

4.0 Threats and Opportunities



Coddiwomple (v)
to travel in a purposeful manner
towards a vague destination

4.1 Threats and Opportunities

Table 5. Threats to our landscape and the challenges and opportunities they present to our scheme.

| Threat | Causes or issues | Opportunity |
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| Environmental | | |
| Changing character of the landscape | Mineral extraction, changes in agricultural practices, large-scale development, HS2 | Although the character of the landscape will be altered by large-scale mineral extraction (and will continue to do so) the opportunities presented through restoration originally incorporated recreation (water sports) and are currently focussed on wildlife-rich spaces with diverse habitats (water, woodland, meadow) incorporated with low-level recreation (walking, cycling). We have the opportunity to create tranquil spaces that benefit people and wildlife. There are opportunities to work with landowners to consider wildlife-friendly farming practices; protect heritage features; and alter how land with hidden archaeology is managed to preserve the asset in the future. Urban development and transport infrastructure (e.g. HS2) may provide additional funding streams for local projects, for example, through Section 106 obligations and the HS2 Community Environment Fund. |
| Climate Change | Long-term change and extreme weather events | Consider new ways of managing the landscape; development of the Washlands for water-retention during high rainfall and water levels will be undertaken through Living Floodplains. Extreme flood events will become more frequent so the use of the floodplain must be considered. Flood mitigation presents a variety of opportunities. |
| Loss of Habitat | Through climate change, development, changing management etc. | There are opportunities to identify and restore or recreate new habitats through Biodiversity Offsetting as compensation for development in the landscape. Fragmentation is a major threat to long-term viability as connected habitats allow for the movement of species between sites. Natural heritage improvements will be essential in halting the loss of habitat and reinstating habitat in strategic locations. |

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| Uncertainty over future management | Need for long-term management, coordinated approach, biodiversity offsetting. | A coordinated landscape approach, coupled with a long-term vision for the area, provides the basis for a coordinated approach to management. With key decision-makers and influencers involved in the partnership there is scope to arrive at a common agreement over long-term management. |
| Pollution | An increasing population brings higher emissions; growing industry impacts pollution levels | As development in the landscape and surrounding area increases, and with it the transport infrastructure that serves this development, pollution from increased road traffic, residential housing and industry will also increase. There is opportunity to link into sustainable transport initiatives to encourage alternative forms of transport. The scheme is improving the existing footpath and cyclepath network with the vision that infrastructure changes must happen first to enable a cultural change in travel choices. Education will also play a part in changing hearts and minds. |
| Flooding | The Trent Valley is a floodplain landscape and therefore large areas are at risk of flooding. High-level flood risk events are becoming more frequent | The Environment Agency is currently reviewing the flood defences along large sections of the Trent Valley and there is opportunity to work alongside this statutory work to influence the scope and the mitigation. Transforming the Trent Valley is currently linked into the Burton+ scheme with the EA and ESBC to develop an approach to flood mitigation that acknowledges the role played by different habitats in flood management and recognises the needs of the local communities. |

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| Plant and animal diseases and non-native Species | In particular Himalayan Balsam, Floating Pennywort and mink | There is an opportunity to work with volunteers to identify the location and extent of non-native species and record this information, and engage communities directly on removing some non-native species (e.g. Himalayan balsam). Working to create healthy and supported habitats builds resilience across the landscape. Spreading information allows communities to become champions for their area, encouraged through the community engagement projects. Similarly, messages like 'check, clean and dry' for canoeists are important for preventing further contamination. |
| Economic | | |
| Large-scale development | Large-scale housing, A38 expansion, Garden Town and Twin Rivers | Large-scale development will alter the economy of the landscape bringing a larger population and more business opportunities. There is scope for development to attract investment if carefully planned and a long-term vision for the landscape will be key to this. Additionally, informing the planning system to ensure appropriate foot and cycle links are provisioned giving access to the wider countryside opens opportunities for local spending and supporting of small businesses. It is shown in the TVW Economic Assessment that walkers spend locally and small local shops and cafes have scope to benefit. |
| Active quarries / future mineral extraction | There are a number of active quarry sites across the landscape and restoration needs to be undertaken as part of a wider vision. Future mineral extraction is also planned | There remain large areas of unexploited mineral in the Tame and Trent Valleys and a potential to open up mineral extraction along the largely unexploited Dove Valley. With a landscape scale vision there is opportunity to influence mineral plans and planning decisions on areas that should be protected due to their natural or cultural heritage, or due to their value in preserving the character and integrity of the landscape, and to realise the collective potential of many restoration proposals to create a more connected landscape for people and nature. The audit information supplied by the development of this scheme will provide part of the evidence base to inform and influence future decisions. |

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| Landfill sites | A number of sites have been allocated for landfill and will impact on the environment and local communities | The location of landfill sites will impact the restoration time for quarries, will impact local villages due to higher levels of large vehicles, and will put strain on local infrastructure. There will be an impact on the nature of site restoration. There is possibility to embrace a restored site with varied habitat opportunities. The landscape is pock-scarred by quarry lakes and landfill provides an alternative restoration closer to the original landscape character. |
| High Speed 2 | This will provide a short-term impact during the construction phase and a long-term impact upon completion | This new rail link has the potential to alter the character of the landscape by making nearby locations (Lichfield, Stafford) part of the London commuter belt. There is a risk that property prices will rise, pricing out local residents, and demographics will alter as a result of changing job opportunities. Liaison with local rail and bus operators is needed to improve connectivity within the landscape as well as into the landscape. |
| Cultural | | |
| Social Changes | Demographic changes, development pressures, economic changes | External pressures will lead to an inevitable, but uncertain, social change in attitudes, priorities and expectations. The scheme has the opportunity to influence this change through directly engaging communities, providing training and skills, inspiring community champions, improving infrastructure and relaying key messages. Working with young adults trains the new generation of deliverers and influencers; whilst providing formal and informal education for young children will help to guide and educate the decision makers of the future. |
| Local issues and attitudes | Feeling alienated from the river or the landscape; feeling unheard; local issues not addressed | It is clear that there are issues related to the scheme that go beyond the scope of a heritage project. With key decision makers and influencers involved in the partnership, there is opportunity to share the audit information, consultation responses and community feedback to highlight issues that need to be addressed. Community engagement and education needs to tackle feelings of alienation and effective communication should ensure that the correct messages are heard. |

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| <p>Attitudes and understanding</p> | <p>Illegal activities e.g. flytipping and graffiti; habits and expectations</p> | <p>Lack of understanding, or sometimes a lack of sympathy, leads individuals to undertake illegal activities. The scheme presents an opportunity to tackle anti-social issues through education and awareness raising, whilst attempting to address a lack of sympathy through a sense of community pride and ownership. Breaking habits is difficult, however people will often choose the easy option and so new habits can be created by careful planning. This is particularly important in footpath creation and cycle infrastructure.</p> |
| <p>Competing priorities</p> | <p>Conservation, tourism, agriculture, industry</p> | <p>For a landscape that works for wildlife, culture, communities and industry there will be inevitable competing priorities. Increasing numbers of tourists and visitors puts pressure on sensitive heritage sites. Careful management is required and there is opportunity to view sites within a landscape context to prioritise or divert resources as required, based on a spatial strategy.</p> |

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| Overuse | Either through intensification or high footfall | Increased housing development will lead to a population increase in the landscape. Encouraging access to new sites will lead to high numbers of visitors. A careful balance is needed to ensure that delicate sites are preserved and protected and that destinations and the infrastructure that serve them can sufficiently meet the demand. A landscape scale vision is essential to ensuring appropriate management. |
| Neglect | Lack of management or miss-management leading to issues like soil erosion, scrub encroachment, decay and vandalism | Working with volunteers there is scope to identify sites that are suffering from neglect, principally natural heritage and cultural heritage sites. By working with and supporting landowners, we can identify the causes of neglect and work to reverse the situation. This could be due to lack of knowledge, lack of skills, economic pressures, disinterest etc. The projects allow us to tackle these issues to bring about change. Supporting landowners will have a direct influence; training and supporting volunteers will ensure a legacy. |
| Political | | |
| Political and Policy Changes | Brexit, changes in local government, changing political priorities | As the United Kingdom begins negotiations to leave the European Union, the impact on policy remains uncertain. This is likely to have impact on a local as well as a regional level. Additionally, changes in local government can alter political will and is likely to have an impact on a scheme exceeding 5 years. |
| Agricultural Policy | Changes in policy, priorities and subsidies. | Changes to the Single Market as a result of Brexit are likely to impact agriculture through changes in subsidies, legislation in care or movement of stock, or differing priorities in outputs. This will impact how the landscape is farmed and managed. |