

Staffordshire Trent Valley Catchment Plan 2018



Catchment Partners



Environment
Agency



Working in partnership with
BPSG



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Current Steering Group Partners

Environment Agency	Groundwork West Midlands
Staffordshire Wildlife Trust	Severn Trent Water
Newcastle Borough Council	South Staffordshire Water
Staffordshire County Council	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Wild Trout Trust	Catchment Sensitive Farming on behalf of Natural England

1. Introduction

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) introduces a holistic approach to the management of the water environment and establishes a system for the protection and improvement of all aspects of the water environment including rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwater. The WFD objective is for all inland and coastal waters to reach a more natural state or 'Good Ecological Status' by 2027.

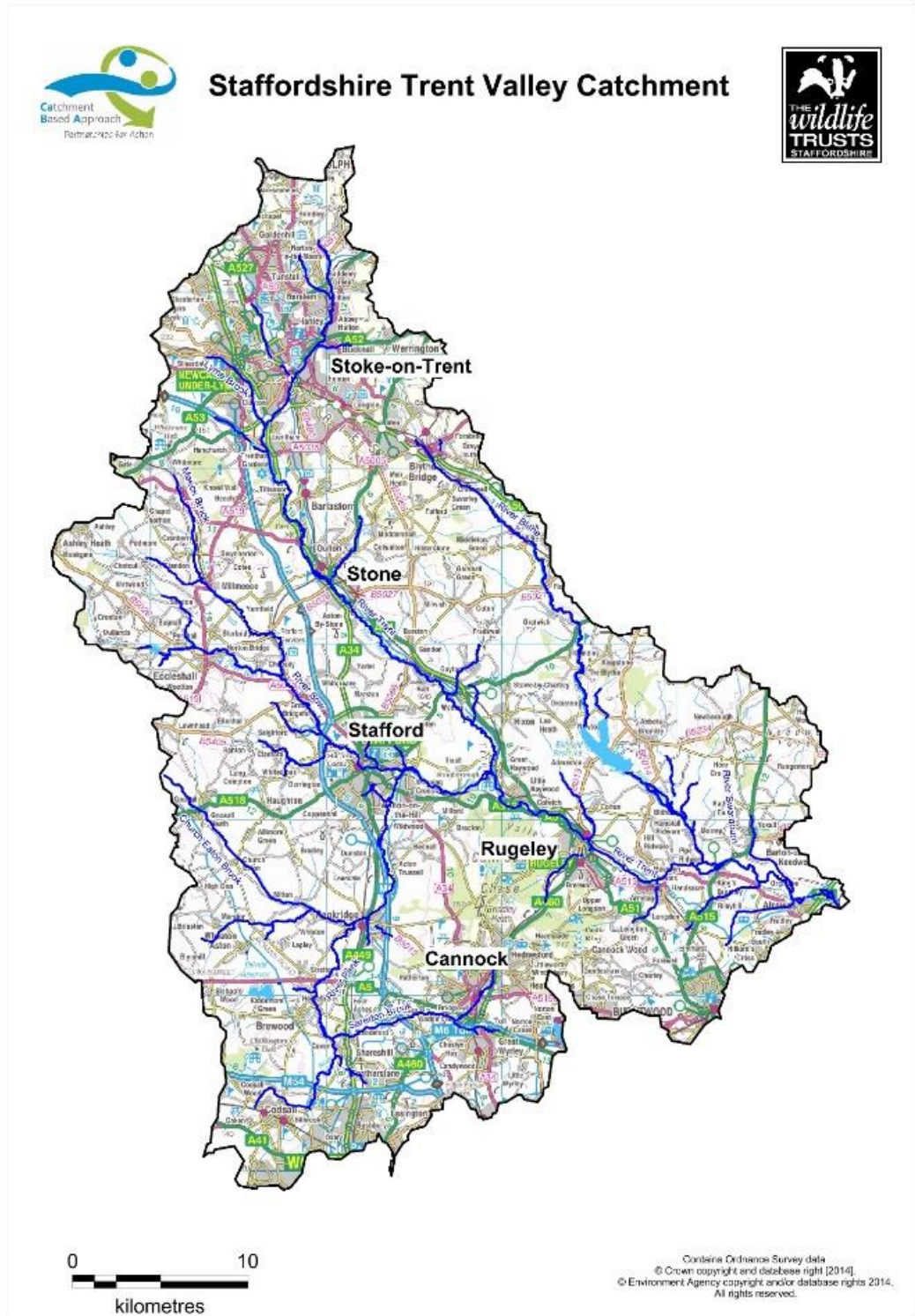
This is an ambitious target and it has been recognised that local organisations and communities have an essential role to deliver the requirements of the Directive. This will be done through the Catchment Based Approach and the setting up of Catchment Partnerships bringing local knowledge and expertise to deliver collaborative working and improvements to our water environments at a river catchment scale. There are now more than 100 catchment partnerships throughout England and Wales working in partnerships to deliver a wide range of wetland projects to work toward achieving these ambitious targets.

The Staffordshire Trent Valley (STV) Catchment area includes the River Trent from its source to its confluence with the River Tame. There are also a number of tributaries in the upper reaches of the River Trent which flow through the highly urban catchment of Stoke-on-Trent. The catchment supports abstraction for public water supply, for spray irrigation and industrial purposes. Abstraction for public water supply takes place from the sandstone aquifers and Blithfield Reservoir on the River Blithe. The reservoir is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for over-wintering birds. It is also a major salmonid fishery and the River Blithe is also a mixed trout and coarse fishery. There is a current Voluntary Initiative partnership to minimise the impact of pesticide use around the Blithfield Reservoir catchment. Now in its second year it has worked with more than 30 farmers across the sub catchment.

Historically, poor water quality and poor habitat in the River Trent downstream of Stoke-on-Trent have impacted upon fisheries. Water quality has improved over the last twenty years, particularly with improvements to sewage treatments works and storm discharges to the River Trent in Stoke-on-Trent and associated tributaries.

There are a number of Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest within the STV catchment including Cannock Chase, Chartley Moss and Pasturefields Saltmarsh.

Staffordshire Trent Valley Catchment Map



2. Catchment Vision

Our vision is to recreate one of Britain's great network of wetlands for wildlife and people. Our catchment will benefit from improved resilience to climate change, flooding and pollution in doing so will be in an improved ecological condition.

By working in partnership across the catchment we will inspire others to care for and care about the water environment. We will have a valley that people are proud of and will enjoy living in, working in and visiting. We will have a diverse water environment with healthy rivers, lakes and canals which will attract a host of wildlife species.

3. Partnership Aims and Objectives

Aims

- Collectively identify the key issues within the catchment relating to the water environment.
- Agree the relevant actions that are required to deliver improvements to the water environment at a catchment scale to help meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.
- Ensure that work to improve the water environment in the area is well informed by evidence which is gathered from a range of sources including the Environment Agency, partners and local knowledge.
- Whenever possible ensure that projects deliver wider benefits for people and enhance the natural environment for the benefit of their health and wellbeing by providing access to enjoy the environment and wildlife in it.
- Summarise the agreed issues into a Catchment Delivery Plan and coordinate delivery through project delivery partners.
- Maximise the use of existing resources and seek to attract additional funding where appropriate, to support the agreed outcomes of the Catchment Plan.
- Annually review the Catchment Plan to assess and evaluate if targeted actions have resulted in improvements to the state of the water environment and met the catchment partnership objectives.

Objectives

The partnership will focus on the following objectives for the catchment and identify actions required to meet them:

- A sustainable water environment as a result of improving water quality, reducing flood risk and developing resilience to climate change for the Staffordshire Trent Valley catchment
- Enhance the biodiversity of our rivers and waterways through restoring them to a more natural state and improving habitats.
- Increasing access and amenity value for local communities and businesses as part of the catchments planned green infrastructure.
- Encouraging people to connect with their local water environment through citizen science and volunteering opportunities.

4. Challenges

The STV catchment is affected by many different issues, some small-scale and local, others long term and covering the whole area. The main challenges facing the catchment can be summarised under the following headings; pollution from waste water; diffuse pollution from urban and rural areas and physical modifications to rivers.

Pollution from waste water is a major reason for not achieving 'Good Ecological Status'. Discharges from the sewage network that contain phosphate and ammonia and can adversely affect the ability of rivers to support fish and invertebrates.

Diffuse pollution from rural areas is a major pressure in the catchment. Land management activities that result in the loss of phosphates, pesticides and sediment to the water environment is a major reason that water bodies are not achieving good status.

Diffuse pollution from urban areas are a major pressure in the built up areas within the catchment, of particular concern is the Stoke-on-Trent and Urban Newcastle area as close to the source of the Trent. The effects of this can be seen downstream and so tackling source issues has to be a priority.

Physical Modifications. Man-made changes to the shape and flow of rivers are also a major pressure in the catchment. These include the engineering of river channels, abstraction of water for public water supply, the introduction of barriers to fish and changes to riparian habitats.

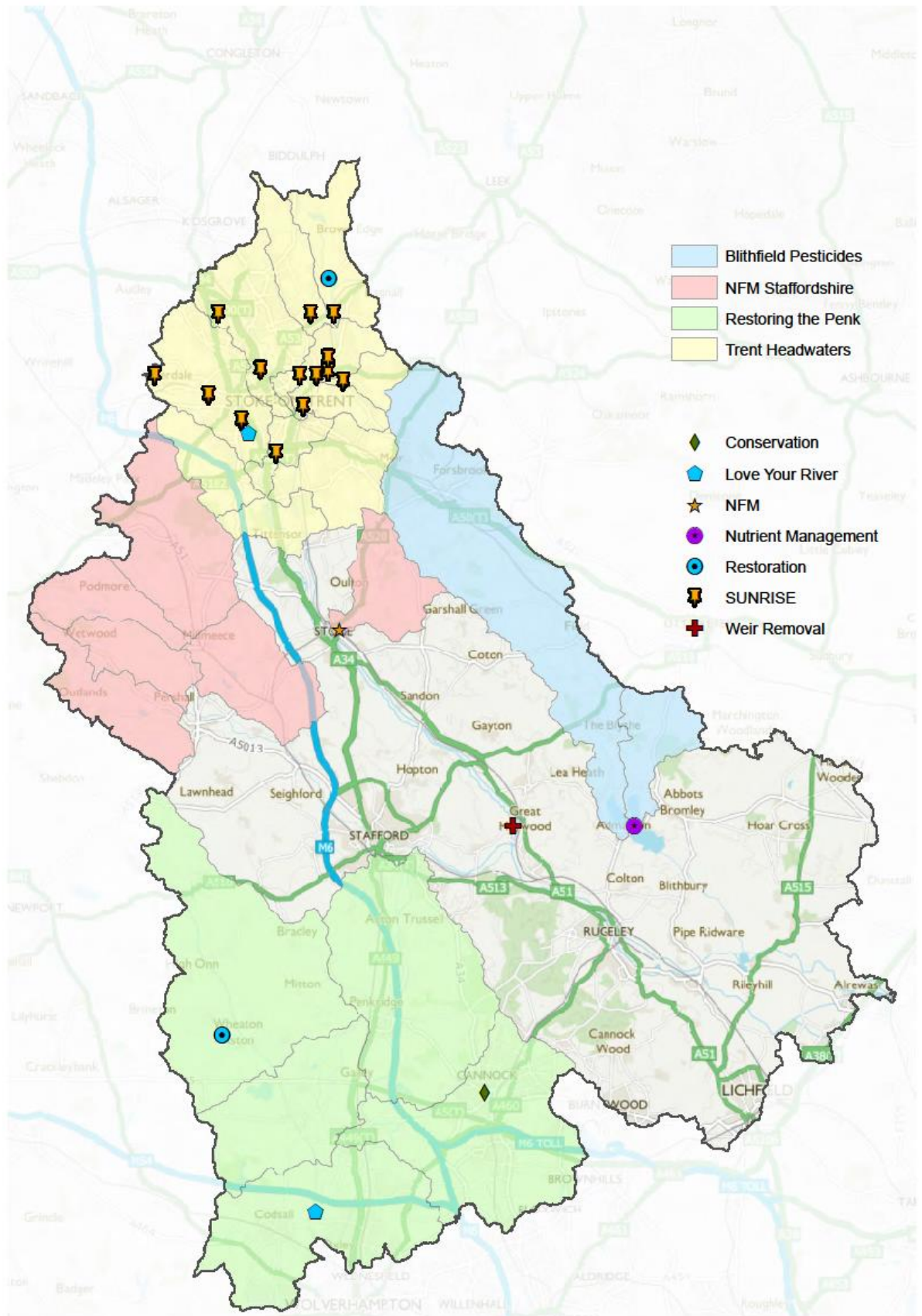
5. Partnership Themes within the Catchment

During the lifetime of the Staffordshire Trent Valley Catchment Partnership a number of themes and specific areas of work have evolved and can be seen on the map below. These themes have been agreed by partners and steer our activities in order to maximise the benefits to be had from working in a Catchment Based Approach. As the partnership grows and evolves these themes and work areas may change and this is determined by changing conditions in our water bodies. The theme areas may also expand to take in new sub-catchments where funding allows having learnt from best practice in other areas.

- Love Your River Trent Headwaters
- Blithfield Pesticides
- Restoring the Penk
- Natural Flood Management Staffordshire

The evidence which has led to the development of these areas of work can be seen on the table on page 8 and shown on the map on page 7. The individual projects within these areas of work can be found on the project tracker (see page 10).

Staffordshire Trent Valley Catchment Priorities



6. Evidence Base

The original catchment plan was written in consultation with the partnership steering group. The project delivery plan was created in the same way, these are both regularly reviewed and updated.

During the development of the catchment plan evidence is used to develop and refine project ideas in order to ensure that they deliver against the aims and objectives of the STV partnership and WFD.

Evidence is gathered using a number of sources, WFD information, catchment data explorer, local evidence from partners including water quality testing, electro fishing data and local communities.

Evidence Base for the Project Themes.

Operational Catchments	Brief description of catchment	Main issues within the catchment
Blithe Rivers & Lakes	A predominantly rural catchment with a mix of arable and livestock farming. The catchment contains Blithfield Reservoir: a designated drinking water protected area.	Due to its rural nature, diffuse water pollution from agriculture is attributed to the main reason why rivers in this catchment are failing to meet WFD (Water Framework Directive) 'Good Ecological Status'. Blithfield reservoir is impacted by pesticides, namely metaldehyde.
Penk Rivers & Lakes	The Penk flows through urban and rural landscapes. Agriculture is a mix of arable, livestock, including dairy and soft fruit farming. Motte Meadows National Nature Reserve and SAC is within the catchment.	Diffuse pollution from both urban areas and agriculture present pressures on the River Penk and its tributaries along with point source pollution from waste water.
Sow Rivers & Lakes	Predominantly a rural catchment with a mix of livestock and arable farms. The lower Sow flows into Stafford town via the SSSI; Doxey Marshes. The Meece Brook, a tributary of the Sow has low flow issues. One of the Meres and Mosses, Cop Mere SSSI is within this catchment.	The upper catchment is impacted by nutrient enrichment. Groundwater abstractions are impacting on the flow levels within the Meece Brook. Diffuse pollution from urban and rural areas are also attributed to the Rivers within this catchment failing to meet WFD 'Good Ecological Status.'
Trent for source to Sow	The headwaters of the Trent flow through rough grazing land before entering the Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme. Downstream the catchment is a mix of rural and urban. Agriculture is predominantly livestock farms.	The urban environment has a major impact on the morphology, ecology and water quality of the River Trent. Diffuse pollution from roads along with misconnections and intermittent discharges from sewage systems are a significant reason for failure within this catchment along with physical modifications to the water courses.
Trent from Sow to Tame	A mixed urban and rural catchment, the Trent flows through the towns Rugeley and Burton-upon-Trent. Agriculture is a mix of livestock and arable farming. The lower reaches of the Trent flow through sand and gravel quarries.	Point source sewage discharges, urban diffuse pollution and diffuse pollution from agriculture are the main reasons for rivers failing to meet WFD 'Good Ecological Status' within this catchment.

7. Action Plan including Funding Strategy

The catchment plan has been updated and reviewed by partners in early 2018 and will be reviewed annually hereafter.

The project tracker has been created as a way of centrally recording project ideas from all partners within STV. It will allow us to monitor progress of projects and ensure that they fit in with the overall aims of the partnership and WFD. Furthermore, it will allow us to have ideas worked up in readiness should new sources of funding become available.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

The partnership undertakes monitoring and evaluation in a number of ways dependant on the group, organisation and project. Baseline data will be collected prior to any project activity using existing expertise within the partnership or specialists where this doesn't exist.

There are specific monitoring and evaluation activities taking place for certain areas of work such as the Blithfield Pesticides Group. South Staffs Water have a drinking water protection plan and carry out regular water testing at fixed points throughout the Blithe catchment.

Scientific, citizen science and volunteer monitoring will be used as appropriate to measure success of projects, particularly in engaging local people. This will be of particular relevance when supporting friends groups and community groups within the catchment.

During steering group meetings the partnership discuss the success of projects reviewing what went well and any lessons learnt. Additionally, where appropriate case studies are written after project delivery and uploaded to Staffordshire Wildlife Trust website and the CaBA national website.

It is always an aim of any project delivery to include monitoring as part of the overall project, however, funding is not always available to support this after the life of the project.

The Catchment Partnership will contribute to the national CaBA reports and evaluation annually.

The catchment project tracker spreadsheet will be reviewed during each steering group meeting to ensure data is up to date.

9. Communication and Engagement Strategy

Internally, within the partnership we hold steering group meetings on four occasions per year, or more if and when the need arises. There are also sub catchment meetings twice a year for the Blithfield Pesticides Group. Additionally, there are regular communications via email and telephone to keep partners informed when relevant information needs to be shared.

Externally, relevant communications including information about events, funding opportunities etc are distributed by email to more than 90 contacts as and when information seems appropriate to share. A newsletter is written twice a year or more if there is sufficient information available which is also distributed via this method.

Information such as project case studies, newsletters and catchment plans are held on the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust website and so freely accessible to all. During 2017 there were more

than 180 viewings of this page. In addition this information is also published on the CaBA national website.

The various partners work with a range of different audiences from schools and universities, Friends of groups and community groups, to businesses and land owners representing the catchment partnership to these audiences.

10. Project Tracker

A project tracker has been created which shows in more detail the project ideas which are supported by the project plan and partnership. This is circulated within the catchment partnership and also reviewed at every steering group meeting. The project tracker records information about the projects in more detail, a summary and indication of the types of projects recorded of can be seen in the table below.

Summary of Projects

Project Name	Central Grid Ref	Water Body ID	Project Summary
Hoo Mill Weir Removal	SJ9950024002	GB104028053272	Removal of a box culvert to aid fish passage.
Restoring and Improving Staffordshire's Catchments (RISC)	SJ88302760	GB104028046761 GB104028053220 GB104028052990	Tackling agricultural diffuse pollution, improving habitat provision for fish and invertebrates in areas which are failing to meet requirements of WFD. Working with landowners to reduce sediment and phosphate through a range of Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems (RSuDS).
Restoring the Penk (Whiston Brook)	SJ844132	GB104028046761	Project to address agricultural diffuse pollution and improve river habitat through a combination of advice and guidance, capital works including rural SuDS projects, fencing off water courses, creating cattle drinking bays and riparian tree planting.
Farming Floodplains for the Future	SJ8123729707	GB104028052990	Reducing flood risk, addressing agricultural diffuse pollution and improving river habitat on the River Upper Sow/Meece Brook, focusing on Priority Sites (Copmere & Doxey), working with the local flood action group.
Natures Flood Defence	SJ9063434418	GB104028046761	Installing natural flood management schemes at strategic locations to reduce flood risk in Stone combined with addressing rural diffuse pollution and improving river habitat.
Protecting Blithfield Reservoir	SK0541524169	GB30435478	Reducing nutrients and pesticides into Blithfield Reservoir through farmer engagement and provision of advice on best practice and management. Access to all farmers in the Blithe Catchment to funding through the SPRING2 scheme offered by South Staffs Water.
Project Name	Central Grid Ref	Water Body ID	Project Summary

Tad Brook Meander	SK05947261	GB104028046520	The project aims to re-naturalise a 300m length to create a meander into adjacent wet woodland. The area is within a Drinking Water protection zone and would be an extension to the work carried out by the Blithfield Pesticides Group. It would improve the Brook for Invertebrates Macro and Fish.
Volunteer led watercourse enhancements within the Trent Headwaters	N/A	GB104028046680 GB104028053340	Headwaters are an essential foundation for naturally functioning rivers as well as being vital habitats in their own right. It is widely accepted that the health of downstream reaches is only as good as that of its headwaters, and this is reflected within the Staffordshire Trent Valley. GWWM want to tackle these issues by supporting and facilitating local community groups and volunteer teams to deliver cost effective enhancements to their local watercourses. The project will deploy tried and tested soft engineering techniques to deliver increased in-channel and riparian habitat heterogeneity and resilience. The target watercourses will be selected based on their "Poor WFD" status and associated RNAGs, alongside the presence of passionate and committed local groups. The proposed delivery is based on actions that have been identified as key to achieving objectives for 2027 within the Humber River Basement Management Plan, and the techniques deployed will deliver valuable morphological and ecological improvements to the benefit of all river biota.
SUNRISE – ERDF Funded project	Various	Various	A range of intervention to improve watercourses in Stoke-on-Trent and Urban Newcastle-under-Lyme. Including SuDS retrofit options, barrier removal, restoration, re-routeing channels and pond creation.
Crayfish Conservation	Various	Catchment wide	Raising awareness of the species and promoting research link opportunities with Universities, secure improved biosecurity at key sites, maintain the spring fed hatchery and continuation of the Ark sites at Cannock Chase, AONB & SAC. Protection of the last Crayfish SSSI at Walk Mill, Cannock.
Trent Valley Improvement	SK2273721229 (Scheme central ref not area within STV)	Various	Carrying out river restoration opportunities and creating a network of blue green infrastructure across the Trent Valley linking up with ERDF and HLF projects.

In addition to the details provided in the table on the previous page the project tracker also records other information including:-

Additional Benefits to People and Environment

Catchment Priority Reasons for the Project including:-

- Pollution
- Habitat
- Fish Passage
- Citizen Science
- Species
- NFM
- Protected Area/Site

Delivery Timescale, Funding Status, Monitoring Plan etc

A copy of the project tracker is available on request from STV Catchment coordinator Mel Westlake.
Please email: m.westlake@staffs-wildlife.org.uk.