Clarification questions received and answered

1. **Baseline Surveys:**
2. Where have surveys been carried out? May we see the results pre-submission to refine our tender accordingly? Surveys have been carried out at the following locations, and can be viewed upon request.

* Taunton Green
* Galmington Way
* Greenway
* Hamilton
* French Weir
* Comeytrowe
* Victoria
* Hawthorn

1. Where have surveys been commissioned but not yet carried out? Can we help? They are all currently complete at the following locations, awaiting 1 final report which should be with us promptly.
2. Do any sites not yet have surveys organised – can we help or is there an expectation to include this in the tender - if so for how many sites? There are remaining park locations, green spaces that we manage without surveys. Lyngford Park and Goodland Gardens are set to receive a survey next year as part of our new Green Flag application. Remaining locations without surveys are: Freize Hill Community Orchard, The Grove, Priorswood, Pennys Field and Staplegrove.  If you wish to undertake the wildflower creation at non surveyed sites this would need to be factored into the distribution of the funding for the tender. Please find our location here: [Taunton Town Council - Parks and Play Areas](https://www.taunton-tc.gov.uk/taunton-community/parks-open-spaces/)

**2. TT25 Flood Alleviation Scheme Area (French Weir)**

1. Re "How should Somerset Council leave the land"? We are happy to have a chat about this to give free advice on soil management for wildflowers - perhaps we may be in time to ask for subsoil to be put back on top in some areas following excavation? This could hugely help and speed up wildflower establishment if it's possible.  This is a wonderful offer. Please reach out to: [climate@taunton-tc.gov.uk](mailto:climate@taunton-tc.gov.uk) and we can organise a chat, we still have time to amend the current request.
2. Allotment scheme potential in this area – would it be wise, therefore, for us to focus on the perimeter borders for this particular project? Our approach is flexible and iterative so this can shift as the situation develops. We have changed our thinking that this location might better suit the planting of more fruit trees to make a community orchard, at this stage the ideas are flexible for this particular space. At the very least we would like to indeed focus on the borders and the secondary triangle area of land immediately next to this area show on the map. We appreciate the approach of flexible and iterative as we are looking for this in how we approach the design phase for the selection of sites.

**3. Open Spaces Team:**

1. Can we clarify the resource in this team please? How many people/ FTE, roles etc? Are their tractor drivers among them?  There are 12 in this team, a mixture of 1 lead, 2 supervisors, 2 apprentices and the remaining being assistants. We have an in house tractor and most of the staff are certified to use it. However it is currently in near constant use so we would need to coordinate with the Open Spaces Lead on the capacity for this to be used by the open spaces team to help in the delivery of this project. Initial meetings would have to be conducted to identify capacity from the team anyway for the implementation of the corridors.
2. The project brief doesn’t currently include mention of training sessions for staff teams? Would you like to  include this in our proposal? We have demonstrable experience of delivering high quality training to land management teams and this can support the ongoing success and legacy of the project. This sounds like a great opportunity to offer if you feel it would aid with the project legacy as we will definitely  be looking at this to ensure long term success. I believe there is reference to asking applicants to consider how they would help create management plans that can be delivered by TTC more long term to ensure this. A training opportunity seems a great way to address this element. It would be good to be mindful of turnover of staff to ensure a way for the information to be retained and redistributed for staff, as staff come and go over time.
3. Equipment and machinery to hire e.g. cut and collect  - can you say more on your hopes or expectations regarding machinery costs and hiring etc, staff training etc? Is this to be included in te budget of £25k? I can’t provide anymore currently on this unfortunately. We are a new council and have gone through a series of considerable expansions in the last year. I currently don’t have a forecast of future budgeting. We are hoping that as the external advisors, you would be aware of cost breakdowns that it would take to hire this equipment if and when necessary. Additionally, there is mention that we are interested in upskilling the community by offering scything (which would come from a separate budget) to help support capacity with the cut and collect. This is addressed in the request for: *Provide within the scope technical advice and an ongoing long term maintenance programme with minimal intervention after the project finishes that can be used by our open spaces team and any volunteering forces.* Provided in the scope.
4. You mention that you currently have a lack of storage and growing space, is there a desire to address this with say purchase of a polytunnel or creation of a dedicated growing/storage space? We currently don’t have capacity onsite for growing, nor a secure location that we could grow within our parks. There are potential talks between our ops and assets and somerset council about a nursery owned by SC on the outskirts of Taunton, but this is only a beginning discussion so there is no timeline or guarantee that will take place and be opportunity. It would be highly unlikely it would be an opportunity for the time this project is set to run therefore take the project as having to source seed and planting externally but in the most sustainable way possible. We welcome working with local providers.

**4. Native wildflower planting in urban planters**

1. May we ask if you wish to focus solely on growing native species in urban planters and hanging baskets or might there be some flexibility on this?  In semi-natural spaces, parks, green spaces, native wildflower meadow restoration should, of course,  be the absolute priority and in keeping with the strategy and with seeds/plants of known provenance. However in core urban areas, managing fixed planters cost-effectively could involve woody and/ or perennial species that have long leaf and flower seasons, giving longer seasons of interest, absorb pollutants and provide pollen and nectar. These will usually be more cost-effective to manage than seasonal native wildflower shows, and whilst they are more typically municipal, they will last. We can of course endeavour to include an agreed proportion of native and near-native species in these planting schemes alongside horticultural varieties to create the most suitable, beneficial and attractive displays that we can with you. We are open to incorporating non-native species beneficial to pollinators and that are adapted to urban environments and predicted climate change challenges. We would like to prioritise native in the first instant but are definitely open to creating a mix, at the advice of the expertise from the chosen provider.

**5. Funding/Project Budget**

1. Are materials costs, equipment costs (e.g. purchase of scythes, tools for friends of groups) and purchase of plants, seeds, shrub/tree whips, plugs and bulbs etc all to be included within the current £25K budget? Is there an existing budget for any of these items available that will be utilised? There is potential for the purchase of plants to come from the 26/27 climate budget, however POs would not be able to be raised until March. Additionally, any requests for additional funding would have to go through the Community and Place Committee to be agreed by councillors. There is no guarantee they would agree to more expenditure when a significant portion of money has already been allocated from the previous years budget. Scything and tools can be put through the climate budget for friends of groups/volunteers because this is deemed a business as usual to support our volunteers to carry out their tasks. For the restoration of the wildflowers specifically, I think the purchase of seed etc would have to come from the allocated £25k or up to £40k. Aim to work within this and we can discuss the potential for additional funding into the new financial year if we identify an opportunity that the Community and Place Committee might be the benefit of investing more into this project for.
2. RE: Additional funding We suggest that our initial tender focuses on the £25,000 currently available for the work. This will provide clarity. We would love to enter further discussions should your application to the NLHF be successful. We will certainly include an expression of interest in partaking in any future tender process should the funding be extended and we can make some initial suggestions for expansion of scope as part of our bid. Unfortunately I have ran this question past higher leadership and we require an estimated costed breakdown of how each scope of funding would be tackled, so that we are able to apply for the additional funding in the initial instance. Currently we are awaiting costed breakdowns from applicants, so that we can put this within our nature bid submission which require a costed breakdown of where the funding will be used. Therefore, by submitting the requested scopes for both potentials you are making it more likely that we will be successful receiving the additional funding which will only benefit both the successful applicant and pollinators by being able to proceed with the larger project.

**6. Subcontractors**

Is it essential that we select any potential subcontractor/s prior to submitting our bid? No, you can make reference where you would need additional sub contractors and your approach to engaging sub-contractors.

1. In the Project Brief, under Project Deliverables, it states that the awarded bidder is to *“deliver successful pollinator corridors of native wildflowers across the proposed sites specified.”* For the avoidance of doubt, does the scope therefore include the physical implementation of the wildflower corridors?

The scope does include the physical implementation of the wildflower corridors

1. If the scope does include the physical implementation of wildflower corridors, what guarantees or warranties are required, and over what periods?

We wish to work with the successful applicant to identify KPIs that will help us measure the success of the project. These KPIs would be specific to each stage of the project. For example, for community engagement, you might suggest KPIS based on results pulled from a community feedback form, after an engagement event has taken place. For wildflower creation, we can see that from the research success is usually measured by achieving a **50–80%** range for sown wildflower (forb) cover by year 2–3 (Carvell et al. 2022). We would therefore request **70% forb cover by year 2**. If by year 2 this is not achieved, we would expect the contractor to return in year 3 to address any planting needs to bring the success rate up to the requested 70%.  We will provide a Service Level Agreement at the start of our agreed working partnership that will stipulate these outlines. We would also like to see an explanation of what you as a contractor would deem a success measure and how these success measure would be calculated, i.e. will you have an officer come out and record the forb cover to gain estimates, during what times and frequencies, or , will you instead spend a few hours to train some of our open spaces team in how to collect the data, so they can gather the information themselves for measuring and monitoring. In your tender, please therefore provide projections of how your success measures might look and how you would go about measuring these. Once the successful applicant is chosen, we can then work with the candidate to collectively agree the additional success measures, based on the varying factors, which may be site specific.