



## LANDSCAPE AND WILDLIFE GRANTS

Issued by:



Stepping Stones Countryside Management Project  
Leicestershire County Council  
Community Services Department  
Rutland Building, County Hall,  
Glenfield, Leicestershire LE3 8TE

Telephone: 0116 265 7264 / 7221  
Facsimile: 0116 265 7965  
Minicom: 0116 265 7334

E-mail: [steppingstones@leics.gov.uk](mailto:steppingstones@leics.gov.uk)  
Information from this leaflet is also available in alternative versions (e.g. large print, Braille, tape or an alternative language) by contacting the numbers shown above.

Printed on recycled, chlorine-free paper.

### Guidelines and Useful Contacts

Other forms also available:

- Guidelines for Community Projects (CPW01)
- Application Form for Community projects (CPW02)
- Application Form for Private projects (LWG04)



### The Stepping Stones Partnership is funded by:

- Leicestershire County Council
- Blaby District Council
- Charnwood Borough Council
- Harborough District Council
- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
- Oadby and Wigston Borough Council

## Landscape and Wildlife Grants

The Stepping Stones Countryside Project Officers have the discretion to refuse a grant based on whether they feel that the proposed works and or the site on which the works are proposed conflict with the aims and objectives of the Stepping Stones Countryside Project, the development of the Community Woodland and Greenspace Project and any other strategies and documents to which the Stepping Stones Countryside Project and the County Council are in agreement with for example the Leicestershire Biodiversity Action Plan.

### 1. Who can apply?

Farmers, other rural landowners/tenants and businesses.

Applicants should also demonstrate a benefit to the wider community by being within 800m of a settlement and/or adjacent to a public road/other public right of way or by providing increased access to the area after the scheme is completed.

### 2. What grants are available?

- The total grant offered is up to 50% of the total project costs to a maximum value of £2,000 available each financial year. Therefore if the total grant being sought is more than £2,000 then it may be necessary to phase the project works over 2 or more years.
- Consultancy fees incurred when professional advice is sought in preparing the application and implementing the project may also be payable.
- Please note that you must ensure this documentation covers **all** your anticipated costs. Once a grant is offered additional costs cannot be considered. Nor can we grant funding retrospectively.

## District Councils

For advice on planning permission, conservation area consent or tree preservation order consent and possible sources of additional financial assistance you should contact your district council:

Blaby District Council	Tel. 0116 275 0555
Charnwood Borough Council	Tel. 01509 263151
Harborough District Council	Tel. 01858 828282
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council	Tel. 01455 238141
Melton Borough Council	Tel. 01664 502502
North West Leicestershire District Council	Tel. 01530 454545
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council	Tel. 0116 288 8961

## **Natural England**

For advice on Local Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Biodiversity and Planning in relation to nature conservation.

Natural England East Midland Region  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
The Maltings  
Wharf Road  
Grantham  
Lincs  
NG31 6BH  
Tel. 01476 584800

## **Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust**

The Wildlife Trust is an organisation promoting nature conservation. It owns and manages a number of ecologically important sites. The Trust has an officer in charge of the Biodiversity Action Plan who can offer advice and guidance upon improving biodiversity within Leicestershire. For more information contact:

Brocks Hill Environment Centre  
Washbrook Lane  
Oadby  
Leicestershire  
LE2 5JJ  
Tel. 0116 272 0444

## **Leicestershire and Rutland Rural Community Council (LRRCC)**

The L.R.R.C.C. produces an excellent information pack covering a very wide range of sources of grant aid. Contact the L.R.R.C.C. on 0116 266 2905 or view the information at [www.ruralcc.org.uk](http://www.ruralcc.org.uk)

For village hall grants contact:

John Moore  
Hon Secretary  
Rural Community Council  
133 Loughborough Road  
Leicester  
LE4 5LQ  
Tel. 0116 268 9701

## **3. What are the guidelines for preparing the application and carrying out the work?**

### **3.1 Plans and Specifications**

A plan, clearly showing the location of the works within the surrounding area, **must** be submitted with your application. This should show road names where possible. A grant offer cannot be made if the plan is not submitted. Please remember, however simply produced, the plan should enable our inspector to find the site of your project.

Proposals for small woodland management should also be accompanied by a detailed site plan.

### **3.2 Quotations, Estimates and Tenders**

The copies of quotations, estimates or tenders you enclose with your application must be fully itemised - single lump-sum figures are not acceptable.

## **4. Works Eligible For Funding.**

### **4.1 Native Tree and Shrub Planting**

- Species must be selected from the species list provided: However it should be noted that not all of the species are appropriate for different landscapes and so the Stepping Stones Countryside Project reserves the right to change your chosen species list as appropriate.
- Applicants are encouraged to use planting stock of local provenance wherever possible.
- All trees and shrubs should be planted as transplants, i.e. 40 - 90 cm in height.
- All planting must be protected against rabbits and, where necessary, against livestock. New fencing for this purpose should be set a minimum of 2 metres from the plants; anything less will inevitably lead to browsing off and consequent withholding of grant. Stock fencing attracts an additional payment.
- If you would like to plant more than 0.5 hectares, you should contact the Forestry Commission whose own grants are more suited to larger operations. Those applicants within the area of the National Forest should contact The National Forest Company.

### **The National Forest Company**

Community groups within the area of the National Forest may benefit from assistance provided by the National Forest Company. Landowners considering large-scale tree planting within the area may also be eligible for additional assistance through the Tender Scheme. For further information contact:

The National Forest Company  
Enterprise Glade  
Bath Lane  
Moiria  
Swadlincote  
Derbyshire DE12 6BD  
Tel. 01283 551211

### **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)**

DEFRA provides advice and information on environment, food, rural affairs and administers the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. This grant scheme can assist farmers and landowners with larger, more extensive countryside conservation projects. For further information contact:

### **DEFRA, Rural Development Services**

Block 7  
Government Buildings  
Chalfont Drive  
Nottingham  
NG8 3SN  
Tel. 0115 929 1191

### **Leicestershire & Rutland Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)**

The national FWAG network provides independent technical advice and practical guidance on the enhancement of landscape, heritage and wildlife and the management of resources, access and recreation, through environmentally responsible farming. For further information contact:

FWAG Officer, Leicestershire & Rutland FWAG  
Mole Cottage  
Brooksby  
Leicestershire  
LE14 2LJ  
Tel. 01664 434033

## 12. Landscape and Wildlife Grants Useful Contacts

There are various organisations who may be able to offer advice or additional financial assistance, or from whom you may need permission for certain works:

### Environment Agency

The Environment Agency is the regulatory body with responsibility for the protection of natural water resources, conservation along waterways and water bodies, monitoring of water quality, pollution control and flood defence. You should contact them if you are undertaking works on or adjacent to any watercourse. For further information contact:

**Lower Trent Area Office** – covers most of Leicestershire with the exception of eastern and western margins – for those areas contact the Midlands or Anglian addresses.

Lower Trent Area Office  
Trentside Offices  
Scarrington Road  
West Bridgford  
Nottingham  
NG2 5FA  
Tel. 08708 506506

### **Midlands Regional Office**

Sapphire East  
550, Streetsbrook Road  
Solihull  
West Midlands  
B91 1QT  
Tel. 0121 711 2324

### **Anglian Regional Office**

Kingfisher House  
Goldhay Way  
Orton Goldhay  
Peterborough  
PE2 5ZR  
Tel. 01733 371811

Or the general enquiry line Tel. 08459 333111

### Forestry Commission

The Forestry Commission can assist landowners to carry out large-scale tree planting through the Woodland Grant Scheme. It is also the body with responsibility for regulating the felling of trees. For further information contact:

East Midlands Conservancy  
Central Office  
Station Road  
East Leake  
Loughborough  
Leicestershire  
LE12 6LQ  
Tel. 01509 852334  
Fax. 01509 853886

## 4.2 Species List

**Acer campestre**  
Field Maple

**Aesculus hippocastanum**  
Horse Chestnut

**Alnus glutinosa / incana**  
Common / Grey Alder

**Betula pendula**  
Birch

**Carpinus betulus**  
Hornbeam

**Castanea sativa**  
Sweet Chestnut

**Crataegus monogyna**  
Hawthorn

**Cornus sanguinea**  
Dogwood

**Corylus avellana**  
Hazel

**Cytisus scoparius**  
Broom

**Fagus sylvatica**  
Beech

**Fraxinus excelsior**  
Ash

**Ilex aquifolium**  
Holly

**Juglans regia**  
Walnut

**Malus sylvestris**  
Crab Apple

**Pinus sylvestris**  
Scots Pine

**Pinus nigra maritima**  
Corsican pine

**Populus tremula**  
Aspen

**Prunus avium**  
Wild Cherry

**Prunus spinosa**  
Blackthorn

**Quercus robur**  
Oak

**Rosa canina / rubiginosa**  
Dog / Eglantine Rose

**Salix alba / fragilis**  
White / Crack Willow

**Salix caprea / cinerea**  
Goat Willow / Sallow

**Sorbus aucuparia**  
Rowan

**Taxus baccata**  
Yew

**Tilia cordata / platyphyllos**  
Small / Large Leaved Lime

**Ulex europaeus**  
Gorse

**Viburnum opulus**  
Guelder Rose

## 4.2 Native Woodland Types

Woodland stand types are classified using the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) developed by Rodwell (1991). Three principal types of native woodland are found in Leicestershire and Rutland. When planning your planting scheme please be guided by the following native woodland type descriptions.

Ash	<b>Field Maple with Dog's Mercury – NVC Woodland W8</b>	This woodland type is found on the calcareous clay soils, basic brown earths and rendzinas that occur in eastern Leicestershire. Ash is the dominant tree with oak and field maple. Other trees found include birch, holly, crab apple and grey willow. The shrub understorey is predominantly hazel and hawthorn and, depending on local soil type, can include blackthorn, elder, guelder rose, goat willow, dogwood and wild privet.
Oak	<b>Birch with Bluebell – NVC Woodland W10</b>	This woodland type is found typically on moderately acidic brown earths and base - poor gley soils such as those of Charnwood Forest. Oak and silver birch are the dominant trees, with both pedunculate and sessile oak species occurring. Sessile oak is found principally in Charnwood Forest. Other trees associated with this oak woodland include holly, rowan and downy birch. The shrub layer consists of hazel and hawthorn, with other species such as blackthorn, elder, guelder rose, gorse and broom.
Alder	<b>Alder Woodland with Stinging Nettle - NVC Woodland W6</b>	This woodland type is restricted to the banks of streams and marshy ground - a good example can be found adjacent to Groby Pool. Alder and crack willow are the dominant tree species, with downy birch, ash, pedunculate oak, holly and goat willow. The shrub layer consists of grey willow, elder, hawthorn, guelder rose and blackthorn.

## The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan

This document can be found in libraries. The below mentioned sections are relevant to applicants who are undertaking relevant works. Leicestershire County Council recognises the importance of the biological diversity of the County and endorses the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan.

Biodiversity is the variety of life in all its forms and the habitats where it occurs. The aim of the plan is to prevent the decline of biodiversity in the County and to identify habitats of the rarest and most threatened species. The most cost-effective means of conserving biodiversity is by conserving habitats that occur in woodland, scrub, wetlands and farmland.

The principal Action Plans within the Biodiversity Action Plan are:

### Habitat Action Plans

- Wet woodland
- Rocks and built structures
- Broadleaved woodland
- Urban habitat - leicester
- Lowland wood pasture and Parkland
- Hedgerows
- Heath grassland
- Mature trees
- Calcareous grassland
- Neutral grassland
- Field margins
- Floodplain wetland
- Reedbeds
- Roadside verges
- Fast flowing streams
- Sphagnum ponds
- Springs and flushes
- Mesotrophic (narrow range of nutrient) lakes
- Eutrophic (nutrient rich) standing water

### Species Action Plans

- Dormouse
- Violet Helleborine
- Bats
- Black Hairstreak Butterfly
- Barn Owl
- Purple Small Reed
- Black Poplar
- Nightingale
- Wood Vetch
- Sand Martin
- Otter
- Water Vole
- Redstart
- White Clawed Crayfish
- Dingy Skipper & Grizzled Skipper

### **Biodiversity in Leicestershire**

- Secure partnership funding that will enable conservation organisations and other land managers to maintain designated sites and bring those, which are not managed for nature conservation under an appropriate management regime.
- The creation of new wildlife sites through partnership in areas where there is a low density of designated sites.

### **Landscape in Leicestershire**

- Help promote the benefits of incorporating properly designed landscape schemes, which respect the diversity of landscape and built character, into new developments.
- Promotion of access to and the interpretation of the countryside, whilst ensuring that this does not have detrimental effects on areas of sensitive landscape character and biodiversity.

### **Cultural Heritage**

- Raise awareness of the importance of cultural heritage features to avoid damage and loss.

### **11.5 The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy**

This document can be found in libraries. The below mentioned sections are relevant to all Private applications and may also to apply to Community applicants who are undertaking relevant works. Leicestershire County Council, as a strategic planning authority, recognises the importance of the landscape character of Leicestershire and has published The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy. The aims and objectives of this strategy are:

- to conserve and enhance the character, diversity and local distinctiveness of the County's landscape
- to identify appropriate opportunities for new woodland planting to increase the woodland cover of the County
- to promote the sustainable management of the County's existing woodland resource to produce timber and provide environmental and social benefits

### **4.3 Small Woodland Management**

Grants are available to assist in managing small areas of undermanaged woodland to enhance their biodiversity and to sustain them as landscape features. Assistance is available for the following operations:

- fencing against stock, deer or rabbits, but only as part of other funded
- works
- felling mature or over-mature trees to allow replanting or natural
- regeneration
- thinning operations
- coppicing of hazel, ash, willow or alder
- re-pollarding ancient boundary trees within the woodland area
- clearing open drains or ditches within the woodland area

It is important to seek professional advice on woodland management operations. Additional grants are available to help towards the cost of this.

This grant can be used in conjunction with that for tree planting where replanting is to follow management operations.

### **4.4 Hedge and Hedgerow Tree Planting**

- New hedges should include at least 70% hawthorn and should be planted at 6 plants per metre in a double staggered row (i.e. 3 per metre per row).
- Planting should include hedgerow trees, which should be planted at not more than one tree per 20m length of hedge. Trees, other than oaks, must be feathered, i.e. 1.75 - 2.50m in height with branches all the way up the stem.
- To protect hedgerow trees from accidental damage when hedge trimming, the positions of trees must be marked with clearly identifiable posts or tags and the contractor or person responsible for the hedge trimming must be informed of the hedgerow tree planting.

- Hedgerow trees can also be planted into existing hedges.
- All species for hedge planting must be selected from the species list provided in section 4.1.
- Applicants are encouraged to use planting stock of local provenance wherever possible.
- New stock fencing, where necessary to protect newly planted hedge from browsing livestock, attracts an additional payment. Fencing for this purpose must be set at a minimum distance of 2m from the hedgerow's margin(s). In approved circumstances grant aid can be provided for stock fencing to both sides of a hedge, up to the limits specified on the application form.

#### **4.5 Hedge Laying**

Schemes comprising a maximum of 500 metres of new hedge laying are eligible.

Hedges to be laid should be staked and bound in the traditional manner; grant may be withheld if this is not done. Gaps greater than 1 metre should be planted up and should be counted as new hedge planting in the application.

#### **4.6 Field Pond / Wetland Habitat Creation and Renovation**

Wetland habitats are increasingly important landscape features. Projects could be; ponds, shallow scrapes, reed bed creation in existing ponds or lakes, otter holts.

Wetland features should be:

- naturalistic in effect with gently shelving sides
- naturally filling
- not artificially lined
- not intended for commercial fishing or fish rearing
- not planned as a feature of a golf course or other sporting ground
- not part of a scheme of mineral extraction

- Promote and protect Leicestershire's parks, gardens, open spaces, playing fields and rural assets to visitors and residents.
- Involve local people in identifying and preserving what is special and important.

#### **Improving Lifestyles and Health**

- Develop opportunities for local people to benefit from and help conserve the natural environments and green spaces – including playing fields especially around towns

### **11.3 Achieving Excellence for Leicestershire – Leicestershire Community Strategy**

This document can be found in libraries. The below mentioned sections are relevant to Community applicants, when self-assessing their applications. Please note that applicants should ideally be able to show that their application supports at least one of the following strategic aims.

#### **Strong communities**

- Increase access to the countryside by improving the rights of way network and to make the countryside more interesting and attractive by conserving and enhancing its natural and historic heritage.
- Develop a community park.

#### **The needs and aspirations of young people**

- Develop through consultation with young people, activities for leisure.

### **11.4. ENABLE's (Environmental Action for a Better Leicestershire) - Environmental Statement**

This document will be on the County Councils web site by summer 2004. The below mentioned sections are relevant to Community applicants, when self-assessing their applications. Please note that applicants should be able to show that their application supports at least one of the following strategic aims.

#### **Environmental Education**

- Encourage the participation of under represented groups in the enjoyment of the countryside and involvement in environmental issues.

Local people have a sense of community spirit and are supported in activities to bring people together

Equality of access to services for everyone

Vital and thriving market towns and village centres, which act as hubs for the surrounding communities.

Communities

#### **Safer Communities**

To build respect in communities and reduce the level of anti-social behaviour

#### **Cleaner and Greener**

Increase quality and use of green space

To increase walking, cycling and the level of outdoor physical activity

Improve bio-diversity and nature habitats

#### **Economic Development**

Increase the vitality and viability of town and rural centres

### **“11.2 Love Leicestershire” - Leicestershire Cultural Strategy Partnership**

This document can be found in libraries. The below mentioned sections are relevant to Community applicants, when self-assessing their applications. Please note that applicants should be able to show that their application supports at least one of the following strategic aims.

#### **Strengthening Communities**

- Encourage more involvement in community heritage schemes at the local level
- Develop more community use of allotments
- Develop more community and cultural use of public spaces

#### **Celebrating Leicestershire**

- Conserve, enhance and promote Leicestershire’s unique archive and object based history, landscape, ecology, built heritage and innovative architecture

The value of a wetland habitat is greatly increased when an area of non-intensive land use known as a buffer zone surrounds it. A buffer zone provides an essential terrestrial habitat for pond life and adds to the diversity of the habitat.

**Please think carefully before carrying out work to renovate or create wetland habitats.** Your chosen site may already be of importance for wildlife. Creating a new wetland habitat, in particular, may adversely affect local drainage patterns. Poorly drained areas where the water is held close to the surface are known as flushes and are increasingly rare features forming significant wildlife habitats. Similarly, areas of damp meadow are frequently of high conservation value.

As the location of ponds is such a sensitive issue, we strongly recommend you seek professional advice before making an application. Consultant’s fees including survey work can be included in the eligible costs

As some of the grant offer may be based on an estimate of the costs of the work, you may be required to submit invoices when the completed work is ready for inspection.

#### **4.7 Pollarding of Waterside Willows/Alders**

Pollarding is a traditional form of management for these trees. Pollarding a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 25 trees is eligible for grant assistance. Grants for fewer than 5 trees can be offered where other works are included in the application.

#### **4.8 Renovation of Rural Drystone Walls**

The renovation of rural drystone walls is eligible. Schemes should cover a minimum of 10 metres and a maximum of 100 metres in length and should comprise the renovation of an area averaging at least half the height of the wall.

Walls must be of a traditional drystone construction and restoration should be carried out in a sympathetic manner.

## 4.9 Protective Fencing

### Fencing

New fencing to protect planting schemes, hedge laying and wetland habitats from stock grazing can form part of the eligible works. When used with new planting or hedge laying it should be set a minimum of 2 metres from the plants; anything less will inevitably lead to browsing off and consequentially the withholding of the grant. In approved circumstances grant aid can be provided for stock fencing to both sides of a hedge.

Fencing around wetland habitats should be set at an average minimum distance of 5 metres from the top of the pond bank or edge of the wetland area and should close off at least 50% of the habitats circumference from grazing or ploughing activities.

#### **Electric fencing will not be grant aided.**

Stock fencing should be of a construction sufficiently substantial to be in place for the minimum 10 years maintenance period. **Acceptable forms of fencing are:**

- **Post and three or four rail**
- **Post and 3 strands of barbed wire**
- **Post and stock netting with one top strand of barbed wire**

**Electric fencing will not be grant aided.**

## 5. Maintenance

- It is a requirement of the grant offer that all assisted works be maintained in good order for at least 10 years.
- The works may be subject to a spot check at any time during that period.
- Failure to maintain the works may result in the grant being reclaimed.
- You must provide details of how the scheme will be maintained each year for the minimum 10 years.
- For landscape works this should include items such as frequency of weed control, pruning, watering, replacement of failed plants and adjustment of tree ties or rabbit guards.

## 11. Landscape and Wildlife Grants supporting documents

The policies set out in the following documents may be used in assessing your application:

### **11.1 Local Area Agreement**

Local Area Agreements are a policy initiative announced by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in July 2004. They are a three year agreement, based on local Sustainable Community Strategies, that set out the priorities for a local area agreed with Central Government and a range of service providers from both statutory and voluntary sectors.

**The LAA for Leicestershire can be found at the following web address:  
[www.leicestershiretogether.org](http://www.leicestershiretogether.org)**

The below mentioned sections are relevant to applicants, when self-assessing their applications. Please note that applicants should be able to show that their application supports at least one of the following strategic aims.

#### **Older People**

To increase the range and volume of cultural, leisure and recreational activities that older people participate in

#### **Healthier communities**

Increase participation in physical activity

#### **Children and Young People**

Improved physical health of children and young people

Improved life chances and better opportunities for vulnerable young people

Improved personal and social development and enjoyment of culture and recreation

Increase contribution of Hard to Reach groups in consultation/active involvement processes

#### **Stronger Communities**

Local people feel part of the decision making process and have a role in planning the future of their own community

## 8. How will payment be made?

- Payment will be made by cheque from Leicestershire County Council
- When the works are completed you must notify the Stepping Stones Project Officers (0116 265 7264/7221) at County Hall by letter, fax, telephone or e-mail.
- Payment is made following a site inspection and approval of the work by a Stepping Stones Project officer.
- You are strongly advised not to make a payment to contractors until the work has been seen and approved by a County Council officer.
- Please note that works not included in the approved application form and agreed on as part of the grant cannot be considered for payment.
- Please note that the Stepping Stones Countryside Project cannot grant works retrospectively.

## 9. Help available in preparing the application

### 9.1 Employing a Consultant

Unless you are confident you can prepare the proposals yourself you will probably need to employ a consultant to give you advice and help in preparing the application. Grant is available towards the costs of professional fees incurred in this way. If you need help in finding a consultant you should contact the Project Officers at County Hall.

If you wish to include consultancy costs in your application:

- fees must have been charged
- the consultant concerned must be identified on the application form
- retained agents must have been required to carry out the work over and above their usual duties and to have incurred additional costs thereby

## 10. Disclaimer

Stepping Stones reserves the right to vary the terms of the grants.

Grants cannot be claimed to cover any maintenance costs of your scheme or any routine maintenance works to existing facilities.

## 6. GRANT CONDITIONS

### 6.1 Details

- A grant application **must** be made in advance of any work being carried out. Works should not begin until a grant offer has been received in writing by the applicant. If for any reason the applicant wants to start works before then it is vital that the applicant speaks to the Stepping Stones Countryside Project officer first so that a site visit can be made prior to works commencing. Any works done before a formal grant offer is received is always done at the applicants own risk as a grant is not always guaranteed.
- The site must be within the Stepping Stones Project area (see map front page).
- Where the site does not belong to the applicant, the applicant must hold a lease, licence or other written agreement with the owner for access to the land for a minimum of 10 years.
- The work should not be required either as part of a condition of planning permission or as a legal agreement associated with planning permission.
- All permissions necessary to enable the work to go ahead must have been obtained from the relevant authorities before a grant can be offered. These might include planning permission, conservation area consent, listed building consent, appropriate ecclesiastical permission, tree preservation order consent and the obtaining of a felling licence, or the approval of English Nature or the Environment Agency.
- Where the works are close to the highway the proposals must be agreed with Leicestershire County Council's Highways Divisional Engineer before a grant can be offered.
- The project should not include proposals for the removal of any hedgerow unless you have the prior consent of your district council.

- If your proposed works are within or close to a flood plain or an existing watercourse, they **must** be approved by the Environment Agency before a grant can be offered.
- If your proposed works are within or close to a Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI), they must be approved by English Nature.
- Statutory undertakers such as the electricity, cable, gas and water companies should be consulted where any of the proposed works are in proximity to their services.
- The project must not include any commercial advertising.
- The site must not be located in a private garden.
- Stepping Stones Grants can be used to "top-up" grants received from other organisations, provided the grant does not lead to double funding or the scheme making a profit.
- The County Councillor for the area in which the project is to take place will be consulted for their views on the proposed scheme. Applicants are therefore strongly recommended to contact them prior to submitting the application form.
- The use of peat or peat based products is not acceptable
- All hardwoods should be British grown. Imported hardwoods will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and then only from certified sustainable sources.
- Softwoods should be pressure treated with preservatives to the appropriate British Standard. Your timber merchant will be able to advise you on the most appropriate treatment.
- All timber must be from certified sustainable sources e.g. Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC).

## **6.2 Plans and Specifications**

In addition to the application form you will need to supply the following, preferably drawn to scale:

- Detailed drawings of your proposed scheme including its relationship to its surroundings.

- A location map clearly marking the proposed site so that officers can make a site visit.

## **7. How will the application be assessed?**

Your application will be assessed in accordance with the criteria listed elsewhere in these guidelines. This includes officers making reference to various Leicestershire County Council documents, which are summarised later on in these guidelines.