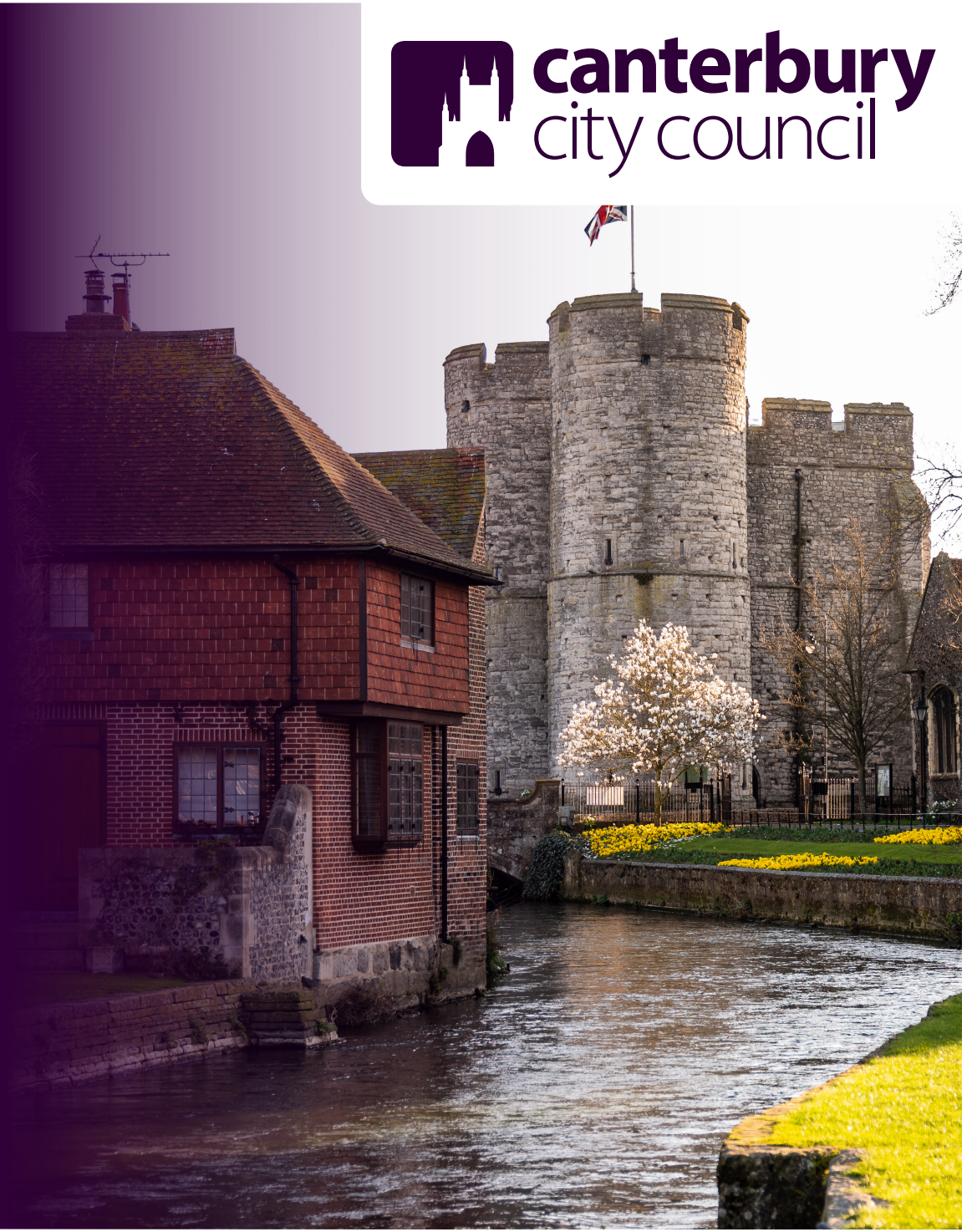
canterbury city council

Canterbury Riverside Strategy

2023 to 2028

A strategy for the riverside corridor between Chartham and Sturry

Transport and Environment 2023



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CHAPTER 1.0

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Present-day context

The City of Canterbury is synonymous with history and great beauty. It is the birthplace of Christianity in Britain and a destination for pilgrims for hundreds of years; home to an iconic cathedral and a World Heritage site, with a distinctive and unique sense of place.

Canterbury's fine-grained medieval street pattern, complemented by the many surviving historic buildings, walled courtyards and open spaces creates an intimate, enclosed townscape brimming with interest. The River Stour connects open spaces and provides a corridor for nature and people to pass through the city; it is this fusion of historical and contemporary built form and landscape which makes Canterbury a special place. Canterbury's river is a rare chalk river habitat; its crystal clear waters support an abundance of wildlife both above and below the surface.

The division of the river through the centre of the city into two narrow channels is the result of past human intervention to harness it as a source of power, to make crossing easier, and to exploit it as a source of fresh water.

Today, the riverside is more accessible than ever before and is a cherished feature of the city, 'Canterbury's Coast'. The riverside footpath network, passing through parks, walled gardens and occasionally being forced to branch away through city streets, is well used, attractive and fully integrated into the fabric of the city.

However, there remains great potential to extend, upgrade and enhance the existing network of routes, spaces and, indeed, the river itself. In 2011 partnership working delivered the three mile 'Great Stour Way' riverside walking and cycling route between Canterbury and the village of Chartham. Since 2015 further improvements have been delivered including new sections of pathway and a range of other improvements.

1.2 Achievements since 2015

Over the course of the last five years a host of riverside improvements and actions from the previous strategy have been achieved. These include:

New sections of riverside path

- Tannery Park to underpass at Rheims Way - completed
- Sargeants Parade to Asda - new elevated riverside walkway completed 2021
- Kingsmead Road to bridge at Westwood Drive - creation of new section of riverside and path at the Riverside development completed 2022
- Asda to Vauxhall - currently underway, due to be completed in 2023

Enhancements to existing sections of path

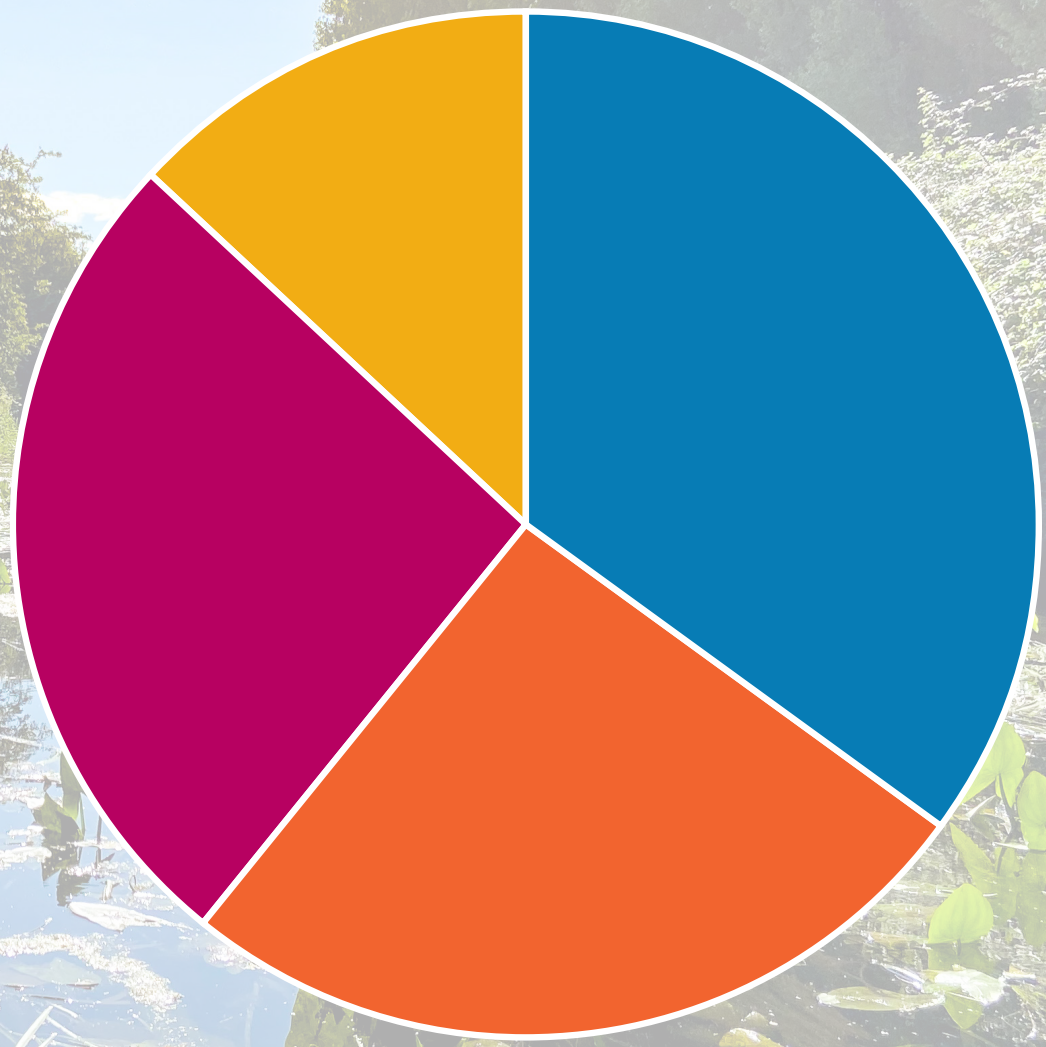
- Kingsmead to St Radigunds - pathway widening works - completed 2022

Through partnership working, a variety of enhancements have been achieved in the riverside open spaces, including new community facilities, pathways, pollinator friendly planting schemes, additional tree planting, new seating, entrance and interpretation signage, new litter bins, riverbank restoration works and in-channel river improvements in the following riverside open spaces:

- Westgate Parks including Toddlers cove, Bingley Island, Tannery Field and Westgate Gardens
- Butterfly Garden
- Millers Field/The Causeway
- Greyfriars Garden
- The Franciscan Gardens
- Sollys Orchard/Abbots Mill Garden
- Abbots Mill Project Garden
- Kingsmead Field
- Stonebridge weir
- Barton Mill
- Vauxhall Avenue
- St. Radigunds and Sainsbury's RIverside
- Chartham Fish Ladder
- Chartham/Thanington River Works

The pie chart shows (by percentage) the status of the actions from the 2015 to 2020 strategy Action Plan.

The challenge now is to further build on the work previously achieved and continue to embed and reinforce a recognisable identity for the network of riverside routes, continue to support local people, further extend eastwards to link Canterbury with the village of Sturry to create an attractive and direct off-road walking and cycling route in line with Sustrans plans, and to explore the potential development of a Stour Valley Regional Park.



1.3 Vision statement and deliverable benefits

The vision for the Canterbury Riverside is as follows:

Canterbury's riverside will be a clean, safe, accessible and coherent place – a joy to wander, a sustainable transport corridor for walkers and cyclists – a confident place that reflects the city's proud heritage and complements its important and diverse biodiversity. Residents, business owners and the council will have positive and open conversations about maintaining the riverside's status as an asset to all who live and visit the area. A thoroughfare linking attractive and well managed green spaces, with viable business etc – it will be a draw/attraction for visitors in its own right as well as doubling up as an important corridor for people and wildlife. It will be a gateway to the Stour Valley, and to a possible Stour Valley Regional Park.

Key benefits to be delivered:

- Encourage more people to walk and cycle off road thereby reducing traffic congestion and air pollution
- Enable people to be more active to improve their health and well being
- A welcoming, connected, legible and accessible network of shared routes and spaces for everyone to use
- A well-managed, clean and safe environment presentable at all times of the year
- Provide numerous opportunities for people to have contact with the natural environment and wildlife; foster public respect for the riverside environment and the importance of looking after it
- Facilitate and encourage wildlife's recovery along the river corridor
- The continued involvement of local people in developing and managing the riverside and riverside open spaces
- Optimise the potential multi-functional benefits of well-designed and managed riverside open space, for example, flood storage, pollution filter
- Increase the interest of the city as a destination for visitors and businesses to encourage and support economic growth and tourism. The riverside corridor provides access to a range of attractive parks and gardens within the city and offers a safe, certain, high quality and accessible gateway to the wider countryside.
- Promotion of a possible Stour Valley Regional Park for Canterbury

CHAPTER 2.0

LOCATION OF STUDY AREA

2.1 This strategy will be an accompanying document to the City Council's recently revised Open Space Strategy 2022 - 2027. The Open Space Strategy records and audits all publicly accessible open space within the district and contains standards for new open space provision. It classifies open space into different types of typologies. The riverside network falls into the category of Green corridors – linear green routes used for walking and cycling with opportunities for wildlife migration.

2.2 The agreed study area extends from the village of Chartham in the west to Sturry in the east, and incorporates land owned and managed by a range of landowners. For convenience the 'corridor' has been divided into three sections:

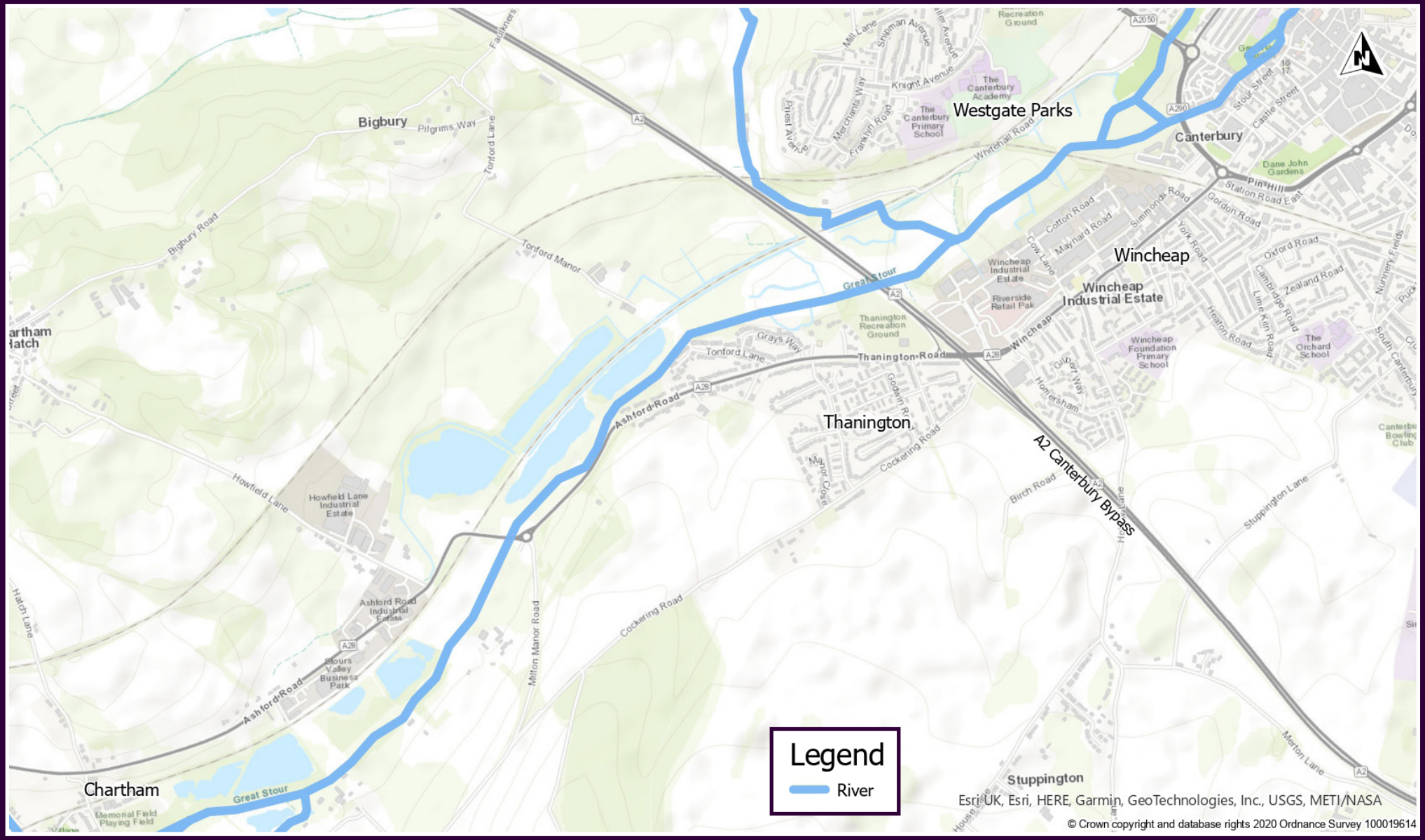
Section 1 – Chartham to Canterbury 4.7km – map 1

Section 2 – Westgate Parks to Barton Mill 2.0km – map 2

Section 3 – Barton Mill to Sturry 2.9km – map 3

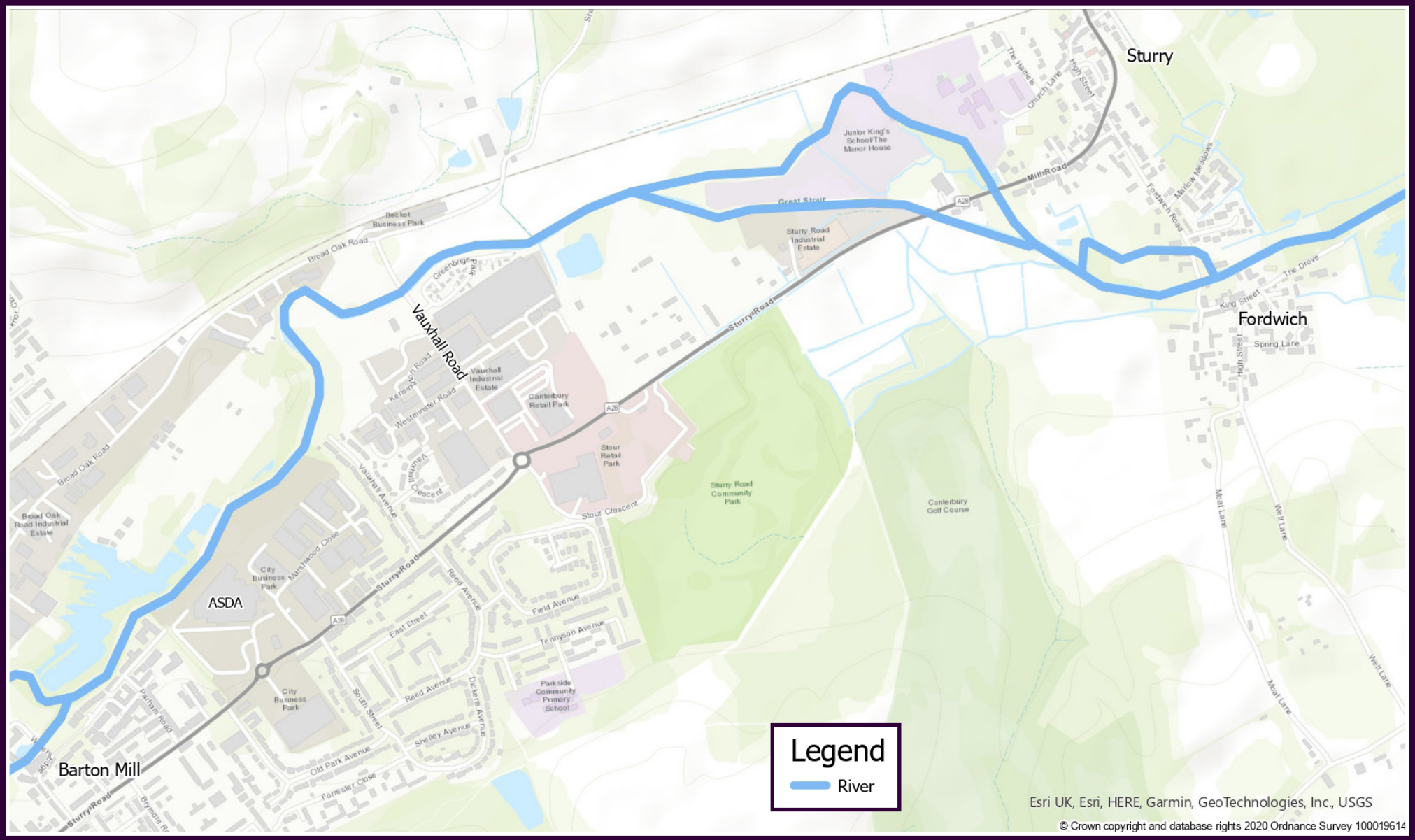
Total length – 9.6km

Section 1: Chartham to Canterbury (4.7km)



Section 2: Westgate to Barton Mill (2km)

Section 3: Barton Mill to Sturry (2.9km)



CHAPTER 3.0

POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Canterbury District Adopted Local Plan 2017

The Local Plan contains specific policies relevant to the river and riverside environment in Canterbury:

Policy CC12 Water Quality extract:

The Council will seek to ensure that every opportunity is taken to enhance existing aquatic environments and ecosystems. This will include restoration of natural river features (including riverbanks) and removal of barriers to fish passage when appropriate opportunities arise.

Any new development should not compromise Water Framework Directive objectives.

Policy DBE7 Public Realm extract (where relevant to Canterbury Riverside)

In order to achieve high quality design of the public realm, development proposals will be expected to:

(a) Reinforce or enhance the established character of the area;

(b) Integrate with existing path, circulation networks and patterns of activity and permeability;

(c) Integrate with the existing landscape setting;

(d) Respond to contextual features and be locally distinctive;

(e) Contribute to a safe and secure environment;

(f) Be accessible and usable to people with varying mobility requirements;

(g) Create attractive, manageable, well functioning spaces within the site.

Policy DBE8 Public Open Space extract (where relevant to the Canterbury riverside)

Policy DBE8 Public Open Space In order to ensure that functional, visually successful public open space is created with a strong sense of place as part of new development, the City Council will expect developments to incorporate the following:-

(a) The retention and incorporation of public rights of way and the creation of a connected open space and pedestrian/cyclist circulation system related, where appropriate, to a landscape framework having regard to safety and security;

(e) Create opportunities for wildlife habitats and corridors where appropriate. Demonstrate how the management and maintenance of public open space will be continued long term.

Policy DBE9 Outdoor Lighting (where relevant to Canterbury riverside)

Proposals for new outdoor lighting or new developments which include outdoor lighting will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

(a) It has been designed to minimise light glare, light trespass, light spillage and sky glare through using the best available technology to minimise light pollution and conserve energy.

(b) It does not adversely impact residential amenity;

(c) It does not adversely affect sites of nature conservation interest and/or protected and other vulnerable species and heritage assets;

(d) It does not adversely impact on protected landscapes or those areas where darks skies are an important part of the nocturnal landscape;

(e) The lighting levels do not exceed the levels recommended by the ILE in the relevant environmental zone as set out in Appendix 5;

(f) It does not have an adverse impact on long distance views or from vantage points.

In addition the City Council will expect proposals to demonstrate that they have had regard to the checklist set out in paragraph 8.95. For large developments involving outdoor lighting or those

developments in or adjacent to sensitive locations, the City Council may require a Lighting Strategy to be submitted.

Policy HE1 Historic Environment and Heritage Assets (where relevant to Canterbury Riverside)

The City Council will support proposals which protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment and the contribution it makes to local distinctiveness and sense of place. Proposals that make sensitive use of historic assets through regeneration and reuse, particularly where these bring redundant or under-used buildings and areas into an appropriate use, will be encouraged.

Development must conserve and enhance, or reveal, the significance of heritage assets and their settings. Development will not be permitted where it is likely to cause substantial harm to the significance of heritage assets or their setting unless it is necessary to achieve substantial public benefit that would outweigh the harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and,
- no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and,
- conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and,
- the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Any development affecting directly, or the setting of, a listed or locally listed building, Conservation Area, Scheduled Monument, registered park or garden, historic landscape, or archaeological site will be required to submit a Heritage Statement with any Planning Application. The statement will need to outline and provide evidence as to the significance of the heritage asset including its setting, the likely impact of the development upon it and be proportional to the importance of the said heritage asset. Should permission be granted for the removal of part or all of a heritage asset the City Council will not permit the removal or demolition of the heritage asset until it is proven that the approved replacement development will proceed.

Policy LB2 Areas of High Landscape Value

The following Areas of High Landscape Value are defined on the Proposals Map and Inset Maps:

(a) The North Kent Marshes;

(b) The North Downs;

(c) Blean Woods;

(d) Wantsum Channel;

(e) Canterbury (the valley of the River Stour around Canterbury).

Within these areas, development will be considered in relation to the extent to which its location, scale, design and materials would impact on or protect the local landscape character and enhance the future appearance of the designated landscape and its heritage and nature conservation interest. Development proposals that support the landscape character (including settlement character), and have no significant impact upon historic setting, archaeological or nature conservation interests, where relevant, will be permitted.

Within the Canterbury AHLV, development proposals should have particular regard to the historic setting of the City and the World Heritage Site.

Policy LB7 Locally Designated Sites (where relevant to Canterbury Riverside)

Development or land-use changes likely to have an adverse effect, either directly or indirectly, on:

(a) Local Wildlife Sites;

(b) Local Nature Reserves; or

(c) Regionally Important Geological/ Geomorphological Sites

will be permitted if the justification for the proposals clearly outweighs any harm to the intrinsic nature conservation and/or scientific value of the site. Where development is permitted on such sites, careful site design should be used to avoid any negative impact. Where negative impact is unavoidable, measures should be taken to ensure that the impacts of the development on valued natural features and wildlife have been mitigated to their fullest practical extent. Where mitigation alone is not sufficient, adequate compensatory habitat enhancement or creation schemes will be required. Any application affecting locally important sites will be expected to demonstrate enhancement measures to benefit biodiversity.

Policy LB8 Landscape Scale Biodiversity Networks

New development will need to show how it will:

(a) avoid the fragmentation of existing habitats and support the creation of coherent ecological networks through both urban and rural areas; and

(b) retain, protect and enhance notable ecological features of conservation value such as ancient woodland, neutral grassland, hedgerows, trees, wetlands, river corridors and other water bodies, and habitats that offer breeding or feeding sites of local importance to populations of protected or targeted species. Lighting that has been sensitively designed to minimise disturbance to protected species and their food sources (eg low level, directed, warm, tinted lighting) will be permitted.

(c) protect opportunities for improving connectivity of habitats in strategically important Biodiversity Opportunity Areas. Strategic opportunities for biodiversity improvement will be actively pursued within the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.

Policy LB13 River Corridors

Development shall show how the environment within river corridors and river catchments, including the landscape, water environment and wildlife habitats, will be conserved and enhanced.

Supply of water, treatment and disposal of waste water and flood risk management should be shown to be sustainable and deliver environmental benefits, within the water environment.

Policy OS12 Green Infrastructure

Proposals for new development should ensure that :

(a) Green infrastructure is planned, designed and managed to conserve and enhance the distinctive character and special qualities of rural and urban landscapes, and the identity of settlements. Where feasible as part of all new developments and proposals, developers will need to establish and extend green space networks as corridors for movement by foot and cycle, as havens for wildlife and natural habitats and for leisure, amenity and recreational use. Where practicable green linkages should be encouraged from within existing settlements to the open countryside.

(b) Existing open space is conserved and enhanced as part of these networks, which where possible, should extend through major new development sites and connect directly with community facilities, employment areas and transport hubs in order to deliver sustainable development and support the health and well-being of residents.

Policy OS13 Riverside Strategy

Land identified on the Local Plan Proposals Map (Inset 1 and 2), as Open Space and Riverside Path, along the River Stour corridors in Canterbury City will be protected from development to enable its future use and contribution towards the riverside corridor, having regard to the Riverside Strategy.

Note: The council is currently developing a new Local Plan for the district and this should be in place during the lifetime of this Riverside Strategy.

3.2 Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal (October 2020)

The appraisal provides an evidence base for the review of the Local Plan, and is an informative tool for developers, planners, land managers, landscape professionals and conservation bodies.

The study identifies areas that require conservation, restoration, reinforcement or improvement. It provides justifications for managing pressures for change in the area without diminishing the value of the landscape and existing potential wildlife habitat networks.

The appraisal supports the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), by assessing character and biodiversity at a wider landscape scale to:

- Identify and describe the local landscape character areas
- Assess the condition and sensitivity of these landscape character areas
- Identify existing priority wildlife habitats and strategic biodiversity networks

The two relevant landscape character areas affecting the river corridor within the study area are:

a) **F7: Stour Valley West** (Thanington - Chartham – Milton Bridge), and

b) **F6: Stour Valley – Sturry and Fordwich** (Vauxhall Road – Sturry)

The guidelines for both are to **conserve, restore, enhance and protect**.

Specifically the landscape management guidelines are as follows:

a) Stour Valley West section:

- Conserve and enhance the biodiversity interest of wetland habitats, the Great Stour River and associated lakes by managing scrub encroachment. Explore opportunities for further wetland habitat creation within the floodplain, linking the existing floodplain grazing marsh
- Protect ancient woodlands and existing woodland priority habitat. Enhance improved grassland to bring them to species rich grassland of priority habitat quality setting of the river
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of chalk and neutral grassland, wetland, river floodplain, chalk scarp and wet woodland
- Conserve and improve the traditional landscape pattern and structure, as well as restoring the traditional drainage pattern where possible. Encourage the restoration and management of extensive wetland grazing and enhance the pastoral valley floor setting of the Great Stour River
- Seek to remove detracting features from the valley, including replacing/removing post and wire fencing where practicable
- Create and implement a long term management plan for invasive species across the river catchment. Excavation and removal techniques should be favoured, where this is not possible an appropriate herbicide treatment is recommended

b) Stour Valley – Sturry and Fordwich section:

Conserve and enhance the biodiversity interest from wetland habitats and watercourses as part of the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA

Protect the landscape's valued semi-natural habitats including blocks of priority habitat broadleaved deciduous woodland, grassland habitats and wetland tree species along channels and ditches

Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation and enhancement of woodland, river floodplain, wetland and neutral grassland habitat

Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods

Conserve the historic field pattern of the landscape by avoiding unsympathetic culverting of watercourses and channels

Create and implement a long term management plan for invasive species across the river catchment. Excavation and removal techniques should be favoured, where this is not possible an appropriate herbicide treatment is recommended

3.3 Green Infrastructure Strategy 2018 to 2031

The strategy sets out the strategic network of green infrastructure across the Canterbury district, assesses needs, opportunities, strategic priorities and objectives. It supports the adopted Local Plan and the draft Local Plan 2045 and links to other key strategies.

Key objectives:

CC2 – Implement actions for wildlife and access in the Riverside Strategy to improve and strengthen the river corridor through the city centre

CC6 – Ensure that the wider countryside is linked to the city centre through strategic allocations and that corridor linkages across and into the city are retained in the future.

CC14 – Ensure wildlife and access corridor links into the urban area from the countryside are maintained and enhanced.

RC4 – Ensure that the countryside is linked to the city centre through strategic allocations and that corridor linkages across and into the city are retained in the future.

3.4 Open Space Strategy Draft 2022 to 2027

The Canterbury district Open Space Strategy is based on an assessment of the quality, quantity and accessibility of publicly accessible open spaces. It sets standards for accessibility and quantity of new open spaces and guides developers on the need for future allocations of financial planning obligations such as section 106. Such financial contributions (s.106) will always be targeted at the closest or most relevant sites to the development but where and when opportunities do arise, investments will be made to the open spaces that contribute so much to the riverside area.

Looking forward, the Open Space Strategy will benefit from a new set of quality inspections of key open spaces to ensure all are accurate and uptodate. These findings will also help prioritise investments, as required, in the open spaces along the Canterbury Riverside area.

3.5 Pollinator Action Plan (due winter 2023)

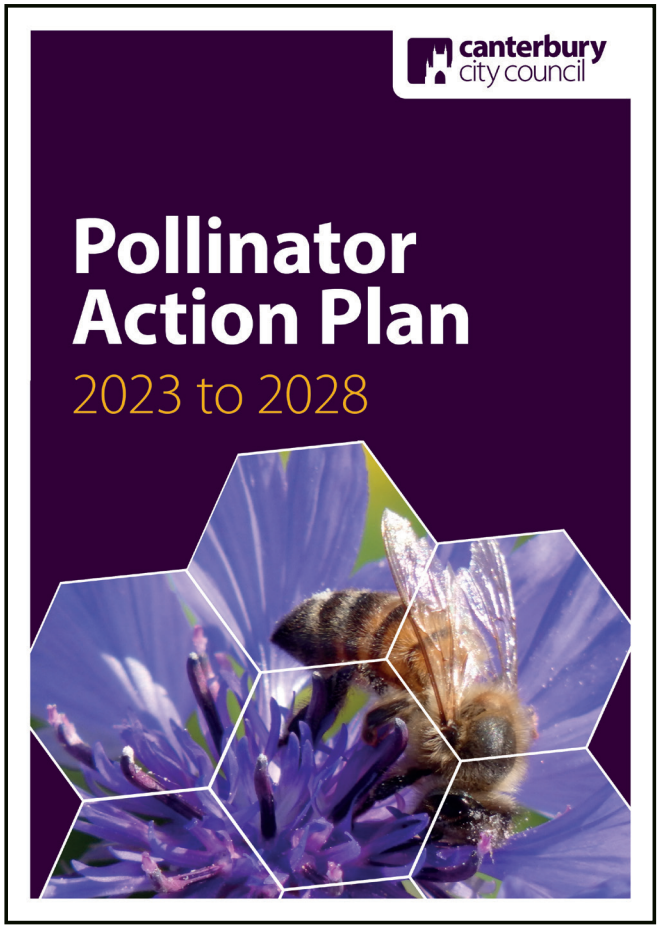
The Canterbury district Pollinator Action Plan identifies the importance of the Stour Valley and riverside area for its habitats that support a range of pollinators. Specifically, the Action Plan promotes working with landowners and community groups to trial a stand-alone 'pollinator pathway' along the river Stour between Chartham and Fordwich consisting of feeding and over-wintering habitat in parks, openspaces and other riverside areas. This action and ambition encourages the consideration of pollinators in future planting opportunities and in any land management changes.

3.6 Water Framework Directive 2019 (Cycle 3)

Wider Policy Context: Water Quality

The rich biodiversity and ecological value of the River Stour is a key indicator of the overall health of the river and is intrinsically linked to water quality.

The Stour Catchment is 1 of around 200 Chalk Streams in the world, 85% of which are found here in the UK. However, despite such global significance, the Stour Catchment has fallen vulnerable to a



multitude of human interventions over the years, such as wastewater treatment works, agriculture, mining, abstraction and urbanisation; all of which in some way have impacted on the health and ecological value of the river.

The Water Framework Directive (2000) (WFD):

The WFD aims to achieve 'good' status for all rivers, lakes and coastal waters with an aim to 'prevent further deterioration and protect and enhance the status of aquatic ecosystems and associated wetlands' through collaborative water and land management. The WFD supports five official ecological classifications, which are:

High, good, moderate, poor and bad.

As current land use and infrastructure within the Stour Catchment is associated with high agricultural inputs and pressured water treatment facilities respectively, the WFD mechanism provides a holistic interpretation of these variables.

The River Stour is dissected into 20 different water bodies, where 12 are classified as moderate, 7 as poor and 1 as bad.

The main dissected water body running through the centre of the Canterbury district is the Great Stour and its designated location is between the A2 and West Stourmouth. This section of the River Stour falls short of the WFD aim and classifies as 'moderate' on water quality. To put this into perspective only 17% of UK chalk streams currently hold a 'good' ecological classification.

Understanding the Great Stour's classification

Within the framework, there exist specific ecological assessment components which are categorised into three components: biological, physio-chemical and hydromorphological. These three categories are then given a classification based on an established threshold value.

For the **'moderate'** water quality condition:

Under the biological component rivers may display signs of disturbances within their aquatic ecosystem such as habitat degradation, reduced species diversity or the increasing prevalence of invasive species.

Physio-chemical status is established based on the presence of elevated concentrations of pollutants. Sources of pollution might include agricultural and urban runoff as well as wastewater treatment works. A key indicator of this may be increased eutrophication, caused by excess nitrogen and phosphorus within the water body.

Within the hydromorphological component a 'moderate' classification would be indicated by the disturbance of ecological functioning based on channel straightening/modification, bank stabilisation or flood control engineering.

If a body of water is measured to have a **'good'** water quality status this means that:

- Under the biological component the river signifies a well-functioning and healthy aquatic ecosystem, with a diverse range of native species, balanced ecological structure and an absence of anthropogenic disturbances.
- Under the physio-chemical assessment, a 'good' status indicates low levels of pollution and minimal levels of harmful substances. Such parameters include dissolved oxygen, pH level, nutrient levels and chemical contaminants.
- And finally, for the hydromorphological component, a 'good' classification would imply minimal modifications to the natural flow, connectivity and form of the river.

The Great Stour water quality

The Environment Agency's adoption of the WFD can be found under the Catchment Data Explorer directive on the Government website. This data comes from the most recent 2019 assessment. The following information summarises this data and highlights the specific strengths and shortfalls associated with the current 'moderate' water quality classification of the Great Stour:

Biological

Overall, the classification given for this component is **'moderate'**.

- Fish, aquatic plants, and microscopic plant communities populations are all below the standard for achieving the 'good' ecological classifications.

Nevertheless, freshwater invertebrate populations are found to be strong within the Great Stour having been classified as 'high'. This success should be utilised in order to better understand river pollutants as invertebrates can act as indicators of water quality. As they remain mostly stationary within a river system, they can contain traces of contaminants long after they have washed away.

Physio-chemical

Overall, classification for this component is **'moderate'**.

Within this categorisation, quality elements for all but phosphate are 'high'. Meaning Acid Neutralising Capacity, ammonia, dissolved oxygen, temperature and pH are currently not issues of concern and meet the highest quality standard within the WFD. However, significant levels of phosphate found in the water body gives rise to a 'poor' classification for this element (moving the overall classification for physio - chemical component to 'moderate'). This is associated with point-source discharges from wastewater treatment works, and diffuse run-off from urban areas (i.e. petrol stations, landfill and industrial sites) and agriculture (i.e. pesticides and poor nutrient management).

Nevertheless, various industry quality controls are in place to encourage nutrient mitigation. This includes but is not limited to:

- Phosphate reduction within sewage works before they enter water bodies
- The Catchment Sensitive Farming initiative which encourages farmers to modify nutrient inputs
- Nutrient neutrality ensuring new developments do not contribute further to nutrient burdens
- The use and encouragement of sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) to prevent pollutant rich urban runoff from reaching water bodies. For instance, Canterbury City Council is currently exploring opportunities to ameliorate possible run-off from roads and businesses from entering the River Stour through a wetland restoration project at the Wincheap LNR.

In addition, to these human inputs within the Stour Catchment, high levels of priority hazardous substances, Mercury and Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDE), are also found. No single sector has been identified as responsible, however, PBDE is a 'forever chemical' once used in a variety of household products such as textiles and plastics. Even though PBDE production and import is now banned in the UK, its prevalence still remains and highlights the importance of effective litter and waste management. This strategy's actions included the provision of well-placed litter bins and the organisation of community driven river cleans.

Hydromorphological

Overall, classification for this component **'supports good'** as the hydrological regime remains fairly constant over a defined period of time. This concerns the alternation of wet and dry phases in the main channel and connections with associated ecosystems

However, the Great Stour is still designated as heavily modified and this has likely contributed towards some of the pressures on the local ecology. Hence, the Great Stour experiences low flows due to abstraction for public supply, commerce and agriculture. Other human interventions, which are more visible along the Great Stour include modifications to natural conditions, such as flood risk management in the form of weirs and sluice gates, channel straightening and other influences of urbanisation.

Structures intercepting the natural water course often slow down the river to such a degree that silt settles and infiltrates the gravel bed which can have some damaging ecological consequences for aquatic life. This change in river bed characteristic can cause alterations in the way oxygen and nutrients are exchanged along this surface, impacting on the survival of fish eggs. Invertebrates and plants may also be affected as increasing levels of silt

cause the clogging of sediment and the decline of hospitable habitats. In addition, such structures also cause primary impacts upon fish regarding how they are able to migrate throughout their lifetime. The European eel is a highly endangered key species which has been found to suffer under these conditions. Such ecological impacts highlight the importance of engineering structures to allow the continuation of migratory behaviours and the natural flow of silt and sediment.

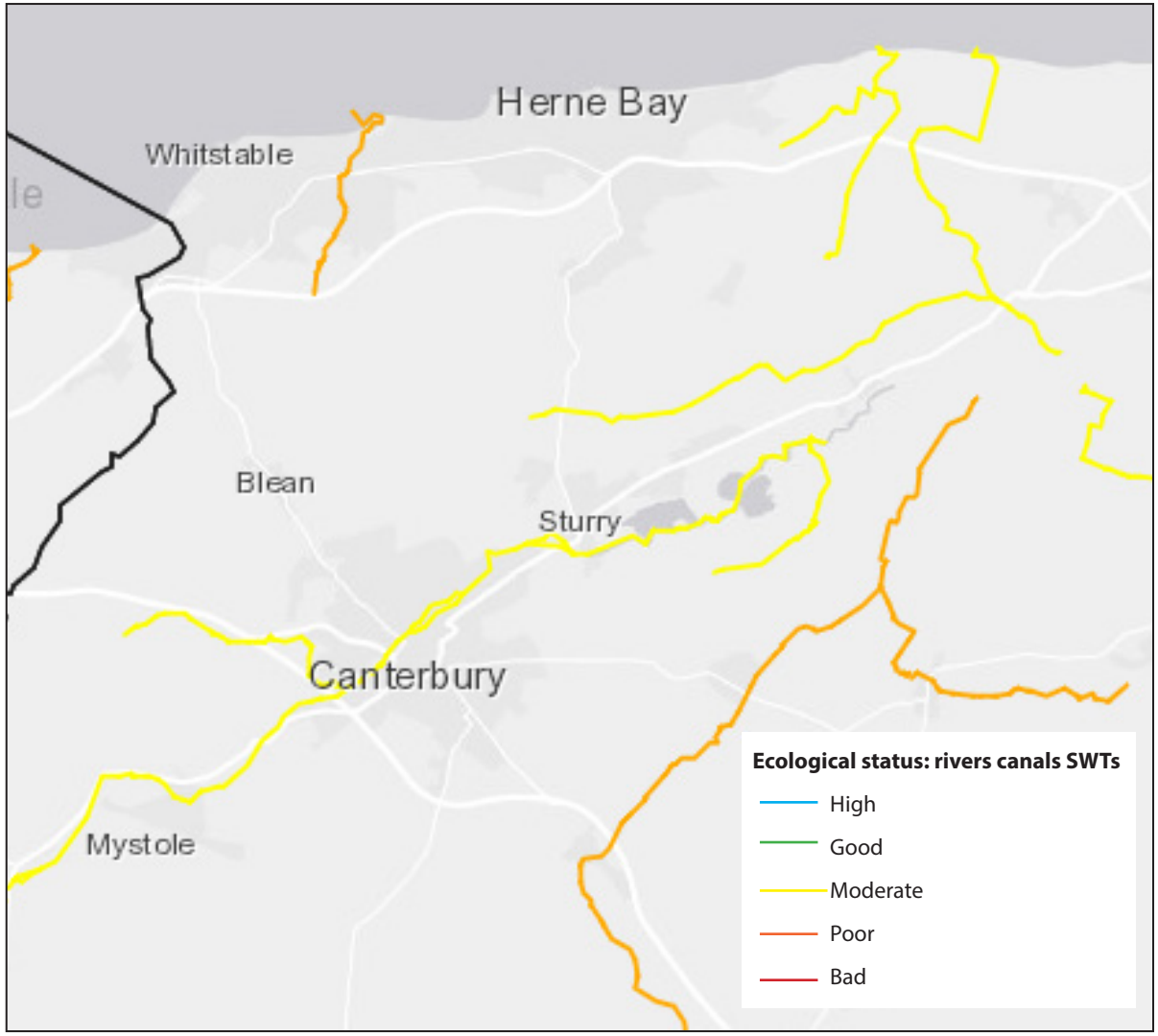
3.7 Climate change and the river's health

The effects of climate change continue to have an impact on weather patterns, which consequentially influence the state of our rivers. Based on the Met Office's UK Climate Projections for the south east of England and referenced within Kent's Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment, by 2080 we will face:

- hotter summers, by around 5°C to 6°C
- warmer winters, by around 3°C to 4°C
- decreased summer rainfall by 30% to 50%
- increased winter rainfall by 20% to 30%
- sea level rise is predicted to increase by 0.8m

Water temperature levels can have a direct impact on the condition of rivers as a habitat, therefore affecting the biodiversity and general health of a river. Rising temperatures create the required environment for harmful algae to thrive. Algae blooms can cause detriment to river ecosystems as they block the sunlight required for other living organisms to survive.

Map showing ecological classification (identifiable by colour) of the Great Stour within a localised Stour Catchment map.



Source: Experience Arcgis (2022) 'River Basin Management Plan: maps' Classification. Available at: experience.arcgis.com/experience/73ed24b6d30441648f24f043e75ebed2/page/Classification/

Rainfall patterns affect our rivers in a multitude of ways. Increased levels of rainfall in winter months causes higher flows, increasing the likelihood of erosion and chemical weathering. Decreased rainfall in the summer months can result in lower flows and even drought, in more extreme cases. Lower flows lead to less transportation within the river, as well as making mass movement less likely.

Short term weather events are becoming increasingly frequent as a result of climate change. Storms that follow a period of drought are a particular risk, where drought causes the ground to become less permeable. This results in higher rates of surface run-off where the ground absorbs significantly less water.

Adaptation is key against the potential impacts of climate change on rivers. Adaptation in Climate Change terms simply means to adapt in the face of climate change, resulting in increased climate resilience and reduced risks of impact as a result of climate change. Nature based solutions should be prioritised within adaptation, for example trees can be used to aid cooling around our waterways. Natural flood management techniques such as buffer strips can be introduced to mitigate against the effects of flooding.

CHAPTER 4.0

DETAILED DESIGN POLICY

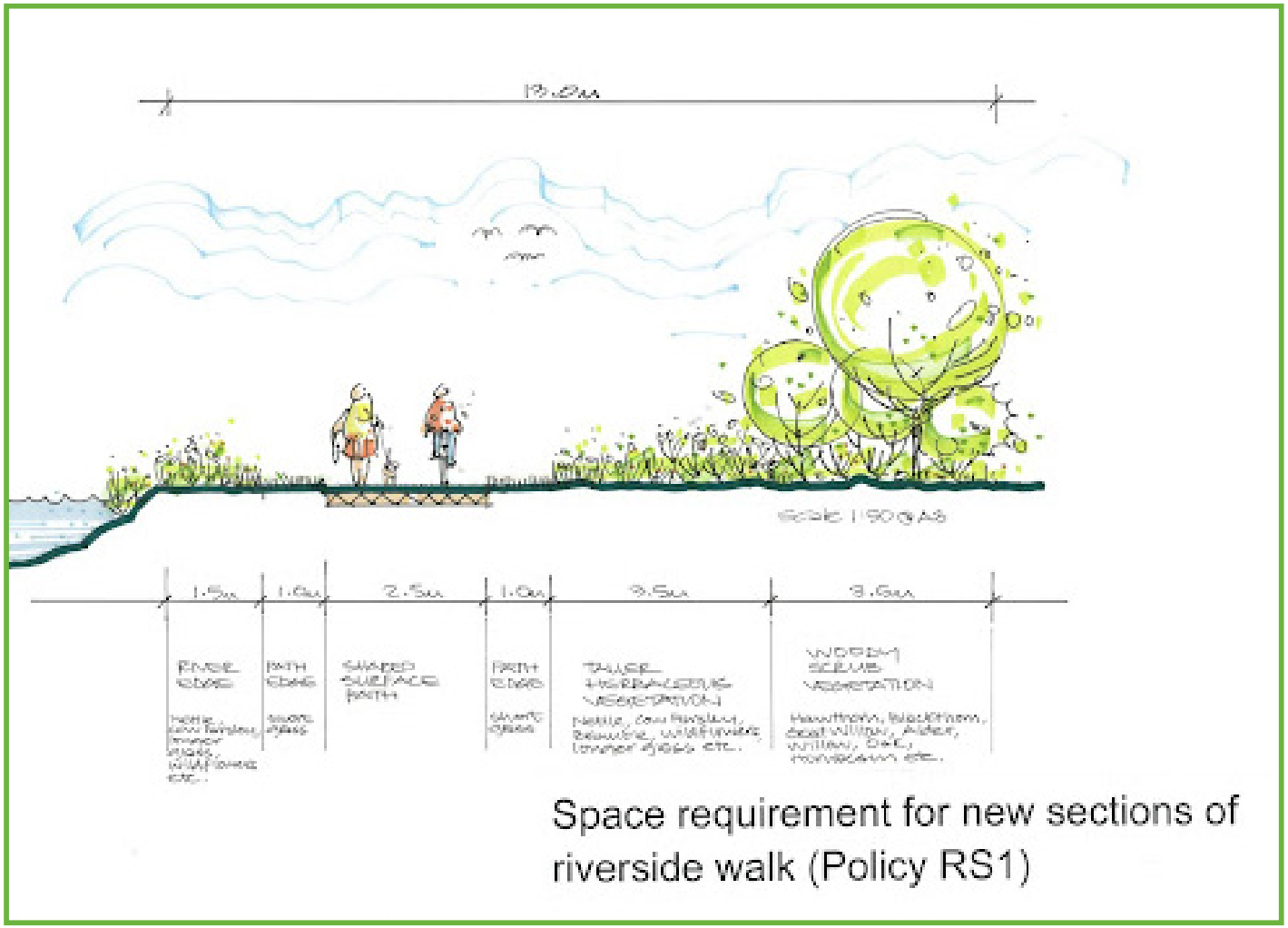
The aim of the following policy statements is to ensure that the creation of new sections of route and the enhancement of existing sections are coordinated to produce a unified riverside environment of good, consistent design quality and recognisable identity.

4.1 Space requirements for creation of new sections of riverside walk

The Environment Agency require a minimum width of 8.0m from top of river bank for operational watercourse management reasons. Past experience has shown that this dimension does not provide sufficient space for habitat creation and buffering built development.

The optimum width of 'riverside corridor' required to adequately accommodate access for people to walk and cycle and a rich, varied habitat for wildlife is 13.0m from top of river bank. The cross-section drawing below shows how this width will typically be apportioned.

Policy RS1: *Wherever possible a minimum corridor width of 13.0m shall be reserved for new riverside access routes.*



Space requirement for new sections of riverside walk (Policy RS1)

4.2 Land ownership and management of the Riverside Corridor

Coordinated management of the Riverside Corridor as one coherent entity can only be achieved if land ownership and management are unified.

Policy RS2: *Where land adjacent to the river is developed the developer will be encouraged to transfer ownership and management of the riverside corridor (approximately 13m wide access corridor measured from river edge) together with an agreed commuted sum to cover future management to the city council. In addition, the developer will be expected to fund the construction of the new path, furniture, signage and planting in accordance with the city council's design and specification.*

4.3 Shared path surfaces for walking and cycling

All riverside routes have been designed to be shared by pedestrians, cyclists, e-bikes and e-scooter users without segregation. A largely unmarked and unsigned route places responsibility on users to respect others and act responsibly. The behaviour of cyclists and other users shall be kept under review in busy city centre spaces.

Policy RS3: *Hard surfaced riverside path routes shall be shared by pedestrians and cyclists without segregation wherever possible.*

4.4 Path width and surface treatment

Sustrans, the UK's leading sustainable transport charity, advise that shared surfaces should be 2.0 - 3.0m wide with 1.0m wide grass margins either side. Our own experience confirms that a hard surfaced width of 2.5 – 3.0m with 1.0m grass margins either side works well.

Policy RS4: *Shared surface path widths shall be a minimum of 2.5m in width with 1.0m wide cut grass margins either side to present a managed appearance.*

The consensus of opinion amongst users favours bitumen macadam as the most suitable path surface material.

Machine laid bitumen macadam is the preferred choice because of the smooth surface which is well suited to cycling and low maintenance. The bitumen macadam may be laid on geogrid in areas where there is a flooding issue. When bitumen macadam is used the edging is important. Treated softwood timber forms a stable edge and enables more natural curved alignments to be achieved. Macadam weathers in appearance and if concrete edging is used it will soon become covered by vegetation. Bitumen macadam paths can be made to appear more 'natural' by the application of a bonded natural stone aggregate to the surface. This adds an extra cost and is likely to wear away over time.

Self-binding path gravel provides an alternative to macadam and is best suited to areas outside the city centre in open countryside, or areas bounded by trees and hedges. The surface is porous with a loose texture. The material is a mix of different sized aggregate and is combined with a fine clay dust. It is laid using a heavy roller with a water jet to produce a compacted surface which binds together with usage. The surface can be topped-up if low spots occur. A timber edge is commonly used to retain this surface.

Policy RS5: *The preferred choice of material for new path surface construction in both urban and rural areas, shall be bitumen macadam.*

4.5 Lighting

A balance needs to be struck between the provision of artificial lighting for pedestrians and cyclists along certain lengths of the riverside and maintaining a dark sky to protect habitats for wildlife. River corridors, especially in urban centres, provide an excellent foraging habitat for nocturnal wildlife such as bats.

Increased lighting is a particular problem for bat populations. Bats are specifically adapted for low light levels. Lights, particularly those with high ultraviolet (UV) levels attract large numbers of insects which can result in a depletion of numbers from the riverside habitat. The Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals has issued guidance on bats and artificial lighting (Guidance Note (GN08/23 – Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night) which should be referred to when considering replacement and new lighting at the riverside in key bat habitat areas – see Appendix 1. Additionally CIEEM provide guidance notes for Planners,

Engineers, Architects and Developers. This can be found on their website

cieem.net/resource/bats-and-lighting-guidance-notes-for-planners-engineers-architects-and-developers/?filter_resource_type=227%20%20%20dd

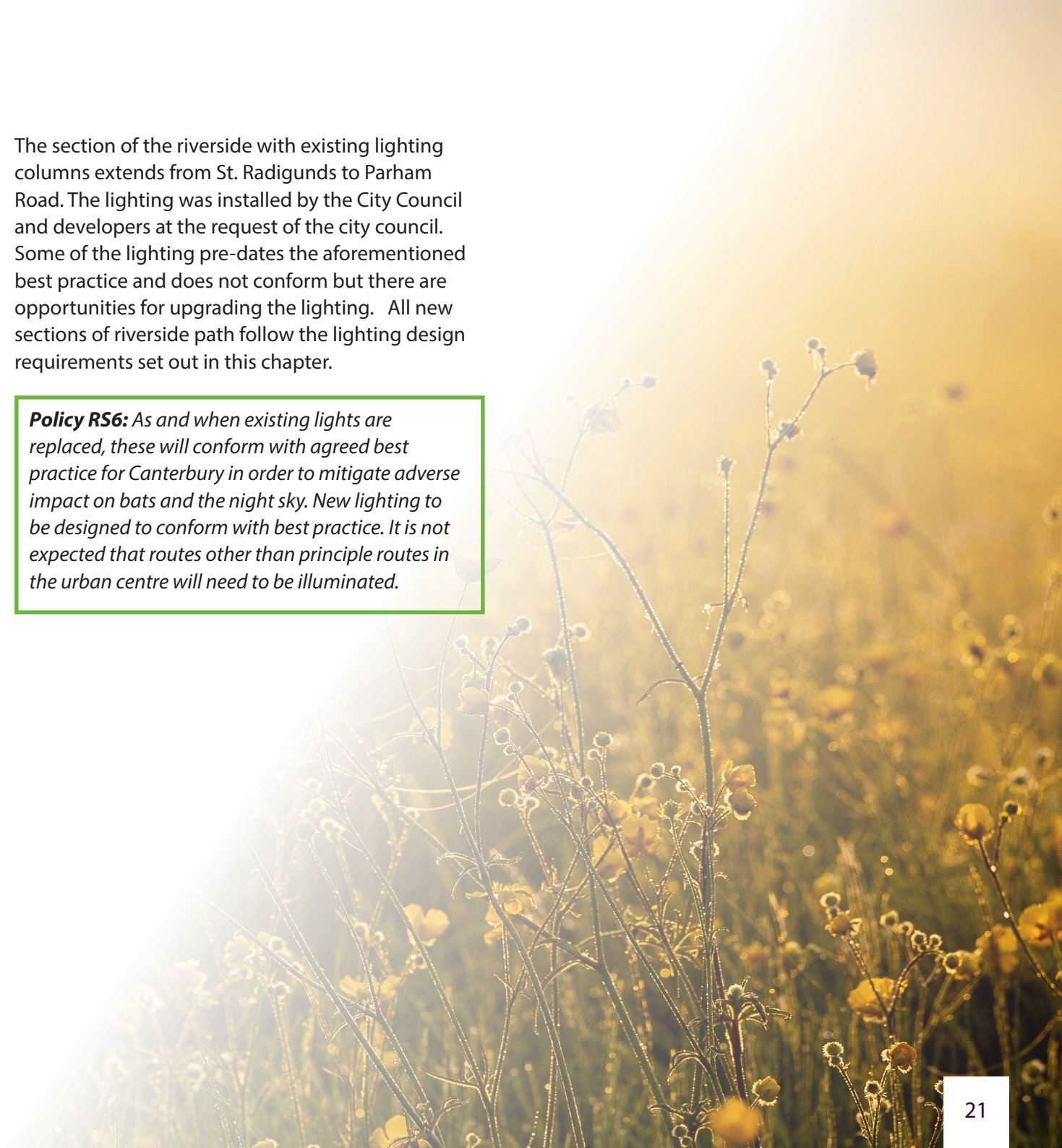
Artificial lighting in the wrong place at the wrong time is a pollutant which can harm the natural environment. However since 2020 there have been significant improvements to lighting, reducing impacts on wildlife, whilst maintaining adequate levels of illumination for safe public access, but there are still conflicts where land adjacent to the riverside corridor is brightly lit for public safety purposes but may impact riverside bat habitats.

Where possible, riverside lighting shall conform to the following requirements:

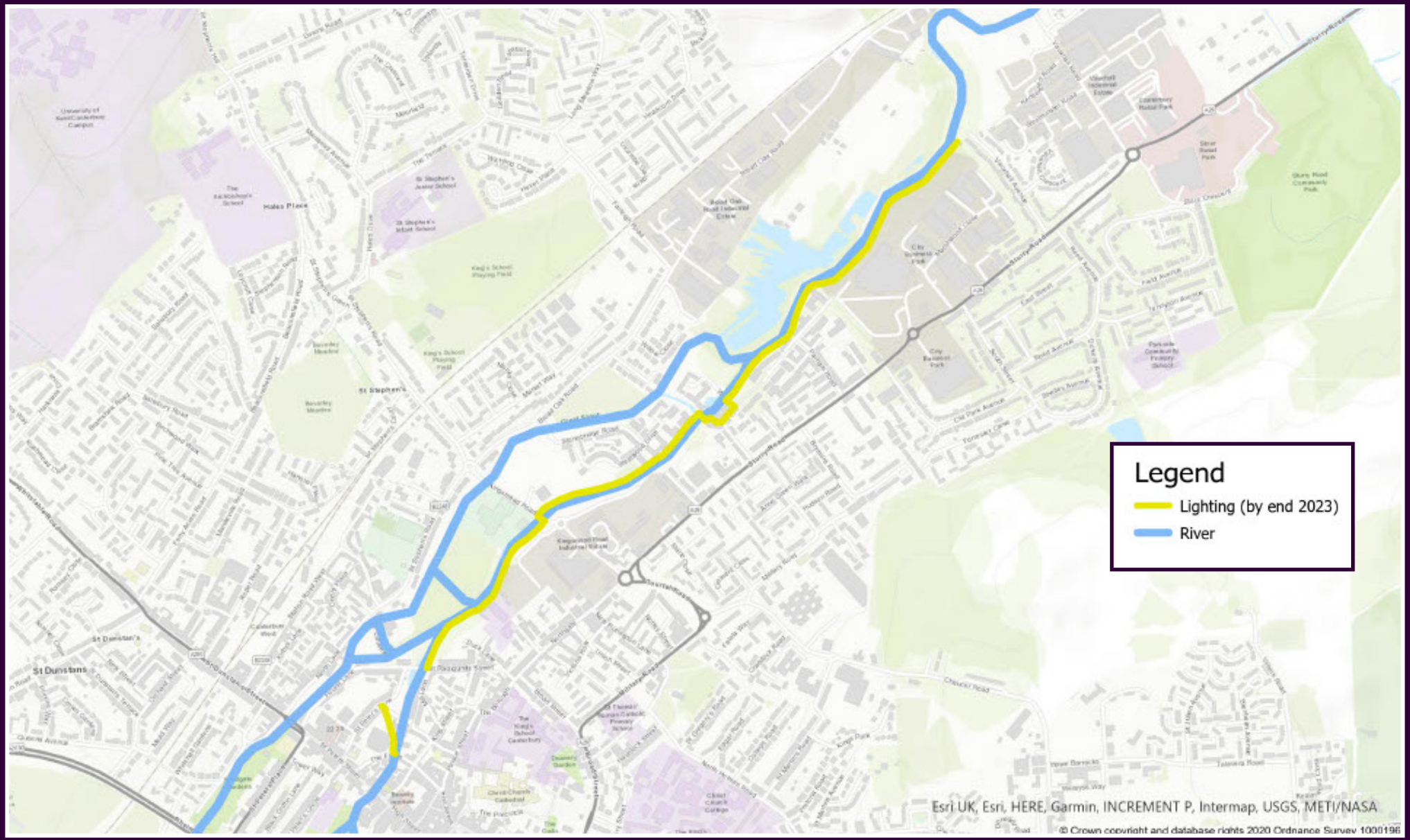
- Avoid light spillage into the night sky
- Use narrow spectrum bulbs less damaging to wildlife
- Use medium to low level lighting columns (less than 4.0m high). Low level light sources reduce ecological impact, but are more prone to malicious damage
- Direct illumination away from the river and riverside vegetation down towards the access route
- Use energy-efficient LED lighting at 30 watts where possible for pedestrian routes to provide an illumination level of 20 lux (55 lux is the standard ambient illumination level)
- Incorporate sensor controlled devices to trigger illumination by the movement of an approaching user

The section of the riverside with existing lighting columns extends from St. Radigunds to Parham Road. The lighting was installed by the City Council and developers at the request of the city council. Some of the lighting pre-dates the aforementioned best practice and does not conform but there are opportunities for upgrading the lighting. All new sections of riverside path follow the lighting design requirements set out in this chapter.

Policy RS6: *As and when existing lights are replaced, these will conform with agreed best practice for Canterbury in order to mitigate adverse impact on bats and the night sky. New lighting to be designed to conform with best practice. It is not expected that routes other than principle routes in the urban centre will need to be illuminated.*



Illuminated sections of riverside path



4.6 Furniture

Furniture refers to seating and litter bins.

Seats

Seats should not be installed unless the location is suitable. A seat should be positioned in a sunny, sheltered location with a view. Ideally a seat should back against a fixed element such as a wall, railings, fence, hedge or tree to provide a visual 'anchor' and to provide a sense of security. Seats should be comfortable with a back and arm rests, although this will not be the case in every instance. Seats should be set back from a path by at least 2.0m wherever possible. Seats with a view of the path will help provide informal surveillance.

Seats provide an opportunity to reinforce the identity of Canterbury's riverside. The style of seat for urban settings should differ from that used in open countryside and rural environments, with both having standardised selected designs appropriate for the respective settings. It is acknowledged that certain historic gardens and parks in Canterbury may have a particular style of seat not used elsewhere. Although there are maintenance advantages to standardisation, in the interest of creating a sense of place it cannot always be achieved. In some cases seats with a back support and/or central arm rests are preferred to provide for those with a need for additional support.

The route between Chartham and Canterbury features several 'landmark' sculptural seats crafted by artists. Sculptural seats such as these work well along the longer rural stretches because they help legibility and wayfinding and serve as distance markers. Care should be taken to avoid siting 'sculptural seats' at too frequent intervals. Additionally there are a number of bespoke art seats set in the urban riverside spaces which enhance the individual identity of these spaces and provide aesthetic interest.

Policy RS7: *To strengthen route identity a standard seat type has been selected for both urban and rural settings. Occasional well-sited sculptural 'landmark' seats will be installed to add interest and aid navigation.*

Litter bins

The Glasdon Jubilee litter bin is appropriate for both urban and rural situations and is now in use on the busiest urban stretches of riverside. This style of litter bin is well suited for the riverside as its covered style minimises and reduces the risk of litter blowing out, being accessed by birds, littering the riverside and the river itself. Litter bins should be carefully sited at junction points and should not be positioned too close to seats where unpleasant odours and insects discourage usage, and must be firmly secured into the ground and offset from the pathway, to avoid the scenario of them being moved out of place and potentially ending up in the river. The longer rural stretches should not be interrupted by litter bins. Users should be asked to take their litter home with them or deposit it in the nearest litter bin. Frequency of emptying bins is as per the Council's Grounds Maintenance and Associated Works contract, any non-compliance with contract terms may be discussed with the Contract Management officers.

Policy RS8: *A standardised litter bin type is used for the riverside.*

4.7 Structures

Structures include hard landscape elements such as walls, railings and bridges which are key components of the riverside infrastructure. Walls and railings provide enclosure, control movement and add richness to the townscape experience of urban areas. Existing structures need to be regularly inspected and maintained in good condition. It should be noted that some of the structures are Kent County Council owned and managed. The design of new walls, railings and bridges should have the input of an appropriate professional to ensure design quality and sensitive integration with the local context. The context will determine the most appropriate design, materials and construction techniques.

Bridges provide key visual punctuations along the riverside corridor. They connect, provide a platform for views of the river and, if well designed, provide memorable architectural features.

Existing bridges need to be regularly inspected and maintained. New bridges need to be designed to fit the context and other bridge design in the locality. Bridges need to conform to access and safety standards in terms of widths and handrail heights. They can be narrower than adjacent paths. The height of a bridge over water will be determined by the requirements of the Environment Agency. A level transition between path and bridge should be

achieved where possible to promote ease of access for pedestrians and cyclists. Bridges with a riverside footpath passing beneath them need to be carefully designed to make sure that the footpath is adequate width and adequately lit (bay friendly lighting) to maximise people's sense of safety; bridges without public access beneath should be designed in such a way to minimise anti-social behaviour. An example of the former is Kingsmead Road bridge which is dark and narrow access for pedestrians. An example of the latter is the Stonebridge Road bridge which has repeated problems of anti-social behaviour.

Where a Public Right of Way (PROW) passes under or over a bridge, Kent County Council enforces PROW requirements.

Policy RS9: *New walls, railings and bridges represent important infrastructure elements and need to be appropriately designed in sympathy with local context to enhance local distinctiveness.*

4.8 Signage

In relation to the riverside walk, there are three types of sign:

Welcome

Most often used in relation to a static space such as a principal park or garden with identifiable boundaries. Commonly fixed to an existing wall or railings, or post mounted in the ground, at an access point. A welcome sign at key access points serves to advertise the name and existence of the space; to highlight features and facilities available (plan of site with key); and to provide contact details of owner or managing organisation.

Directional

Typically a finger post sign, this type of sign (related to linear routes) confirms the existence of the route; may display distances to destinations; and, advertises the route to those who do not currently use it. National cycle routes shall be indicated by a small but easily recognisable adhesive sign attached to the post of directional signs.

Interpretation

Most commonly a lectern type panel designed to convey information to enrich the user experience. The information may relate to notable historic structures or events, past use of the site, wildlife or landscape interest. Website and app downloads may be provided for further information.

It is important for signage to be coordinated, consistent, clear and relevant to users. It should be used judiciously and sited at key locations, and clutter is to be avoided.

An easily recognisable logo specifically designed for a space or linear route l strengthens the identity. A logo for Canterbury's riverside has been produced and should ideally feature on all riverside signage.

Policy RS10: *Welcome and information signs should be designed to incorporate riverside branding wherever possible to provide a consistency and sense of place. The style and size of the sign should be appropriate to the location and accessible to the user. Wherever possible these signs should be fixed to existing walls and railings to minimise 'clutter'. Two different types of directional signs shall be used: stainless steel post with metal finger signs for urban centres and timber marker posts for open countryside.*

4.9 Planting

The emphasis is on managing existing areas of planting rather than new planting design. Only isolated, short sections of the river corridor feature groups of trees. In open countryside trees such as willow and alder occasionally punctuate the riverside landscape. Management may involve coppicing trees and shrubs, sowing of wildflowers seeds, changes to mowing regimes, to improve and create grassland habitat for pollinators, and allowing river-edge planting to develop with minimal disturbance.

In situations where new planting is required the following principles should be followed: outside the urban area plant selection should be native species characteristic of the riverside and local area. Indigenous plants strengthen local landscape character and provide food, shelter and 'stepping stones' to aid safe movement for a diverse range of wildlife. Priority should be given to planting for pollinators where feasible.

Within the urban boundary there will be opportunity for carefully selected non-native species to be planted subject to context. Wherever possible tree species in urban areas should be native, and planted for pollinators.

Tree planting requires careful consideration - right tree, right place. Trees and tall shrubs will impact on views, the ecology of the riverbank and river and the sense of safety perceived by users.

Policy RS11: *New planting should be composed of native species. River corridor vegetation should be managed to create an attractive, safe environment maximising variation of habitat for wildlife. In certain instances in urban areas it may be appropriate to consider planting individual non-native 'landmark' trees, but rural areas should prioritise native species planting.*

4.10 Biodiversity

The river and its associated drainage channels are key habitat features supporting a range of fish, mammals, birds and invertebrates. Chalk rivers are characterised by clear water of shallow depths, an abundance of river gravels, good assemblages of plants and relatively stable water flows. Through good water catchment management the environment of the Great Stour should be supporting trout, eels, water voles, otter, our native crayfish, bats and a wide range of birds in good numbers.

Rivers are used as corridors for wildlife to pass along. Sometimes historic structures such as sluices and weirs have been installed and these can act as a barrier to some species. Work has and will be undertaken to allow more species to pass through or around these structures in Canterbury.

The species below are in no particular order:

Beaver – The river Stour, below Canterbury has one of the largest populations of beaver in England. They have been on the edge of Canterbury since around 2013, and have been prevented from coming through Canterbury due to the structures at Abbots Mills and Deans Mill. However, beaver are likely to come through the city at some point, if they have not already done so. They will dig burrows, damage trees, and possibly gnaw on man-made material. Protection for specimen/valuable trees can be put in place. Since 2022 they have legal protection so licenses are required to do any work around where they might reside in burrows or lodges. Habitat creation for beaver in rural areas/on the edge of Canterbury, along with other species, should be identified wherever possible.

Otter – The population of otter has been building again in the Stour catchment since the late 1990s but numbers are still very low. They were widespread in the 1950s but possibly went extinct due to persecution, pollution and habitat loss. They will pass through Canterbury but like beaver are largely nocturnal so are very unlikely to be seen. The majority of their diet is fish and especially eel. They live in holts under trees but can use artificial holts or even man-made structures. They have been helped to get through Canterbury where there are structures by installing ladders but sometimes where otters have obstacles they can be forced onto roads and railways. Otters are a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. Where otters are found the mink population is usually low due to otters out competing mink, and mink are an introduced species that can prey on water vole. Increasing the fish population, reducing pollution and providing habitat will all help otters maintain or increase their population.

Water vole – The population of water vole has been declining nationally for half a century due to the increasing mink population, habitat loss and pollution. Many schemes have been put in place to help maintain or develop habitat in the last 30 years such as Countryside Stewardship and they have been assisted by other farming policy changes and conservation bodies purchasing wetlands. In 2009 when a water vole survey was undertaken in the Lower Stour catchment it was found that the area had one of the largest population densities in the UK. Water vole are found on the east and west side of the city but at very low densities. Water vole, like beaver are vegetarian, feeding on emergent and riverside vegetation. They live in small burrows on the riverside. Brown rat and mink will eat them. Due to the built up and historic nature of Canterbury it is important to identify any locations where riverside vegetation can be developed to allow water vole to move freely through the City, what might be termed 'Service Station habitat', like the planters put in place in Westgate Gardens.

White-Clawed Crayfish – This is our only native species of crayfish and it has been declining in most of the UK over the last 50 years. It prefers rivers with stones and gravels as opposed to silty rivers so was found above Canterbury in the 1990s. The last record in the District was at Shalmsford Street in 1999. The KSCP are undertaking eDNA surveys in the river catchment to ascertain if it might still be present and intends to develop Ark sites. It is still present above Ashford. Its decline is largely due to the introduction of non-native species of crayfish, especially American signal crayfish which can carry a plague that the White-clawed crayfish is particularly susceptible to. The plague can be carried on fishing tackle and wellington boots. It can also be wiped out by pollution and by too much sediment in the river. Signal crayfish have been found in the river as far up as Fordwich. Ensuring that people going into the river have clean/biosecure footwear and equipment is what is most required to encourage a population of white-clawed crayfish but it is unlikely that they will come back to the main river in Canterbury.

Fish – A plentiful supply and range of fish species in the river is very important for other wildlife and anglers. Like other lowland English rivers fish numbers have declined. This could be due to pollution, disease and lack of food, such as invertebrates and other fish to feed on. Fish are omnivorous, and most are fairly opportunistic. Fish species in Canterbury should include eel, pike, dace, stone loach, bullhead, minnow, perch, chub, brown trout, brook lamprey, gudgeon, roach, common bream, rudd, tench and stickleback. Wild sea trout and salmon have been recorded in the last

decade coming through Canterbury, although this is very rare, hopefully it is a sign that our rivers are improving for fish. Ensuring that we have vegetation in our rivers and that they are unpolluted will help fish numbers increase.

Eels – The stour used to be an excellent river for eel but like all other European rivers, eels have declined massively, making them 'Critically Endangered' by the IUCN Red list of Threatened Species. However, when carrying out electro fishing surveys eels can still provide 50% of the fish biomass, it is usually the younger eels that are absent from catches.

Birds – In addition to wildfowl that use the river perhaps the other most recognisable iconic bird is the kingfisher. These are very special to see due to the blue iridescent plumage and fishing habits. They are a protected species so take care not to disturb them, especially around their nests. Birds associated with the river will be feeding off insects, fish and plants and so management directed at encouraging these groups will benefit birds. Bread has very low nutritional value to birds and encourages rats so best not to feed it to them.

Bats – The river corridor is extremely important for bats. All 18 species of bat in the UK are protected through the Wildlife and Countryside Act and this includes their roosting sites. Bats use the river to navigate along but also because the large number of trees can provide roosting and nesting sites for some species. Insects are likely to be found around vegetation, including trees and from the river itself, so the river corridor is good foraging habitat for them. Daubenton's bat, which is found in Canterbury, is most associated with water but all species will be using the river corridor, so ensuring we have some large trees in the river corridor and other vegetation is important. As soprano pipistrelles favour insects with aquatic larvae, the river itself is of particular importance to this species. They forage here in good numbers on summer evenings. Artificial light can disturb bats feeding and roosting and so the design of it needs to be considered.

Riverfly – There are three voluntary groups that monitor the health of the river through Canterbury by doing riverfly surveys. These are coordinated by the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership and are based at Westgate, Kingsmead and Sturry. Species such as mayfly larvae and freshwater shrimp are caught, recorded and returned to the river. Most of the river bed through Canterbury is termed an armoured or concreted bed. This has occurred because of the amount of rubble that has been deposited in the river over many centuries and because calcium carbonate has dissolved and glued some of the natural gravels and substrate together. Invertebrates and fish prefer loose gravels, so any work that could be done to provide more natural beds will be beneficial to the health of the river.

Further issues for biodiversity in the river in Canterbury

Litter pollution is an ongoing problem in the river in Canterbury. Litter can trap, poison, and kill wildlife. Fishing line, plastic balls and bottles, and micro plastics are just some of the items found in the river which can impact on biodiversity.

INNS or invasive non-native species are not as prevalent in the river in Canterbury as in other rivers in Kent or indeed the UK. Plants such as Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed are present and if allowed to spread could smother our native plants which wildlife relies on for food and shelter. The American mink species is present in Canterbury and has an impact on native species such as water vole.

Over recent decades many of our chalk rivers have been damaged by nutrient enrichment (nitrogen and phosphate) and unfortunately the Great Stour is classified as being eutrophic as a result of high levels of particularly phosphate. Eutrophication, or over fertilisation of rivers, leads to excessive growth of algae which smothers out other aquatic plants and animals. Eutrophication also reduced the amount of oxygen available to fish and as such is possibly responsible for large scale fish kills experienced along the Stour. Phosphates get into water courses as a result of run-off from agricultural fields fertilised with phosphorus compounds. However, the main source is from household effluent from sewage treatment works and septic tanks. The EU Water Framework Directive adopted in 2000 demands both clean and biologically healthy rivers. As a result huge investment is being made to improve the effectiveness of sewage treatment plants. It is hoped that, over time, the main source of phosphates to our rivers will be significantly reduced and work is underway to create new wetland habitats along the Stour to help strip out high nutrient loading.

Policy RS12: *The environment of the river and river corridor provides a range of very important habitats and safe movement corridor for wildlife, particularly through the urban centre of Canterbury. Wherever possible new design and landscape management decisions shall promote biodiversity. The in-channel river passing through Canterbury shall be enhanced as a linear movement route for wildlife.*

4.11 Recreation

The two main recreational activities associated with the river are the managed use of watercraft (boats, punts and canoes), and fishing, which is unmanaged between Toddlers Cove and Sturry.

Well-managed recreational use of the river can make a valuable contribution to making Canterbury's riverside a more popular and attractive place.

In recent years paddle boarding has become a popular leisure activity on the river and continues to increase in popularity. Paddle boarding can cause conflict with other users of the river particularly along stretches that are used by licensed watercraft operators. The impact of paddle boarding on the existing river users and wildlife needs to be considered. There is a need to establish and define what public navigation rights exist (if any) and in the longer term an assessment of the river's carrying capacity for leisure craft is recommended.

Watercraft

Well managed, licenced (and unlicenced) recreational activities such as boating, kayaking and punting add vitality and interest to the river, extend the offer to visitors and reveal hidden parts of the city without disturbance to other users. Some watercraft operators have been active on the river for over 10 years and their best practice, regarding sustainability and ecological awareness, is welcomed and will be promoted as best practice. The city council will encourage the establishment of an annual forum as an opportunity for water-based leisure users to come together to discuss leisure issues and establish best operational practice.

Licenced activities: Punt and boat hire has been successfully managed by Canterbury City Council's licensing section for a number of years. There are now three licensed operators within the city centre. Two operating on the southern channel or 'Kings River' and one from the Westgate Towers on the northern channel. Punting is able to animate the river without major disturbance to wildlife. It is popular with visitors to the city, and provides a valuable contrast to the busy shopping streets. It contributes to dispersing tourists and broadening economic activity within the city.

Unlicensed activities: the city council will work actively with interested groups/organisations in an effort to coordinate the accommodation of a range of river-based activities (canoeing, kayaking, bodyboards etc) with a view to ensuring all operations respect access arrangements, bylaws, biodiversity and health and safety.

Policy RS13: *Maintain licenced boating and punting activities on the river at sustainable levels. Consider capacity of the river in given location before approving any new water-based interests.*

Fishing

Tonford fly fishing club manage the river for trout fishing from the railway bridge just upstream of Toddlers Cove to Chartham. The Canterbury and District Angling association manage the section from the Mill Pool at Sturry to Plucks Gutter for course fishing. The stretch of river between Sturry and the start of the Tonford fly fishery is unmanaged.

A more serious threat to fish populations is being posed by overseas visitors who customarily eat coarse fish instead of returning them to the river as is the tradition in this country. The Environment Agency has been pressing for signs with symbols to be displayed to indicate coarse fish are not to be killed and eaten.

Previous strategies both noted the capacity of the river to accommodate boating and fishing as being limited, and highlighted that both activities have the potential to disturb other users and wildlife. It is important on a small river such as the Stour that boat use is carefully managed. The city council has produced an Advice Note relating to fishing in Canterbury (see Appendix 2).

Policy RS14: *The city council shall work in partnership with the Environment Agency, the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership, and local friends groups to develop a policy to educate anglers and to manage unrestricted fishing between Canterbury and Sturry to avoid fish stocks being further depleted.*

CHAPTER 5.0

THE NETWORK OF RIVERSIDE PARKS, GARDENS & OPEN SPACES IN CANTERBURY

5.1 The existing network of riverside spaces

Table 1: Riverside parks, gardens and open spaces accessible to the public

Name	Type	Area (Hectares)	Ownership	Management	Locked at night
Hambrook Marshes	Nature Reserve	20.23	Private Charitable Trust	Private	No
Wincheap Meadow Local Nature Reserve	Nature Reserve	6.65	CCC	CCC	No
Whitehall Meadow	Nature Reserve	4.5	CCC	CCC	Yes - access is restricted
Westgate Parks:	Park		CCC	CCC	
Toddlers Cove		2.0			No
Bingley Island		1.7			No
Tannery Field		2.0			No
Westgate Gardens		1.7			Yes
Tannery Park	Park	0.3	Private	Private	Yes
Greyfriars Garden	Gdn	0.3	CCC	CCC	No
The Franciscan Gardens	Gdn	0.6	Private	Private	Yes * (access is via 60 St Peter's Street
Butterfly Garden	Gdn	0.008	CCC	CCC	Yes

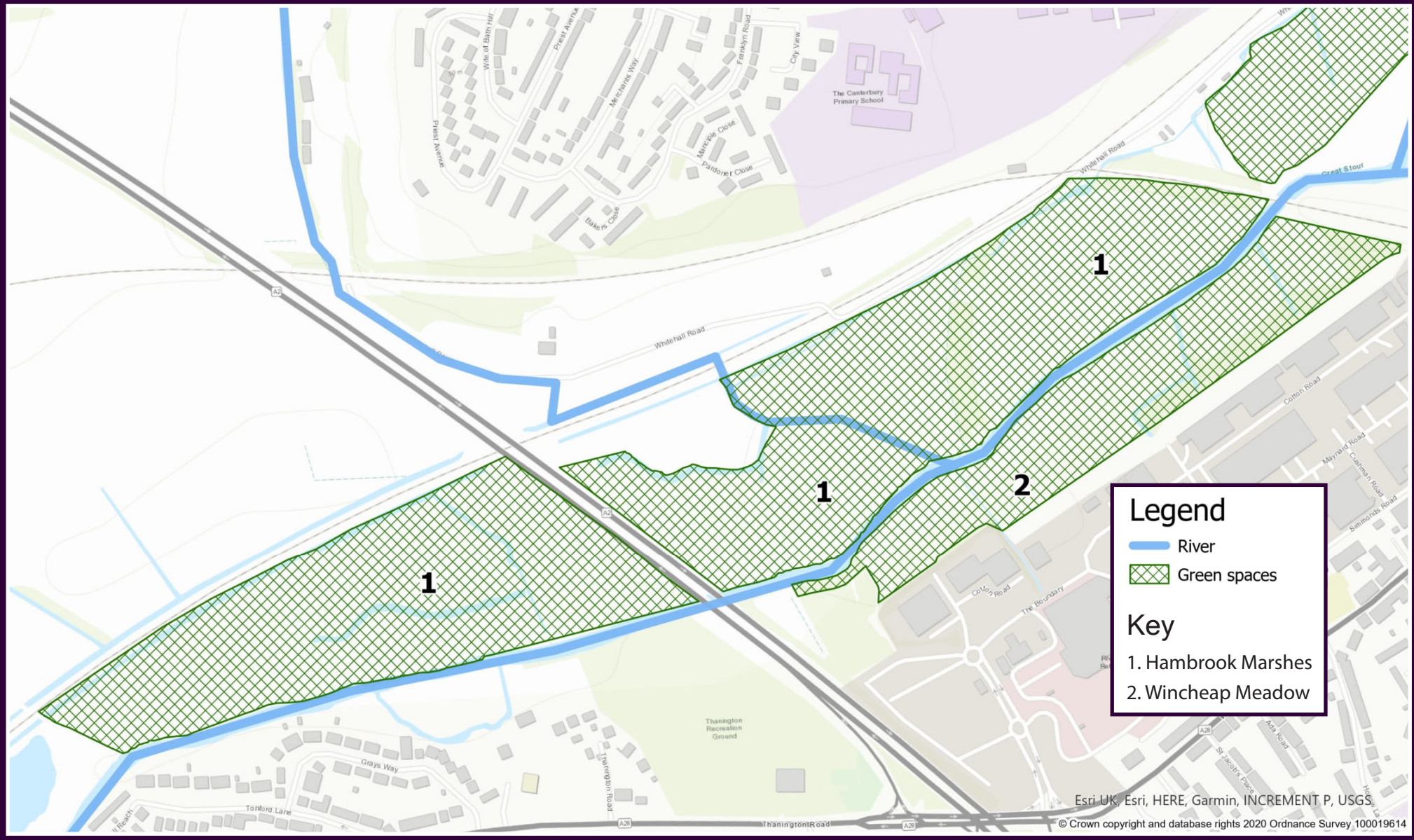
Name	Type	Area (Hectares)	Ownership	Management	Locked at night
Millers Field / The Causeway	OS	0.2	CCC	CCC	No
Abbots Mill Garden / Solly's Orchard	Gdn	0.3	CCC	CCC	Yes
Abbots Mill Project	Private and Public OS		Private / Leased	Private/ CCC own Arrowhead section	No
Bus Company Island Local Nature Reserve	OS	1.1	CCC	CCC	Yes (access by appointment)
Kingsmead Field Village Green	VG	1.3	CCC	CCC / FoKF	No
Kingsbrook Park	OS	0.6	Private/CCC	CCC	No
Barton Mill	OS	0.9	CCC from 2016	CCC from 2016	No
Sargeants Parade	OS	0.2	Private	Private	No
Vauxhall Avenue Field	OS	2.7	CCC	CCC	No

(CCC : Canterbury City Council; OS: open space; Gdn: Garden; VG: Village Green)

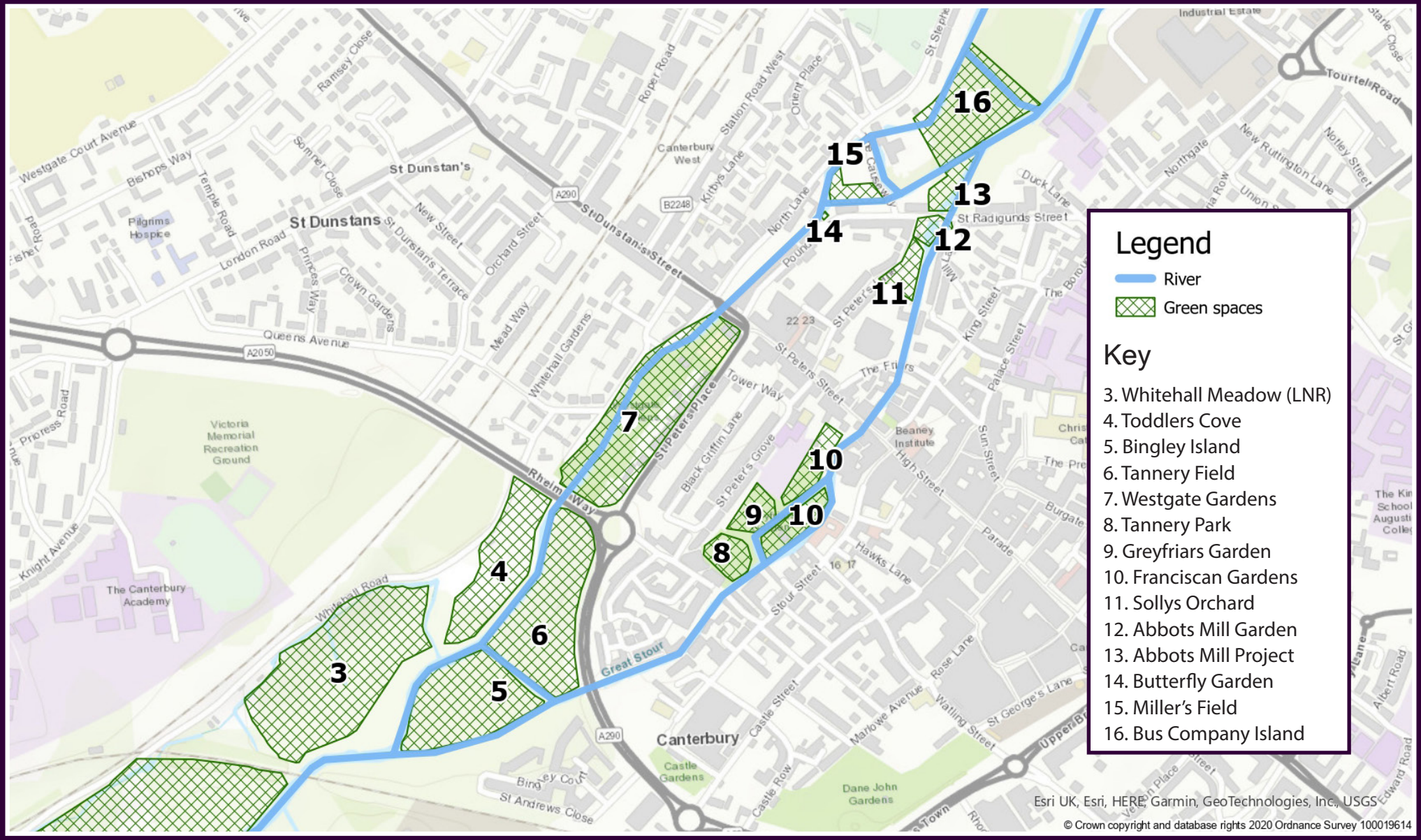
(*The Franciscan Gardens opening is seasonal 10am to 4:30pm (last entry to gardens at 4pm) Monday to Sunday

The assemblage of parks, gardens and open spaces associated with the linear riverside corridor as it passes through the urban centre of Canterbury has a combined area of 47.78 hectares. Most of the sites are owned and managed by the City Council. These spaces make up the green spine of the river corridor through the city and out into the rural area; they provide great variety in terms of spaces with different functions, and a heritage trail revealing hidden parts of the city.

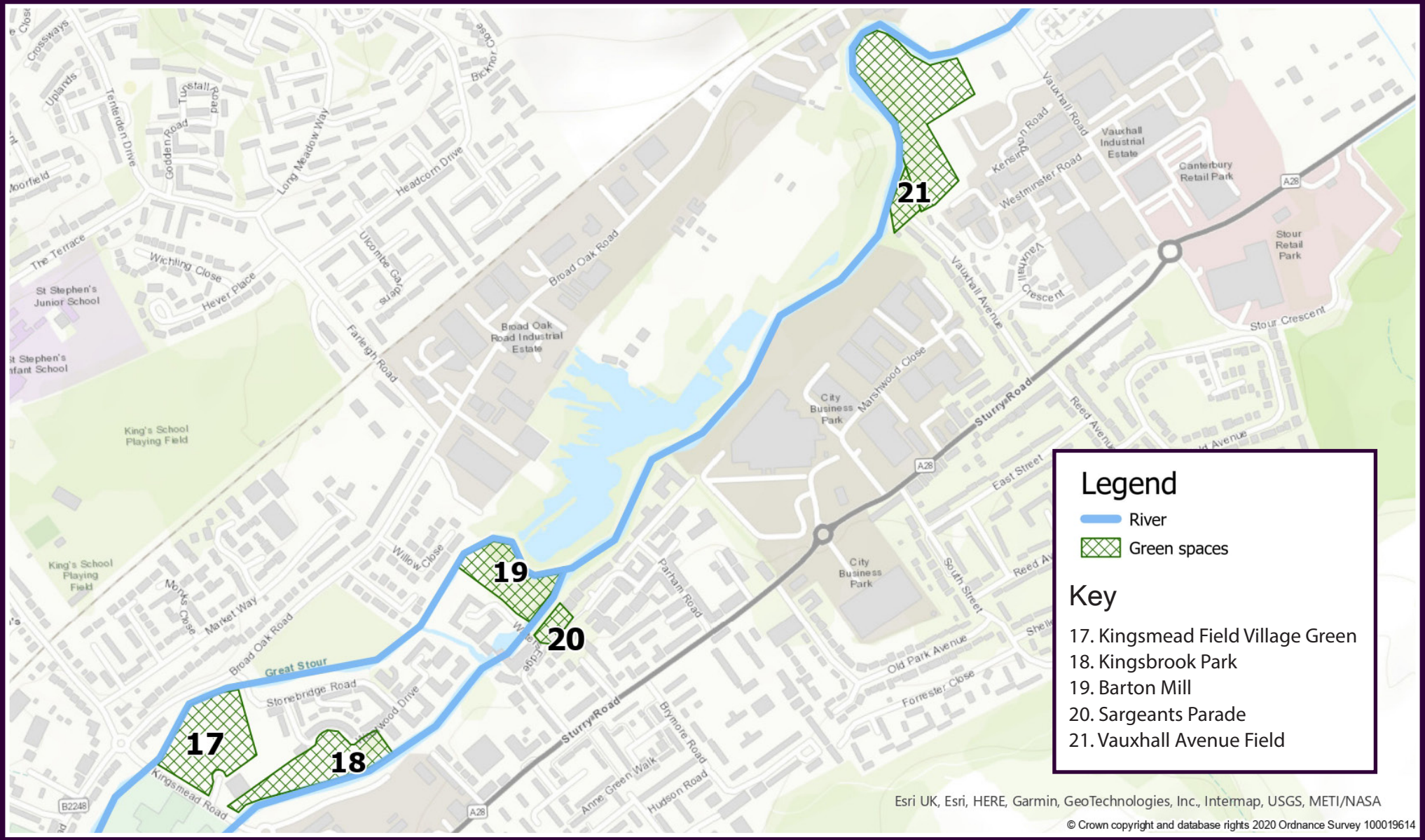
Key riverside open spaces



Key riverside open spaces



Key riverside open spaces



5.2 Individual character and whole-route design

Each of these 'static' spaces possesses its own individual character. It is important to identify and understand the essence of the character of each space to guide future change. In this way proposed changes are more likely to strengthen character and historic sense of place.

It would be wrong to try to dilute individual character and variation in an attempt to unify the spaces into a single, easily recognisable riverside walk brand. The approach should be to identify and strengthen individual character and user experience, and, through design, provide subtle indications that the spaces form part of the riverside walk network.

This is best achieved through the choice of colour of the metal work of furniture, gates and railings and signage. Path surface treatment is a powerful way of unifying the route, but may not be practical or cost effective in all instances. Coordination of signage (welcome, directional and information) with the use of standardised design and the inclusion of a distinctive logo (see appendix 1) is the most practical way of highlighting the riverside route within these spaces.

Table 2: Description of the character and function of riverside spaces

Name	Character/function
Hambrook Marshes	Wetland area to the west of the city, immediately adjacent to the river Great Stour. Provides valuable habitat for thriving bird life and a wealth of plants and wildflower species and is managed for conservation. The site is wet grassland for most of the year, though during the summer months the site dries to become a wildflower meadow. The Marsh is managed to increase biodiversity and as an educational resource and is not farmed for arable or livestock; no agrochemicals are applied to the site, which increases the floral and faunal diversity. The site is grazed for the purpose of conservation management to increase species-richness and maintain a variety of grass sward lengths. This is particularly important for winter wading birds that use the site, as they require open areas to forage and long grass for cover. The Great Stour Way shared use path network runs through the marshes, connecting Westgate Parks and Whitehall Meadow through to Tonford Lakes. A wooden footbridge connects to Wincheap Meadow on the southern side of the river.
Wincheap Meadow LNR	A semi-natural open space to the west of the city centre adjacent to the river Great Stour and opposite Hambrook Marshes. The site is dissected by ditches and has encroaching scrub and trees. The area behind Pets at Home is meadow grass with two scrapes created for diversity of habitat and wildflowers. The area has limited public access with informal mown pathways providing access to the meadow. A bridge over the river allows walkers to gain access to sites on the northern bank of the river, including Hambrook Marshes. The long term management of this 6.65 hectare site will be set out in a management plan that will be developed to support the site's dedication as a Local Nature Reserve. Management will focus on wetland habitats and may contribute to the need to reduce nitrates and phosphates from the waters of the Great Stour. The management plan, to be in palace by spring 2024, will take account of the site's ability to positively contribute to enhancements to the adjacent Wincheap Industrial Estate.

Name	Character/function
Whitehall Meadow LNR	An area of semi-natural open space on the western edge of the city centre, directly adjacent to the river Great Stour. The majority of the site is semi-natural grassland, managed by the grazing of cattle with livestock fencing bounding the large northern compartment. Two ditches and three scrapes within the site provide further habitat interest. The smaller compartment to the south of the site contains the Great Stour Way shared use pathway and an area of amenity grassland that extends down to meet the riverbank. The larger northern compartment is currently managed to meet nature conservation objectives and the south predominantly as amenity/open space. The site marks the transition from the more formal environment of the Westgate Gardens to a much more informal setting that extends out into the wider countryside.
Westgate Parks:	
• Toddlers Cove	Informal grass open space with random groups of trees. Accommodates natural timber play area, toilet block and parking. Opportunity to vary grass cutting to further emphasise informal character. Line of pollarded willow trees separate space from the river. Destination for children and families in fine weather.
• Bingley Island	Secluded island managed for nature conservation interest with ponds. Circular, unsurfaced, informal path route. Area of short grass contrasting with tree groups and areas of tall, native herbaceous vegetation.
• Tannery Field	Buffer space between Rheims Way and river on two distinct levels, which serves a green buffer between Rheims Way and Westgate Gardens. Lower area subject to flooding when river level rises. Wildflower meadow and the location of the popular Bull sculpture. Noise from Rhems Way impacts on the tranquillity of the space.
• Westgate Gardens	Attractive, enclosed, linear riverside park formerly private garden to Tower House. Ornamental planting of shrubs, herbaceous perennials and bulbs provide year round seasonal interest. The presence of the river, which is very visible, is the main point of interest and makes this park very popular.
Tannery Park	Informal 'pocket park' laid out to grass with sparse tree planting. Incidental toddlers playspace with seats overlooking the river. Space has strong natural surveillance from overlooking apartments. Public access between the city centre and the Westgate Parks complex.

Name	Character/function
Greyfriars Garden	Hidden, enclosed space laid out to grass and trees with winding path links to adjacent spaces. Narrow branch of the river forms the southern boundary but is not very visible. Quiet, contemplative space. People pass through space or use it to access neighbouring primary school. An art seat is located in the garden.
The Franciscan Gardens	Walled garden with historic Greyfriars 13th century chapel built over the river channel. Access hidden by way of narrow path and two bridges. Traditional wildflower meadow and wall enclosed garden space, formerly a formal garden. Wonderful tranquil atmosphere providing a secluded sanctuary for people and wildlife in the heart of the city. The site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and the place the Fransciscans settled after their arrival in the UK from Assisi in 1224.
Butterfly Garden	Very small walled garden space overlooking the river. Link space between The Causeway and city centre. Natural stone paving combined with narrow plant beds and seating. Nectar-rich plant species are planted for pollinators, however the garden is partly in shade for most of the day.
Millers Field / The Causeway	'Island' space surrounded by river on all sides. Car park added leaving 'L' shaped grass space without clear function. Riverside path links to North Lane car park and city centre. Structural lime tree planting maturing well. A space passed through rather than lingered in, due to the presence of a car park and lack of interest. A spiral art seat is located just before the bridge.
Abbots Mill Garden and Solly's Orchard	Intimate walled garden space with south-facing aspect. Sunny and sheltered for most of the day. Unfortunately the view of the river is obscured by a boundary wall. Orchard theme to planting. Space connects, by way of a series of footbridges over sluice gates, to the site of the former Abbotts Mill. Sight and sound of rushing water and deep mill pool with brick bridge backdrop creates a very attractive, memorable space. The whole site is a registered Scheduled Monument. An art seat is located in Abbots Mill Garden
Bus Company Island Local Nature Reserve	Wooded island in the centre of the river managed for nature conservation with a pond, wet margin and a series of grassed, wooded and orchard areas, for amphibian, reptile, bird and invertebrate interest. Access is not promoted due to the local nature reserve designation and wildlife value of the undisturbed site. Local wildlife wardens monitor the site.

Name	Character/function
Kingsmead Field Village Green	Flat, multifunctional open grass space beside the northern channel of the river. Used by local people for informal sport and recreation, including dog walking, casual kick-about football, table tennis, and green gym. Facilities for children with a play area. High beech hedge to screen Kingsmead Road on western boundary. Mature weeping willow trees on the northern boundary indicate a line of lower level river channel. Wildflower swathe on the eastern section planted for pollinators. Trees planted on the boundary with Kingsmead Road and the boundary of new development to the east of the field. Two key functions: informal recreation and wildlife habitat. Registered Village Green.
Kingsbrook Park	Small 'pocket park' space within centre of new housing development. Separated by abrupt change in level from lower riverside walk. There is a play area for younger children. The play area is the only part of the park suitable for active play. However some areas of the open space are suitable for outdoor leisure/recreational activities such as picnicking, sitting etc, and the site is adjacent to Kingsmead Field .
Barton Mill	Unmanaged area of dense willow woodland and small area of open grassland, flanked by river. Expected to come into the possession of CCC (from developer) during the lifetime of the Riverside Strategy. To be managed for nature conservation with limited public access.
Sargeants Parade	Rectangular open grass space in centre of new student housing development. Designated protected open space in Local Plan. No clear function. Good natural surveillance.
Vauxhall Avenue Field	Informal, rough grass open space beside the river on eastern suburban edge of the city. River obscured by high earth bund from part of the open space. Facilities for children and youths with a play area and Multi-use Games Area. Pylon, substation and sea cadet headquarters are all protected by steel palisade fencing.

CHAPTER 6.0

ENHANCING EXISTING SECTIONS - SECTIONS 1 TO 3

6.1 The Action Plan in chapter 9.0 sets out a detailed list of improvements to existing sections of the riverside to explore. These include:

- Widening of existing paths to provide improved shared space for walking and cycling
- Improve existing pathway surfacing where required
- Upgrade lighting to LED (bat friendly) where required
- Upgrade of existing furniture and identifying new furniture required, including seating, railings and litter bins
- Improve signage along the riverside route including signage at key entrance points and interpretation signage
- Wildlife and habitat enhancement at key locations
- Continued control of invasive species
- In-channel river and riverbank enhancements
- Monitoring and responding to litter and fly tipping
- Condition surveys will be carried out by the council and CRG to determine and prioritise investment opportunities.

6.2 Levelling Up bid - 2022/23

In 2022 the council submitted a bid for Levelling Up funding for a Canterbury City scheme entitled – Connected Canterbury: Unlocking the Tales of England. The bid was successful and the council has been awarded £20 million to deliver the scheme. The scheme aims to bring tangible, visible improvements in the city through a variety of regenerative projects. In Canterbury, the bid centres around three key strands totalling £22 million:

- **Heritage assets and spaces** – targeting sites which are either hidden and at risk, such as the Poor Priests' Hospital and Canterbury Castle, or are underutilised, like the Westgate Square and Clock Tower Square, for investment to breathe a new lease of life to these areas and buildings.
- **Green arrival** – targeting prominent arrival spaces to radically improve public spaces and navigation around the city, providing opportunities for electric car charging and cycle hire.
- **Connecting our heritage** – providing a new visitor draw with a series of story gardens, linking the gardens' heritage assets, commercial spaces and arrival points with a series of trails around the city, providing an app to promote all of these including the cycle hire docking and electric vehicle charging locations.

The scheme puts forward a number of open spaces and civic spaces for investment and enhancement to help tell the tale of Canterbury's heritage and to link the important cultural offers that Canterbury has -

Story Gardens

The spaces: Nine gardens, ranging from very small open spaces to larger parks, are scattered across the city and vary in character and current condition. All are freely open to the public and many are tucked away. The common thread is the open spaces ability to help tell one of Canterbury's Tales of England.

The investment: Hard and soft landscaping, accessibility and lighting improvements, seating and play equipment, interpretation and wayfinding, augmented reality trigger points, CCTV, cycle parking and the designing out of anti-social behaviour.

Why invest?: Many of the gardens are anonymous and little known and all require improvement. Some are degraded but they all present an opportunity to make improvements for biodiversity and local people.

Impacts of investment: Increased pride of place, opportunity to galvanise local people, a coherent visitor offer with a series of gardens linked to routes, enhancements for biodiversity, security and public realm, flexible events spaces created and an enhanced, educational offer created.

The project will be delivered by mid 2025.

CHAPTER 7.0

CREATING MISSING SECTIONS

The following sections of riverside access do not exist and need to be provided to complete the network (Chartham to Sturry):

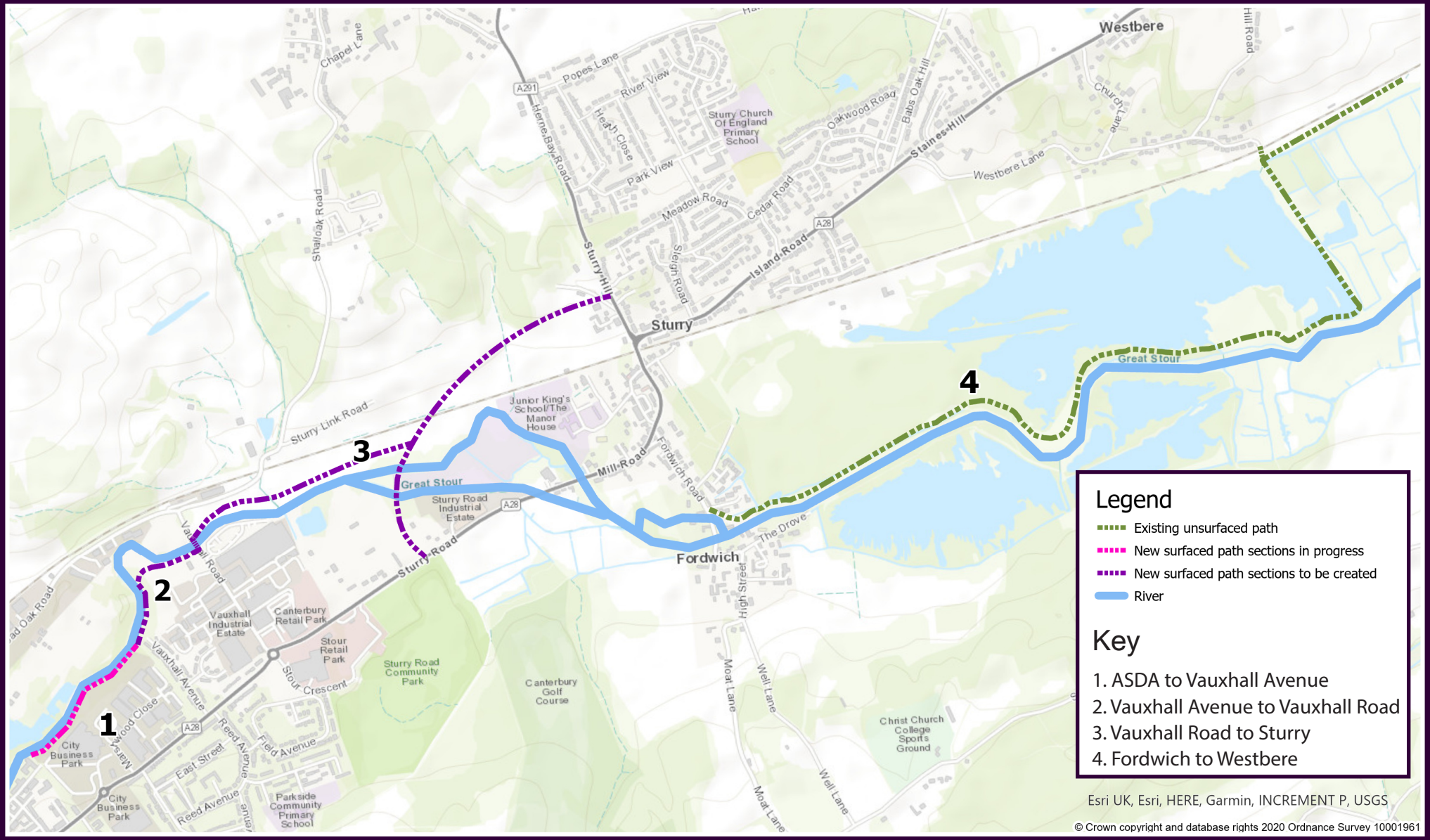
Table 3: Missing sections of access path

Number	Name	Landowner	Approximate length of new path	Construction cost estimate May 2023	Funding Source(s)
1.0	ASDA to Vauxhall Avenue Path to Asda from city was completed 2021	CCC	480m	£160,000 - completion programmed for 2023	s.106
2.0	Vauxhall Avenue to Vauxhall Road including bridge to northern bank	CCC	460m	£450,000 estimated 2025 completion subject to funding	Active Travel England
3.0	Vauxhall Road to Sturry Note: alignment of route changed to link to the footway/ cycleway that will be constructed as part of Sturry link road Not sure that the mapping is correct here. It ought to show Sturry link road	South Eastern Power Networks Plc TBC - change of route may mean that landowners have changed.	1,350m	£350,000 - to be considered when Sturry link road is completed in 2025	s.106 and IDP or future bid to Active Travel England

Note: estimated construction costs include path construction, furniture, signage, planting and bridges where identified.

In some cases implementation will involve land purchase or legal agreements with landowners. These potential costs, unknown at the time of writing this strategy, have not been included in the above table.

Creating missing sections of riverside paths



7.1 Funding opportunities

The city council is well placed to coordinate efforts to obtain funding for these worthwhile off-road walking and cycle routes. It is likely funding will be needed to purchase land, enter into access agreements with landowners and to construct path routes. The following funding opportunities are available to the city council:

- Canterbury district Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Section 106 funding from new developments for specific sites
- Community Infrastructure Levy (tariff imposed on new developments and used district-wide for range of specific infrastructure, eg. Transport, education, open space)
- Canterbury City Council capital funding
- Local Transport Plan Fund (Kent County Council)
- Local Sustainable Transport Fund (Kent County Council)
- Sustrans (national interest group promoting walking and cycling)
- Central Government initiatives to support sustainable transport projects
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Active Travel England - administered through KCC
- LUF

Local government funding for capital projects such as these is typically unpredictable. By agreeing a schedule of highly desirable projects with an approximate cost the authority will be better placed to take advantage of funding opportunities when they arise.

Canterbury City Council will be investigating the feasibility of extending the riverside route from Fordwich to Westbere and then on to Hersden following a path running parallel with the south side of the railway line to the former Chislet Holt railway crossing.

CHAPTER 8.0

FUTURE MANAGEMENT

A key aim of this strategy is to create a continuous riverside corridor trail with a recognisable identity. Existing sections will be upgraded to meet the design quality of new sections.

Once this has been achieved the challenge will be to manage the infrastructure and riverside environment in accordance with agreed management principles in order to further develop and promote ease and pleasure of use by people walking and cycling, design quality aimed at reinforcing a recognisable identity and habitat enhancement to encourage greater wildlife diversity.

It is hoped that agreement of this strategy will enable all involved in the management of riverside spaces to come together to adjust existing procedures to produce a better coordinated, more proactive management programme.

8.1 Themes to guide future management

If a set of themes and aspirations can be agreed by designers, users and those responsible for managing contracts, improved management regimes are likely to result.

The following table sets out themes, aspirations and the ideal for future management.

Table 4: Enhanced future management

The table below sets out the 'ideal' for management of the Canterbury Riverside using Green Flag principles.

Theme	Aspiration	Management action
A Welcoming Place	• Welcoming signage at appropriate locations • Range of events	• Ensure signage is presentable and clean • Ensure entrance points are open with closing time clearly stated (where space locked at night) • Support and encourage appropriate events to attract people
Healthy, Safe and Secure	• Natural surveillance optimised • Presence of other people • CCTV in secluded urban spaces • Well maintained paths	• Tree cover to be managed to promote appropriate views to river from nearby buildings • CCTV cameras and associated signage to be maintained in good working order • Lighting to be maintained in good working order • Any section of route noted as being perceived as unsafe to be redesigned to mitigate issue(s) • Regular inspections of path surfaces with defects repaired on a risk basis. • Reporting of anti-social behaviour and vandalism to the appropriate authorities - CCC Community Safety Unit and the Police
Well Maintained and Clean	• Litter-free • Graffiti –free • Dog-mess free • Clear pathways • Clean signs • Unpolluted river free of inorganic debris	• Well-placed litter bins secured in appropriate locations at access points and key intersections, emptied as per contract • Avoid over-provision of litter bins. Instead encourage people to take waste home or to the nearest bin, foster respect and collective responsibility. • Avoid separate bin for dog waste • Speedy removal of graffiti. • Signs to be cleaned annually. • Organised river clean up events by community groups such as Friends of Kingsmead Field.

Theme	Aspiration	Management action
Environmental Management	• Planting of trees and shrubs of appropriate species in appropriate locations • Balance of open and semi-enclosed spaces (grass and trees)	• Existing trees, hedges and shrubs to be managed to enable easy and comfortable use of the riverside path by walkers and cyclists • Grass margins to be maintained to a maximum height of 50mm to indicate regular management • Worn areas of grass (due to shade cast by trees, occasional winter flooding or desire lines following more direct routes) to be repaired at appropriate time of year using appropriate seed mix
Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage	• Predominantly native tree and shrub species • Pollinators • Areas of longer grass/ vegetation • Riverbank enhancement • Access for people on one side of river and wildlife on the other • Interpretation signage	• Identify and agree areas where grass and river bank vegetation can be left to grow longer • Plant for pollinators • Always maintain shorter grass margin to all paths (min.1.0m wide) to indicate area is managed • Discourage people to access certain areas through use of vegetation (nettles, bramble etc) or use fencing or railings • Bank softening for benefit of river wildlife • Where possible (particularly in urban areas) promote access for people on one side of the river leaving a 'quiet' riverbank on the other for wildlife • Signage to educate on the natural green heritage and wildlife of the river, riverbank and and river corridor
Community Involvement	• Canterbury Riverside Group • Friends Groups • Residents' Associations	• Partnership working with friends groups and Canterbury Riverside Group to deliver the action Plan • Involve the community in making decisions about a site's development
Marketing and Communication	• Identifiable brand for the route • Appropriate signage in appropriate locations • Recognisable logo • Unified colour of railings, lighting columns, furniture and signs etc	• Ensure all signs and furniture are maintained in good condition • All metal work such as railings, gates, bins, seats, lighting columns and signs are repainted on a regular basis using agreed colour • Avoid addition of adhoc furniture, signage and planting since this will dilute the strength of the image

8.2 Partnership working with external organisations, friends groups and volunteers

A key aim of this strategy is to establish an overarching framework within which interest groups can make a meaningful contribution. The agreement of future visions for these spaces is part of this process. Partnership working involving the City Council in a coordinating role, external organisations and friends groups is the preferred way of working.

The city council work directly with the Environment Agency (EA) and the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership (KSCP) as well as the following friends groups with interest in specific sections of the riverside:

- Love Hambrook Marshes
- The Friends of Westgate Parks
- The Friends of Kingsmead Field
- Canterbury Riverside Group
- The Abbots Mill Project
- St Peter's Residents Association
- Vauxhall Avenue and Crescent community
- Canterbury Society
- Canterbury BID

This strategy recognises that working with interested local people in the form of friends groups is central to the successful delivery of a high quality, vibrant, well managed riverside environment.

The linear nature of the riverside corridor lends itself to accommodating a number of different interest groups. The city council in conjunction with the KSCP/EKCIP work in partnership with the friends groups.

Involvement fosters 'ownership', interest and enables the riverside environment to be better understood and cherished. Local people may be able to undertake tasks which the local authority is no longer able to resource, such as, historical research, event organisation, guided tours, and website creation and management. External organisations are able to apply for funding for agreed projects to maximise budgets.

CHAPTER 9.0

ACTION PLAN

Table 5: Action plan

No	Subject	Action	Lead	End date	Possible funding sources	Priority	Workshop notes
1.0	**Deliver strategic sections of unfinished riverside access path**						
1.1	ASDA to Vauxhall Avenue: new path (503m)	• Secure consent of landowner(s) – **completed** • Secure planning consent and funding – **completed** • Construct new path • Review options for lighting, furniture, signage, planting etc	Transportation Team leader	By November 2023	s.106	H	
1.2	Vauxhall Avenue to Vauxhall Road: new path and bridge (380m)	• Secure planning consent and funding • Construct new path • Install new walking and cycling bridge • Review options for furniture, signage, planting etc	Transportation Team leader	By Dec 2025	s.106	M	
1.3	Vauxhall Road to Sturry: new path (1644m)	• Ensure space reserved for riverside path in plans for Sturry bypass • Secure consent of landowner(s) • Secure planning consent and funding • Construct path • Review options for furniture, signage, planting etc	Transportation Team leader	By June 2027	s.106/CIL/KCC/ Active Travel England/ external funding	M	2.18, 3.4

No	Subject	Action	Lead	End date	Possible funding sources	Priority	Workshop notes
2.0	**Deliver key infrastructure to improve access and movement in Canterbury riverside area**						
2.1	Shared space paths/ zones	• Carry out a feasibility study and create a list of priority areas where widening of shared space zones is appropriate • Engage the Riverside group • Secure funding • If possible create an additional walking/ cycling zone • Cut back overgrown vegetation along the riverside path so that the path becomes wider	Transportation Team Leader	By June 2027	s.106/CIL/KCC/ external funding	H	2.16, 3.19, 3.21
2.2	St Radigunds car park: improved shared walking and cycle movement (160m) plus Connected Canterbury/LUF's Green Arrivals	• Investigate feasibility of accommodating cycle path within car park – **completed** • Investigate feasibility of constructing wider shared path to replace existing – **completed** • Secure planning consent and funding – **completed** • Construct new wider path – **completed** • LUF – Establish EV charging points • LUF – Greening of the car park through tree planting , or similar. • LUF – Wayfinding and Information boards	T&E	LUF – by March 2025	s.106/CIL/ KCC/external funding/LUF	H	

No	Subject	Action	Lead	End date	Possible funding sources	Priority	Workshop notes
2.3	Kingsmead north side of river opposite Kingsmead Junior School: new wider path	• Secure consent of landowner(s) • Secure planning consent and funding • Construct new, wider path • Review options for furniture, signage, planting etc	Transportation Team leader	By June 2027 s.106	s.106/CIL/KCC/ external funding	M	
2.4	Tannery access steps leading to Rheims Way underpass: improve access	• Liaise with planning enforcement – **completed** • Amend design to improve access for wheelchairs and cycles • Secure planning consent and funding • Implement design change	Environment Team	By June 2027	s.106/CIL/KCC/ external funding	L	
2.5	Explore opportunities to enhance the setting of the Great Stour at North Land Car Park as the regeneration area identified within the draft Local Plan.	• Carry out a feasibility study • Engage Riverside group/Stakeholders • Obtain funding	T&E, Regeneration Team	By June 2027	s.106/CIL/KCC/ external funding	M	3.22
2.6	Establish a River Leisure Users Forum	• Establish membership and Terms of Reference • Engage with river leisure user groups to set first agenda • Ensure feedback to the Riverside Group/ stakeholders	T&E, Regeneration Teams	By end 2023	From existing resources	M	

No	Subject	Action	Lead	End date	Possible funding sources	Priority	Workshop notes
3.0	**Surface dressing of existing paths**						
3.1	Possible improvements to riverside path surfacing: Westgate Towers to Barton Mill	• Carry out a feasibility study • Engage the Riverside group and arrange a site visit with the group members • Create a list of priority areas • Obtain funding • Implement upgrade	Environment Team	By June 2027	s.106/CIL/KCC/ external funding	M	
4.0	**Lighting (upgrading existing to LED)**						
4.1	St. Radigunds to ASDA (1415m)	• Carry out a feasibility study in conjunction with engineers • Engage the Riverside group and arrange a site visit with the group members • Create a list of priority areas • Obtain cost and funding • Implement upgrade	T&E	By June 2027	s.106/CIL/KCC/ external funding	M	
5.0	**Furniture and signage**						
5.1	Possible improvements to riverside path furniture: Westgate Towers to Barton Mill	• Carry out a feasibility study and identify where new seats are needed • Engage the Riverside group • Obtain funding - capital and revenue • Implement upgrade	Environment Team	On-going	s.106/CIL/KCC/ external funding	M	

No	Subject	Action	Lead	End date	Possible funding sources	Priority	Workshop notes
5.2	Arts seats	• Carry out a feasibility study and identify where new seats are needed • Engage the Riverside group • Obtain funding - capital and revenue • Add arts seats	Environment Team	By June 2027	s.106/CIL/KCC/ external funding	M	1.7
5.3	Improve signage along riverside routes	• Carry out a feasibility study • Arrange a walk with the Riverside group and identify the key entrance points to the riverside path • Obtain funding • Design new, modern, unique and consistent interpretation signs for the riverside area • Create a recognisable identity for the area through signage (consider adopting a name for the whole of the riverside path) • Consider adding QR codes on the new signs with information on walking and cycling routes	Environment Team	By June 2027	LUF/BID/s.106/ CIL/KCC/external funding	H	2.6, 2.9, 2.13, 2.14, 2.15, 3.9, 3.16, 3.17, 3.18
5.4	Canterbury Coach park area	• Obtain funding • Repaint the riverside railings in the area and carry out necessary repairs to improve their quality	Environment Team	June 2025	LUF/s.106/CIL/ KCC/external funding	H	2.6
5.5	Riverside through Sollys/Abbots Mill to Kingsmead Bridge	• £25k of funding secured for improvements to furniture, signage, wildlife enhancement	Environment Team	By end 2023	LUF/s.106/CIL/ KCC/external funding	H	

No	Subject	Action	Lead	End date	Possible funding sources	Priority	Workshop notes
6.0	**Wildlife habitat enhancement**						
6.1	In-channel river enhancement works	• Continue working on riverside restoration projects • Agree a programme of prioritised works, EA's consent to be obtained • Funding to be obtained • Implement works	KSCP & Environment Agency	On-going	s.106/CIL/KCC/ external funding	M	1.8
6.2	Land at Canterbury North substations	• Explore opportunities to improve the Local Wildlife Site that surrounds the site • Consider adding some crossing over the River Stour to the green areas to the south • Consider protecting the site's current lack of access and the benefits for wildlife	Environment Team	By June 2025	s.106/CIL/KCC/ external funding	L	
6.3	Riverside wildlife enhancement	• Arrange a walk with the Riverside group and create a list with priority areas • Incorporate habitat connectivity, pollinators and local nature recovery schemes • Obtain funding • Work with stakeholders in order to deliver the schemes • Continue considering and working towards biodiversity and pollinator benefits	Environment Team	On-going	s.106/CIL/KCC/ external funding	M	1.6, 3.2

No	Subject	Action	Lead	End date	Possible funding sources	Priority	Workshop notes
6.4	Wincheap Meadow new area	• Liaise with Natural England to determine Local Nature Reserve position for the 6.65ha site. • Work with the Canterbury Riverside Group and Defra family to develop a new LNR Management Plan. • Liaise with Natural England and Planning on contributions to Stodmarsh Mitigations. • Seek funds to implement capital works and management costs. • Implement works	Environment Team	By June 2027	s.106/CIL/KCC/ external funding	H	
6.5	Invasive Plant Species	• Commission invasive plant species survey in the riverside area • Review survey results and create a programme of prioritised works	Environment Team and EA	On-going	s.106/CIL/KCC/ external funding	H	
6.6	Riverside through Sollys/Abbots Mill to Kingsmead Bridge	• £25k (in conjunction with 5.5) of funding secured for improvements to wildlife enhancement	Environment Team	by end 2023	s.106/CIL/KCC/ external funding	H	
6.7	Fishing	• Develop media to educate anglers and to manage unrestricted fishing between Canterbury and Sturry to avoid fish stocks being further depleted.	Environment Team Environment Agency Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership		s.106/CIL/KCC/ external funding		

No	Subject	Action	Lead	End date	Possible funding sources	Priority	Workshop notes
7.0	**Funding and Marketing**						
7.1	Monitor number of users	• Establish a monitoring system • Prioritise green flag site (Westgate Parks) • Access and use mobility data such as daily footfall, catchment areas, dwell time, density and frequency of visits	Environment Team	By November 2023	From existing resources	M	
7.2	Funding	• Explore funding opportunities for on-going maintenance costs of the riverside area • Create a maintenance programme of works • Explore funding opportunities for new projects for the riverside area	Environment Team	On-going	From existing resources	M	2.7, 2.17
8.0	**Community Involvement**						
8.1	Antisocial behaviour reduction	• Invite CCC's community safety unit and Kent police to attend future riverside strategy meetings • Create a plan that will help reduce ASB on CCC riverside sites	Environment Team	On-going		H	2.1, 3.23
8.2	Public education and awareness of the river	• Provide media on CCC's open spaces that surround the river • Promote the riverside strategy through CCC's website and social media platforms • Engage with local residents through new and existing Friends' groups	Environment Team & KCSP	On-going	BID/s.106/CIL/ KCC/external funding	M	2.5, 2.8, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7

No	Subject	Action	Lead	End date	Possible funding sources	Priority	Workshop notes
8.3	Stakeholders/ Community Groups	• Continue working with the Riverside group and hold annual meetings to review the riverside strategy action plan and its progress • Continue using the Riverside group as a consultative group on wide riverside issues • The Riverside group continues to be used as a forum that feeds in information on different local groups • Improve the working relationship and communication between the Riverside group and CCC departments (eg planning, community safety unit, engineers) • Members of the Kent police should be invited to an annual meeting • Engagement with commercial businesses in the area can be strengthened (eg Asda, Canterbury BID) • Engage with KCC and invite officers to annual stakeholder meetings • Engage with CCC and KCC Councillors to raise the profile of the riverside strategy and its action plan	Environment Team	On-going	From existing resources	H	1.5, 1.9, 2.4, 2.7, 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, 3.23
8.4	Community lead Annual Festival of the Stour	• Liaise with CCC Events Team • Explore the possibility of organising an annual festival for River Stour with events on different parts of the river and nearby open spaces	Environment Team, Riverside Group & Stakeholders	On-going	From existing resources	M	3.8

No	Subject	Action	Lead	End date	Possible funding sources	Priority	Workshop notes
8.5	Open Spaces	• Review Open Space Strategy quality assessments • Engage the Canterbury Riverside Group • Explore funding opportunities • Implement enhancement	Environment Team	By June 2027	From existing resources/s.106/ CIL/KCC/external funding	H	1.10
8.6	New developments	• The environment team will organise meetings with the Riverside group to raise their awareness of large developments in the riverside area (e.g. Wincheap development)	Environment Team	On-going	From existing resources	M	1.12, 3.14, 3.25
9.0	**Grounds Maintenance and Cleansing**						
9.1	Fly-tipping	• Liaise with CCC Contracts Team and discuss the possibility of improving the fly-tipping removal timescales when items are thrown in the river • Seek update from Contracts Team on current procedure on fly-tipping removal from the river	Environment Team and Contracts Team	On-going	From existing resources	M	2.3

No	Subject	Action	Lead	End date	Possible funding sources	Priority	Workshop notes
9.2	Cleansing and litter collections	• Liaise with CCC contracts team and Canenco to seek improvements in cleansing arrangements • Consider trialling recycling litter bins • Add litter bins, that are accessible from a road, on the riverside path between Barton Mill and Asda • Carry out a feasibility study and consult widely on future provision of litter bins • Engage the Riverside group in the litter round table • Investigate use of small electric vehicle/ cargo-bike for riverside litter collection	Environment Team and Contracts Team	On-going	From existing resources/s.106/ CIL/KCC/external funding	H	2.2, 2.10, 2.19, 3.10, 3.20
9.3	Graffiti removal	• Maintain graffiti removal timescales	Contracts Team	On-going	From existing resources	M	1.3
9.4	Litter and fly tipping in the river and adjacent riverbank	• Create a Task and Finish Group to address the issues of litter and fly tipping in the river and litter management on the riverbank and river corridor.	Environment Team/ Contracts/ Canterbury Riverside Group/ Councillors	TBA	From existing resources	H	n/a

No	Subject	Action	Lead	End date	Possible funding sources	Priority	Workshop notes
10.0	**Climate Change Mitigation**						
10.1	Climate change mitigation	• Continue using the riverside area for climate change effect mitigation • Organise a stakeholder workshop to explore further opportunities for climate change mitigation linked to the riverside area	Environment Team and Planning Policy Team	On-going	From existing resources	H	1.13
11.0	**CCC Strategies**						
11.1	Strategies	Where appropriate, CCC to ensure that key CCC strategies that can have an impact on the environment (e.g. pollinator strategy) make specific recommendations about the riverside area	Environment Team	On-going	From existing resources	H	3.1

9.1 Funding and delivery

Delivery of the Action Plan is dependent on funding. Canterbury City Council has been collecting Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for a number of years from new development, and s.106 Developer Contributions are sought where appropriate from new developments, these are potential sources of funding for delivery of the Action Plan. We will work with colleagues and partners to identify funding opportunities and to ensure appropriate funding is secured over the period of the Action Plan.

CHAPTER 10.0

VISION FOR RIVERSIDE SPACES

Table 6: Vision for specific riverside spaces

Name	Future vision
Hambrook Marshes	To protect, manage and preserve Hambrook Marshes for the benefit of wildlife and the public' and a key objective is to secure long-term funding so that the Marshes can be protected in- perpetuity.
Wincheap Meadow LNR	To recognise the Local Nature Reserve designation status for the 6.65ha site and implement an agreed management plan to restore a series of wetland and riparian habitats, provide appropriate public access and security, and ensure the site makes a positive contribution to nature's recovery and regeneration of the wider area.
Whitehall Meadow LNR	Preservation as a Local Nature Reserve. Deliver Management Plan
Westgate Parks:	
• Toddlers Cove	Destination riverside play and picnic meadow. Natural timber, pollarded willows along river boundary, longer grass in less intensively used parts of the site. Car park with links to off-road walking and cycle routes to Chartham and Whitstable mean this space has potential to become a gateway to the open countryside. Potential location for public art.
• Bingley Island	Semi-natural island managed as a secluded wildlife refuge. Publicly accessible but not positively promoted. Subtle management of vegetation : coppiced willow thickets, damp areas with sedges and native flora, shorter meadow areas and cut grass paths though taller native herbaceous vegetation. Occasional groves of alder, willow aspen and single specimen black poplar. Older pollarded willows to be retained for hole nesting birds. Increased surveillance and access through the area to the Bingley Court development may reduce unauthorised activity and costs of enforcement and clearance in the long term.

• Tannery Field	Traditional Kentish orchard with wildflower understorey. Shorter meadow grass from main path access outwards. Outer edges allowed to grow longer with 1-2 cuts per year. Tree division between Tannery Field and Bingley Island managed to eventually replace the existing line of lombardy poplar trees. Native species such as alder and willow introduced. Defined areas of wildflowers to provide for enhanced biodiversity and interest. Native woodland shaw on earth bank separating orchard on higher plateau from lower riverside water meadow.
• Westgate Gardens	Informal, ornamental riverside park restored to take on the character of the garden of a private residence. Mature specimen trees and colourful herbaceous borders set within immaculate lawns.
Tannery Park	Incidental 'pocket park' . Occasional tree groups within a gently contoured grass landscape. Differential grass cutting to allow areas of longer grass to flourish. Cut grass paths. Riverside meadow space enclosed by buildings and existing trees.
Greyfriars Garden	Secluded open space passed through or arrived at by accident. Enclosed, introverted space featuring trees and grass. Longer grass margins. Opportunity to plant a small group of fruit trees.
The Franciscan Gardens	Part of 'hidden Canterbury'. Not connected to the linear riverside trail through Canterbury. Traditional wildflower meadow and formal walled garden with historic chapel straddling river channel. Mature trees and flint and brick walls. Bridges over the river offer glimpsed views along narrow, winding river channels.
Butterfly Garden	Small, intimate walled garden space. Colourful nectar-rich plants to encourage pollinating insects.
The Causeway	Grass open space with riverside sculpture. Visual impact of car park 'softened' by planting. Colourful wildflower grass sward. Winding path route from car park to butterfly garden.
Solly's Orchard	Groups of orchard trees, areas of longer grass with bulbs, wildflowers, scented climbing roses on south-facing wall. Nectar-rich herbaceous perennial planting to attract bees and butterflies. Comfortable seats set back from the winding path.

Bus Company Island Local Nature Reserve	Protected, concealed glade within woodland managed as an island wildlife refuge with controlled accessPond with boardwalk and soft mud margin, managed longer grass areas, log piles. Nest boxes for a wide range of birds, bats and invertebrates. Preservation as a Local Nature Reserve.
Kingsmead Field Village Green	'Riverside Green' with two key functions: informal recreation and wildlife habitat suitable for informal recreation and occasional events. Unobstructed central grass space with pollarded willows along the northern boundary with the river. Seating on boundaries. and a picnic zone. Areas of longer grass meadow with wildflowers. Reinstated circular walk around island (subject to feasibility assessment) and creation of path link between Kingsmead Field and Kingsbrook Park. Riverside subject to public consultation. Amenity picnic zone,area and toddler play area, table tennis and green gym provision. Subject to public consultation.
Kingsbrook Park	Compact residential neighbourhood on an island between two branches of the river. Accessible circular riverside walk around the whole island. Small open space with toddlers play facility on south side of development. Four sculptural riverside seats on decks along the southern branch of the river.
Barton Mill	Land set apart from the riverside route Damp willow woodland managed to create greater habitat diversity – coppicing, pollarding, thinning. Area of associated open grassland on infertile soil to be managed as longer grass wildflower meadow. Site to be managed for reptiles.
Sargeants Parade	River separated from this space by a steep tree-covered bank. The Parham Road development lacks open space. The consensus of local community feedback is that this open space is important and should be recognised and managed as communal open space.
Vauxhall Avenue Field	Neighbourhood play area with multi-games court set within landscape close to the end of Vauxhall Avenue. Riverside walking and cycling route bisecting space linking Canterbury with Sturry. New bridge over river close to Sea Cadets centre. Grass open space suitable for informal ball games and dog walking. Boundaries to be planted with native thorn hedge planting. Longer grass margins to the open space.

CHAPTER 11.0

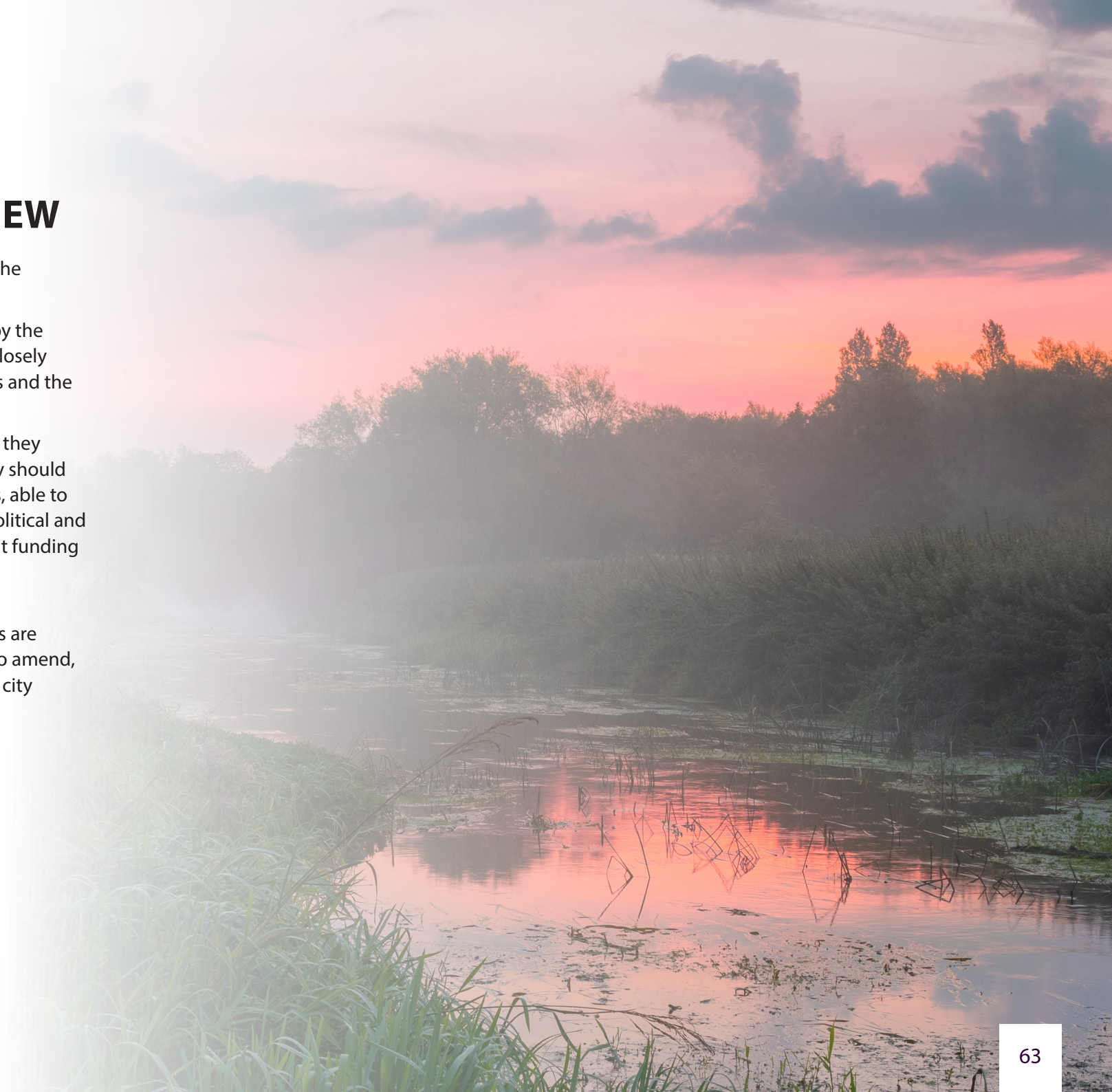
MONITOR AND REVIEW

The action plan provides a framework for the monitoring of this strategy.

The action plan will be implemented not by the city council acting alone, but by working closely with partner organisations, interest groups and the community.

Even the best plans need review to ensure they remain targeted and relevant. This strategy should always be thought of as a work in progress, able to accommodate changing circumstances, political and organisational change and new or different funding opportunities.

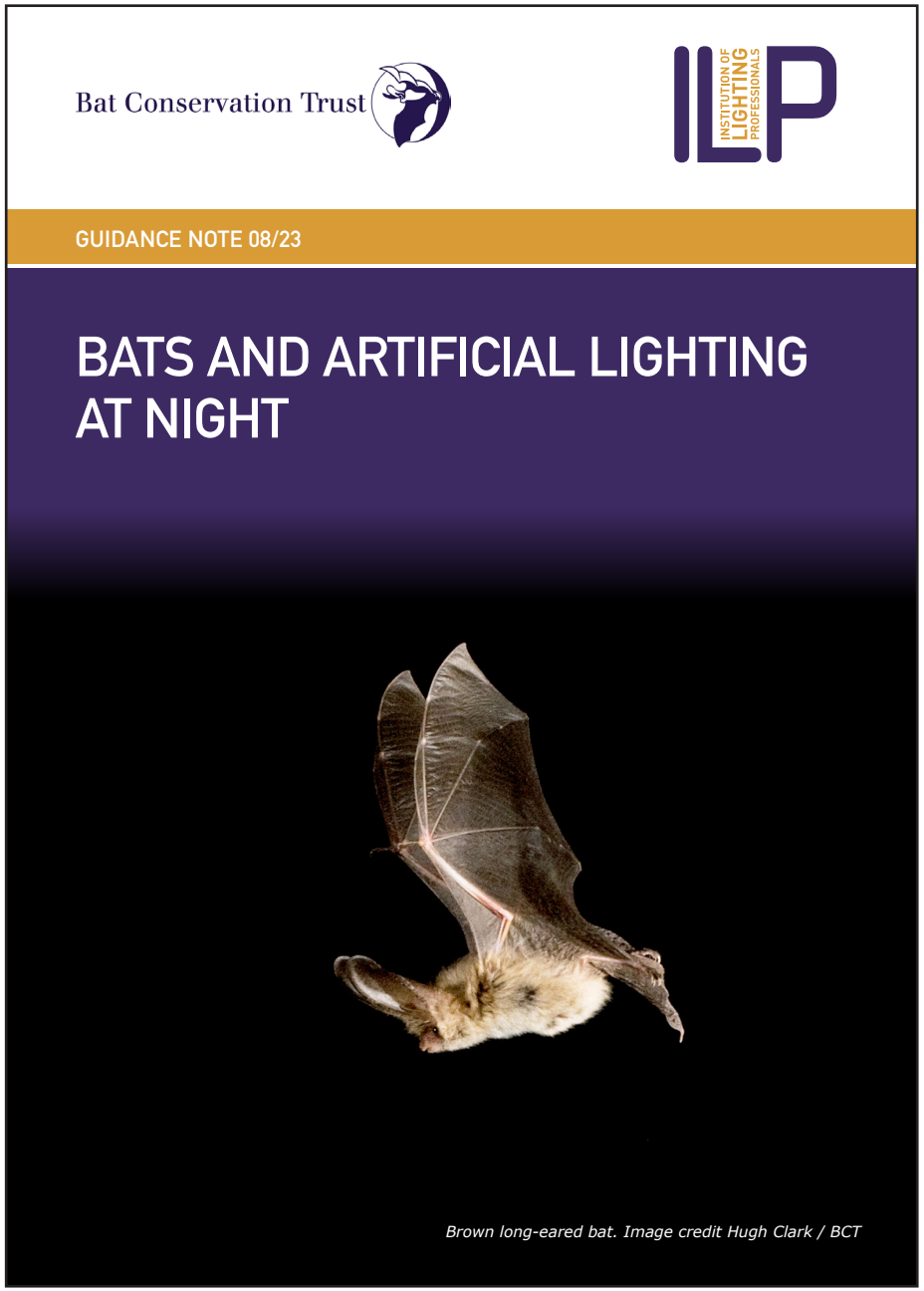
Annual reviews, carried out with a forum representing a wide range of local interests are recommended with opportunity created to amend, add or delete actions in line with what the city council and community wish to achieve.



APPENDIX 1

Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night

www.bats.org.uk/news?category=guidelines



APPENDIX 2

Fishing on the River Great Stour, Canterbury

Introduction

In the late 1980s Canterbury City Council began a process of opening up the riverside corridor in the city to people. Today, access paths for walking and cycling follow the twists and turns of the river as it flows through the various parks and gardens of the city. As a consequence, the riverside routes are now very popular and well used by everyone.

The river itself is currently home to three punt and boat companies with a canoe company also looking for an operational base.

Given this situation the river in the centre of Canterbury is not best-suited to fishing. This advice note will expand on the reasons for this and will provide alternative locations.

Fishing on the Great Stour in central Canterbury, is now not seen as appropriate and is not encouraged for the following reasons:

- The city is a popular place for people – residents and visitors. The riverside access routes which pass close to the riverbank are particularly attractive to walkers, cyclists and joggers. The river itself is licenced for punts, rowing boats and canoes. There is a health and safety risk from casting lines with hooks across pathways.
- There is a complex arrangement prevailing whereby byelaws outlaw fishing in certain city council-owned parks and gardens. In other areas the riverside is in private ownership and the permission of the owner is required before fishing.
- The deeper pools close to mill races are characterised by high enclosing walls. Fish caught in these situations are difficult to land without causing distress and injury to the fish. Paths adjacent to these locations are often narrow and very popular with people. Fishing is not appropriate in this situation.
- The winding, narrow river corridor in most of the city is characterised by the presence of obstructions in the form of bankside trees, shrubs and overhead power lines. Empirical evidence suggests anglers are more likely to snag fishing lines in this context compared to more open countryside. Discarded fishing line and hooks represent a hazard to wildlife, particularly waterfowl, bats and other terrestrial mammals.
- Regular fishing from the same position may result in food and bait being discarded on the bank. This is not only untidy in appearance but is known to attract vermin. In an urban context this can quickly escalate into a serious issue.
- Fluctuating water levels, coupled with the obstruction of weirs, mean fish in the urban reaches of the river are often under stress. Fishing in such circumstances can exacerbate the situation.
- Fish in the Stour are under pressure from many factors. We would like to promote the city centre as a safe refuge for fish; a place from which they can spread out to improve the overall sustainability of the fish population throughout the river.
- The river margins in the city are increasingly coming under pressure from invasive plant species such as Japanese Knotweed (Fallopia japonica) and Himilayan Balsam (Impatiens glandulifera). Anglers who disturb marginal vegetation may inadvertently contribute to the spread of these potentially harmful species.

To conclude, the River Stour running through the centre of the city is not managed as a fishery and the river is not best-suited to the activity of fishing.

Those wishing to fish the River Stour are encouraged to join the Canterbury and District Angling Association (email: **enquiries@cdaa.co.uk**). Canterbury and District Angling Association has eleven lakes and a long stretch of the River Stour in the **Canterbury** area of Kent. The club has a Trout Section for fly fishing.

There are also numerous commercial fisheries within easy reach of the city. Those with a passion for angling, or just pursue fishing as a casual pastime, are encouraged to seek out alternative venues to those in the city.

Regulations

Coarse (freshwater) fishing on the River Stour is strictly seasonal. There is no coarse fishing allowed during the Close season (15 March to 15 June). Maximum penalty £50,000.

The close season for brown and rainbow trout in rivers, streams and drains is from 1 November to 2 April (Southern byelaw). You can fish for brown and rainbow trout outside of these dates – 3 April to 31 October.

The close season for salmon in all waters is from the 3 October to 16 January (Southern byelaw). You can fish for Salmon outside of these dates – 17 January to 2 October.

The close season for migratory trout (sea trout) in all waters is from 1 November to 30 April (Southern byelaw). You can fish for migratory trout outside of these dates – 1 May to 31 October.

Most people fishing in Canterbury are likely to be coarse (freshwater) fishing so please report all instances of fishing between 15 March to 15 June as these are likely to be illegal.

Anyone over 12 years of age must possess a valid rod licence issued by the Environment Agency. This must be available for inspection at all times whilst fishing otherwise prosecution may result. Maximum penalty £2,500.

www.gov.uk/fishing-licences/buy-a-fishing-licence

Possession of a valid rod licence does not in itself grant a right to fish. Landowner permission is always required. [Note: within Canterbury city limits a right to fish in public areas exists.]

The Environment Agency's South East Region rod fishing byelaws apply; see:

www.gov.uk/guidance/regional-rod-fishing-byelaws-south-east-region

All the above apply to fishing with rod and line. Also watch out for fixed lines, nets and traps. These are particularly targeted at catching eels and should **always** be reported. It is also illegal to leave a rod and line in the water unattended.

If anyone is seen fishing during the close season, or is believed to be fishing inappropriately, they should be reported to the Environment Agency's Incident Hotline Tel: 0800 80 70 60 (24 hour service)

The Environment Agency will not respond to every report of suspected illegal angling due to limited resources, however, all the reports are collated and used to prioritise enforcement activities. It is good practice – and worthwhile – to report all suspicious activities.

Some dos and don'ts for fishing the River Stour

'These guiding principles are aimed at sustaining fish stocks, protecting the environment and ensuring the health, safety and well-being of all river users, including anglers.

- **DO** return all fish unharmed to the river as quickly as possible. The use of keepnets to temporarily retain your catch – though not prohibited – is not encouraged. Fish removal can harm the natural balance of the river ecosystem and can add to the pressure that some threatened species are already under.
- **DO** use un-hooking mats when specimen fish are banked: unhooking is the aspect of fishing where fish are most likely to sustain damage. Fish care is vital from the moment you begin to land the fish through to its safe return to the river. Fish that are well looked after out of the water should grow, and reproduce, well in the water.

- **DO NOT** use crayfish of any species, whether alive or dead, (including any part of a crayfish) as bait. Native crayfish are rare and protected. Non-native crayfish species can spread crayfish plague, which can wipe out the native species.
- **DO NOT** take any fish for use as live bait unless the fish are retained at and used only in the water from which they were taken. Moving live baits between waters can spread fish diseases. Live-baiting, though not prohibited, is discouraged.
- **DO NOT** leave a rod and line with its bait or hook in the water, such that you are unable to take sufficient control of the rod.
- **DO NOT** block or otherwise obstruct riverside paths and cycle-ways.
- **DO NOT** light any fires on or close to the riverbank.
- **DO** be aware of other river users. Always take care when casting.
- **DO** keep a careful look out for overhead electric power lines and keep a safe distance away.
- **DO** follow the Check, Clean, Dry advice to prevent the spread of invasive species.
- **DO** report all instances of unauthorised angling, dead or distressed fish or incidents of pollution to the Environment Agency's EA incident hotline on: 0800 80 70 60.
- **DO** take all litter home with you.

If anyone is seen fishing during the close season, or is believed to be fishing inappropriately, they should be reported to the Environment Agency's Incident Hotline Tel: 0800 80 70 60 (24 hour service)