



**North Tyneside Council**

# Environment Sub Committee

Tuesday, 30 August 2022

**Tuesday, 6 September 2022** 0.02 Chamber - Quadrant, The Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside, NE27 0BY **commencing at 6.00 pm.**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>5. Biodiversity Action Plan and Biodiversity Net Gain</b>	<b>3 - 46</b>
To receive a presentation on the annual report in relation to the Newcastle and North Tyneside Biodiversity Action Plan and the biodiversity requirements of the Environment Act 2021 in relation to biodiversity net gain.	

**Circulation overleaf ...**

Members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and receive information about it. North Tyneside Council wants to make it easier for you to get hold of the information you need. We are able to provide our documents in alternative formats including Braille, audiotape, large print and alternative languages.

### **Members of the Environment Sub Committee**

Councillor Davey Drummond (Chair)

Councillor Gary Bell

Councillor Brian Burdis

Councillor Margaret Hall

Councillor Gary Madden

Councillor Pam McIntyre

Councillor Martin Murphy (Deputy Chair)

Councillor Linda Bell

Councillor Michelle Fox

Councillor Chris Johnston

Councillor Louise Marshall

Councillor Jane Shaw

# Biodiversity Action Plan Report 2020-22

Jackie Hunter  
Biodiversity Officer



# BAP Annual Report

Habitat	Species
Buildings & Structures	Farmland Birds
Estuary & Coastal	Bats
Brownfield Land	Amphibians
Transport Corridors	Dingy Skipper
Open Water & Wetland	Otter
Rivers & Watercourses	Urban Birds
Managed Urban Greenspace	Water Vole
Native Woodland	Red Squirrel
Lowland Grassland	Hedgehog
Scrub/Shrub & Hedgerow	Slow Worm
	Bumblebees
	Brown Hare





# Planning Projects

## Murton Gap Masterplan





# Planning Projects

## Murton Gap Masterplan – Green Infrastructure





# Planning Projects

## Murton Housing Site – Existing Site





# Planning Projects

## Murton Housing Site – Development Site Plan

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# Murton Housing Site – Wildlife Corridor Landscaping

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# Planning Projects

## Murton Housing Site – Wider Landscaping Context



# Planning Projects

## Murton Off-Site Compensation Area - Backworth





# Planning Projects

## Murton Off-Site Habitat Compensation

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# Planning Projects

## Murton Housing Site – Biodiversity Net Gain

### On-site existing habitat:

- 14ha arable (cereal crops)
- 0.45ha poor field margins
- 1.3ha amenity grass
- 1.116km hedgerows

### On-site post development habitat:

- 0.6ha broadleaf woodland
- 0.5ha mixed native scrub
- 0.6ha SUDs & reedbed
- 1ha neutral and modified grassland
- 2.09km native hedgerow

### Off-site existing habitat:

- 20.5ha arable (cereal crops)
- 0.75ha poor SI grassland
- 2.2km native hedgerow

### Off-site compensation habitat:

- 4.57 ha neutral grassland
- 2.5km native hedgerow
- Skylark plots
- Set aside

### Biodiversity Net Gain

**+ 29.55% (habitats)**

**+ 575% (hedgerows)**



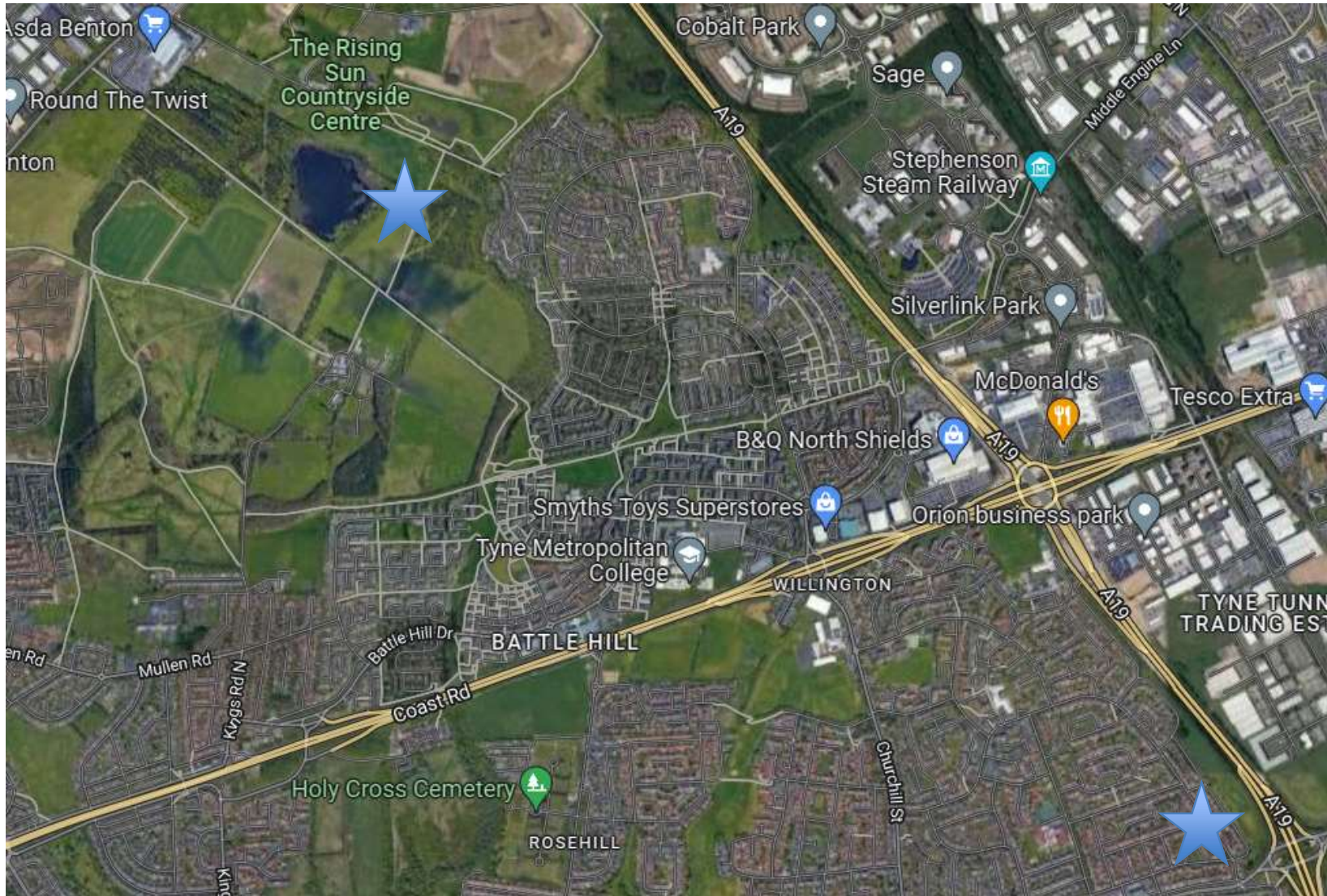
# Council Biodiversity Projects

- 84 greenspace sites created and managed as biodiversity areas
- Restoration of Education Pond at Rising Sun Country Park
- Creation of approximately 4ha of native woodland at RSCP Farm, Henley Gardens and Love Avenue through North East Community Forest (NECF) funding
- Conservation Grazing at St Mary's Nature Reserve
- 500 bluebell bulbs provided and planted at Benton Quarry Park
- 500 bluebell bulbs, native wildflower seed and cherry tree provided and planted at the SUEZ waste site
- Watercourse improvements, scrub planting and meadow creation at RSCP (approx. 0.3km near Aysgarth)
- Seaton Burn watercourse improvements at Wideopen (approx. 0.3km)
- Wildflower seed provided for lower promenade project at Whitley Bay
- Stephenson Museum – ecological survey for HLF bid



# Biodiversity Projects

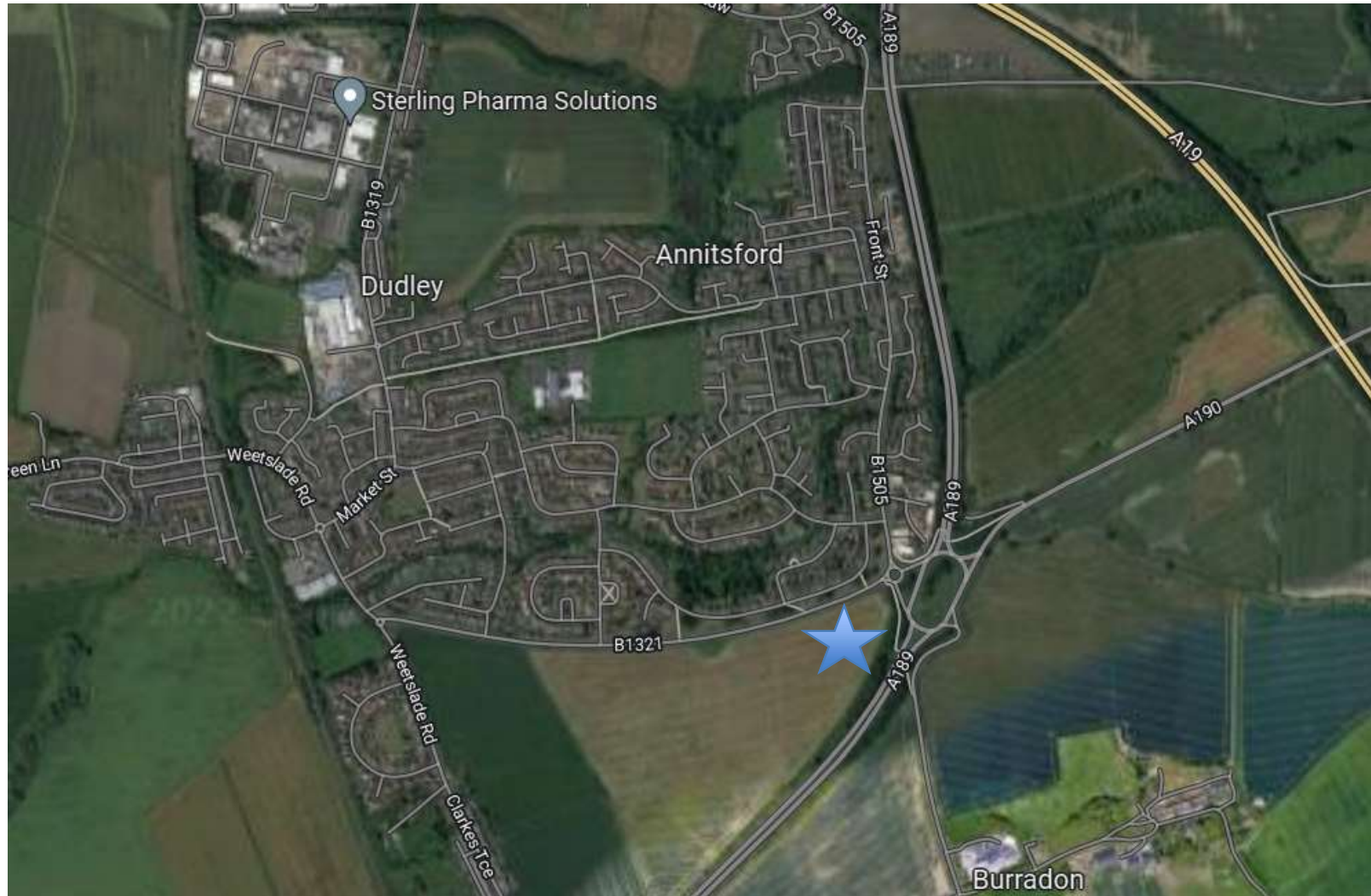
## North-East Community Forest (NECF) – Woodland Creation





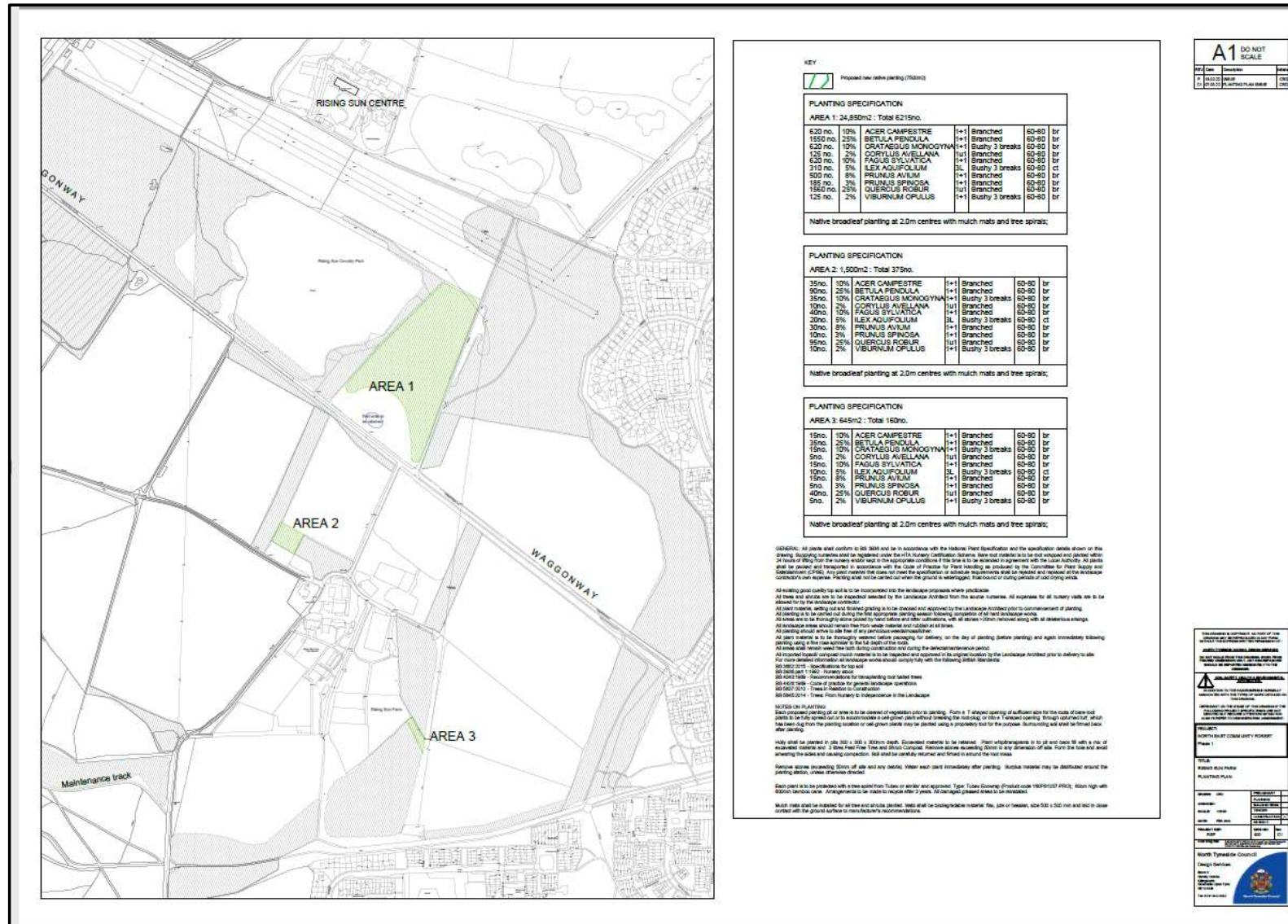
# Biodiversity Projects

## North-East Community Forest (NECF) – Woodland Creation



# Rising Sun Country Park

- 2.7ha mixed native broadleaf woodland
- 6750 trees planted by volunteers & farm





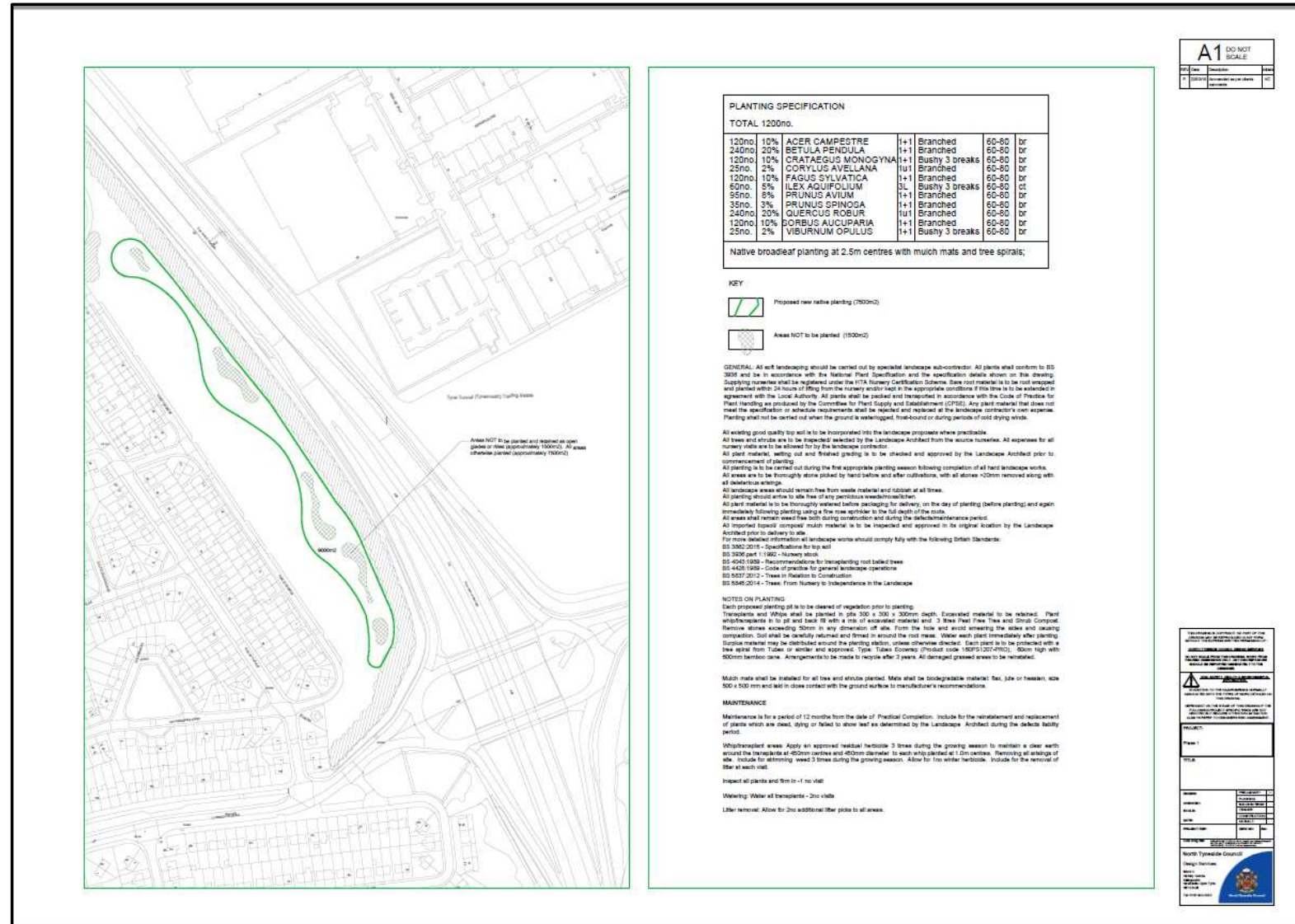
# Rising Sun Country Park





# Henley Gardens

- 0.75ha mixed native broadleaf woodland
- 1200 trees planted





# Henley Gardens

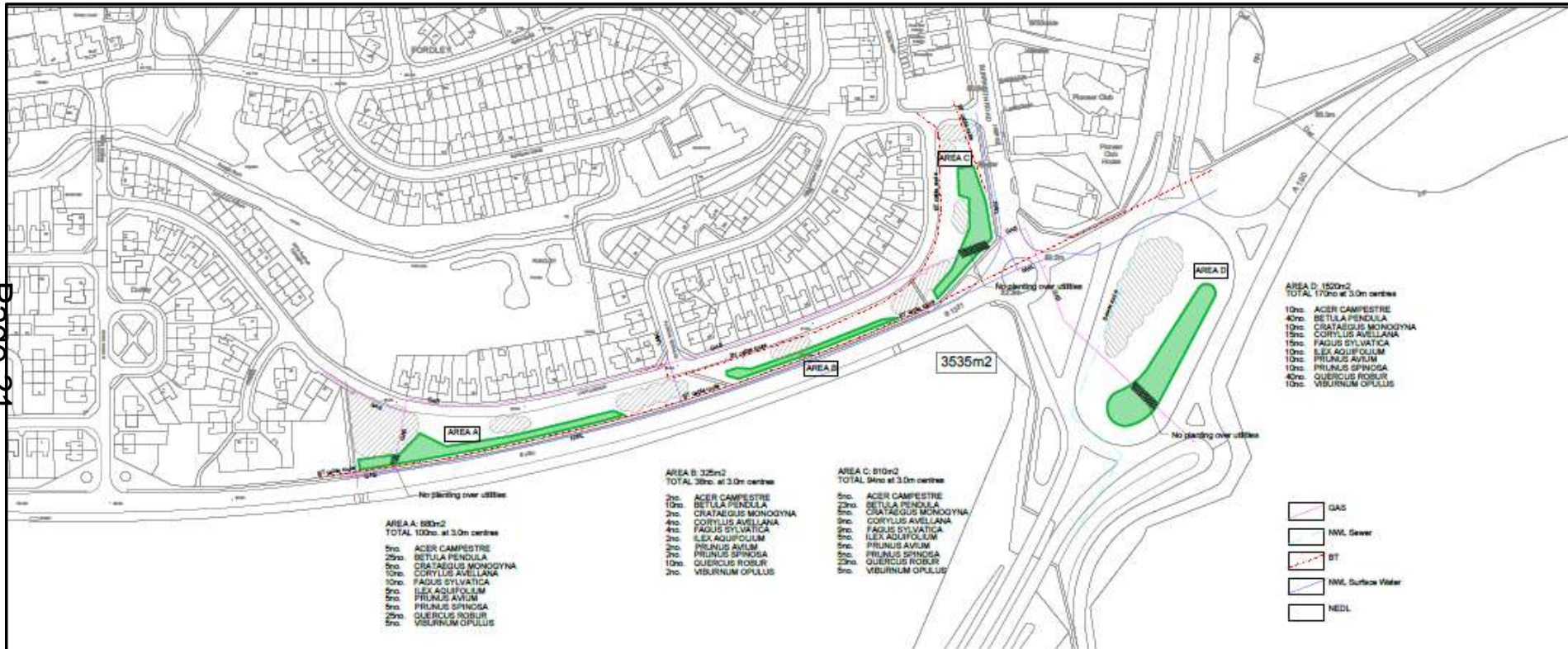




# Love Avenue

- 0.35ha woodland
- 402 trees planted

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# Biodiversity Projects

## Watercourse Improvements – Seaton Burn

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# Biodiversity Projects

## Watercourse Improvements – RSCP





# Biodiversity Projects

## RSCP Pond Restoration



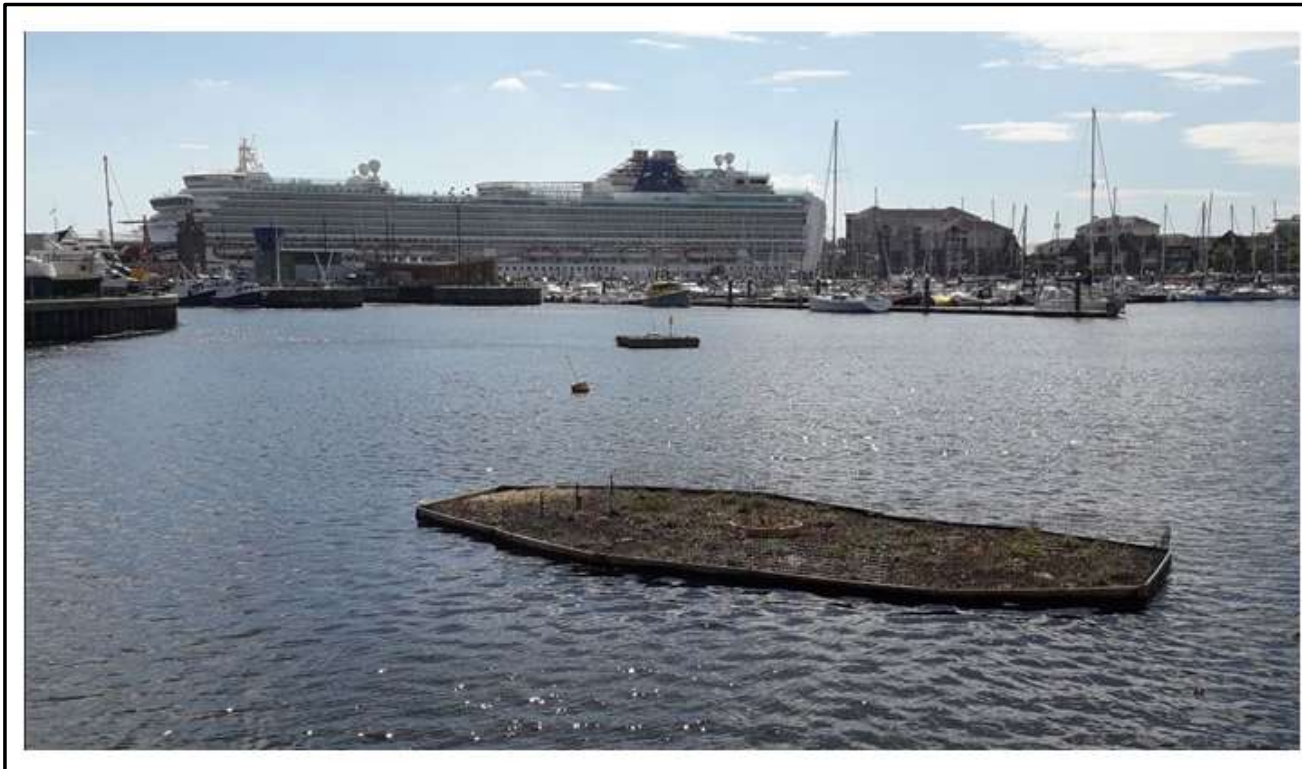
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# Biodiversity Projects

## Royal Quay Marina – Floating Ecosystem (2021)

- Tyne Estuary Partnership Project
- 50m<sup>2</sup> floating ecosystem planted with native salt tolerant plants
- Small reef system created beneath the water– baskets filled with natural materials provide nursery for fish and marine organisms
- 1000m<sup>2</sup> floating ecosystem installed (July 2022) Newcastle Quayside



# Biodiversity Projects

## Trees for Cities - Suez Site Howdon



# Community Projects

## St Mary's Wetlands Conservation Group

- Wetland Restoration / Management
- Conservation grazing with Exmoor ponies to manage the species-rich grassland
- Managing vegetation on the islands to maintain suitable habitat for roosting waders
- Regular litter picks undertaken throughout the year
- Viewpoints maintained by removal of vegetation and strimming in front of main screen.
- Fencing repaired following damage due to Storm Arwen in Nov 21
- 'St Mary's Island Wetland Management Plan' updated in February 2021 covering the period 2021-25
- Regular bird surveys/monitoring, including annual breeding bird surveys and monthly WeBS surveys
- Annual botanical surveys/monitoring in June/July
- Won the Royal Horticultural Society 'It's Your Neighbourhood' 'Outstanding' award for Northumbria in October 2021





# Community Projects

## St Mary's Wetlands Conservation Group





# Community Projects

## Friends of Brierdene

- Over 9000 volunteer hours between 2020-2022
- Wildflower grassland creation and management
- Native tree and scrub planting and management
- Watercourse management (clearance and bankside repairs)
- Invasive plant management
- Footpath, bridge and fence repairs
- Community events
- Animal and plant surveys (Annual Bioblitz)
- Duke of Edinburgh Gold each month
- Royal Horticultural Society "*It's Your Neighbourhood*" (IYN) Inspection with Judges
- Green Flag Award



# Community Projects

## Friends of Brierdene





# Community Projects

## Friends of Brierdene



# Community Projects

## Friends of Holywell Dene – General Activities

- Removing fallen trees, branches and debris blocking the burn
- Meadow Management
- Litter picking
- ERIC training event “Introduction to Wildlife Recording”
- Members attended ‘New Year Plant Hunt’ event (ERIC) and collected data for the “City Nature Challenge”
- Red squirrel project in partnership with the North-East Red Squirrel Group
- Footpath works/extending footpaths
- Fence repairs
- Tree/scrub management



# Parks & Greenspace Projects

## Northumberland Park

- Regular RSPB 'Big Garden Birdwatch' events
- Monthly bee walk and survey (Citizen Science Surveys)
- Tree planting events
- Management of butterfly meadow
- Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) staff training (prepare & lead bat walks)
- Volunteer meetings and activities
- Regular monthly wildlife/biodiversity surveys (Northumberland Park)
- Quarterly biodiversity surveys (Marden Quarry)
- Gardening group
- Northumberland Park Wildlife Group regular newsletter/sightings board and Facebook page.





# Parks & Greenspace Projects

## Northumberland Park – tree planting events



# Parks & Greenspace Projects

## Rising Sun Country Park

- 5760m of native hedgerows managed annually
- 386 volunteer hours provided within the Park.
- 189 Education visits with 2680 participants including bat events
- 4 wildflower meadows managed annually including removal of invasive species and scrub removal to prevent encroachment.
- 200m of new post and rail fence provided along the route into the Nature Reserve.
- Tree management/thinning works in Hadrian Woodland with habitat piles created for wildlife and over 300m of redundant fencing removed.
- Vegetation clearance to improve viewing areas in front of bird hides at Swallow Pond.
- Wildflower meadows cut and hay used at donor sites within park to create/enhance species rich grassland
- Red Squirrel Project in partnership with North East Red Squirrel Group





# Parks & Greenspace Projects

## Killingworth Lake Park & Benton Quarry Park

- Management and sowing of wildflower areas
- Woodland management works (Killingworth)
- Commemoration Project (Killingworth)
- 500 bluebell bulbs planted (Killingworth Lake Woodland)
- Bird boxes installed in trees at both parks
- Control of invasive plants by volunteers at Killingworth

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# Thank You

Scarlet Waxcap



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# Biodiversity and Planning

Environment Committee Sub-Group  
6 September 2022



# Current Planning Approach

## National and local planning policy

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and policy S5.4 and DM5.5 of the Local Plan are implemented to “contribute to and enhance the natural environment” and “protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity”.
- Decision making is directed to follow the mitigation hierarchy. Applications for development should:
  - Avoid harmful impacts, any residual harm should be
  - Adequately mitigated on site, and as a last resort ...
  - Compensated for off site.
  - Schemes that cannot adequately compensate harm should be refused.
- Policy also establishes that net gains in biodiversity value should be sought.



# Current Planning Approach

## Considering planning applications

- Decisions regarding development proposals must take all material considerations into account. This means considering both the benefits and harm that might arise from development.
- For biodiversity, development proposals that deliver benefits - for example provide employment or homes - should only be refused if the potential harm cannot be adequately avoided, mitigated or compensated.
- To consider development proposals the planning team work closely with the Council's ecologist (Jackie!).
- Applicants are encouraged to engage in pre-application discussion. This can identify issues at an early stage and ensure proposals avoid harm wherever possible.
- For many schemes we are now making use of the Defra biodiversity metric to calculate the net impact of development.

# Environment Act – Responsibilities and Priorities

## Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- Mandatory requirement (2023) for all planning applications (with exemptions) to deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain on development schemes
- Delivery through a number of mechanisms including on and off-site mitigation/compensation or credit scheme
- Register of sites nationally for delivery of off-site compensation
- Minimum requirement for 30-year management and monitoring of net gain sites
- Monitoring & Enforcement of BNG sites by LPA
- Reporting to Government on BNG delivery



# Environment Act – Responsibilities and Priorities

## Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)

- A new system of spatial strategies for nature that will be set up across England to drive forward nature recovery and identify areas for habitat delivery and enhancement. Each LNRS will be composed of a partnership of LA's, environmental organisations and landowners and will be tasked with delivering a 'strategy' through a 'Responsible Authority' for nature recovery that includes biodiversity mapping and identifying key areas for habitat delivery including sites for biodiversity net gain.
- LNRS will also support wider objectives such as mitigating or adapting to climate change in an area.
- LNRS will guide effective delivery of biodiversity net gain and other nature recovery measures by helping developers and planning authorities avoid the most valuable existing habitat and focus habitat creation or improvement where it will achieve the best outcomes.

# Environment Act – Responsibilities and Priorities

## **Strengthened Biodiversity Duty (Section 40 of NERC Act 2006)**

- Duty amended to ensure public authorities (Local Authorities) look strategically at their policies and operations (functions) from time to time (at least every 5 years) and assess what action they can take ‘to further’ the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. They must also have regard to the relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Species Conservation Strategies and Protected Sites Strategies, as part of the consideration
- This will include a reporting duty requiring Local Authorities to produce a Biodiversity Report every five years. The Reports will describe action taken and its impact, which can then be used to guide future action. Biodiversity Reports by Local Authorities will include a summary of action taken under the biodiversity net gain policy



# Environment Act – Challenges

## Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- Additional responsibilities in assessing net gain requirements on all planning schemes and ensuring adequate training has been provided to deliver this
- Identifying/assessing potential Local Authority sites to add to a National Site Register for delivery of future net gain projects
- Assessing Net Gain Plans over the mandatory 30-year management and monitoring period associated with each planning application to ensure they meet legislation requirements
- LPA enforcement responsibility will require ecological expertise to assess non-compliance of net gain delivery schemes
- Delivery of net gain projects on Local Authority land (identified on the National Register) and their future monitoring and management
- Adequate resources to deliver the above requirements
- Reporting of Biodiversity Net Gain delivery to Government in required timescales

# Environment Act – Challenges

## Local Nature Recover Strategy

- Biodiversity mapping of resources in NT to provide baseline information for Strategy
- Working with a number of organisations, groups and landowners with competing priorities
- Identifying suitable sites to deliver nature recovery projects and biodiversity net gain
- Assisting in the delivery of the LNRS and any associated monitoring and reporting to Government
- Identifying funding sources to deliver projects in NT
- Adequate resources to deliver requirements of the Strategy

## Strengthened Biodiversity Duty (Section 40 of NERC Act 2006)

- Adequate resources to deliver the requirements of the updated and strengthened Biodiversity Duty including the requirement for Local Authorities to regularly report on the action taken to conserve and enhance biodiversity (Biodiversity Reporting)