

# GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

## IMPLEMENTATION: ENHANCING OUR EXISTING NETWORK

You should read this document after reading  
[The Primer](#) if you are:

A Local Resident / Community Group /  
Parish Council / Authority Officer  
with an interest in initiating or implementing  
green infrastructure projects



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# HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

## Purpose of the Strategy

The purpose of the Strategy is to ensure a strategic and holistic approach is taken to protecting, maintaining and enhancing the ecology, landscape and heritage in the District.

The Primer (Part 0) provides an overview of the Strategy and its purpose, commentary on the existing Green Infrastructure assets in the District, and the Vision and Objectives of the Strategy. The other Parts of the Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Primer. These are:

This Part provides guidance on:

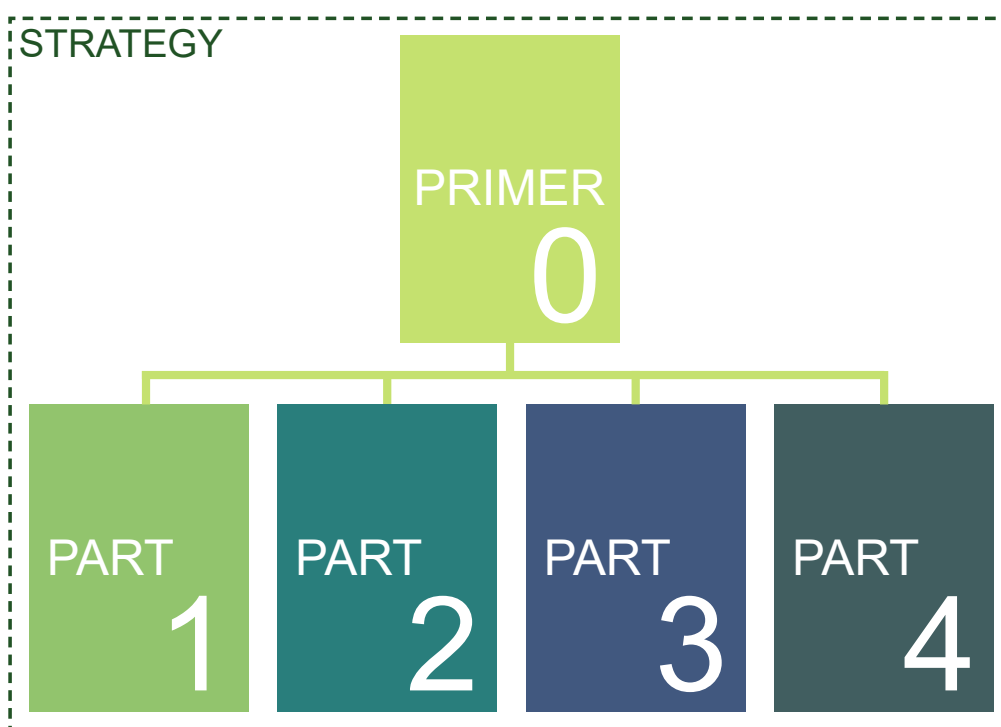
1. Implementation: Enhancing our Existing Network

It provides:

- A list of potential District-wide projects to enhance existing Green Infrastructure at both strategic and community-led scales
- Initiatives that can be incorporated into small-scale development schemes
- Information on maintenance and stewardship for relevant projects of this type
- Information on funding for relevant projects of this type

The other Parts of the Strategy cover:

2. Implementation: Landscape-Led Design
3. Implementation: Green Infrastructure in Strategic Allocations
4. Implementation: Infrastructure Enhancement Projects



# HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

## **Who will use the Strategy and Part 1?**

The Strategy comprises four Parts. Anyone using the Strategy and the associated guidance and projects should read the Primer first, to familiarise themselves with the purpose, context and vision of the Strategy.

This Part of the Strategy (1. Implementation: Enhancing our Existing Network) is primarily for local residents, community groups, parish and town councils, and council officers with an interest in initiating and implementing Green Infrastructure projects. It should also be used by planning applicants preparing smaller scale development proposals. It provides ideas and advice on how to take local projects forward or where there is a need to introduce Green Infrastructure provision into a development proposal.

## **When to use this document?**

If you are interested in initiating or delivering a local, community-led, or strategic project which seeks to enhance the existing Green Infrastructure network within or across the District, this document will help provide ideas and guidance on how to plan for, collaborate, fund and maintain these types of projects.

# DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

1.1

# 1.1 DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

## Overview

This Part of the Strategy looks at ways we can enhance the District's existing Green infrastructure network. The projects that can contribute to this objective are set out in the following pages and guidance acts as briefs for each one. They can be implemented across the District to enhance our existing landscapes across a variety of scales. The projects are divided into four types:

- Strategic Projects
- Community Initiated Projects
- Projects to Encourage Engagement with Green infrastructure
- Projects for Small Scale Developments

In the future, more District-wide projects will be identified and briefs for them will be included as part of future updates to the Strategy.

### Strategic Projects

These projects are of a District scale or need coordination across the District. These are:

- Movement and Wayfinding
- Roadside Wildflowers

### Community Initiated Projects

These projects are appropriate for implementation across the District but would be initiated by local communities, including by town and parish councils, with support from the Council. These are:

- Tree Planting - A Call for Sites
- Community Greenspace Improvements

### Projects to Encourage Engagement with Green infrastructure

This project aims to increase the numbers and diversify the range of people using the District's Green infrastructure network:

- Art in the Landscape

### Projects for Small Scale Developments

All planning applications are required to comply with the Council's local plan policies. All development schemes, no matter how small, are capable of making a positive contribution to the enhancement of Green Infrastructure across the District. This Section provides further information on the types of initiatives that can be incorporated into these types of schemes.

# 1.1 DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

## Strategic Projects

### Movement And Wayfinding

#### The Project

Developing and supporting the implementation of a Strategy for the enhancement of the District's Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network to make it more legible, accessible and useable by everyone.

#### Why?

To ensure new and existing communities have better access to high-quality and local green and blue spaces and to create connections between the District's communities. The approach supports a number of objectives including in relation to health and well-being and carbon reduction.

#### What Does Success Look Like?

The implementation of a coherent set of initiatives which have resulted in the provision of improved signage, removal of physical barriers to support access for all, provided more complete routes across the PRoW network and the introduction of maintenance regimes. The District's PRoW network will have been made safer, more visible, coherent and accessible for all as a result.

#### How Do We Get There?

By commissioning a consultant team with expertise in wayfinding design and landscape architecture - to design, develop and construct a series of wayfinding interventions across the District. This will be supported by raising awareness and promotion of routes and working with landowners to join up missing parts of the network and ensure that routes across private land is clearly defined.

#### Key Stakeholders

- Town and Parish Councils
- EFDC's Countrycare team
- Essex County Council Highways
- Local User Groups
- Sustrans
- Landowners
- Developers

#### Potential Funding Sources

- Highways England
- Essex Country Council
- Government Active Travel Grants
- Town and Parish Council precepts
- Section 106 planning obligations

#### Approximate cost (per square meter)

£70-650 (depending on level of works)



Walthamstow Wetlands by Kinnear Landscape Architects



Borough Highstreet by East Architecture

# 1.1 DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

## Strategic Projects

### Roadside Wildflowers

#### The Project

To implement cutting regimes for roadside verges, and undertake the seeding of areas, to provide for the creation of wildflower verges.

#### Why?

To tackle the climate and biodiversity crises, by providing long-term benefits for people, wildlife and ecology and improving the visual amenity of the District.

#### What Does Success Look Like?

The successful implementation of a management approach which results in an improvement in the natural capital of the District and the creation of wildlife corridors.

#### How Do We Get There?

- The Council will work with Essex County Council and Highways England (both of which have statutory biodiversity duties) to identify verges and roadside areas that are appropriate for wildflower planting. Opportunities to expand Essex County Council's Special Roadside Verges scheme will be explored. The project will include encouraging the implementation of a species-appropriate seeding programme and/or the establishment of mowing regimes for the relevant organisation responsible for maintaining the verges to implement to support wildflower growth. In doing so consideration will be given to keeping junction verges clear of taller planting to allow for safe visibility splays.
- Encourage local communities to identify local opportunities for highway verge wildflower planting.
- Publicising the approach to support awareness raising.

#### Key Stakeholders

- Local communities
- Town and Parish Councils
- EFDC's Countrycare
- Essex County Council
- Highways England
- Essex Wildlife Trust

#### Potential Funding Sources

- Existing highway maintenance budgets
- Plantlife
- Biffa Award for Rebuilding Biodiversity

#### Approximate cost (per square meter)

£2-7 (depending on seeding or turfing options)



Roadside wildflowers in Sheffield



Roadside meadow planting in Leeds



# 1.1 DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

## Community Based, Council Supported

### Tree Planting - A Call For Sites

#### The Project

Boosting the District's tree canopy cover with new tree planting on appropriate sites identified by the community. Tree planting can be on rural or urban sites, and can range in scale from just a few trees to improve a local greenspace, to extensive woodland planting projects.

#### Why?

To tackle the climate and biodiversity crises, providing long-term benefits for people, wildlife and ecology and enhance the visual amenity of the District.

#### What Does Success Look Like?

Improved quality of outdoor spaces and places and carbon capture through well considered tree planting and helping to deliver the next generation of big trees in the District.

#### How Do We Get There?

- The Council will put out a call for sites via social media and engagement platforms
- Communities to respond with potential sites they have seen where this approach could be adopted so the Council can assess the results to compile a list of sites to take forward
- The Council, in partnership with parish and town councils and community groups, will help to implement tree planting using 'Right Tree Right Place' principles and arrange appropriate stewardship for long-term success
- The Council will work with Essex County Council to explore opportunities to co-ordinate schemes as part of its Tree Planting Forest Initiative

#### Key Stakeholders

- Town / Parish Councils and Community Groups
- Epping Forest District's Hedgerow and Tree Wardens
- Essex County Council
- GreenArc Partners
- Schools
- Landowners and developers

#### Potential Sources of Funding

- Woodland Trust
- Forestry Commission
- Essex Forest Initiative

#### Approximate cost (per square meter)

£86-390 (depending on specification of tree and planting density)



New tree planting in urban 'Forest' by Spacehub



New woodland creation at Heartwood Forest, Hertfordshire

# 1.1 DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

## Community Based, Council Supported

### Community Greenspace Improvements

#### The Project

Improving local greenspaces through a community-led design approach, by developing a toolkit of guidance on initiatives and stewardship strategies. The toolkit may include elements such as: introducing relaxed mowing regimes, provision of seating, bins, growing beds, improved boundary treatments, drainage and natural play elements (such as mounds, logs and boulders). Guidance on how to create spaces that are designed to be used by all, including for those with special needs and dementia will also be provided.

#### Why?

Well-designed and multifunctional greenspaces can make people happier, healthier and bring communities together. Developing a resource for communities will make it easier for them to bring forward local projects.

#### What Does Success Look Like?

An increased use of enhanced local greenspace by a range of ages, backgrounds and abilities within the community. An improved feeling of civic pride and sense of community are amongst the social benefits of these projects, whilst environmental gains can be made through biodiversity enhancement.

#### How Do We Get There?

- The Council will seek nominations from community-based organisations to establish a trial project. The identified project should have the potential for the creation of a greenspace which is capable of incorporating a significant number of the elements identified above. There will also need to be a clear commitment by the community organisation to engaging in both the development of the toolkit and the implementation of initiatives.
- Advice will be provided by the Council and its Countrycare Service in relation to any maintenance, stewardship and funding applications.

#### Key Stakeholders

- Community Groups
- Community Champions
- EFDC's Countrycare
- Town and Parish Councils

#### Potential Sources of Funding

- The National Lottery Community Fund
- Groundwork
- Section 106 planning obligations
- Town and Parish Council precepts

#### Approximate cost (per square meter)

£44-196 (average)



Drapers Field, Waltham Forest by Kinnear Landscape Architects



Warpole Park, Ealing by J&L Gibbons

# 1.1 DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

## Projects to Encourage Engagement with Green Infrastructure

### Art In The Landscape

#### The Project

To develop a network of high-quality art across the District, which is integrated into the landscape and builds on Harlow's Sculpture Trail.

#### Why?

Well-designed and multifunctional greenspaces can make people happier, healthier and bring communities together. 'Art in the Landscape' can also act as a visitor attraction, helping to draw people away from existing spaces which are under pressure from visitors (including the Epping Forest), and encourage people into the countryside for the first time. It also has the potential to showcase the skills of local artists and makers.

#### What Does Success Look Like?

The introduction of high-quality art which has been sensitively sited in the landscape for all to access and enjoy. Artwork could come from local artists or artists from elsewhere, well-known or lesser-known artists, could be temporary or permanent and could vary from sculpture to theatre. Any artwork should respond to its surroundings, be meaningful to its location, and enhance a visitor's connection to the landscape.

#### How Do We Get There?

By establishing a working group which includes experts in public art curation and landscape architecture, whilst ensuring community groups are involved and engaged throughout the process.

#### Key Stakeholders

- Town and Parish Councils
- Local Educational and Art Programmes
- Local Schools
- Harlow Arts Trust
- Landowners and developers

#### Potential Sources of Funding

- Arts Council England
- Heritage Fund
- Section 106 planning obligations



Nuria and Irma, Yorkshire Sculpture Park by Jaume Plensa



Theydon Bois Earthwork, Richard Harris for The Woodland Trust

# 1.1 DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

## Projects for Small-Scale Developments

The following projects are aimed at smaller scale residential developments of 10 homes or fewer. The projects allow these sites to develop a Green Infrastructure network which is appropriate to the scale of the development, and contribute to the District's effort to combat the climate and biodiversity crises.

### Back Garden Wildlife Corridors

Private gardens are a significant contributor to urban greening - streets of houses are often accompanied by corridors of back gardens. Collectively they form a valuable resource to wildlife by being planted with a wide variety of trees, shrubs, fruiting specimens and flowering plants and creating wildlife corridors.

Tall and impermeable garden boundaries can restrict wildlife movement between gardens, meaning many small mammals and invertebrates are not able to move freely within a Back Garden Wildlife Corridor. Garden boundaries that allow wildlife to travel from garden to garden are important in all residential sites, especially smaller sites where there may not be significant areas for green infrastructure provision.

Boundaries could be planted with mixed, native hedging to allow better wildlife movement. If timber fencing is preferred, it could be detailed with gaps or 'holes' at ground level to allow creatures to climb through.

Typical cost: **£20-125 per linear m** (depending on type and height)

### Roofscapes as Landscapes

Green and biodiverse roofs provide an excellent alternative to more standard roofing materials - both visually and ecologically. They can be installed on flat or pitched roofs, and can be planted with a mix of sedums and wildflowers. For maximum biodiversity impact, the substrate should vary in depth.

By installing green or biodiverse roofs, a significant proportion of a site can contribute to Biodiversity Net Gain, where it would have otherwise not done so. Planted roofs can also be used alongside water harvesting and blue roof systems.

Typical cost: **£200-230 per sqm**



Wildlife-friendly garden fencing



Biodiverse roof with sedum, wildflowers and hibernaculum

# 1.1 DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

## Refuges for Wildlife

Man-made hibernaculum are places where wildlife can seek refuge, and they can be easily integrated into all sites. Bird and bat boxes can be integrated into building facades, whereas bug hotels and stripped logs can be placed on green / biodiverse roofs. Hibernaculum can even be used as a sculptural element within greenspaces.

Typical cost: **£30-80 each** (depending on type)

## Planting for Biodiversity

All proposed planting should be diverse in species, form and seasonality. The best plantings for biodiversity recreate natural environments based on the microclimate of the location - for example, a shady, sheltered area would suit a native woodland-inspired planting design, whereas a sunny, windy spot would suit a prairie-style planting design.

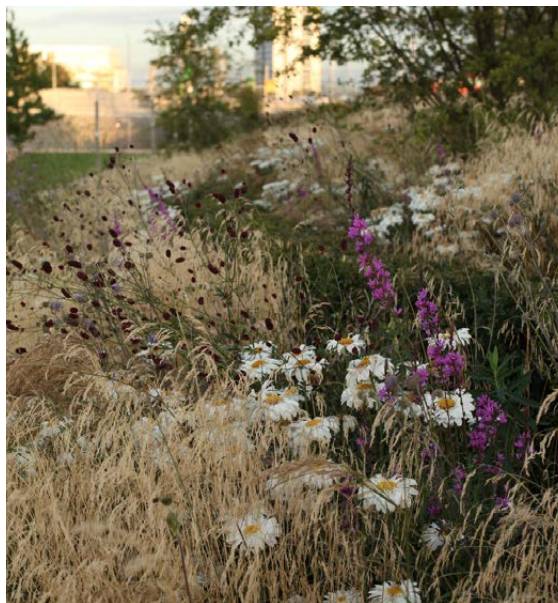
Proposed plantings should maximise their benefit to invertebrates and pollinators with a mix of native and non-native plants, with diverse flowering periods. Seasonality is key to wildlife-friendly planting, as well as visual interest - therefore there should be a mix of deciduous and evergreen specimens.

Larger areas of amenity grass can be planted with a biodiverse lawn mix, while areas not intended for heavy use can be planted with wildflower meadow.

Typical cost: **£9-35 per sqm** (depending on planting type and planting density)



An example of a bug hotel



Biodiverse planting at The Olympic Park by Sarah Price, James Hitchmough and Nigel Dunnnett

# 1.1 DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

## Drainage as Habitat

Sustainable Drainage Systems are strongly encouraged on all sites, regardless of their size. The key principle of SuDS is that they mimic natural water processes, capturing water where it falls and slowing runoff into nearby watercourses. Some SuDS such as rain gardens and swales can also provide excellent habitat potential for a range of invertebrates and amphibians. They can be planted with species which can cope with being wet and dry with the seasons, providing much more ecological and visual impact than piped systems.

Urban Design London's [Designing Rain Gardens: A Practical Guide](#) provides a useful introduction to soft SuDS options.

Typical cost: **£50-530 per sqm** (depending on depth)

## The Next Generation of Trees

When planning a site, every effort should be made to keep good quality, existing trees - mature specimens hold ecological, visual and cultural value. Looking at the future of our mature trees throughout the District however means we must plan for the next generation. New tree planting should be sought in all sites - ranging in species and specification to suit the local environment, following 'Right Tree, Right Place' principles. New trees must be planted in generous tree pits with good quality soil and appropriate irrigation provision.

Increasing tree cover in the District will also improve carbon capture abilities.

Typical cost: **£86-390 per sqm** (depending on specification of tree and planting density)

Further guidance on projects for small sites and individual homes has been produced by [Rewild My Street](#).



Street SuDS in White City, by Robert Bray Associates



Planning for the next generation of trees in Accordia, Cambridge

# STEWARDSHIP FOR DISTRICT- WIDE PROJECTS

# 1.2

## 1.2 STEWARDSHIP FOR DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

### Strategic Projects

#### Movement And Wayfinding

##### What are the stewardship principles?

To maintain the pedestrian, cyclist and equestrian Public Rights of Way network to a high standard, ensuring safe, legible and accessible routes all year round for the benefit of District residents and visitors.

##### Who is the current owner?

Essex County Council and landowners with Public Rights of Way on their land.

##### What are the current stewardship arrangements?

- Essex County Council is responsible for maintenance of all routes, except Public Rights of Way running across private land
- Landowners are responsible for the maintenance of Rights of Way over their land
- Epping Forest District Council are responsible for clearing roads, pavements and cycleways of litter

##### What changes to the stewardship arrangements could be made?

Introducing major changes to the current stewardship arrangements would not be appropriate. However more regular reviews of the Public Rights of Way network as part of monitoring and updating the Movement and Wayfinding Strategy could be undertaken to identify areas requiring improvements - as well as encouraging greater community involvement.

##### How can the community be involved?

Regular engagement with user groups and communities to help identify areas of the Public Rights of Way network which could be improved to achieve safe, legible and accessible routes all year round.



## 1.2 STEWARDSHIP FOR DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

### Strategic Projects

#### Roadside Wildflowers

##### What are the stewardship principles?

To develop a network of biodiverse roadside verges and maintain them to encourage wildlife without compromising road safety.

##### Who is the current owner?

Essex County Council / Highways England

##### What are the current stewardship arrangements?

Essex County Council pay for Epping Forest District Council's Countrycare team to maintain all adopted highway verges in the District

##### What changes to the stewardship arrangements could be made?

Some changes to Countrycare's maintenance programme and practices would enable the development of the Roadside Wildflowers project - through relaxed mowing regimes and undertaking seeding.

##### How can the community be involved?

Communities could help identify potential verges for Roadside Wildflowers, either through their Town or Parish Council, through a community group (for example the Epping in Bloom initiative) or through the development of a tool on the Council's website - where members of the public could 'apply' for verges near them to be part of the Roadside Wildflowers project.

## 1.2 STEWARDSHIP FOR DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

### Community Based, Council Supported

#### Tree Planting - A Call For Sites

##### What are the stewardship principles?

To manage new tree planting to ensure its longevity and continued benefit to local communities, the environment and in support of the District's carbon capture potential.

##### Who is the current owner?

A mixture of owners depending on which sites come forward but will be primarily the responsibility of Epping Forest District Council, Essex County Council and Town / Parish Councils and landowners. In the first stages of the project, site identification will focus on Council owned land.

##### What are the current stewardship arrangements?

Management and maintenance is typically dependant on the ownership of each site. Identified tree planting sites within Epping Forest District Council's ownership are currently looked after by a combination of the Council's Grounds Maintenance Team, Countrycare and the Environmental Protection and Drainage Team.

##### What changes to the stewardship arrangements could be made?

The responsibility for stewardship would largely remain with the current landowners of the identified sites. In Council-owned sites, an appropriate maintenance and management plan could be established in new tree planting areas to ensure healthy growth and maximum benefit to biodiversity. Further training could be given to the teams carrying out maintenance in order to achieve these.

##### How can the community be involved?

The community would largely be involved in the identification of tree planting sites across the District, and therefore the continued development of the project. Community members could suggest sites through their Town or Parish Council, through a community group (for example the Epping in Bloom initiative) or through the development of a tool on the Council's website.

## 1.2 STEWARDSHIP FOR DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

### **Community Based, Council Supported Community Greenspace Improvements**

#### **What are the stewardship principles?**

To ensure the community continue to be engaged in the management and maintenance of their own improved greenspaces to achieve high levels of community cohesion, pride in local spaces and care for the local environment.

#### **Who is the current owner?**

Primarily, Community Greenspaces are in the ownership of Epping Forest District Council or Town and Parish Councils.

#### **What are the current stewardship arrangements?**

Greenspaces within Council ownership are currently looked after by a combination of the Epping Forest District Council's Grounds Maintenance Team, Countrycare and the Environmental Protection and Drainage Team.

#### **What changes to the stewardship arrangements could be made?**

Day to day maintenance would still remain with the above identified teams, however the overall management strategy would largely depend on the greenspace improvements identified by the community. Therefore, the overarching management strategy could be developed by the community with input and support from the Council.

#### **How can the community be involved?**

The local community would set up a group to help bring about improvements to their local greenspace. The community group would be leading the project, and that would include making decisions about the future stewardship of the space. The Council will provide advice and resources to make informed decisions, as well as supporting potential funding applications for the long-term management of the greenspace.

## 1.2 STEWARDSHIP FOR DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

### Projects to Encourage Engagement with Green Infrastructure

#### Art In The Landscape

##### What are the stewardship principles?

To involve communities in the development of an art network across the District - where well maintained, accessible and meaningful artwork is used to engage people in their surrounding green infrastructure and outdoor spaces.

##### Who is the current owner?

Previously, there has been very little public art commissioning in the District, despite it being home to various artists over the years (such as Walter E Spradbery and Jacob Epstein). Artwork proposals for this project are yet to be developed, including where any artwork is to be placed - and therefore it will be dependent on who owns the land. However, it is anticipated that artwork will predominantly be placed on Council or Town and Parish Council owned land or within larger areas of open space provided as part of the strategic sites proposed as part of the emerging Local Plan.

##### What are the current stewardship arrangements?

Whilst pieces of public art remain few in the District, the artwork located in parks and gardens (such as the Memorial to King Harold in Waltham Abbey Gardens) are typically looked after by the local Town Council. The Theydon Bois Earthwork is maintained by The Woodland Trust.

##### What changes to the stewardship arrangements could be made?

As an example, The Harlow Art Trust is responsible for the development and stewardship of the Harlow Sculpture Trail. In Epping Forest District, the Qualis Community Interest Company (CIC) could extend their stewardship responsibilities to the development of a coherent artwork network in the landscape.

##### How can the community be involved?

The local community can be included in the procurement, creation and location of artworks, as well as the development of a trail over time.

