

23 September 2021

Report of	Assistant Director of Environment	Author	Rosa Tanfield
Title	Year 3 – The Woodland & Biodiversity Project		☎ 03300538047
Wards affected	All Wards		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out and reviews the progress that has been made through the Woodland and Biodiversity Project which is now in year 3 of its five-year programme.
- 1.2 The project has evolved over the 3 years and has a clear objective and statement of purpose set out. The project focuses on three, intrinsically linked areas of work:
 - For our communities
 - For our wildlife
 - For our environment
- 1.3 The report sets out the activities being undertaken across these areas and highlights particular projects that demonstrate the impact being made in each.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to note the contents of this report.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 This report is for information only.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 The Woodland Project (as it was initially called), launched in 2019. In response to learning, development and challenge, the principles and objectives of the project has evolved; from a clear aim of planting trees to make the borough greener and offset carbon emissions in year 1, to incorporating increased consideration of biodiversity and community focus in year 2, to a project that now focus on developing a legacy of a greener and biodiverse future for Colchester in year 3. The following project descriptions demonstrate the evolution of the project:

Year 1 (2019/20)

- 5.2 'The Colchester Woodland Project'

'Over the next five years, we plan to plant 200,000 trees across the borough as part of the Better Colchester campaign. Trees and woodlands are a vital part of our eco-system, and we are committed to preserving them and helping them to flourish. This is at the very heart of the Colchester Woodland Project. We want to make our borough even greener, and we want to help our community know, love, and use our woods and parks'

Year 2 (2020/21)

- 5.3 'The Colchester Woodland and Biodiversity Project'

'We plan to plant 200,000 trees across the borough in the next 5 years, as part of the Better Colchester campaign, as well as to encourage natural recovery networks that help wildlife and biodiversity. Trees and woodlands are a vital part of our eco-system. We are committed to planting trees and to helping them and wider biodiversity to flourish. We want to make our borough even greener. We want to help our community know and love and care for our environment, from wildflowers and meadows, to our woods and parks, old or new.'

Year 3 (2021/22)

- 5.4 'The Colchester Woodland and Biodiversity Project'

'Is a unique opportunity for everyone to work together and develop a legacy of a greener Borough for future generations.'

The project aims to bring about improvements in 3 areas, our Communities, our Wildlife and our Environment.'

Year 3 in detail

- 5.5 Whilst the number of plants the project aims to plan has been removed from the project description, the ambition to deliver on 200,000 trees and plants has not diminished and the project is continuing to deliver this aim, having planted 28,120 so far, and in year 3 there are at least a further 34,000 planned and larger sites are in early discussions as outline later in this report. However, year 3 of the project sees an important shift in the how such an ambition might be delivered and the articulates important outcomes from the project. The focus is on providing a unique opportunity for everyone (no matter what background, location, age, etc) to collaborate with others and create a legacy of a greener place for Colchester in the future. To ensure that this aim is met, the project focuses on three intrinsically linked areas which it sets out to make tangible outcomes:

COMMUNITIES

- 5.6 To add value to the health and wellbeing of our communities and support the development of deep-rooted connection. We will:

- Improve physical health by enabling access to green spaces for everyone
- Enable more people to be involved in nature based outdoor activities to improve physical and mental health

- Help communities to benefit from urban planting
- Help families create precious memories and stories

WILDLIFE

5.7 To develop, enhance and diversify our wildlife within Colchester. We will:

- Enable 200,000 new plants to thrive
- Create new woodlands
- Recover and improve wildlife corridors and networks

ENVIRONMENT

5.8 Reduce the environmental impact of the Council and influence others to follow our lead: We will

- Help residents and businesses to make informed decisions about their impact on the environment in Colchester
- Conserve and enhance biodiversity
- Contribute to the reduction in drought and flood risk

5.9 In working towards these outcomes and to deliver the best possible approach, the team have committed to the following:

1. We will not harm existing habitats
2. We will use natural processes as far as practicable and possible
3. We will seek to balance the needs of people and nature
4. We will collaborate, consult and involve communities and partners
5. We will allow others to take part and own the project
6. We will use every opportunity to influence others to follow our example

FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

5.10 Working with community groups on planting and activities days can deliver immense opportunity and impact on both community and individuals' health and wellbeing. In particular the work delivered in partnership with not-for-profit, social enterprise Together We Grow CIC (TWG) in 2020 provides evidence of this and this has been recognised recently through the nomination of an award in the prestigious Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Service Awards 2021. These awards identify the best and most innovative Councils in the UK. More than 320 submissions were submitted to award organisers with the Council being shortlisted in the Best Community & Neighbourhood Initiative category for its work in partnership with TWG during the pandemic. The following paragraphs set out how the project team, working with TWG, were able to make a difference in communities through planting trees in 2020.

Together We Grow Communities

5.11 TWG has been a partner of the Woodland and Biodiversity Project since year 1. Given the work that TWG do in terms of community engagement, increasing awareness of the mental and physical benefits of working outdoors in nature and their core remit of nurturing and improving a key public outdoor space, it was felt they would be the right choice to assist in carrying out the community element of the project.

5.12 2020 was a particularly challenging year in planning community planting days and it was incredibly disappointing for everyone, including local communities, when it was clear that public planting days could not go ahead. But this did not stop the team.

5.13 TWG had begun working on a project with Refugee Action Colchester called '[Together we Grow at home](#)' encouraging individuals and families to start growing edible plants at home, and the project ended with a celebration of everyone's efforts in September.

- 5.14 As a direct result of the 'Together we Grow at home' project the organisations realized that some of the men in the refugee community were harder to reach and that their needs were very different. TWG and Refugee Action Colchester developed a Men's Mental Health Winter group. It was clear to the organisations that the men wanted to work: they wanted to work hard, and they wanted physical work. TWG nurtured this concept during the first month of winter and then gave them the option of being the lead group in planting trees in their community as part of the Woodland and Biodiversity Project.
- 5.15 The men took to the project with more enthusiasm and passion than had been expected; they retold stories of similar activities from their own countries, about planting with families and tales of now lost spaces. Continuing the project work in a different setting provided huge emotional benefit to these men, building a community, and giving the Woodland & Biodiversity Project a wellbeing focus. And so, the challenge of not being able to open fully to the public became a huge opportunity.
- 5.16 In tangible terms, 14,000 trees and shrubs were planted across the Borough in Year 2. But the most significant outcomes, were from those people involved: community cohesion and improved physical and mental health for the individuals.
- 5.17 Another example of the type of experiences on planting days can be read in Appendix A.
- 5.18 The team are also working on the following activities:

<p>C.1 Deliver an engagement campaign (schools, households, business, care homes)</p>	<p>So residents can make a difference in their own gardens</p> <p>We are developing an online library of resources and videos to provide guidance and top tips on how people can encourage biodiversity in their own spaces. This will be available via colchester.gov.uk and shared in weekly posts via our social media channels.</p> <p>Recognise those residents who support the project</p> <p>Across many sites in the Borough local residents are taking it upon themselves to care and protect the newly planted sites. These 'Tree Guardians' are now being recognised and provided with the tools to help them continue with their roles. A campaign to recruit more Tree Guardians and showcase the wonderful work they do and the impact they make is being shared.</p> <p>More communities are aware and involved in projects</p> <p>Local schools (30) have been contacted and offered trees and shrubs, along with farmers, landowners and businesses for their landholdings.</p>
<p>C.2 Work with Together We Grow and other community organisations on activities</p>	<p>See 5.10-5.17</p> <p>Conversations remain ongoing with TWG to see how the programme of work can be further expanded.</p>

<p>C.3 Deliver community planting days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity and spaces contribute to health of individuals • Larger communities' benefit from urban and peri-urban planting 	<p>Officers are currently in the process of developing the plans and consulting on community planting days at the following locations for 2020/21. It is estimated over 13,000 trees and shrubs will be planted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kings Head Meadow • Magnolia Drive Open Space • St Johns Open Space • Wheatfield Road Open Space • Community Orchard – Colchester Cemetery • Great Horkesley Jubilee Green • Speedwell Road Open Space • Queen Elizabeth Way Open Space • Salary Brook Greenstead • Henrietta Close Open Space <p>Relevant Ward Members have been contacted and invitations for site meetings have been sent and are being arranged.</p> <p>As in previous years The Woodland Trust (WT) assess the suitability of each site and the location, scale and species mix of the trees being used. They provide funding for this element of the project and have supported and funded the Council's approach of using only biodegradable rabbit guards, reducing the risk of contaminating the local environment with plastic debris.</p>
<p>C.4 Deliver Trees for Years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So residents can make a difference in their own gardens 	<p>Trees for Years, unlike previous years will not be delivered in one specific location in 2021 but will be delivered across the Borough to ensure easier access for residents and to reduce travel time for those wishing to collect items. It is estimated that 15,000 trees and shrubs will be provided for residents.</p> <p>To ensure resilience and help manage the process, the distribution will be delivered through a click and collect service, which reduces risk should there be a need to reintroduce Covid safety measures as has been experienced in the last 18 months.</p> <p>To facilitate a click and collect service, tree packs will be developed to suit different garden sizes.</p> <p>Officers will work with Parish Council and community groups for distribution sites, and through the analyse of postcode data from previous events, identify popular areas of the borough residents are travelling from and to help identify click and collect locations.</p>
<p>C.5 Use Street Tag to encourage residents to monitor sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents are engaged with the impact of 	<p>Community enabling colleagues, working in partnership with the Essex Local Delivery Pilot have launched Street Tag, a free interactive app that promotes physical activity in a fun and accessible way.</p> <p>Street Tag turns physical activity into a game by converting walking, running, and cycling into Street Tag points (tags). It is a</p>

biodiversity and habitat recovery	<p>way to transform streets and parks into a giant virtual playground for local communities. Competitors compete to top the leader board and win prizes. More information can be found here: www.colchester.gov.uk/street-tag.</p> <p>In linking to this project, tags have been added to all the rewilding sites and encourage users to monitor the locations (e.g. the number of butterflies they see).</p>
C.6 Deliver a Blossoms Circles programme, commemorating 2020	This is being considered through the Policy Panel as part of a wider programme of commemoration.
<p>C.7 Greening the Orbital:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wayfinding, barrier removal, route enhancements as part of Phase 1 of Greening the Orbital programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colchester Orbital wayfinding discs have been delivered and working with Walk Colchester and their volunteers, these will be installed imminently on CBC sites Walk Colchester have created an Orbital leaflet which is in production The Orbital has also been added to the Go Jauntly App (ECC led) by Walk Colchester Officers will continue to work to seek funding and implement the Greening the Orbital programme around the recommended improvements to the route
<p>C.8 Undertake (street tree) urban planting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More communities benefit from urban and peri-urban planting 	<p>Trees are being provided for the parklets which are to be located along the High Street in a project delivered in partnership between the Council and Our Colchester, Business Improvement District. This will introduce trees to the Town Centre.</p> <p>Officers are working with colleagues on other Town Centre projects to establish the opportunity for further tree planting as plans emerge.</p> <p>Officers are also working with Essex County Council and Essex Highways to establish the ability to increase urban planting. One opportunity is planting where dead or dying trees have been removed historically, and not replaced – these locations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.</p>

FOR OUR WILDLIFE

Wetland Restoration Programme

- 5.19 The project team have an ambition to work with partners and others to develop a restoration programme of Colchester's wetlands. The public are largely unaware of wetland's ability to offer nature-based solutions to problems associated with climate change. As carbon sinks, flooding buffers, wildlife refuges and water purifiers, wetland restoration and protection can help the wildlife and people of Colchester deal with, and potentially reverse, the onset of climate-associated risks. This work also helps to deliver objectives of the Greening the Orbital programme.

- 5.20 The team are working to develop a programme along the River Colne corridor, river valley, and catchment. In Year 3, the project team have focused on two wetland restoration sites as a start to this larger and rolling programme of wetland restoration: Hilly Fields and Cymbeline Meadows have been selected because:
- These sites have wetland improvement plans already written and ready to implement
 - These sites are opposite each other on either side of the river Colne so provide a focused area of input to start the programme
 - With a plan to improve all the wetland habitat along the Borough's stretch of the River Colne corridor, these two sites are at the 'beginning', or 'inflow' of this stretch with all the other wetland improvement sites located down river of them.
 - Hilly Fields is a designated Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Cymbeline is a designated Local Wildlife site (LoWs).
 - The project team can connect easily with local schools and others to develop engagement and activities: Hilly Fields already has schools using the site - it has 'forest school' areas set up. Kingswode Hoe School is located on the boundary of the site, and they regularly use the site.
 - Cymbeline Meadows already has other biodiversity improvement projects planned for the site (see below)
 - Both sites are connected via the Colchester Orbital
- 5.21 The wetland habitats at Cymbeline and Hillyfields have been degrading for several years and it is important to preserve and improve the wildlife corridors to help combat climate change and habitat loss.
- 5.22 Wetland specialists such as Pink Water Speedwell, Water Horsetail and Willow Emerald Damselfly, as well as a host of lowland breeding wading birds in England are only found across a handful of sites nationwide, could be lost and all other currently common wetland specialist species, if our wetlands become degraded and depleted. Many Odonta, the order of insects that include Dragonflies and Damselflies, are experiencing range changes, potentially due to climate change. Good quality wetlands can provide the habitat for these species. This is another reason why connectivity between our sites is so important.
- 5.23 Unfortunately, the team were unsuccessful in their application to the Government's Green Recovery Fund, in partnership with En-Form and Abberton Rural Training. But they will continue to work with these partners and others to source the funding to delivery of this project.
- 5.24 The team are also working on the following activities:

<p>W.1 Undertake Phase 1 planting and planning at Cymbeline Meadow to create a new woodland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create new woodland • Recover biodiversity and habitats 	<p>There is an ambition to create a new woodland and Nature Reserve at Cymbeline Meadow. The aim is to replace agricultural land and enhance existing areas to deliver a diverse and rich mosaic of habitats across the whole site, for future generations of Colchester.</p> <p>Initial concept plans have been drawn up detailing areas of hedge planting, pond and wetland creation, areas of nectar rich grassland, scrubland, bird seed rich crop areas and tree planting, including areas for future coppice woodland.</p> <p>During phase 1 it is important for officers to work collaboratively with the current Tenant Farmer and seek advice and guidance</p>
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	<p>from a variety of organisations such as Natural England, Essex Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust and others.</p> <p>Officers are also working with the Council's Archaeological Advisor, organising, and carrying out impact assessments and archaeological assessments. Once complete, these will better inform the concept plans and more detail will emerge for consultation.</p> <p>It is hoped that 10,000 whips/trees will be planted in the current financial year, along with some wildflower meadow management, however this will be dependent on the assessments outlined above.</p> <p>This work helps to deliver objectives of the Greening The Orbital programme.</p>
<p>W.2 Engage and enable Parish Councils to establish new woodlands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable others to create new woodlands • Recover biodiversity and habitats 	<p>All 31 Town & Parish Councils have been contacted and offered free trees and shrubs for planting on their land or for distribution to their residents – 15 have expressed an interest with up to 6,000 trees being requested.</p> <p>The project is partnering with Big Green Internet, Woodland Trust to deliver the Red Squirrel Project to plant up to 4kms (20,000 whips) of new hedgerow on Mersea Island.</p>
<p>W.3 Undertake planting at Colchester Northern Gateway</p>	<p>Potential planting sites around the boundary of the site and access road from the rear of the Park and Ride have been identified. Site surveys are being carried out to identify tree numbers and species.</p>
<p>W.4 Deliver the Colchester Wetland Restoration Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity and habitats are improved and more diverse 	<p>See above</p>
<p>W.5 Continue to deliver the Colchester Greening Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced environmental impact of the Council 	<p>The Greening Colchester Policy was presented and agreed by the Environment and Sustainability Panel on 17 September 2020. Its aim was to stop the use of glyphosate-based products through a phased approach on Council owned land. The timeline published has been met and officers continue to work with partner organisations on implementing changes to their policies also.</p> <p>Currently the following alternative methods of weed control are being trialled on Council owned land:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetation around obstacles and play areas is being cut back twice per year.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetation along fence lines is being left to grow for wildlife and cut once per year • Non glyphosate weedkillers are being trialled on weed growth in car parks and pathways on CBC owned land. <p>As part of the Council's commitment to remove of glyphosate-based products, the policy also introduced the stopping or reducing of grass cutting in specific areas to improve biodiversity and visual amenity of the grass verges, creating rewilded, wildflower or naturalised woodlands.</p> <p>Now that the policy has been in place for 12 months, a review will be undertaken on the impact and effectiveness, and recommendations or changes will be made as appropriate.</p>
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FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

5.25 All of the objectives are intrinsically linked and an example of this is the work undertaken with Wivenhoe Town Council.

The Wivenhoe Project

5.26 In January, Wivenhoe Town Council (WTC) worked with the Council's officers to trial "no mow" management regimes between March and September at 12 designated open spaces and residential verges in the town. The objectives were to work more closely with communities and establish if a local approach could increase biodiversity and to assess public reaction. This would be the first approach of this type undertaken by the project team, undertaken as trial, so that if it was successful, it could be used as a template and example to roll out to other Councils and partners. The project is led by WTC, with support as and when needed by Council officers. WTC have reported the following:

5.27 The highlights to date include:

- Nearly 150 different species of wildflower have been identified across the sites since March.
- There were on average 5 times as many wildflowers in the unmown sites, compared to the mown sites.
- 8 local residents have joined the project as volunteers. They are responsible for flower surveys on all the sites.
- The Council have erected 16 information boards at all sites explaining how the sites are being managed.
- There have been no problems with mowing. The grounds maintenance contractor has been very receptive and responsive throughout.
- Separate to the project, there were some concerns from residents about the general length of grass around the town due to the explosive spring growth resulting from the wet winter and late spring. There were almost no concerns about the project sites themselves.

5.28 Public response has included:

- 60 letters to neighbours of the project sites were sent explaining the project in March. No objections have been received by WTC in return.
- No complaints have been received by WTC and only one reported by Council Officers – a repetition of concerns about traffic sight lines at one site.

- Updates on the project have been posted on the Town Council and Wivenhoe Community Facebook pages. The posts have received widespread approvals and generated many overwhelmingly supportive comments.
- While the vast majority of social media comments have been simple statements of support, some important issues have also been raised and resolved, including maintaining safe traffic sight lines at two sites and access to play areas in another.
- Survey volunteers have been approached by 12 members of the public while doing site surveys. All have expressed support for the project, one wanting to join in the surveys with her small children.

5.29 Costs and benefits for Wivenhoe:

- Financial: no costs have been incurred to date by WTC except for the erection of site signage (cost to CBC). Notional savings of contract time are probably too marginal to model reliably at this stage.
- Carbon emissions: sites are cut up to 14 times a year normally. Reducing to x1 cut a year represents a 93% reduction in carbon emissions on each site included in the project.
- Biodiversity: Five times as many flowering plants have been found in unmown sites compared to mown sites. With plants being able to complete their life cycles we would expect this abundance of wildflowers to increase in future years in unmown areas.
- Public satisfaction: public response has been overwhelmingly positive, with no formal complaints received about the project and strong support expressed on social media and in person by residents.
- The project is showing that summer long “no mow” is a viable management option for green spaces in residential and urban areas and is effective in increasing native biodiversity at no financial cost to Council taxpayers and with the prospect of cost benefits if it is extended. Key elements to success are local town and parish council buy-in, and positive, explanatory engagement with residents.

5.30 The project team are keen to complete 12 months of this trial, to assess the impact and understand what lessons have been learnt, what improvements can be made, and to the establish a roll-out of this initiative to other interested Parish and Town Councils, and partners or organisations.

5.31 The team are also working on the following activities:

<p>E.1 Initiate the setting up a Greening Colchester Network Forum (<i>working title</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross pollination of ideas • Discover what others are doing • Network development • Sharing of activities • Check in and challenge on the project 	<p>Conversations are underway with partners on either establishing or developing an existing forum and network to support connections between groups and organisations, to learn, replicate and scale action across the network</p>
<p>E.2 Deliver (if successful) on the H2020 project</p>	<p>Officers worked closely with Writtle College and Earth Watch to submit a funding bid for a project that would focus on climate change mitigation and social well-being projects that could be</p>

	<p>delivered in Colchester over a period of a couple of years, where the project, impact and evaluation would then be shared with others as case studies. This would have included establishment of tiny forests, forage forests and social forests. Unfortunately, the bid was unsuccessful.</p>
E.3 Roll out the Wivenhoe Project to other Parish Councils	See 5.29-5.33
<p>E.4 Deliver an education campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform others of our management methods and provide examples of how these can be applied 	<p>Officers have worked with Anglia Ruskin University, Romsey Mill and other partners to submit an application for funding towards a project that aims to uncover the secret behind why greenspaces remain hidden and what actions or steps can facilitate further usage among young people and inform the future design of urban green spaces.</p> <p>The project will engage with school aged children (primary and secondary) to involve them in climate actions through art-based workshops and other psychologically inspired creative approaches.</p> <p>These art-based engagements will inform the research team in the development of potential solutions to further increased awareness of climate change (e.g., mobile apps and tree tags highlighting the benefits of trees for carbon reduction and more).</p>
E.5 Provide help, support and prepare Colchester for the future changes that may come forward from the new Agriculture and Environment Bills, through conversations and dialogue with farmers and landowners.	<p>Officers are working with The Big Green Internet and Colchester Natural History Society to identify local landowners and farmers willing to plant trees and hedgerows.</p> <p>Officers are in discussion with 3 large land-owning local businesses to plant up to 3,300 trees and shrubs on their land.</p> <p>Officers are working with the current tenant Farmer at High Woods Country Park to develop proposals for meadow improvements.</p> <p>Officers are working to draw up Biodiversity Net Gain guidance for developers, officers, Members and the public, in anticipation of the Environment Bill being enacted this autumn and to identify sites for Net Gain in the borough.</p> <p>Officers are in discussion with partners about how to create a Nature Recovery Network for the borough.</p>
<p>E.6 Influence planning, strategies, policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the environmental impact of the Council 	<p>Officers are working on developments on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colchester Orbital Guidelines Landscape Development Guidance Green Infrastructure Guide <p>Officers are also updating the Council's natural assets register to assist with conversations and plans for carbon offsetting.</p>

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 Throughout the work of this project Officers have taken due care in giving due consideration to equality and diversity and this is demonstrated through the rewording of the project and the commitments that the project team have created

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 This project supports the Councils [Strategic Plan 2020-23](#) of “tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability” and in particular the priorities of “respond to the climate emergency” and “conserve and enhance biodiversity”. It is also contributing towards “creating safe, healthy and active communities” through the various engagement and planting activities outlined in this report.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The approach to consultation on each of the activities will be dependent on the scope and aim of the specific activity due to the diversity of the work undertaken, but as the commitments set out in 5.9:
- 4. We will collaborate, consult and involve communities and partners
 - 5. We will allow others to take part and own the project
- 8.2 These commitments will be tested throughout the project and due consideration will be given to the timeliness and method of consultation for each activity.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 As with consultation, due consideration will be given to those who may be affected by activities. The team will consult and listen to feedback and make changes, as can be demonstrated throughout this project.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 Year 3 the Council has provided funding up to £150,000 to deliver most of the work set out above, including the Woodland Project Officer, purchasing of plants and trees, fencing, marketing, equipment and maintenance, and technical assessments.
- 10.2 To deliver on more ambitious schemes, officers are working with the partners and other organisations to source external funding and support.

11. Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 It is hoped that working with organisations such as TWG and on community planting days, the project can work towards aims of providing opportunities to support community safety and community cohesion.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 The project does not cause any harm to the health and safety of the general public.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 Risks and opportunities are assessed based on each activity due to the variety of the work being undertaken.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 14.1 The project has very clear aims and objectives for the project in relation to the environment, nature and sustainability. The outcomes in delivering these for Colchester residents are:

Improving health and well being

- Those living closer to greener space in urban areas have been found to experience lower rates of anxiety -[Imperial College London \(2019\)](#)
- Increasing access/proportion of green space in local areas can help develop more active lives, promote communication and socialising with others, as well as helping to capture carbon and improve air quality ([Public Health England, 2020](#))
- [Around 9 in 10 people surveyed by Natural England in May 2020](#) agreed that natural spaces are good for mental health and wellbeing. More than 40% noticed that nature, wildlife, and visiting local green and natural spaces have been even more important to their wellbeing since the coronavirus restrictions began

Contributing to reducing climate risk:

- It is estimated that there are around 2,000 heat-related deaths each year in England and Wales and this number is expected to more than triple to over 7,000 by the middle of the century, as a result of climate change. ([Link](#))
- Approximately 250,000 properties are at risk of flooding in the East of England, posing risks to mental health and wellbeing of the population as well as the operations of businesses ([source](#))

Appendix A

Account from Wayne at TWG:

I was gathering some more trees from the church area when I was 'taunted' by two young lads who had been playing basketball.

'Oi Oi, tree man, what you doing tree man?!' one of them was holding up a tree which was now devoid of its clay and root cage. So, I approached and said, 'this one will be fine it just needs planting quickly'. I asked them if they wanted to help, they tried to negotiate a fiver per tree. I said it was no more than a quid's worth and I didn't have a quid, but did they want to help anyway.....they did.

So, Frankie and Bailey had their induction whilst telling me about a Youtuber called Mister Beast who they were very much in to. He had pledged to plant a million trees to save the planet, they thought this was a great idea.

So, I told them they needed to be safe and therefore should wear gloves, hard hats, and steel boots. They were more than happy.

They brought over another 4 trees with me plus the posts, real resilient lads. They chose the spot, dug the hole, and even used the post rammer (Which is 20kg).

'We love building, we want to be builders when we are older' The weather turned and then-started to sleet, but they wouldn't go and just wanted to finish the full task, the fully put in two trees with posts and ties and prepared for others.

Whilst talking about school it turned out one was a refuser/ not at school due to anger issues and the other attends NEECA (alternative provision) I saw no sign of behavioural issues, in fact quite the opposite. I saw engaged and interested humans with a firm link to their community. They knew a lot of people passing and were proud to tell them what they were doing. They vowed to look after these trees into the future.

I sent them on their way after a handshake and a conversation about them being 'the only 2 people who had seen what we were doing, showed an interest and offered to help and how proud of that they should be'

They skipped off no doubt to be told off about the state of their clothes.