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UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Making Space for Nature in Cornish Towns

Project Strategy

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Contents

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cornwall is in a climate and ecological emergency. We need to create great green infrastructure - with multi-functional, bigger, better and more joined up habitats across the county. If we improve the biodiversity value of urban sites, we can also improve their 'natural capital', the stock of nature from which many benefits (ecosystem services) flow. This is both positive for wildlife and brings nature to the doorstep of many Cornish residents. Everyone needs Nature.

The European Union defines green infrastructure as -
".. a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services such as water purification, air quality, space for recreation and climate mitigation and adaptation. This network of green (land) and blue (water) spaces can improve environmental conditions and therefore citizens' health and quality of life. It also supports a green economy, creates job opportunities and enhances biodiversity".
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/index_en.htm

Making Space for Nature sets out to increase the ecological and social value of Cornish urban green space, to improve the quality of the green infrastructure network. Cornwall's environment faces many challenges including 9-10% tree cover in the county (compared with 13% in UK and 37% in Europe), 28000 homes at risk of flooding and 6 areas failing national air quality standards. Cornwall acts as a 'break weather' and 'break water' for SW England and under climate change is at increased risk of flooding from intense rainfall; longer heatwaves and more heat-wave days; and coastal erosion[1]. Flooding and storm events are already impacting on people and property in many Cornish towns – our communities need to be prepared for more extreme and unusual weather events. Cornwall Council's 'Environmental Growth Strategy' 2015-2065 creates a framework for putting the environment at the heart of all we do in Cornwall and Making Space for Nature is a key delivery mechanism for this strategy in urban areas. Using nature-based on site interventions the project will: increase biodiversity in urban areas; help mitigate the effects of climate change by storing carbon and creating a more flood resilient landscape; link urban green spaces within the wider landscape for wildlife and for active travel; and enhance people's engagement with and experience of nature in urban areas. This will result in healthier places to live and a more resilient landscape.

The project goals are to:

- Increase **biodiversity** and wildlife value
- Enhance **water quality** and a more flood resilient landscape
- Enhance **ecosystem services** provided by sites including climate mitigation such as carbon storage, sustainable drainage via planting and soil improvement, and air pollution mitigation.
- Improve **public access** and promote increased community enjoyment of nature
- Deliver **community engagement** with health and wellbeing benefits
- Embed **environmental sustainability** and equality and diversity principles into all project processes.

[1]https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/40176082/climate-change-action-plan.pdf

- Provide **value for money** during project delivery and long-term site aftercare.

Making Space for Nature (formally known as Green Infrastructure for Growth 2; www.cornwall.gov.uk/spacefornature) is a three year project (2019-2022), which has received £2.4 million from the European Union Regional Development fund with match funding from Cornwall Council and the University of Exeter. Total project value is **£3.1 million,** with £1.8 million for capital works and £280,000 for establishment of new habitat**.** The project follows on from a successful first phase, Green Infrastructure for Growth (GI4G1), which took place in Bude, Camborne, Hayle, Penzance, Pool, Redruth and Saltash. This second project is to be delivered in Bodmin, Falmouth, Launceston, Liskeard, Newquay, Penryn and St Austell and will improve at least **28 hectares of urban green space**, including parks and verges. The project works in existing urban green space, owned or managed by Cornwall Council. The majority of project sites will be similar to GI4G1 sites (average size 1.3 ha) which are small, informal spaces, close to where people live rather than large 'destination' parks, resulting in between 20 and 30 sites improved during the project. Once the project has finished, the long term management for 15 years post project completion will be specified in a site specific Environmental Growth Management Plan. This is funded and overseen by Cornwall Council Public Space team within the Environment Service (for Cornwall Council owned spaces and urban verges[2]), Cornwall Council Highways Team (for larger road verges) and Cornwall Housing Ltd for housing estates.

While the project is required to work within site boundaries, we will use the opportunity to connect sites in the wider landscape, for both people and wildlife by linking residential areas and habitats. The project aims to influence wider Cornwall Council Policy and activities by trialling new management schemes, wildlife interventions, providing additional training and professional development opportunities and sharing the lessons learnt from the project with as wide an audience as possible. This includes helping promote the role of private gardens and other greenspaces such as school grounds in Cornish towns - as havens and corridors for wildlife, linking MS4N sites into the wider landscape and contributing to the quality, character and distinctiveness of the local town.

The key outcomes from this project are multifunctional green spaces that harbour biodiversity, foster connected communities and provide resilience within the wider landscape to flooding and climate change. By improving the amount of natural capital in urban sites, this will help to mitigate both the biodiversity and climate emergencies. The improvements in the physical environment of towns will aid both community and nature; entice more people into richer urban green spaces and make active travel a more appealing alternative, with consideration of integrated, inclusive and accessible cycle and foot infrastructure. By consulting and engaging local communities in green spaces we aim to foster environmental stewardship and participation in outdoor activities such as gardening, citizen science and art leading to health, informal education and wellbeing benefits.

[2] Details of Cornwall Council's budget, including Environment Service spending is available here Council budget books - Cornwall Council

1.1 Strategy Aims and Audience

The aim of this strategy is to ensure that the Building with Nature Standards and the crosscutting themes of 'Sustainable Development' and 'Equality and Diversity' are embedded within the Making Space for Nature project processes from start to finish. While the Strategy scope only covers the Making Space for Nature project (2019-2022), this Strategy will be made publicly available (via the Making Space for Nature website (www.cornwall.gov.uk/spacefornature) to aid best practice across Cornwall Council and ensure lessons learnt during the project are shared. This strategy -

- Brings together the project process and thinking in line with best practice across multiple themes (Appendices 1-13, which will be publicly available).
- Can work as guidance on how to carry out innovative design, construction and maintenance of existing public open spaces for biodiversity and for people.

The Strategy and Appendices 1 – 13 were written by the Making Space for Nature Team, signed off by Cornwall Council's Environment Project Board. The Strategy outlines the project process including initial phases of town and site selection, consultation, surveys, design, construction, post-construction public engagement, monitoring of impacts and long-term management. Corroborating evidence is presented in Appendices A - U which may be made available on request at the discretion of the Public Space Team.

Stakeholders and contractors include –

- Cornwall Council colleagues in Environment Service: Public Space Team, Forest for Cornwall Team, Transport, Planning, Property, Heritage and Carbon Neutral Cornwall
- CC Members
- Town and Parish Councils
- Community Groups and Climate Action Groups
- University of Exeter staff
- Cormac Solutions Ltd for site design and site creation
- Cormac Operations for site management during the 1 year (funded) establishment period, and as Cornwall Council's main contractor for ongoing annual maintenance overseen by the Public Space Team or Highways Team.
- Cornwall Environmental Consultants (owned by Cornwall Wildlife Trust) as a subcontractor for Cormac Solutions Ltd involved in site design.
- The Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (ERCCIS) who provide wildlife information.

1.2 Partners

University of Exeter is the Making Space for Nature Delivery Partner

The project also involves many informal partnerships:

- Existing local community groups e.g. Friends of groups, church groups, Scouts
- National Wildflower Centre

- Eden Project
- Cornwall Housing Ltd
- St Austell Bay Economic Forum (SABEF)
- Duchy College
- Schools and colleges in target towns

Knight's Way Field, Redruth, after completion of the GI4G1 project.

2 VISION

Making Space for Nature will transform 28 hectares of Cornish urban green spaces into buzzing hubs for wildlife and people.

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3 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Making Space for Nature (MS4N) will deliver a major capital investment on at least 28 hectares of Cornwall Council owned and managed urban green space in seven towns throughout Cornwall, with an emphasis on benefitting deprived communities in areas with low levels of green space per person.

Project goals on each site are clear and simple: CORE1

- Increase **biodiversity** and wildlife value
- Enhance **water quality** and a more flood resilient landscape
- Enhance **ecosystem services** provided by sites including climate mitigation such as carbon storage and air pollution mitigation.
- Improve **public access** and promote increased community enjoyment of nature
- Deliver **community engagement** with health and wellbeing benefits
- Embed **environmental sustainability** and equality and diversity principles into all project processes.
- Provide **value for money** during project delivery and long-term site aftercare.

The project sets out clear objectives, with many tangible benefits:

- **Deliver high-quality green infrastructure and maximise multifunctional benefits for end users** Adhere to Building with Nature standards at all stages of the development process including strategy, planning, design, delivery and long-term management and maintenance. CORE1
- **Focus investment on urban green space** where the greatest benefits for people and biodiversity can be achieved, particularly in deprived areas: parks, amenity areas, cemeteries, closed churchyards, margins to sports fields and roadside verges, including in residential estates.
- **Deliver a network of wildlife-friendly solutions** specifically tailored to suit different types of urban green space and reflect local landscape character and context by protection and enhancement of existing habitats and creation of new habitats. We will think beyond the individual site and aim to reconnect and create wildlife corridors and 'stepping stones' within a town/ neighbourhood for wildlife to move between. A network of SuDS within site and linking outside the site with wildlife friendly habitats in and around them will help wildlife to move in the wider landscape, while improving water quality. Habitats are to include restored and new community wildlife ponds and small wetlands, woodland sites enhanced via targeted tree management to improve biodiversity, traditional Cornish hedges (a Cornwall Biodiversity Action Plan habitat), urban wildflower meadows, pollinator friendly shrubs and perennials, native spring bulbs, native tree planting, new orchards and CORE2 WILD2 WAT3 WILD3

BWN

rivers of flower-rich grassland on roadside verges. Collectively these will result in an increase in biodiversity, whilst allowing a change to management regimes after the initial establishment period, minimising long term maintenance costs.

WILD1

- **Create a healthier, more resilient landscape** Maintain soil structure, fertility and quality, reducing any erosion. Use the urban landscape to integrate surface water management and water quality improvements with people and wildlife benefits. Air quality, noise and light pollution all link to decline in biodiversity; therefore encouraging active travel (foot and cycle) in good GI will in turn enhance biodiversity, climate regulation, learning, health, recreation and play.

CORE4

WAT2

- **Improve the natural capital value and ecosystem services provided by sites:** using nature based solutions to mitigate climate change, air pollution and noise pollution that are in keeping with the town's heritage, landscape character and context**,** will be key to each site. Improvements to the physical environment benefit both biodiversity and local communities and visitors. In practical terms this means we will design our projects to have features for both people and wildlife, such as habitats for pollinators which also provide attractive multi-sensory planting for public enjoyment and wellbeing. Reference will be made to cultural and natural features such as historic Cornish hedges, medieval field patterns, remnants of former land use such as orchards (e.g. Cornish apple varieties), burgage plots, old places of worship/ study.

WELL6

- **Provide better access for all**: deliver socially-inclusive urban access improvements, with paths and comfortable seating, cycle racks where appropriate, excellent information and signage. Consider the use of the site in the wider context, by using paths to link routes between residential areas and schools or bus routes, encouraging active travel and reducing short car journeys. Work towards the creation of urban green corridors linking people to nature throughout a neighbourhood, and promoting active travel through pleasant environments.

WELL1
WELL2

- **Work with local communities**: Increase engagement and support for local communities and organisations in local green space management, support for community events and marketing to celebrate local green spaces and sense of place. By increasing the knowledge of a place, ownership and different ways to use a site (for example by promoting citizen science or creative activities) we aim to encourage people into their local green space.

WELL4
WELL5

- **Share best practice:** work with Town and Parish Councils to help them learn from Making Space for Nature, with outreach ventures.

CORE3

Treveglos Meadow, Hayle – before and after GI4G1 works

4 BACKGROUND CONTEXT

4.1 Potential benefits of high quality green infrastructure

In urban areas, green infrastructure is a multi-functional network providing amenity space for formal and passive recreation, active travel, and space for wildlife and biodiversity. Green infrastructure can provide a range of benefits (often termed ecosystem services – the benefits people receive from ecological processes and functions) such as reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, climate change mitigation, reducing urban heat island effects, reduction in air pollution and reduction in noise pollution. It can reduce flood risk and improve water quality though aiding management of surface water drainage by integrating surface water storage, bio-filtration cleaning and reuse, rain gardens, swales and small attenuation ponds within the landscape. The network includes natural and semi-natural features and green spaces that intersperse Cornish towns and reflect local character and identity. It constitutes a natural, service-providing infrastructure that is often more cost-effective, more resilient and more capable of meeting social, environmental and economic objectives than 'grey' infrastructure. The benefits to people include not only improvements to their physical environment but improved health, wellbeing and access to nature.

CORE1

WAT1
WAT2

WELL1

Good green infrastructure should create visually attractive places that are culturally and environmentally rich, reflect the local context and character and strengthen the identity of the town. All publicly accessible green spaces should be

WELL6

inclusive (following BS 8300 standards[3]), accommodating people with disabilities through innovative design and benefitting from active and passive surveillance. They should reflect the power of the natural environment to enhance our wellbeing, improve mental health and promote relaxation. Green infrastructure should be linked visually and physically, as connectivity enhances public engagement with the natural environment.

Berries Avenue Open Space, Bude GI4G1

4.2 The context in Cornwall

Cornwall has a unique cultural character and identity, based on historic land use and trade which has had a strong impact on landscapes via mining, farming and fishing. Each town within Cornwall has its own cultural heritage and feel, identified as part of the Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey (CSUS)[4]. All seven towns within the project contain historic centres dating back to medieval times. Landscapes within Cornwall range from the China clay landscapes of St Austell and surroundings, to north coastal cliffs and harbours in Newquay and the Fal Ria, containing Falmouth and Penryn, fully described in the Cornwall Landscape Character assessments[5]. Themes include pastoral landscapes (75% of Cornwall is agricultural land, and of that 75% is pasture, with field systems dating back to medieval times), unique "Cornish hedge" field boundary structures linking semi natural habitats, coastal habitats such as estuaries and cliffs, heathlands and moors, steep wooded valleys, traditional orchards, and industrial remnants such as mining buildings and spoil heaps.

Despite its wealth of cultural and environmental assets, Cornwall has significant pockets of urban deprivation. People living in towns may struggle to access the

[3]BS 8300-2:2018 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment. Buildings. Code of practice
[4] https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/strategic-historic-environment-service/guidance/appraisals-and-surveys/cornwall-and-scilly-urban-survey/about-the-project/
[5] https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/cornwalls-landscape/landscape-character-assessment/

BWN

adjacent coast and countryside, particularly where car ownership is low and rural public transport links are patchy, which increases the importance of high-quality local urban green space for wellbeing, recreation and healthy living. This has been particularly important during the lengthy Covid-19 lockdown periods in 2020 and 2021.

The following statistics and challenges relating to biodiversity trends, project area community profiles and results from residents' surveys, set out the evidence for demand for the project in the towns selected:

- Urban wildlife is under pressure: e.g. UK hedgehog numbers have fallen from 36million in 1950s to 1 million today. Butterflies have declined by 72% between 2001-2011 — WILD3
- Green Infrastructure assets are currently dominated by heavily mown grass of low biodiversity and low public interest
- Cornwall has an ageing population with issues of social isolation, dementia, cardiovascular disease, depression, obesity and type 2 diabetes.
- 69.8% of adults in Cornwall are overweight. There is a strong link between obesity and physical activity.
- 30.2% of children leaving primary school in the MS4N towns are overweight or are obese. Children's roaming range in 1915 was six miles by 2015 it reduced to 300 yards. — WELL1 WELL2
- Increasing pressure on existing green space: current population of MS4N towns is approximately 82,000
- 20,464 or 25% of the people in the towns of Newquay, St Austell, Launceston, Liskeard and Bodmin live in highly deprived wards.
- 24% of residents are not satisfied with their local green space
- There are at least 130 public green spaces in the Project Area, including roadside verges, churchyards and recreational areas.
- Having good quality public open spaces is rated very important to 95% of Cornish residents
- 66% of Cornish residents visit parks or open spaces at least once per week. — WELL5
- 75% of residents walk to a park or open space from their home

This inspired the Local Nature Partnership and Cornwall Council to develop Cornwall's Environmental Growth Strategy and seek funding to undertake the Green Infrastructure for Growth and Making Space for Nature Projects. These projects promote access, fitness and contact with nature. By enhancing links to green spaces and nature there may be less need for medical intervention and a reduction of strain on the NHS in selected towns and neighbourhoods.

Knight's Way Field, Redruth GI4G1

5 BUILDING WITH NATURE STANDARDS ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION

To ensure Making Space for Nature delivers these aspirations we will test the project using the UK industry recognised **Building with Nature** Standards, which will be applied to the Project Strategy (this document) and four individual sites. A "Good" rating means that high quality green infrastructure has been achieved, delivering benefits within the boundary of the scheme, and an "Excellent" rating means exemplary quality green infrastructure has been achieved, delivering benefits within and beyond the boundary of the scheme.

There are 23 standards in total. Five core standards together create a solid foundation for the delivery of high-quality green infrastructure through planning and development. There are three additional thematic groups of standards, based around Water, Wellbeing and Wildlife. Within each of these themes there are three standards attainable at Good level (1-3) and three standards at Excellent level (4-6).
On the basis of the experience from GI4G, we will demonstrate MS4N project success with a Building with Nature assessment and accreditation of

- Making Space for Nature – Project Strategy (this document)
- 4 sites – design and construction:

Falmouth	Swanvale Open Space (0.8ha)
Launceston	Ridgegrove Park (1.4ha)
Liskeard	Castle Park (2.4ha)
Penryn	Glasney College Field and Saracen Way Woodland (1.0 ha)

5.1 Building with Nature Standards

CORE STANDARDS

CORE1: The green infrastructure forms a multifunctional network.
CORE2: The scheme identifies important local character features as a starting point for the green infrastructure proposals and incorporates them into the scheme to reference, reflect and enhance the local environment.
CORE3: The type, quality and function of green infrastructure respond to the local context.
CORE4: The green infrastructure is resilient to climate change; and minimises the scheme's environmental impact with respect to air, soil, light, noise, and water; and enhances the quality of air, soil and water.
CORE5: Provision is made for long-term management and maintenance of all green infrastructure features post-development.

WELLBEING STANDARDS

Good

WELL1: Green infrastructure is accessible for all and is situated close to where people live to promote health, wellbeing, and active living.

WELL2: The scheme encourages all people to use and enjoy green infrastructure and considers the needs and strengths of vulnerable and excluded groups.

WELL3: Green infrastructure is designed to encourage optimal use and employs hard and soft features to be accessible at all times of year.

Excellent

WELL4: The scheme supports local priorities for reducing and/or preventing health inequalities.

WELL5: The scheme demonstrates innovative solutions to overcoming social and cultural barriers to use and enjoyment of green infrastructure and considers how green infrastructure can promote socially sustainable communities and community cohesion.

WELL6: The scheme demonstrates that green infrastructure is integral to the distinctiveness of place.

WATER STANDARDS

Good

WAT1: Green infrastructure is integral to sustainable drainage and features are designed to minimise surface runoff, manage flood risk, and maintain the natural water cycle.

WAT2: Green infrastructure has been used to improve water quality within the boundary of the scheme.

WAT3: The design of SuDS enhances the capacity of green infrastructure features to create and sustain better places for people and nature.

Excellent

WAT4: The scheme responds to the local policy context in terms of water management, demonstrating an innovative approach to move beyond the statutory minimum.

WAT5: A diversity of green infrastructure features are utilised to improve water quality, utilising more and better treatment stages to maximise pollution reduction downstream.

WAT6: Features relating to water management are used to enhance local distinctiveness and add value to the overall design.

WILDLIFE STANDARDS

Good

WILD1: Green infrastructure delivers a net enhancement of biodiversity quality by avoiding, mitigating, and compensating for impacts on existing biodiversity, and restoring, creating and enhancing biodiversity, where possible within the boundary of the scheme. Provision has been made for on-going monitoring and remediation.

WILD2: Green infrastructure features ensure linkages between habitats within the boundary of the scheme.

WILD3: Green infrastructure delivers key measures that contribute to the target conservation status of key species.

Excellent

WILD4: Green infrastructure includes ecological features around and within the built environment.

WILD5: Green infrastructure is effectively connected to ecological features beyond the boundary of the scheme and plays a role in restoring and sustaining wider ecological networks.

WILD6: The scheme secures biodiversity measures in all stages of implementation and in the case of phased development schemes, across multiple phases of development.

6 POLICIES RELATING TO HIGH QUALITY GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN AND DELIVERY

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The provision of good green infrastructure in Cornish towns helps create places where people want to live and work. It is an essential part of good planning, particularly in the face of Cornwall's climate and ecological emergency. The Making Space for Nature project straddles policy from the realms of planning (the National Planning Policy Framework), the environment (the Defra 25 Year plan for the Environment) and sustainable development (UN Sustainable Development Goals). The Project Team is to reference relevant international and national policy and guidance in site selection and site design. See Appendix 1 for more information on International and National Policy.

CORE3

Cornwall Council has a series of local policies relevant to the project which are Cornwall's Local Plan, Cornwall Council's Environmental Growth Strategy, Cornwall Council's Pollinator Action Plan, Cornwall Council's Climate Emergency Development Plan Document (still in consultation) and for some town councils, the Local Neighbourhood plans. Cornwall's Local Plan prioritises the need for environmental, social and financial sustainability in all that we do. The MS4N approach is informed by Policy 12 (Design) and Policy 16 (Health and wellbeing) both of which highlight the need for multifunctional green spaces which are resilient to climate change. Policy 23 (Natural Environment) requires any developments to retain local character and distinctiveness, as well as protecting and enhancing biodiversity. Policy 25 is explicitly

CORE3

about green infrastructure in its widest sense (including all natural and semi natural environments in Cornwall). It requires developments to help restore connectivity for nature and people, and create accessible and attractive places for communities to make regular contact with nature. Policy 26 (Flood risk management and coastal change) requires that developers minimise flood risk and reduce surface water flows using SuDs and green infrastructure where possible. While Making Space for Nature falls under permitted development, we still follow these guidelines.

The Environmental Growth Strategy aims to result in gain in our natural systems rather than just protection. This will be achieved by better management of our environment, creating more, larger and more connected areas where nature thrives and by designing existing activities and developments to support nature. Under the umbrella of the Environmental Growth Strategy is Cornwall Council's Pollinator Action Plan. Making Space for Nature contributes to the Environmental Growth Strategy by improving the management of urban public open spaces for wildlife, creating more wildlife friendly open spaces, that are better connected and by 'retrofitting' environmental gains to existing public green spaces. The Environmental Growth strategy works in tandem with Cornwall's Health and Wellbeing Strategy which promotes active travel and includes the use of outdoor space for exercise/health reasons as one of their key measures of success. Appendix 2 contains a full list of current relevant local policy.

CORE3

7 PROCESS

Making Space for Nature (MS4N) project will be led by Cornwall Council.

The MS4N Project Team will be recruited by Cornwall Council to deliver the project. The team will take overall responsibility for the coordination and delivery of the project; contract management and administration; overseeing the project site selection and detailed design work; providing the public face to the project; coordinating the activity of the Delivery Partner, and contractors; and ensuring EU compliance. The MS4N Project Team will work with local communities to engage them in the project prior to the commencement of capital works and where possible to co-design environmental and access improvements. The project team, in collaboration with Cormac Operations will also work with communities to increase their involvement in future management of their local green spaces for wildlife and people, alongside marketing and publicity work. The project team is working with Cormac Operations to use the Establishment funding available to enable the employment of an 'Urban Ranger' alongside the existing long term Cormac Volunteering programme, to facilitate community involvement in horticultural activities across sites. The existing Cormac volunteering programme is funded by Cornwall Council core funding.

WELL5

The Project Team has based the project process on the **RIBA 'Plan of Work 2020'**.

Stage 0:	Strategic Definition	) Project Team
Stage 1:	Preparation and Briefing	) Project Team
Stage 2:	Concept Design	) Project Team
Stage 3:	Spatial Coordination	) Cormac Solutions Ltd
Stage 4:	Technical Design	) Cormac Solutions Ltd
Stage 5:	Construction	) Cormac Solutions Ltd
Stage 6:	Handover	) Project Team and Cormac Operations
Stage 7:	Use	) Project Team (until 2022) and CC Public Space Team and Cormac Operations until 2037

This RIBA process has been adapted and simplified to suit the **Making Space for Nature** project (***Figure 1***).

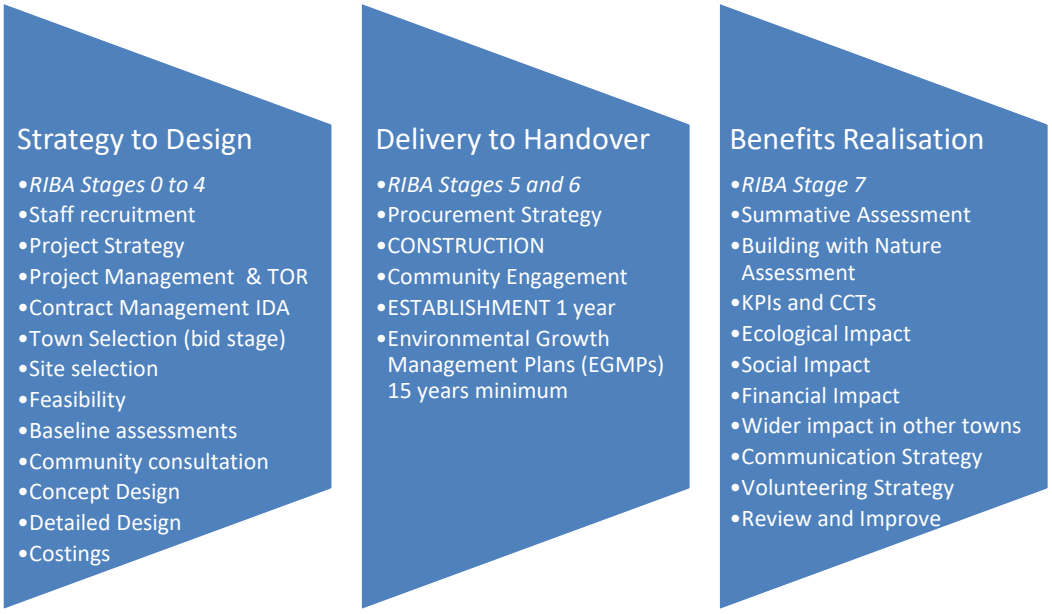

Figure 1 ***Making Space for Nature - Project Flowchart***

The Project Team will use this tried and tested process, which has worked well in the phase one project. The project will measure success using the Summative Assessment Process[6] as determined by the ERDF which covers project performance, efficiency, effectiveness and lessons learnt for the future. As part of the summative assessment the project has developed Key Performance Indicators (see Appendix A) which we will use to measure the project impacts on biodiversity; ecosystem services provided by sites including carbon storage and water storage and quality improvements; social impacts such as site use and perception of interventions; and access to consultation and knowledge; and wider impacts such as financial sustainability of site management and dissemination of knowledge and best practice (see section 17 for further detail).

[6] ESIF-GN-1-033_ERDF_Summative_Assessment_Guidance_v4.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Timescale The proposed timescale for the project strategy, design, delivery and completion is set out below:

8 Town Selection (RIBA STAGE Stage 0: Strategic Definition)

Seven towns in Cornwall (Bude, Camborne, Hayle, Penzance, Pool, Redruth and Saltash) received funding under phase 1 of the project (Green Infrastructure for Growth 1). All other towns in Cornwall were considered and a scoring matrix developed to identify which towns would most benefit from the scheme based on: large population size; high levels of deprivation[7]; low area of green space per person; extent of Cornwall Council assets available to be improved. For full details of the ranking process see Appendix 3, and outcomes are available on request in Appendix B.

WELL1
WELL4

9 Consultation Approach and Engagement Strategy (RIBA stage 0 to 7)

The aim of consultation is to take people with the Project Team on a co-design journey, as much as possible; to ensure that there is equality of access to site designs and the opportunity to feedback is provided to all stakeholders and local residents, throughout all work stages. Consultation begins at the site selection stage. We aim to improve long term sustainability of sites by consulting and fostering a sense of ownership in the sites in both local representatives and residents. Following site completion, on-site engagement will be carried out with the approach following from initial consultation work. All consultation and engagement will consider the need of different audiences, ensuring accessible, appropriate and meaningful events. The consultation and engagement approach are outlined in Appendices 5 and 6 and the Engagement Strategy in Appendix C.

CORE3
WELL2
WELL5

10 Site Selection (RIBA STAGE Stage 0: Strategic Definition)

Cornwall Council owns and manages a wide range of public open space typologies including urban green space, cycle trails, formal parks, sports pitches, verges, beaches, amenity spaces, cemeteries and closed churchyards. In order to maximise the potential impact of the MS4N project an additional screening process was undertaken by specialist staff of the range of public open space typologies currently managed by CC. This identified the typologies with the greatest potential for long-lasting, multi-functional, high impact improvements, narrowing down the

CORE1

[7] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019

project focus to amenity/recreational areas, verges, sports fields, cemeteries and closed churchyards.

Within towns, sites will be shortlisted based on a series of criteria relating to their potential for: multifunctional use; biodiversity improvements; ability to connect existing natural habitat outside the site; environmental gains such as climate mitigation, air pollution mitigation, water storage and water quality enhancement; access improvements and linking with wider active travel networks; heritage interest contributing to a 'sense of place'; and local community involvement (see Appendix 4 for criteria for long listing and short listing sites).

CORE1

WELL6

11 SITE ASSESSMENT (RIBA STAGE 0 TO 1)

11.1 Feasibility

The Project Team will check all background information on each shortlisted site to ensure there are no 'showstoppers' that will prevent delivery (such as contaminated mining sites or SSSI status onsite). The long term management arrangements and financial sustainability of the site will be considered at this point. The team will consult the Steering Group for advice and seek ratification of decisions at Environment Board where necessary, to ensure final site selection is formally signed off, ahead of consultation and design. The aim is to complete site selection within six months of project commencement, to ensure efficient progress for each site. For full list of factors considered at the feasibility stage see Appendix 7.1.

CORE5

11.2 Detailed site assessment

The site assessment strategy uses a variety of information sources to maximise site enhancement which include, but are not limited to -

Ecological survey: A desk based search of Red Data Book Species Records, national designations (SSSIs, NNRs), local BAP Priority habitats, county wildlife sites using information from the local records centre (ERCCIS), both onsite and nearby. This is followed by a site visit using the Preliminary Ecological Impact assessment approach and biodiversity net gain and eco-metric scoring for sites.

WILD2
WILD3
WILD5

Wider environment information: desk based mapping records of air quality management areas, flood risk areas, presence of floodplain and down-stream coastal habitats, potential habitat restoration opportunities using Lagas (lagas.co.uk). The character of the built landscape and the surrounding rural landscapes will be assessed with information from the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Urban Survey, along with the relevant Landscape Character assessment. Check for active travel maps, local cycle ways, public rights of way and nearby open access land (all sites are open access).

CORE2
CORE4

WELL1

BWN

Site cultural designations and mapping information: The Historic Environment Record service will be approached for information of history and archaeological value of sites. Check if the site is in a Conservation Area, contains Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) or listed buildings. Look for nearby engagement opportunities such as schools, interest/hobby groups (Scouts, art groups) and care homes.

CORE2
WELL6

Site visits: Site assessment visits to understand site topography (slopes, microclimate, water courses, wet or dry areas, soil compaction), views from site (cultural markers and 'borrowed landscapes') and current site use (check for active travel connections such as footpaths and cycleways, nearby parking and bus stops. Check location, quality, type (pedestrian/ maintenance vehicle) and hierarchy of site entrances; existing routes and movement patterns on site). View area around site to connect the site to wider green infrastructure and local communities.

CORE 2
CORE 4

The information from the site assessments will be used in a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Barriers Analysis for each site, incorporating the surrounding area and informing the concept design.

See Appendix 7 for full details of site assessment methodology

12 PREPARATION AND BRIEF (RIBA STAGE 1)

12.1 Design Principles

To ensure that the project creates the highest standards of green infrastructure, the design principles follow the themes of Building with Nature (multifunctionality, water, wellbeing and wildlife) and include the European Union cross cutting themes of environmental sustainability, social sustainability and economic sustainability, while ensuring equality of access for all.

CORE4

WELL1

The site design considers all aspects of the site life systems, to bring in decisions about long term impacts and benefits from the start. These relate to the project goals for each site and the surrounding area:

- Increase **biodiversity** and wildlife value: how can the sites be best improved for biodiversity? Consider the existing biodiversity assets on and close to the site, based on ecological surveys and site assessment and achieve net gain. Ensure year round connected habitats and resources available for wildlife. Provide multifunctional GI including bat foraging areas, berry and seed provision for birds as well as nesting sites, hedgehog homes, SuDs features, native trees, pollen and nectar rich shrubs, perennials, wildflowers and bulbs. Monitor and control invasive non-native species.

WILD1

- Enhance **water quality** and create a more flood resilient landscape: consider the source-pathway-receptor model of water within the site as well as the site's connectivity within the local catchment. Deliver water sensitive design – a holistic and integrated approach to flood risk management, sustainable

WAT2

BWN

water use and supply of improvement of water quality in watercourses. Manage rainfall in a creative way so that SuDS strengthens local distinctiveness and adds value to the local environment. Urban greenspaces can help clean and store run-off through a range of surface features including permeable ground (habitats), swales and small wetlands or ponds. Water features can help alleviate flooding and storage areas may be temporary (detention basins/ scrapes) or permanent (retention ponds, wet meadows, wet woodland) linked by interesting conveyance systems (granite 'grips', ditches and swales)

WAT1

WAT2

WAT6

- **Enhance ecosystem services** provided by sites including climate mitigation such as carbon storage, reduced soil erosion, improved water quality and air pollution mitigation: consider adding carbon sequestering vegetation such as trees and hedges where appropriate. Locate planting to provide shade and cooler conditions near buildings or seating areas, in anticipation of hotter summers, resulting from predicted climate change impacts. Increase dense vegetation between air pollution sources and recreation and play areas.

WELL3

- Improve **public access** and promote increased community enjoyment of nature: consider the entrances, exits, desire lines and links to wider footpath network to promote active travel. Retain views and informal surveillance across sites. Site specific details around heritage to be included in designs.
- Deliver **community engagement** with health and wellbeing benefits: design sites to encourage community engagement by adding features which benefit from community management or leaving space for additional features such as future formal play or green gym equipment that may be funded in future. Add benches and seating linked to paths and close to sensory wildlife habitats. Include edible landscape including fruit and nut trees, herbs and foraging opportunities. Consider food growing space if there is proven support and long term community led management commitment. Encourage community links with existing food growing assets like local schools and allotments.

CORE4
WELL2

- Embed **environmental sustainability** and **equality and diversity** principles into all project processes: via careful selection and placement of hard and soft landscaping features; ensuring all excavated material is retained on site during construction. Provide the majority of landscape improvements along the most accessible and well used routes, to bring nature into local residents' daily lives, with morning birdsong and nearby buzzing of bees. Provide a range of seating choices in different places/ aspects to suit differing needs. Allow opportunities to relax, breath in fresh air and an escape into nature, all within an urban area.

CORE4

WELL1

WELL2

- Provide **value for money** during project delivery and long-term site aftercare: design discrete compost areas to put grass cuttings and plant trimmings that also provide habitats; consider the costs of installation and maintenance of different features and provide a balance at each site.

CORE5
WILD1

See Appendix 8 for more detail on how to reach project goals through good design.

12.1.1 Detailed Brief for Concept Design

Biodiversity and habitat creation are primary project design goals. Well-maintained parks and green spaces also help us to unwind and relax and are good for our health, well-being and for sociability across communities. Inclusive design means an open space that is safe, accessible, practical and a pleasure to use. It means: a park with clean and safe facilities; a place with clear legibility to find routes through the space; a place with children and adults in mind; a park with smooth paths for getting around and varied landform on which to play and lounge; a green space where people can exercise and be healthy; a sheltered place to linger and talk; a place that encourages mixing between different groups. Good space design creates an inclusive space to relax and play; a place designed with everyone in mind

WELL1
WELL2
WELL3
WELL5

The Project Team is to use the survey and analysis info to produce a well-considered Concept Design addressing multifunctional goals. Consider physical and functional connectivity between the site and the wider neighbourhood and town. Incorporate local character and distinctiveness in terms of local species, habitats, landscape and townscape. The Team is to start with creation of a quick 'zoning' plan to shape ideas for wider landscape linkages, site entrances, routes, spaces, habitats and wildlife linkages, water inflow and outflow, and site uses (existing and new). The team will look outside the site boundaries to ensure opportunities for linking wildlife habitats and routes for active travel are maximised. This is to be used to produce the Concept Design, for issue to local community stakeholders for comment and feedback. This is to be a colour scaled plan demonstrating proposed spaces, materials, planting types, levels and dimensions. The Team is to reference archived CABE advice including the 'seven principles of good design for public realm'.

WELL6
WILD3

See Appendix 9 for more information on Concept Design to meet project goals.

Trenoweth Playing Field, North Country – GI4G1

13 DETAILED DESIGN PROCESS (RIBA STAGE 3)

The Concept design produced by the project team, with any comments or changes from the consultation process are passed to Cormac Solutions Limited (CSL) who have been appointed to design and implement works (using Cornwall Environmental Consultants (CEC) as subcontractors where needed). Detailed designs are subject to a 'Value For Money' check to ensure project goals are met.

See Appendix 10 for further information on Detailed design process.

14 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY (RIBA STAGE 4/5)

The Project team will follow the following principles when undergoing procurement processes –

CORE4

1) Minimise environmental harm and maximise environmental benefit;
2) Ensure a fair and equal procurement process is undergone;
3) Ensure fit-for-purpose materials are used, including considering long term sustainability of materials, robustness of design and ease-of-maintenance and replacement of components;
4) Ensuring value-for-money is achieved without allowing environmental and social equality considerations to be ruled out due to costs. The project contractor has a Sustainable Procurement Policy (Appendix D).

The following have been detailed as part of a performance specification for the projects:

14.1 Hard Landscape

Hard landscaping products will be selected considering the following information:

CORE4

WAT1

- Environmental sustainability
- Social inclusivity
- Permeability (for path surfacing)
- Local distinctiveness in terms of history, culture and physical environment
- Cost
- Reliability and continuity of supply
- Quality of materials and workmanship and track record
- Ease of maintenance and replacement of components

For full information of selection criteria for hard landscaping products see Appendix 11.

14.2 Soft Landscape

Soft landscaping products (plant stock and planting sundries e.g. mulch) will be selected considering the following criteria:

- Environmental sustainability
- Reflecting local area and habitats, including provenance
- Social inclusivity
- Cost
- Reliability of supply and quality of stock
- Ease of maintenance, and longevity of plants

CORE4
WILD3
WELL2

CORE5

A plant palette was produced by Cornwall Environmental Consultants in collaboration with the MS4N Team, Cormac operatives experienced in horticulture in Cornwall and the Council's Ecologist. The plant palette considered species which were: good for wildlife (including native species and non-natives which are pollinator friendly, fruit producing); suited to soil types in Cornwall (predominantly slightly acidic loamy soils soils) and a selection available for specific site conditions (shade, wet areas, exposure, coastal plants); resilient to future climate change (including species likely to tolerate changes in conditions); at reduced biosecurity risk; reflective of local history and town 'style' and landscape character (by including traditional Cornish apple varieties and landscape character species such as Monterey pine); sensory plants, by their texture, colour or sound.
Plants were selected from this master list based on the individual site characteristics, including surrounding habitats to be referenced and connected, topography, microclimate and soil type.

CORE4
CORE2

Further detail on soft landscape procurement is available in Appendix 11, the brief for the planting palette in Appendix E, and the planting palette in Appendix F.

15 DELIVERY (RIBA STAGE 5/6)

To ensure that the project is delivered by a contractor who meets the project's ambitions in terms of embedding the Building with Nature Standards alongside the cross cutting themes of Sustainable Development and Equality and Non-discrimination, the project team will request the contractors supply the following:

- Environmental Policy (Appendix G)
- Equality and Diversity Policy (Appendix H)
- Capacity and Capability statement (Appendix I)
- Monthly updates to record ongoing work and impact

15.1 Contractor Construction Approach

The contractor will be key in minimising the negative environmental and social impacts during construction. The Contractor is certified to BSI ISO 14001:2015 for their environmental management systems. Construction teams have been trained in protected species identification and invasive species identification.

CORE4

More detail is available in Appendix 12.

15.2 Management

Site management methods are to be sensitive to wildlife requirements e.g. mixed mowing regimes with less intensive mowing along verges and margins to parks, to allow wildflowers to flower and seed. The site management has two phases -

- The MS4N project funds the establishment phase (year one) and
- Long term management (15 years post project completion), set out in a site specific Environmental Growth Management Plan. This is funded and overseen by Cornwall Council Public Space team within the Environment Service (for Cornwall Council owned spaces and urban verges), Cornwall Council Highways team (for larger road verges) and Cornwall Housing Ltd for housing estates. If any sites are devolved to Town councils, the EGMP will be handed over with the sites to ensure the ongoing maintenance commitments.

The landscape management aims to-

- Maximise biodiversity benefits
- Maximise social benefits, with a focus on community volunteering
- Maintain good quality SuDS features
- Be environmentally sustainable
- Be financially sustainable

Full details of the establishment management and long term management prescriptions are available in Appendices J and K, with an example of a site specific EGMP provided in Appendix L.

16 REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT PROCESS (RIBA STAGE 7)

The Project Team is to review and improve processes throughout the life of the project. The importance of learning and two-way communication with contractor will be emphasised via the Contracts Manager, and wider team members will be encouraged to feedback any good ideas or concerns via email or in person. This is facilitated by on-site visits and monthly client/ contractor progress meetings. The project will also carry out review meetings including representatives from front line staff (for example Cormac Civils Teams, Cormac Planting Teams, Community Liaison Officers) as well as Project Team members.

Planned reviews are outlined in Appendix 14

17 PROJECT IMPACTS (RIBA STAGE 7)

Cornwall Council and University of Exeter have set out GI4G2 KPIs (Appendix A) and Cross Cutting Themes (Appendix M). These set our shared goals and measures to evidence change.

Project Impacts will also be reviewed by the CC Audit and Assurance Team who will produce the independent Summative Assessment at the end of the project (July 2022) which reviews the effectiveness of the project, value for money, insights into which interventions worked and which didn't, and lessons for the future.

The delivery partner will liaise between University students and the project allowing additional research into impacts and benefits to be carried out.

17.1 Environmental Impacts

We will measure the project environmental impacts as set out in the KPIs as follows

- Before and after photographs of sites, demonstrating areas of improved biodiversity.
- Area of land with increased biodiversity as assessed by bespoke biodiversity assessment method created and used in baseline ecological survey plus post intervention ecological survey
- Changes to ecosystem services delivered by sites.
- Area of land under Environmental growth management plans

WILD1

CORE4
CORE5

A field visit will be carried out to sites post construction and the biodiversity net gain score calculated as well as the eco-metric score (as outlined in the pre-construction surveys). This will allow us to compare the baseline biodiversity and ecosystem service provision with the post construction biodiversity and ecosystem service provision.

Treskerby Fields, Redruth GI4G1

17.2 Social Impacts

We will measure the project social impacts as set out in the KPIs as follows –

We will record the consultation, engagement and learning events as the project progresses along with number of attendees.

We will deliver a post construction questionnaire survey (Appendix N) to residents local to the space to understand how the changes have affected their use and enjoyment of the parks. Results from this survey will be shared with Cornwall Council management and via the project website. The survey will allow us to understand if there has been –

- Improvement in people's perception of green space
- Increase in time spent at sites
- Change in the activities carried out at sites

Ongoing engagement will also evidence

- Change in the activities carried out in wider greenspaces e.g. private gardens
- Number of volunteers and volunteer hours contributing to establishment and long term site management. This may include horticulture tasks and site monitoring.

Goldsworthy Drive, Bude, GI4G1

BWN

WELL5
WELL6

CORE5

17.3 Financial Impacts

For education and community organisations:

- Increase community engagement in positive green space management and provide opportunities for skills and capacity building.
- Act as an upskilling and information sharing hub to provide best practice for other Cornish towns and organisations.

For Cornwall Council and town councils:

- To hand over sites with financially sustainable long-term management plans.

18 PROJECT LEGACY

The Project aims to leave a lasting legacy by -

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WELL5

- Shared Learning – with CC colleagues, Town and Parish Councils and other partners. Lessons learned from the project will be shared in a variety of forms, via training events, best practice guidance notes, practical volunteering and popular media articles. 'Raising the bar' for approach taken with design and management of other Cornwall Council assets e.g. road verges and land managed by Town & Parish Councils.

WAT6

- Sharing lessons learnt from individual sites – key information from individual sites completed as part of GI4G1 have been compiled as case studies, available from Cornwall Council. Key examples of different site types (churchyards, local parks and sports grounds) have been produced as physical information cards and are available to download from Cornwall Council and University of Exeter websites. Making Space for Nature will add more case studies as needed – e.g. 'Cornish SuDs Landscapes'.

CORE5

- Future funding for greenspace works: this strategy and practical appendices will be used to inform work on public open spaces administered by the Public Space Team, particularly that from the Community Infrastructure Levy. Woodland urban green spaces may be eligible for additional funding for management from biodiversity net gain projects or as part of carbon offsetting schemes.

19 ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

PUBLICLY AVAILABLE APPENDICES 1-13

1. International and National Policy relevant to Green Infrastructure
2. Local Policy relevant to Green Infrastructure
3. Town Selection
4. Site Selection
5. Consultation Approach
6. Engagement Strategy
7. Site Assessment Methodology
8. Brief and Concept Design (RIBA Stage 1 and 2)
9. Detailed Design Process (RIBA Stage 3)
10. Detailed Procurement Strategy (RIBA Stages 4 and 5)
11. Delivery (RIBA Stages 5 and 6)
12. Detailed Landscape Management Strategy (RIBA Stage 7)
13. Review and Improvement Process (RIBA Stage 7)

PROJECT DOCUMENTATION – AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

APPENDIX A – Project Key performance Indicators
APPENDIX B – Town Selection Outcomes
APPENDIX C – Draft Public Engagement Strategy
APPENDIX D – CORSERV's Sustainable Procurement Policy
APPENDIX E – Brief for Planting Palette
APPENDIX F – Finalised Planting Palette
APPENDIX G – Cormac Environmental Policy Statement
APPENDIX H – Cormac Equality and Diversity Policy
APPENDIX I – Cormac Capacity and Capability Statement
APPENDIX J – Establishment Phase Landscape Management Plan
APPENDIX K – Long term management plan prescriptions
APPENDIX L – Examples of a site specific Environmental growth management from the previous phase including a) long version b) short version for site operatives.
APPENDIX M – Cross cutting themes assessment
APPENDIX N – Residents post completion survey
APPENDIX O – MS4N Chemical use Policy
APPENDIX P – MS4N Communications Plan v7
APPENDIX Q – DisAbility Cornwall Workshop Key Outcomes
APPENDIX R – Cornwall Council Terrestrial Invasive Non Native Plant Policy
APPENDIX S – Inclusive Design – Self binding gravel rationale
APPENDIX T - Wildflower product procurement matrix and outcome
APPENDIX U – Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)