

**CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES**

COMMITTEE:	Community & Environment		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	3rd February 2022 7.00pm	LOCATION	Town Hall
REPORT FROM	J MacArthur - Communities and Marketing Manager and Deputy Chief Officer On behalf of Congleton Green Working Group		
AGENDA ITEM	15		
REPORT TITLE	Creating a Site-Specific Biodiversity Plan for Congleton		
Background	<p>Congleton Town Council has declared a Climate and Nature Emergency. The Congleton Green Working Group has been considering ways in which the Town Council can best protect and improve wildlife habitats and increase biodiversity on the land that it maintains or has influence over in Congleton.</p> <p>Following several meetings and research into increasing biodiversity, the Congleton Green Working Group wishes to follow the advice of the Cheshire Wildlife Trust and create a Site-Specific Biodiversity Plan. In order to create this plan, the Congleton Green Working Group is recommending to the Community and Environment Committee that we secure the services of specialists in this complex area of work.</p> <p>The group has identified a Chartered Landscape Architect, with a local authority Planning Environment experience that has worked as a Landscape Advisor with Natural England who is prepared to carry out this work for a modest fee. Due to their familiarity with green spaces in Congleton – they helped create a Landscape evidence base for the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan – the group believes they are uniquely qualified to help Congleton with this work. They are confident that the work could be completed in the equivalent of 9 working days.</p> <p>If the Community and Environment Committee approve this brief and approach, a report will be discussed at Council asking for approval to spend the funds.</p>		
The Project	<p>The work that we would be looking for the consultant to carry out includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting together a list of Congleton sites, where Biodiversity could be improved, based on the Neighbourhood Plan, Streetscape Plans and Trees for Congleton sites. As it is not possible to tackle the whole town, it was suggested that site-specific actions plans should be developed for 30 priority sites where Congleton Town Council is responsible for the maintenance or has potential influence and there is potential to have the greatest impact for biodiversity. • Helping to identify and prioritise those sites with detailed site-specific knowledge that will be mapped using GIS databases. • Identifying the potential actions for the 30 sites e.g., tree planting, hedging, wildflowers, bulb planting, pond or wetland creation, dead hedging, eco piles, bird boxes and bat boxes. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying Green Corridor potential for priority sites. • Assigning the sites to potential stakeholders and volunteers for discussion/development. (Congleton Town Council will follow through with consultation and stakeholder engagement where required) • Being mindful of the importance of green spaces for the health and well-being of local residents and their recreational needs.
The Person	The group has identified a Chartered Landscape Architect, with a local authority Planning Environment experience that has worked as a Landscape Advisor with Natural England who is prepared to carry out this work. Due to their familiarity with green spaces in Congleton – they helped create a Landscape evidence base for the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan – the group believes they are uniquely qualified to help Congleton with this work. They are confident that the work could be completed in the equivalent of 9 working days.
Environmental	This project is about helping the Town Council to respond to the climate and nature emergency by accurately identifying and developing 30 action plans to improve biodiversity in Congleton.
Equality	The needs of local residents will be considered in the development of this project. The group is mindful that households on the lowest income are more likely to suffer the most from the consequences of climate change.
Financial	If approved, a report will go to Council seeking to spend £2,550 from the 2021/22 Ear Marked Reserve of £5k for professional and legal fees.
Decision Requested	For the Community and Environment Committee to approve the recommendation from the Congleton Green Working Group, to contract a local professional to help the group develop detailed and site-specific plans for 30 areas where the Town Council can improve and increase biodiversity. To approve the request going to Council to release £2550 of funding for this project.