

# Green Infrastructure Strategy Action Plan – progress update

Transport Climate & Communities Scrutiny Panel

30<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Esther Coffin-Smith, Natural Environment Manager

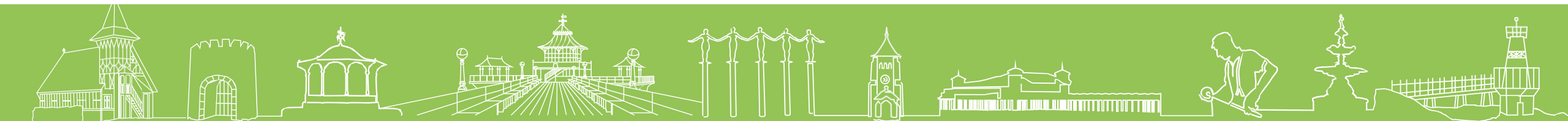


# GI Strategy Action Plan - overview

## GI Strategy themes

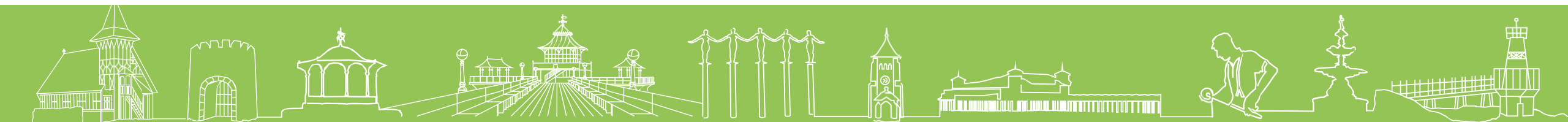
- Access Networks
- Biodiversity & Habitats
- Development Integration
- Greenspace Stewardship
- Trees & Woodland
- Flood Risk & Water Quality (to be covered at a future Panel)

The action plan contains 54 separate actions



# Access Networks

- Publish the Rights of Way Improvement Plan – this is now on the [Rights of Way pages](#) on our internet site.
- Overlay the PROW network with the GI opportunity areas to identify gaps in the ROW network – this is included within the ROWIP action plan.



# Biodiversity & Habitats

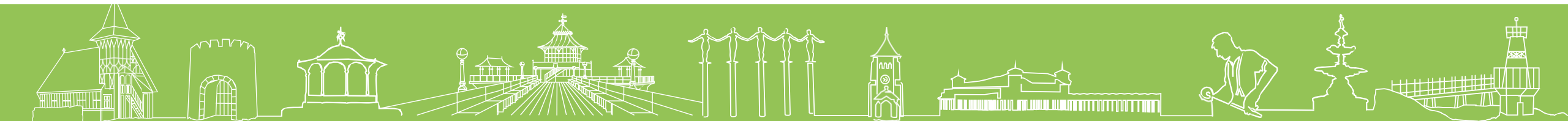
- *Prepare a strategic plan for improving biodiversity in the North Somerset Nature Park*

Commissioned UWE to model the land across NS for habitat and connectivity suitability and identify key locations to protect and enhance for the benefit of bats

Updating the Bat SPD to reflect the modelling and make reference to these strategic areas within the Local Plan

- *Develop improved habitats for greater horseshoe bats.*

Seeking land to purchase to create first Nature Park

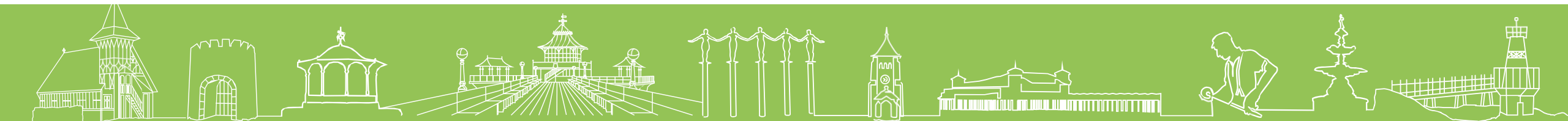
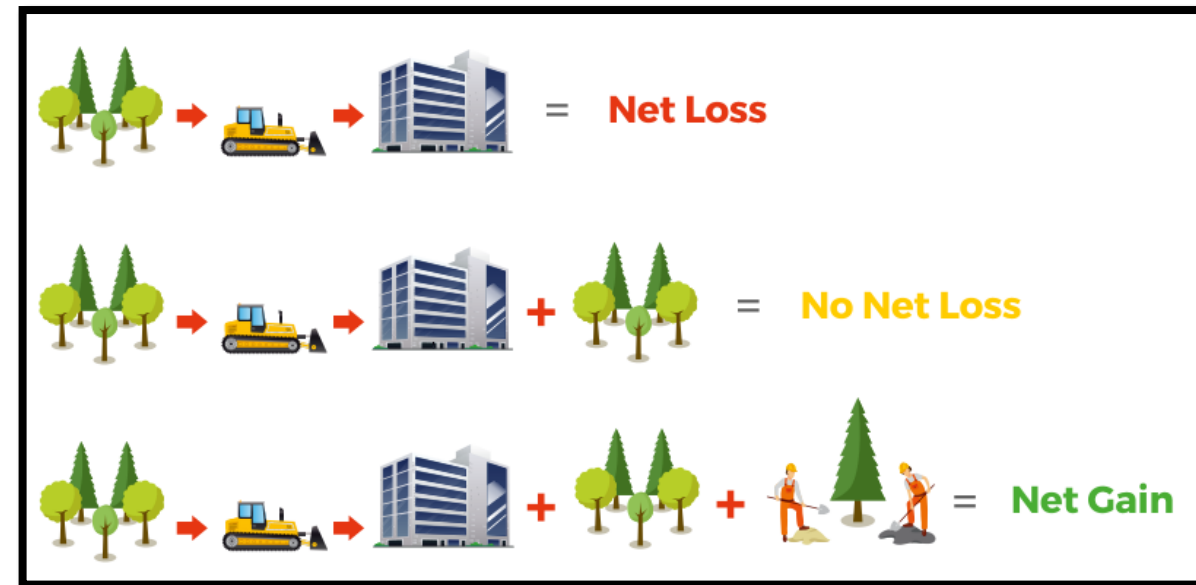


# Biodiversity & Habitats

- *Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)*

Planning support: Biodiversity SPD (inc. BNG requirements), additional Ecology Officer, legal support to draft S106 agreements

Supporting offsite BNG capacity within NS: assessment of NSC-owned land for the delivery of BNG units, creation of a habitat banking vehicle to allow the sale/management of BNG units on NSC land

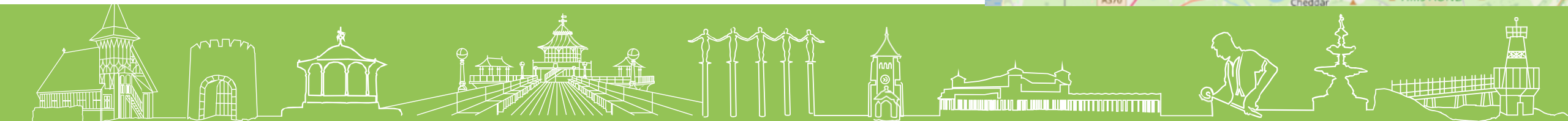
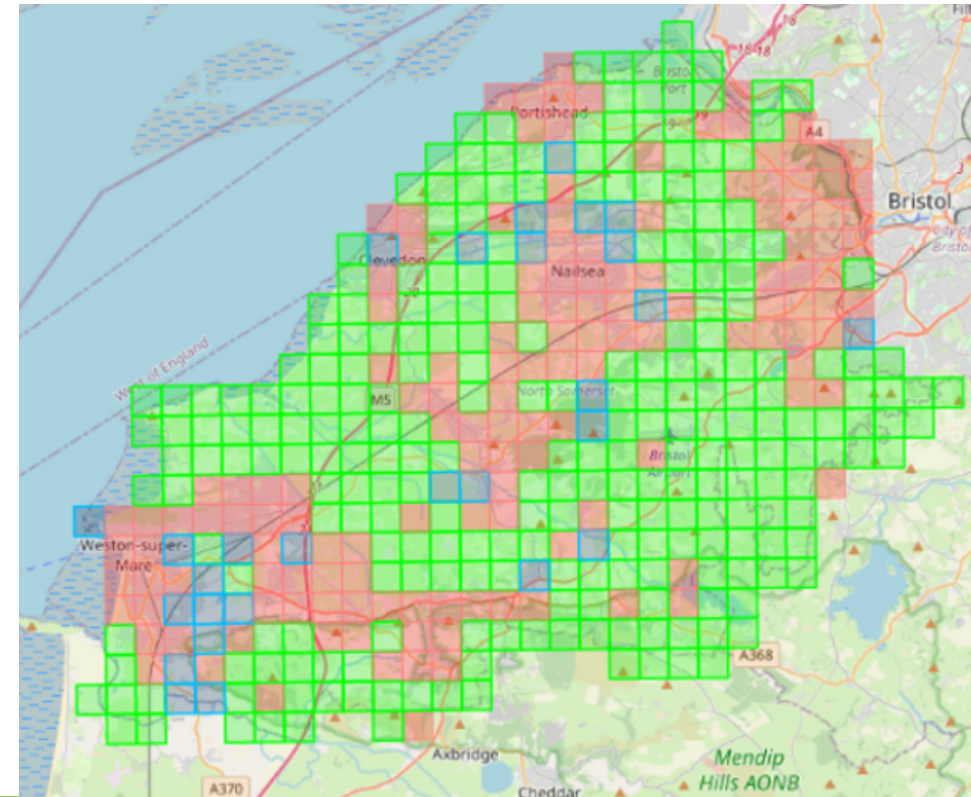


# Biodiversity & Habitats

- *Create a citizen science project with the University of the West of England (UWE) to improve understanding of bat populations across North Somerset.*

3 survey seasons worth of data has been collected by working with volunteer residents/businesses to erect bat detectors. This data had fed into the modelling work UWE has completed.

A lottery bid has recently been submitted for funding for the next 3 years.



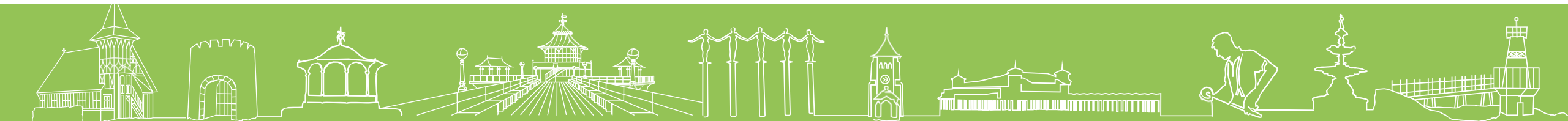
# Development & Integration

- *Mainstreaming green infrastructure*
- *Creating North Somerset Nature Parks for strategic bat mitigation.*

The green infrastructure objectives and North Somerset Nature Park principles have been included in the Local Plan

- *Inclusion of Building with Nature Standards within the Local Plan*

These are encouraged through the draft Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document.

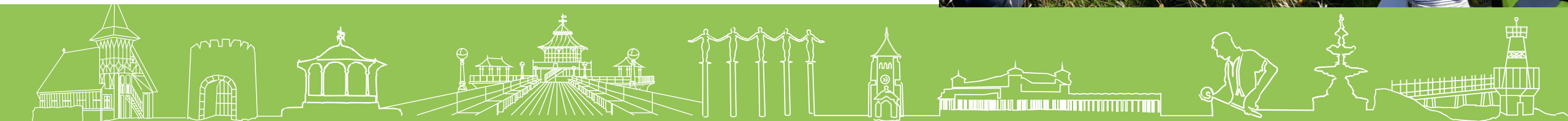


# Greenspace Stewardship

- *Rewilding champions lottery project.*

This £100,000 grant funded project with Avon Wildlife Trust, delivered between July 2021 and November 2022, saw residents volunteering to measure biodiversity to determine the success of the council's rewilding efforts.

The project delivered 30 public engagement sessions, attended by 372 people and 70 survey sessions, attended by 139 volunteers totalling around 300 volunteering hours. 10 Rewilding Champions were recruited and are leading volunteers at some of our rewilding sites.





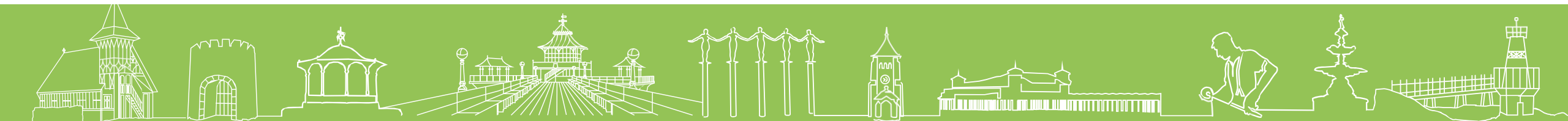
# Greenspace Stewardship

- *Worlebury hillfort lottery project.*

NSC applied for this funding but was unsuccessful. S106 monies have been secured from National Grid to undertake a smaller scale level of ash removal and ride creation. Subject to staff capacity we will submit a new lottery application in 2024.

- *Complete an open space access assessment.*

This has not yet been completed due to staff capacity.



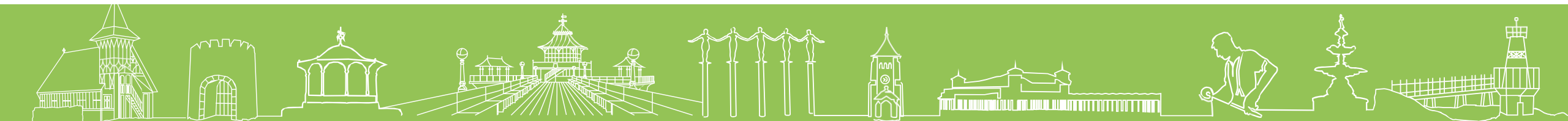
# Greenspace Stewardship

- *Infrastructure survey of parks and open spaces: to carry out a condition survey of parks an open spaces infrastructure to be completed by August 2022.*

All survey protocols have been completed and a management system is being installed. Proactive inspections will commence in January 2024 following successful installation of the management system.

- *Parks improvement plan. Develop a strategy for our parks and play areas which reflects contemporary needs, enhances community engagement, considers new ways for delivery and raises more income.*

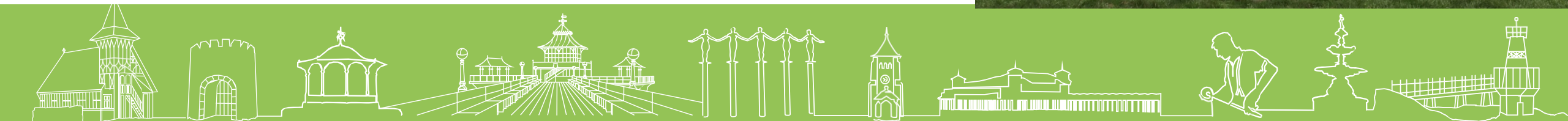
To be completed by December 2024



# Greenspace Stewardship

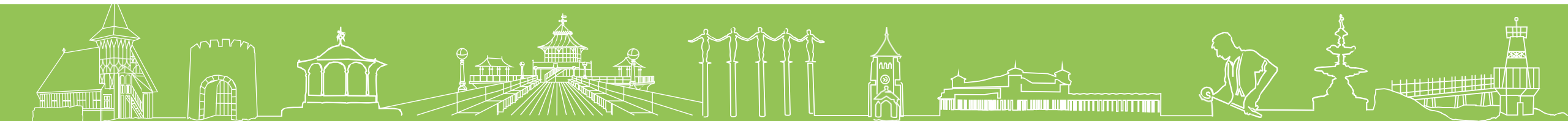
- *Green Social Prescribing project.*

A UKSPF funded Ranger is in post seeking opportunities to bring green social prescribing providers into NSC parks and open spaces on NSC-led activities such as scrub clearance, tree planting, wildlife surveying, etc. for the benefit of wildlife and health and wellbeing.



# Greenspace Stewardship

- *Great lakes project.*
  - Weston super Mare Marine Lake, MARLENS improvements and Pier Trust projects are complete.
  - Gig club storage and slipway improvements should be finalised by February 2024.
  - Portishead Lake Grounds improvements have been made to The Esplanade and Lake surround. An aerator has been installed to improve water quality. A project is underway to improve the café by 2025.



# Trees & Woodlands

- *Publish and deliver the Ash dieback action plan.*

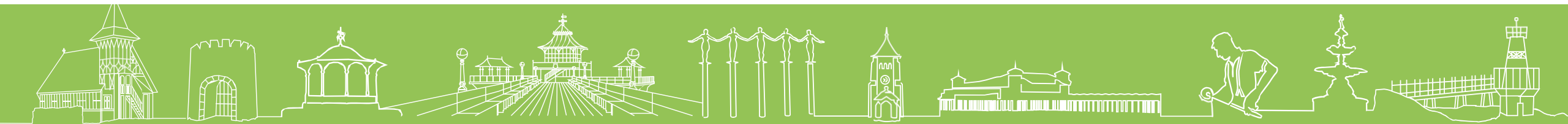
This is complete with the Action Plan being published in September 2022.

- *New orchard planting.*

The Defra-funded Wildlife and Woodland Expansion Officers are investigating opportunities for orchard planting as part of ongoing efforts to meet our 25% increase in canopy cover target by 2030.

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Ash Dieback Action Plan

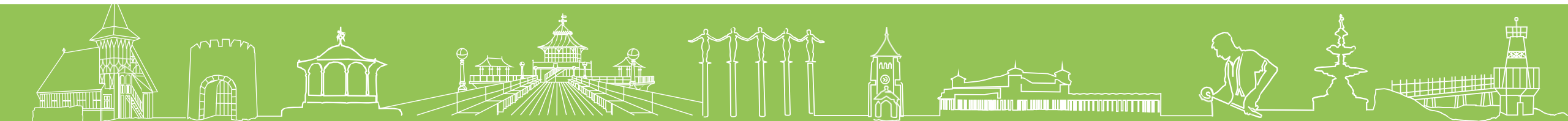
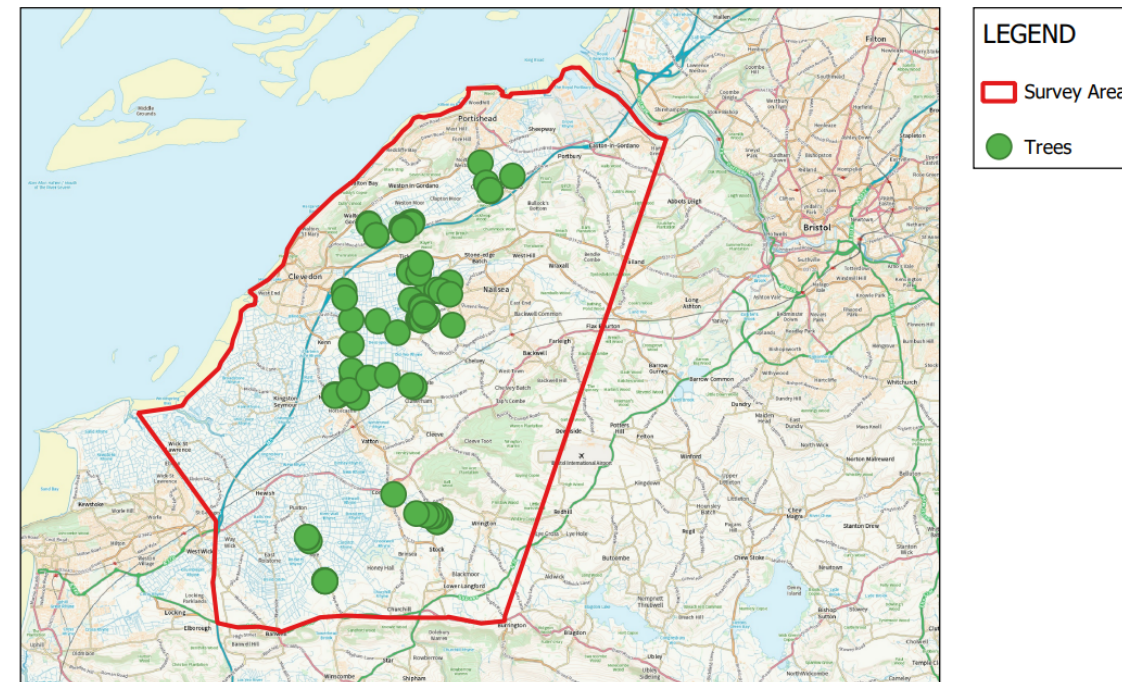


# Trees & Woodlands

- *Iconic trees; protecting our levels and moors trees.*

These trees have been identified. Using s106 funds we are hoping to progress this with the Forest of Avon Trust to contact the landowners with advice on grants amongst other things.

Iconic Landscapes - Tree Locations



# Any questions?

Progress against outstanding short-term actions together with medium term actions will be brought to the Panel again next year.

