NEWARK & SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report to: Cabinet Meeting: 14 October 2025

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Simon Forde - Climate & the Environment

Director Lead: Matthew Finch, Director - Communities & Environment

Lead Officers: Danielle Davies, Environmental Development Officer
Ashley Kitchen, Street Scene Manager

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open Report / Non-key decision
Report Title	Green Gateways Update
Purpose of Report	To update on the Council's 'Green Gateways' commitment contained within the Community Plan; to update on the pilot undertaken in 2025 and to put forward a proposal to successfully deliver more sites within the district.
Recommendations	That Cabinet: a) note the findings and lessons learned from the pilot initiative to green entrances and exits to towns and villages in Newark & Sherwood in line with the aspiration set out within the Community Plan; b) agree that officers try to identify a further five towns and parishes for inclusion in the initiative in 2025/26 and in subsequent years through to Local Government Reorganisation in 2028; c) agree that Newark & Sherwood District Council will absorb the labour costs for the planting initiatives within existing resources, but costs associated with the purchase of plants, seed and bulbs is met by the Town and Parishes, as well as the cost of their future maintenance either via the Town and Parish or VIA; and d) give approval for one-off costs of £8,606 to fund a rotavator and bowser be agreed, as well as an annual cost of £1,034 for access to a water rental, with both to be from within the Environmental Services budget, to enable future delivery of the project.
Reasons for Recommendations	The pilot scheme demonstrated that green gateways with wildflowers will enhance biodiversity in towns and villages in line with the Community Plan, but ongoing success depends on having appropriate resources and a commitment to a future maintenance plan.

1. Background

1.1 As part of Newark and Sherwood District Council's new Community Plan, options to explore green gateways falls under 'Objective 1: Improve health and wellbeing'. The idea being to not only enhance biodiversity in more urban areas, but it will also create a more welcoming environment for residents and visitors across the district. In turn, this will have a positive impact on people's health and wellbeing.

1.2 To better understand the scale of this initiative, there are seventy-six parish councils ***(Appendix A)*** within the district serving three towns and numerous villages with the majority having entrances that would benefit from enhancement.

2. Project Objectives

2.1 To explore options and costs in enhancing the natural environment at entrances into towns and villages within the district to increase biodiversity and improve residential and visitor wellbeing.

3. Pilot Scheme

3.1 Before proceeding with a full-scale rollout of green gateways, it seemed sensible to conduct a trial phase to assess the initiative's feasibility and effectiveness. To ensure a representative sample, the parishes of Bilsthorpe, Blidworth, and Boughton were selected for the pilot scheme. The locations were chosen as they encompass a range of housing types and settings: Blidworth and Boughton sites are both in more rural areas, while the Bilsthorpe site neighbours a newer development. This selection will provide valuable insights into how the green gateways perform and are received in varying contexts, helping to tailor the approach for broader implementation.

3.2 **Green Gateways: Process Overview**

A. HM Land Registry Checks

It is essential to conduct HM Land Registry checks ***(Appendix B***) to confirm ownership of the land identified by Newark and Sherwood District Council for the green gateways initiative. A significant portion of the land along the approaches to town and village entrances is owned by Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) and maintained by Via East Midlands (Via). Additionally, some areas may be owned by local parish councils, who, if they do not manage the maintenance themselves, will receive funding from Via to oversee upkeep on their behalf.

I. For land owned by NCC, approval for planting should be obtained through Via.

II. For land that has *'no register'* and is maintained by Via, approval for planting should be obtained through Via.

III. For land owned by the parish council and maintained by Via, approval for planting should be obtained through Via and the parish council.

IV. For land owned and maintained by the respective parish, approval for planting must be obtained from both the parish council and Via. In cases where Via funds the parish council for maintenance, the responsibility may shift back to Via in the future. It will be important to establish a clear maintenance schedule to ensure it is manageable for Via's team.

B. Visual Illustrations

To help visualise the desired outcomes at various entrances, Via requested visual illustrations. These sketches also assist parish councils in understanding the final result at proposed locations and are included in the maintenance schedule to inform teams of new planting at these sites.

I. Professional visualisation sketches were created for two areas in Coddington and Edwinstowe by the previous Street Scene Manager. A landscape designer visited both sites to measure and assess the ground before developing concept designs based on the Manager's suggestions *(**Appendix C**)*.

In a follow-up discussion, the landscaper recommended removing certain elements. For example, on Beckingham Road in Coddington, he advised against planting trees near the hedge by the play park. For the rain gardens on Ollerton Road in Edwinstowe, he suggested that the proposed Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) weren't necessary and that plant species tolerant of both wet and dry conditions would suffice. The site at Coddington did not form part of this round of wild flowering as it was not deemed a suitable site due to being within the 40-mph zone when liaising with Via. The site at Edwinstowe is being treated as a separate project by the Street Scene Manager due to the scale of the site and it being intended as rain gardens.

II. To advance the pilot scheme with minimal cost, the Environmental Development Officer created mock-up illustrations to help Via, and the parish councils, envision the planned outcomes for the selected areas that would be installed *(**Appendix D**)*.

C. Permission Process for Planting

During initial discussions with Via, the Council presented the Coddington entrance concept. Several factors, other than land ownership, needed consideration to secure Via's approval.

I. The planting area must be within a 30-mph speed limit for safety reasons.

II. Tree planting costs approximately £200 per root ball, excluding the tree cost.

III. All approved trees must be native species.

IV. Any tree planting along grass verges requires Forestry England approval, which is unlikely due to visibility and safety concerns.

V. Planting wildflowers and bulbs, the preferred option, involves no additional costs or safety approval. As they are shallow rooted, there's less concern about the ground work interfering with underground utilities.

VI. The wildflower and bulb mix will be reviewed and approved by an ecologist from Via.

VII. If the district or parish council decides to install new welcome signage at the same time, additional costs and safety checks would apply, similar to tree planting.

D. Final Proposals for Pilot Scheme

Based on the input from Via and the Council's goal to enhance biodiversity and wellbeing in residential areas, the Environmental Development Officer and Street Scene Manager selected a pilot scheme for Bilsthorpe, Blidworth, and Boughton. The focus was on planting wildflowers and bulbs for year-round colour. The process was as follows:

I. HM Land Registry checks were carried out for the locations chosen before visual illustrations were created and submitted to Via for approval by NCC.

II. The illustrations were shared with the relevant parish councils and councillors for review.

III. All parties worked together to integrate the new wildflower areas into the parish councils' maintenance schedules.

3.3 **Green Gateways: Implementation Overview**

A. Ground Preparation

I. The area for sowing was marked using cord to ensure straight lines, as requested by Via for easier maintenance. The seeding area was approximately one metre wide, with length varying by location. A one-metre gap between the road and wildflower area was maintained to minimise road impact on plant growth.

II. The Council hired a rotavator to break up the soil, improving drainage and aeration for wildflower growth. Following this, grounds maintenance staff raked the area to remove weeds and grass, preparing a suitable seedbed.

B. Seed Sowing Process

The wildflower seed mix chosen was AP2 Eco Wildflower Seed Mix (100% wildflower seed consisting of Corn Chamomile, Corn Cockle, Corn Marigold, Corn Poppy, Cornflower, Common Vetch, Birdsfoot Trefoil, Buttercup Mix, Common Knapweed, Hairy Vetch, Ladys Bedstraw, Lucerne, Oxeye Daisy, Phacelia, Red Campion, Sainfoin, Salad Burnet, Self Heal, White Campion, Wild Carrot, Yarrow and Yellow Rattle). This mix consists of both annual and perennial wildflowers, meaning that some of the plants in the mix will flower and produce seeds in the first year, while others will establish themselves and flower in subsequent years. Years where there is less flowering, some additional seed will need to be raked into the ground.

The grass seed chosen was HM5 Shade Grass Seed Mix consisting of 20% Dwarf Perennial Ryegrass, 40% Strong Creeping Red Fescue, 13% Slender Creeping Red Fescue, 2% Wood Meadow Grass, 5% Smooth Stalked Meadow Grass, 15% Hard Fescue and 5% Browntop Bent.

Wildflower and grass seeds were sown separately in a 30% wildflower to 70% grass ratio before raking over to help ensure good seed-to-soil contact, which is crucial for germination and establishment. This method allows for better control over growing conditions, increasing the likelihood of wildflower success.

C. Bulb Planting

Additionally, to provide year-round colour, a mix of bluebells, daffodils, and snowdrops will be planted among the wildflowers in autumn (September–December) before the first frost.

3.4 **Ongoing Maintenance of Green Gateways**

After sowing wildflower seeds, it is essential to keep the soil consistently moist for the first six weeks to support seedling establishment. Watering should occur one to two times per week, increasing in hot or dry conditions. Regular watering should continue through spring and summer. Once established, wildflowers require less frequent watering but should still be monitored during dry or hot periods. Wildflower areas typically need strimming twice a year to maintain diversity and prevent dominant grasses from taking over. One cut is usually carried out in late summer to early autumn and another in late winter or early spring to control the growth of grasses and other vegetation. This mimics the natural disturbances that promote a healthy meadow ecosystem. Also, this is a more cost-effective way to maintain the land as the grass verges in the pilot scheme were being mowed at least four times a year.

3.5 **Financial Overview of the Pilot Scheme**

The table below shows the costs of plants and machine hire to complete the three entrances within the pilot scheme.

ITEMS/ GOODS	**COST (exc. VAT)**
7 x 1KG bags of AP2 Eco Wildflower Seed Mix (100% wildflowers)	£371
2 x 20KG bags of HM5 Shade Lawn Grass Seed Mix	£159.98
Seed delivery cost	£65
Rotavator hire	£70
Rotavator hire delivery and collection	£50
10 x A5 Aluminium composite seedling signs and posts	£350
2000 Daffodils	£320
2000 Snowdrops	£340
2000 Bluebells	£300
	Total Cost
	£2,025.98

3.6 **Conclusion and Key Learnings from the Pilot Scheme**

A site visit in late July found the wildflower areas in Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Boughton thriving with pollinators (Appendix E), particularly at Church Road in Boughton, where bees, butterflies, and flies were actively feeding.

However, extended hot and dry weather, especially in Blidworth, led to some wildflower dieback, resulting in a less vibrant and untidy appearance. This prompted some feedback from the parish council about the area looking untidy and led to increased watering across all sites. To improve future outcomes, sowing should ideally take place between February and March, supported by a stronger watering schedule, adequate staffing and more resources to implement this.

While images of the seed mix were shared with parish councils, feedback suggested expectations for more colour. This may be addressed by either removing grass from the mix or adjusting the wildflower blend—subject to approval by Via's ecologist. Both options will be explored for future planting.

Some pilot scheme locations identified during autumn site visits were no longer suitable at the time of installation due to structural changes or overgrowth. These issues were resolved on-site with parish councils, but in future, a follow-up visit prior to installation will be necessary. Additionally, sites with dense vegetation—such as brambles in Bilsthorpe—will require regular maintenance access to keep the areas manageable.

The process involving NCC, Via and the parish councils is complex due to ownership and maintenance responsibilities. It is not in the gift of the Council to deliver without support and permission from those agencies, so collaboration is essential.

Other locations have been identified to form part of the next five areas to green, but permission will need to be obtained by those parishes first, especially if the Council are asking for them to fund or contribute towards the cost of the seeds and bulbs. So far, areas in Balderton, Coddington and Edwinstowe have been identified. Initial land registry checks and visualisations have been carried out for both Coddington and Balderton.

The Council have already met with Boughton Town Council and Blidworth to discuss wildflower seeding all entrances to Boughton, Ollerton and Blidworth where applicable. This shows there is an ability to implement green improvements to entrances and exits to towns and villages in Newark and Sherwood, and that the parishes want to work with us to make these improvements in their communities.

4 Progressing the Green Gateways Initiative

4.1 Proposal to Parish Councils

Following approval of the recommendations in this report, parish councils will be approached to gauge interest in collaborating on the Green Gateway Initiative for their towns and villages. A key consideration within the recommendations is the cost implications for participating parish councils under the scheme led by the Council, and whether or not the costs to parish councils seems reasonable.

4.2 Project Timelines

Timelines will vary by location, depending on HM Land Registry checks and the time required for Via to obtain planting authorisation from NCC. In the pilot scheme, it took approximately three months from sharing plans to receiving parish council approval.

Due to these delays, seed sowing occurred at the end of April 2025—later than ideal. The preferred sowing period is late February to early March, allowing seeds to benefit from increasing spring warmth and light for optimal germination and root establishment before summer heat.

4.3 **Staffing Capacity and Installation Limits**

Grounds maintenance staff undertake specific daily responsibilities, and additional projects reduce their availability to carry these tasks out. To minimise disruption, it is recommended—following discussions with the Street Scene Manager—that wildflower installations be scheduled across a one-week period, with one day allocated per site and a maximum of five sites installed annually. Increasing the number of installations would require temporary cover staff, subject to staffing levels and associated costs. It would mean that planting could be carried out for around a month, increasing the number of sites to around twenty entrances. Where there are multiple entrances to a town of village, more than one installation day may be required.

4.4 **Financing Green Gateways**

A. To support the success of the Green Gateways initiative, senior leaders have agreed that the Council will carry out site installations free of charge. Participating parish councils will be asked to cover the costs of wildflower seed, grass seed, bulbs (if desired), and a share of rotavator hire (if one has not been purchased by the Council).

The table below outlines the estimated costs chargeable to parish councils. Prices are for individual items and may be subject to inflation in future years.

INSTALLATION COSTS CHARGEABLE TO PARISH COUNCILS	COST (exc. VAT)
1KG bag of AP2 Eco Wildflower Seed Mix (100% wildflowers) *Parish will pay for number of KG used depending on size of area*	£53
20KG bag of HM5 Shade Lawn Grass Seed Mix *Parish will pay for number of KG used depending on size of area*	£79.99
Seed delivery cost *Cost will be split equally between parishes*	£65
Rotavator hire *Cost will be split equally between parishes*	£70
Rotavator hire delivery and collection *Cost will be split equally between parishes if no rotavator is in stock to hire locally*	£50
A5 Aluminium composite seedling signs and posts *Parish will pay for number of signs they require if needed*	£35 (each)
Daffodils *Parish will pay for number required if wanted*	£0.16 (each)
Snowdrops *Parish will pay for number required if wanted*	£0.17 (each)
Bluebells *Parish will pay for number required if wanted*	£0.15 (each)

B. Labour costs will be absorbed by the Council as part of the Councils objective to green entrances and exits within the Community Plan. Each site will include up to two wildflower strips installed over a single day by three members of the grounds maintenance team. Watering is critical from installation through to the end of August in the first year, which will be carried out by a member of the street scene team. In subsequent years, watering will be needed two to three times per week during hot, dry periods. In either September or October of the first year, grounds maintenance teams will install any bulbs the parishes have agreed to purchase throughout the wildflower areas.

C. To improve long-term efficiency and cost-effectiveness in delivering green entrance installations and other greening projects, it is recommended that the Council invest in the necessary equipment. The list below outlines the items required to support this work which will be purchased through the Environmental Services Revenue Budget. These would not only benefit the green gateways initiative, but it would also benefit the wider service.

I. Rotavator - £3450
Purchasing a rotavator would benefit this initiative and support a range of other grounds maintenance tasks, reducing the need for future hire costs.

II. 2000L Highway flowering water bowser with pump - £5,155.69
The current single bowser is primarily used in the Newark area and cannot cover the entire district during the watering period. Purchasing an additional bowser would support the Green Gateways Initiative and other greening projects, as well as service new contracts across the district.

III. Standpipe rental and water costs from Severn Trent Water
Currently, the street scene team must return to the Brunel Drive depot each time the bowser needs refilling, resulting in significant travel time and inefficiency—for example, refilling in Newark before returning to sites in Clipstone or Ollerton. Having access to water from hydrants would save the Council time and money overall.

Access to water across the district would be required for around twenty-seven weeks throughout the months of March to August. The cost to rent metered standpipes which would enable the Council access to water from hydrants is listed below:

- 25mm standpipe rental is **£39 per week** and **£1034 per year**
- 40mm standpipe rental is **£67 per week** and **£1373 per year**

For twenty-seven weeks of use, an annual standpipe rental is more cost-effective. A 40mm standpipe—subject to fire service approval—offers faster filling due to higher pressure; however, a 25mm standpipe is adequate for filling a bowser or connecting a sprinkler.

If the Council enters into a rental contract, Severn Trent Water will provide a hydrant finder map for the district.

Water usage is charged at **£2.61 per cubic metre**, billed monthly. Based on filling a 2m³ bowser and watering three wildflower sites from March to August, the estimated water cost is **£422.82**.

5 Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that members note the findings learned from the pilot scheme to green entrances and exits to towns and villages in Newark and Sherwood in line with the aspirations set out within the Community Plan.

5.2 Agree that officers identify a further two or three parishes as Balderton, Coddington and Edwinstowe have areas which have been looked at for improvement. HM Land Registry checks and illustrations of proposals for Balderton and Coddington have been completed pending approval to continue. These areas would be included as part of the initiative going into 2025/2026 and in subsequent years through to Local Government Reorganisation in 2028.

5.3 Agree that the Council will absorb the labour costs for the planting initiatives within existing resources, but costs associated with the purchase of plants, seeds and bulbs is met by the town and parish councils, as well as the cost of their future maintenance either by the parish or town councils, or by Via.

5.4 Approve a one-off cost of £8,605.69 to fund a rotavator and bowser, and the yearly rental of a standpipe at £1034 to enable the future delivery of this project as well as benefiting the wider service.

6 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability, and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment below where appropriate.

Financial Implications FIN25-26/5601

6.1 As part of the 2024/25 budget-setting process, one of the objectives outlined in the Community Plan includes:

- Exploring options for environmentally friendly (‘green’) entrances and exits to estates and villages.

6.2 The table below presents the estimated costs identified by the Council’s Environmental Development Officer in this comprehensive report. It includes both the initial one-off costs with investment and the ongoing revenue implications.

GREEN ENTRANCES/EXITS TRIAL AND ONGOING COST IMPLICATIONS

DESCRIPTION OF TRIAL COSTS (ONE OFF)	**COST** (exc. VAT)
Pilot Scheme to include all supplies and hire of machinery initially – GM Costs	£ 2,025.98
NSDC labour costs absorbed within existing resources	£ -
Rotavator – Purchased from R&R	£ 3,450.00
Bowser – Purchased from R&R	£ 5,156.00
TOTAL	**£10,631.98**

DESCRIPTION OF ON-GOING REVENUE COSTS	**ANNUAL COST** (exc. VAT)
NSDC labour costs absorbed within existing resources	£ -
Supply of plants, seeds and bulbs	Variable
Recharge of supply of plants, seeds and bulbs - Full cost recovery	(Variable)
Costs for Hydrant Hire Licence/Rental (£1,034)	£ 1,034.00
TOTAL	**£ 1,034.00**

6.3 It is anticipated that both the rotavator and bowser can be funded through existing Repairs and Renewals budgets.

6.4 The purchase of a Hydrant License is considered financially prudent, independent of this specific project. It offers multiple operational benefits, including reduced downtime for the workforce, lower fuel and vehicle-related costs, and a decrease in the Council's carbon footprint. This represents a cost-effective and environmentally responsible approach with minimal associated expenditure.

6.5 Labour costs, as referenced in the report, will be reallocated to support these tasks as required. The recent approval to replace two vacant apprentice positions with two full-time employees will further strengthen the department's capacity to deliver on this Community Plan objective.

6.6 The modest funding required to pilot the scheme—covering plants, seeds, and bulbs—can be absorbed within the Council's existing grounds maintenance budget. As such, there is no anticipated impact on the Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). Over time, the additional equipment acquired may also create opportunities to generate further income.

6.7 **In summary**, all elements of this initiative can be accommodated within the existing Environmental Services budgets.

Legal Implications
LEG2526/3596

All legal implications have been addressed within the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None

Appendix A

Background

List of parish councils within the district of Newark and Sherwood.

Alverton and Kilvington	Averham, Kelham and Staythorpe
Balderton	Barnby-in-the-Willows
Bathley	Besthorpe
Bilsthorpe	Bleasby
Blidworth	Bulcote
Caunton	Carlton-on-Trent
Clipstone	Caythorpe
Collingham	Coddington
Cromwell	Cotham
East Stoke with Thorpe	Eakring
Edwinstowe	Edingley
Elston	Egmanton
Farndon	Epperstone
Fernwood	Farnsfield
Girton and Meering	Fiskerton-cum-Morton
Grassthorpe	Gonalston
Halam	Gunthorpe
Harby	Halloughton
Hockerton	Hawton
Hoveringham	Holme
Kirklington	Kings Clipstone
Kneesall, Kersall and Ompton	Kirton
Lowdham	Laxton and Moorhouse
Maplebeck	Lindhurst
North Clifton	Newark Town Council
Norwell	North Muskham
Ollerton and Boughton Town Council	Ossington
Oxton	Perlethorpe-cum-Budby
Rainworth	Rolleston
Rufford	South Clifton
South Muskham and Little Carlton	South Scarle
Southwell Town Council	Spalford
Staunton	Sutton-on-Trent
Syerston	Thorney
Thurgarton	Upton
Walesby	Wellow
Weston	Wigsley
Winkburn	Winthorpe with Langford

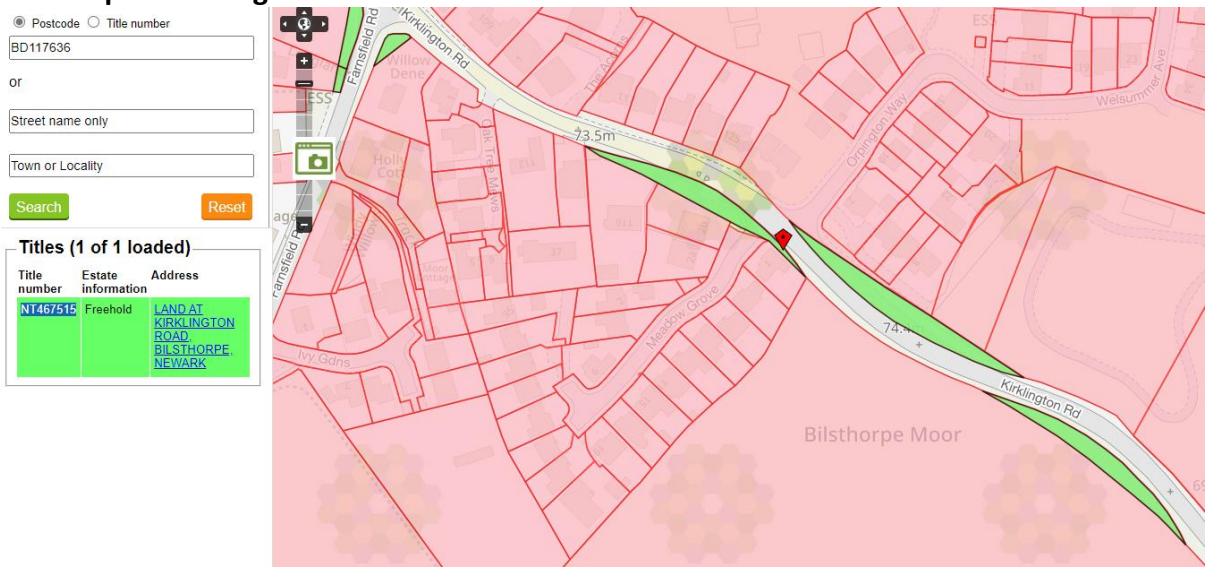
Appendix B

Process for greening entrances

A. HM Land Registry checks

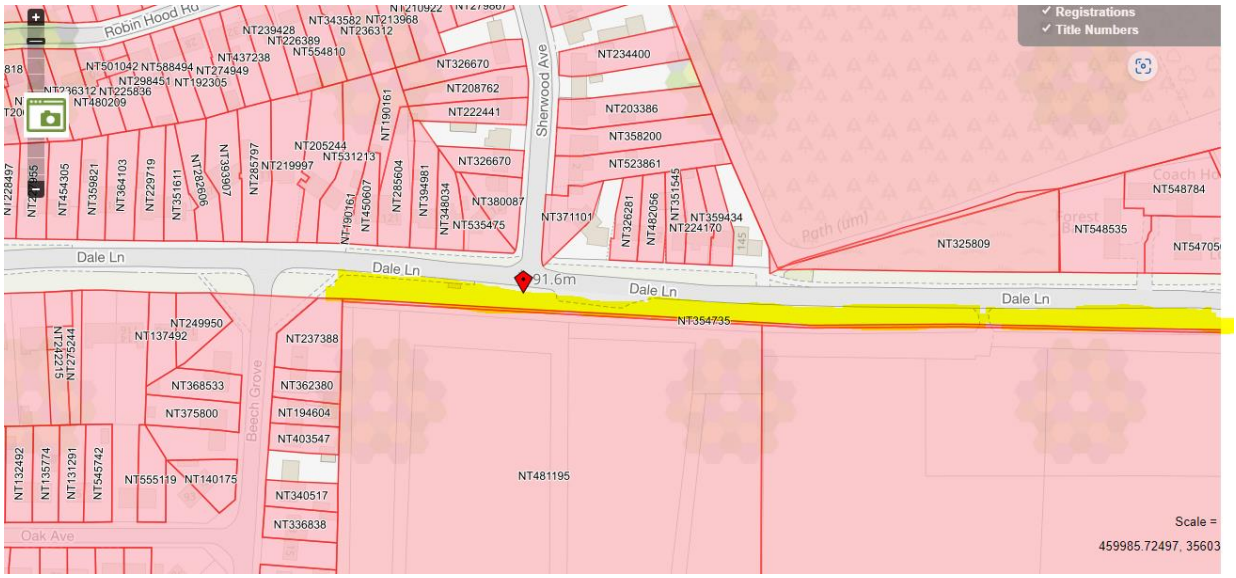
Screen shots of each location in the pilot scheme with ownership details.

Bilsthorpe – Kirklington Road



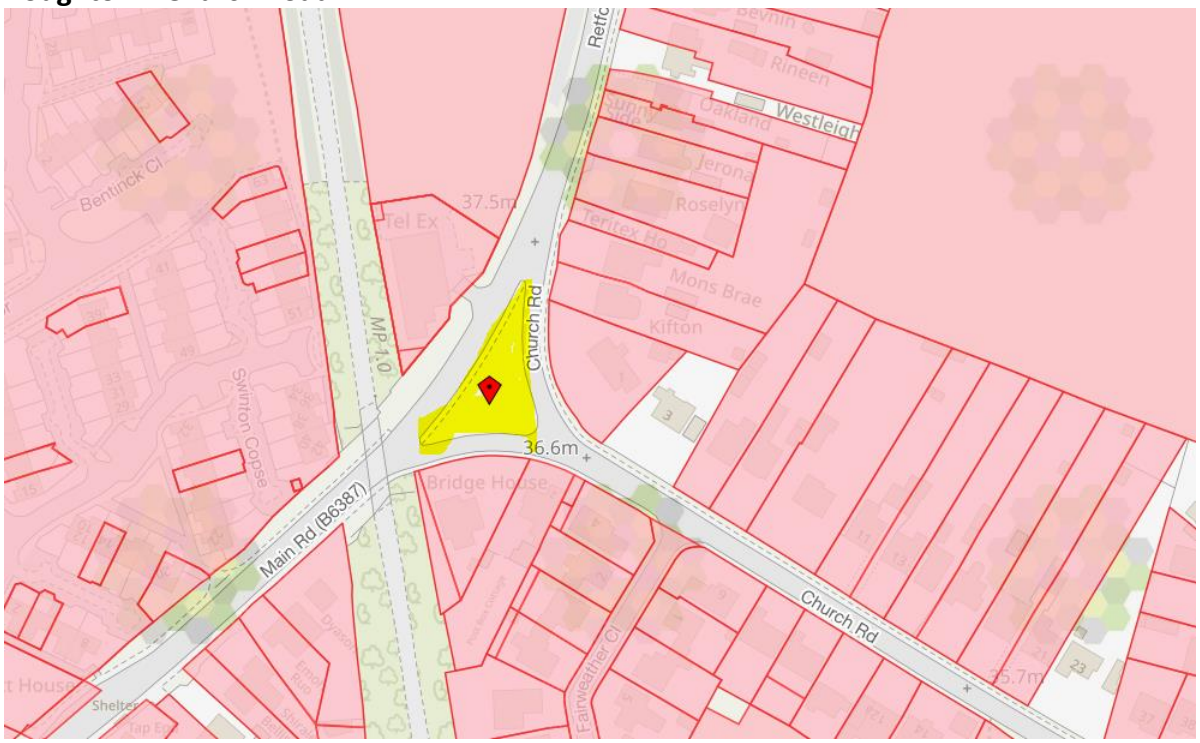
NT467515 - Proprietorship Register: The Nottinghamshire County Council

Blidworth – Dale Lane



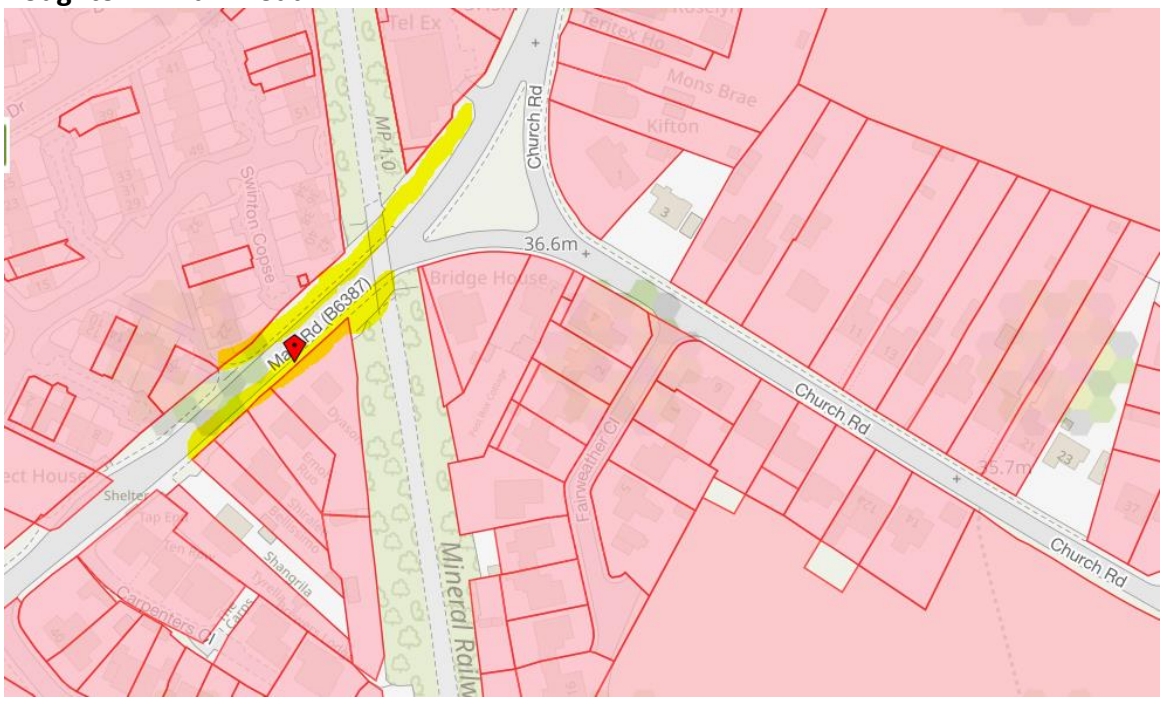
Proprietorship Register: no register

Boughton – Church Road



Proprietorship Register: no register

Boughton – Main Road



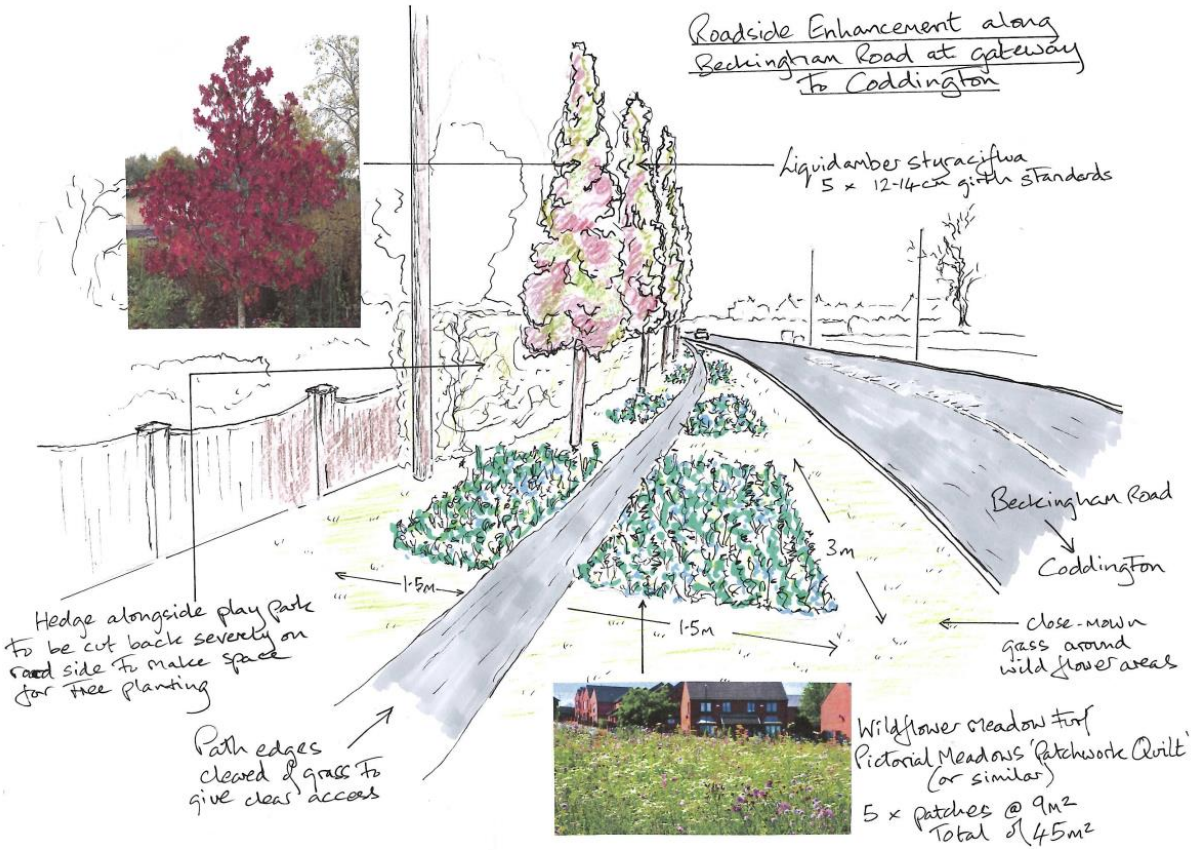
Proprietorship Register: no register

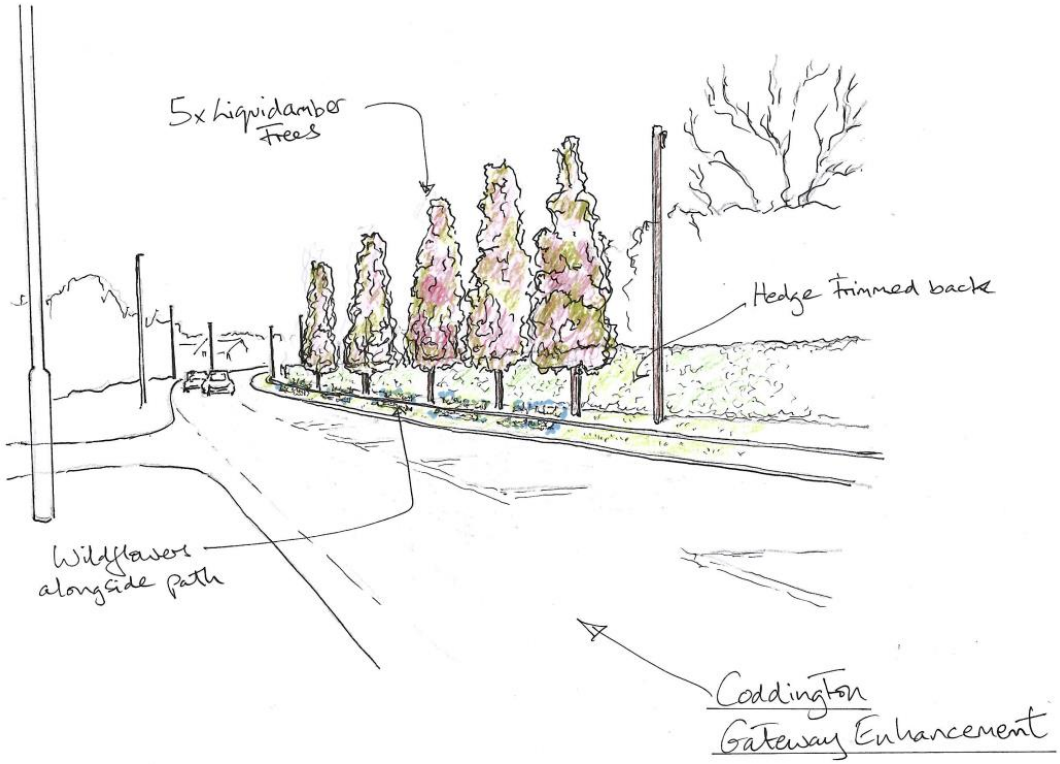
Appendix C

<u>Process for greening entrances</u>

B. I. Visual sketches

Landscape artist's sketches of Coddington – Beckingham Road





Landscape artist's sketches of Edwinstowe – Ollerton Road

Appendix D

Process for greening gateways

B. II. Visual sketches

Environmental Development Officer's sketches of Bilsthorpe – Kirklington Road

Note: this area was altered for the land behind the sign as there had been works carried out which reduced the size of the grass verge, making it too small an area to wildflower.

Environmental Development Officer's sketches of Blidworth – Dale Lane

Note: the area in front of the Bilsthorpe sign had several utility points, so wild flowering took place behind the sign to bus shelter.

Environmental Development Officer's sketches of Boughton – Church Road

Note: during an on-site visit with Boughton Town Council, it was decided to create a single strip of wildflower along Main Road as vans pull up on the corners to carry out maintenance and install the Christmas Tree.

Environmental Development Officer's sketches of Boughton – Main Road

Note: during an on-site visit with Boughton Town Council, we decided to try the area under the bridge as there were signs of flowers growing in this shady location. If the wildflower did not take, we would lay down bulbs as there was evidence that bluebells seemed to thrive in this spot.

Appendix E

Conclusion for pilot scheme

Before, during installation and after photographs of Bilsthorpe – Kirkington Road

Before, during installation and after photographs of Blidworth – Dale Lane

Before, during installation and after photographs of Boughton – Church Road

Before, during installation and after photographs of Boughton – Main Road

Note: the wildflower area on this section of Main road did not take. There was evidence of some growth, but they were not from the wildflower or grass seed sown. Before we plant bulbs at this location in autumn, the Council will discuss whether or not to retry the wildflowers here in February 2026 or go ahead and plant the bulbs as planned.

Before, during installation and after photographs of Boughton – Main Road

Note: the wildflower area on this section of Main road did not take particularly well. There was evidence of some growth of wildflowers towards the back, but there was not much evidence at the front close to the bins. This could be due to shade cast by the bridge and by urination from dogs as there is a poo bin on this location which could suggest a 'go to' area for canines on a walk. Before we plant bulbs at this location in autumn, the Council will discuss whether or not to retry the wildflowers here in February 2026 or go ahead and plant the bulbs as planned.