

YORK COMMUNITY WOODLAND

COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT RESPONSE REPORT

OUR SERVICES



DESIGN



ENVIRONMENT



PLANNING



ECONOMICS



HERITAGE



Nether Poppleton

Hessay

Roman Road

A1237

Knapton

Rufforth

Wetherby Road

Beckfield Lane

Bradley Lane

A1237

Askham Lane

ANNEX 2

Contents



Pavilion Court, Green Lane,
Garforth, Leeds LS25 2AF

Prepared by **Pegasus Design**
Pegasus Design is part of Pegasus Group Ltd.

Prepared on behalf of **City of York Council**
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1.0

Introduction

1.1 City of York Council is creating an extensive community woodland on 194-acres of land to the West of York with the ambition to plant 50,000 trees by 2023. The project is currently known as York Community Woodland (YCW), with a new name to be decided as part of the engagement process.

1.2 The Council's high-level vision for the woodland is as follows:

"The new woodland will be a well-designed, bio-diverse, green space providing a place for peaceful contemplation and leisure for the people of York. This will create a new stray for the city, enhance the setting of the city and make York an even greater place to live, work and visit."

1.3 150 acres / 61 hectares of land have been purchased in the west of York for the creation of York Community Woodland and an additional 30 acres of land next to the A1237 is being considered for additional tree planting.

1.4 Together with adjoining land already owned by the council this has the potential to create around 194 acres / 78 hectares of new amenity woodland for York.

1.5 The land was purchased using part of a £3m Northern Forest budget, agreed at Budget Council in February 2020. In July the council joined the government's Northern Forest initiative which aims to plant 50 million new trees across the north of England. The initiative is a partnership between the Woodland Trust, Forestry Commission and other organisations committed to tree-planting across the North of England including the White Rose Forest which covers the Leeds City Region and York.

Purpose of Report

1.6 This report will summarise the recently completed phase of public engagement, known as the “co-design” phase. The purpose of the report is to:

- Set out the engagement process undertaken including who responded;
- Summarise the key themes and messages emerging from the 6-week community and stakeholder engagement process;
- Identify woodland design features to be carried forward into the final woodland design masterplan;
- Identify the key issues and concerns raised by the public and to suggest suitable council responses and mitigations.

1.7 The findings of this report will play a key role in the next steps of the design process.

2.0

Consultation Programme

2.1 The co-design phase of public engagement ran for 6 weeks, from 14th April to 26th May 2021. This phase is expected to be the key phase of engagement during the wider design process and the main goals were as follows:

- To provide the public with a series of platforms to express opinion on the concept designs of the YCW, with a focus to reach all audiences across the city of York;
- To provide the public accessible and simple channels to express opinion and feedback;
- To deliver a communication plan that promotes this engagement phase with a clear, holistic, co-design approach;
- To evidence all consultation feedback in a clear, streamlined way.

2.2 Ensuring that the consultation was accessible to all was key to its success, particularly as the exercise was undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic. The main form of feedback was through an online survey, online webinars were also undertaken, and various community groups were targeted directly. A postal option for the survey was also made available.

2.3 The consultation was promoted through a number of channels, providing details of how to access the survey or to join the webinars, these included:

- York City Council website & social media channels;
- The YCW newsletter and social media channels;
- Local media pieces (newspapers, etc);
- Community groups (including online forums, social media, etc);
- Ward and Parish Councillors;
- Local Schools, Colleges and Universities;
- Sports clubs;
- Charity groups (including those representing older and disabled people).

Survey

2.4 An online survey was hosted on the YCW website, alongside details of 3 Concept Designs to encourage feedback. The full survey is provided at **Appendix 1**. A mix of quantitative and qualitative questions were used to encourage wide ranging feedback.

Webinars

2.5 Members of the public were invited to attend online webinars where members of the project team were available to discuss the project and respond to questions. Feedback from these sessions was recorded and is included in the analysis in Section 4 of this report.

School Surveys

2.6 Alongside the full survey, a small survey was put together for school children and completed by classes at Rufforth Primary School and St Paul's Primary School. The survey is provided at **Appendix 2** and the feedback is included in Section 3.

Email Responses & Stakeholder Engagement

2.7 Additional community groups and stakeholders were contacted directly by the project team for feedback. A full list is provided in **Appendix 3**.

2.8 As part of the stakeholder engagement members of the project team attended the Knapton with Rufford Parish Council meeting on 4th May 2021 to present the project and answer questions.

2.9 Team members also attended a York Environment Forum meeting (Attendees list provided at **Appendix 4**) and hosted a Stakeholder Advisory Group meeting (Attendees list provided at **Appendix 5**). Feedback from all of these meeting was recorded and is included within the analysis in Section 4.

Responses

2.10 Full details of the responses received are provided below. The numbers received through the different engagement methods were as follows:

Survey	710
School survey	54
Webinars	8
Other events	2
Additional responses	9
Total	783

2.11 Overall the consultation programme is considered to have been wide reaching and successful in engaging people from all walks of life, including harder to reach groups. The variety of feedback methods was appropriate for the scale of the scheme and there was plenty of time for respondents to provide their feedback.

3.0

Statistical Analysis

3.1 The figures presented in this chapter come solely from the questionnaire responses. Other responses submitted by email, in the webinar, etc are covered in section 4 and section 5 of this report.

3.2 It is clear from the amount of responses that the engagement exercise was thorough and worthwhile. Members of the public have shown a great level of support and interest in the project and the majority of the responses align closely with the vision and objectives set out by the Council.

Headlines

- Over 780 responses.
- Over 550 people confirmed they had considered the three proposed concept designs.
- 98% support the creation of a new community woodland.
- 78% agree with the council's high-level vision for the woodland.

Monitoring

3.3 Respondents completing the survey were asked to provide their age (within a range of options) and postcode so that the reach and representation of the engagement exercise could be monitored.

Age

3.4 In terms of age, the responses given have been shown on the pie chart below, alongside a chart showing the age distribution of York (taken from the 2011 Census). These charts show that young people were less well represented within the main survey, and the 40-55 year olds group slightly over represented. It should be noted that these charts do not include the school survey respondents, all 54 of whom were under 16. With this in mind it is considered that the overall engagement exercise did reach groups of all ages, but that some younger people did not feel so strongly about the proposals that they felt the need to comment. This is not uncommon for a consultation of this type.

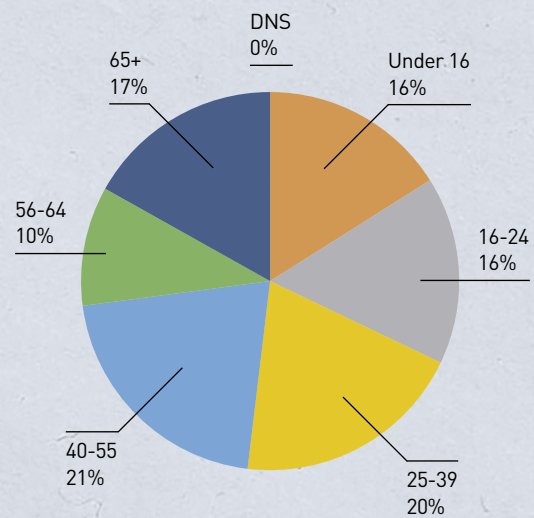


Chart 1 – Census Age Data

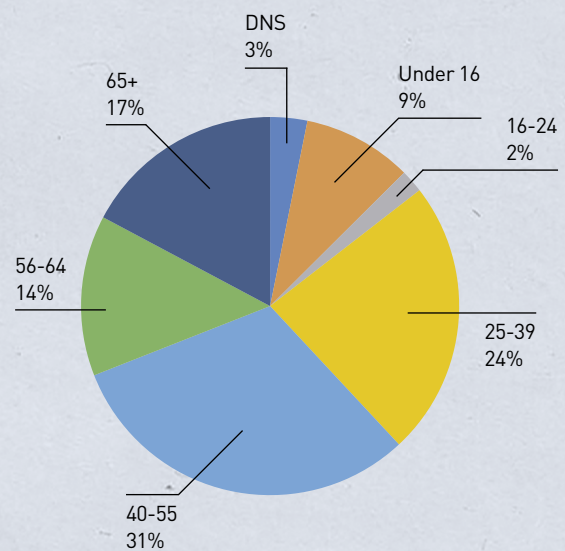


Chart 2 – Survey Age Data

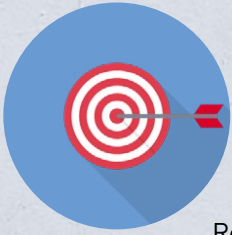
Geographical Reach

3.5 In terms of geographic reach, the below map shows the postcodes of those who responded. The map shows that members of the public from across the City of York engaged in the consultation, with some up to 15km away from the site, as well as a higher density of responses coming from the area nearest the woodland.

3.6 It was key that the consultation reached all areas of the City as the Woodland will be used by all, not just those closest to it. Engagement with those nearest the site was also key, to ensure a good understanding was gained regarding local issues, in particular concerning access, transport and parking. These issues are detailed later in the report.

3.7 Overall, the distribution of respondents shows that the consultation exercise was effective in engaging the wider community but also had a local emphasis on those who will be most affected by the proposals.

Y026	Holgate, Upper Poppleton, Nether Poppleton, Green Hammerton, Whixley, Hutton Wandesley, Cattal, Great Ouseburn, Moor Monkton Moor, Knapton, Little Ouseburn, Kirk Hammerton, Chapel Fields, Bilton Hags.	35%
Y024	Acomb, Holgate, South Bank, Chapelfields, Knavesmire, West Field, Dringhouses, Nunthorpe, Woodthorpe.	20%
Y023	Bilbrough, Nunthorpe, Copmanthorpe, Angram, Acaster Malbis, Bolton Percy, Rufforth, Acaster Selby, Ryther, Middlethorpe, Askham Bryan, Askham Richard, Holme Green, South Bank.	12%
Y010	Laythorpe, Fulford, Heslington, Osbaldwick, Walmgate Stray.	7%
Y031	Heworth, Tang Hall, Huntington, New Earswick.	6%
Y030	Clifton Moor, Skelton, Overton, Rawcliffe, Shipton, Beningbrough, Linton-on-Ouse, Newton-on-Ouse.	6%
Y032	Stockton on the Forest, Moor End, Haxby, New Earswick, Earswick, Towthorpe, Stensall, Huntington, Wigginton.	4%
Y019	Holtby, Escrick, Crockey Hill, Warthill, Riccall, Moor End, Thorganby, Wheldrake, Grimston, Kelfield, Hall Garth, Dunnington, Stillingfleet, Naburn.	2%
Y08	Harlthorpe, Osgodby Common, Camblesforth, Newland, Hambleton, West Haddlesey, Bubwith, Barlby, Skipwith, Gateforth, Temple Hirst, Foggathorpe, Cliffe, Chapel Haddlesey, Drax and North Yorkshire in East Riding of Yorkshire.	1%



Objectives

Respondents were asked to identify which of the five objectives were most important to them. The results were:

96% see increasing biodiversity and creating habitats as an important function of the woodland.

91% see carbon capture as an important function of the woodland.

91% see access to green space for health and wellbeing as an important function of the woodland.

Over three quarters (76%) want to see York's active travel network enhanced to include new walking and cycling routes as part of YCW.

74% see the creation of new green jobs and the development of skills/volunteering opportunities as an important function of the woodland.

KEY OUTCOMES

It is clear that the biodiversity and ecological value of the woodland, along with its environmental function are key for respondents. The space should be useable, but trees, habitats and wildlife should take priority.

The project design will be sensitive to the importance of the plants and wildlife, whilst maintaining useable areas for leisure and mindfulness.

The public responses aligned well with the objectives given so these should be retained to drive the project forward.



Woodland Features

Respondents were asked to rank woodland features in order of importance, providing feedback on what elements they would like to see included in the final design. The results were as follows:

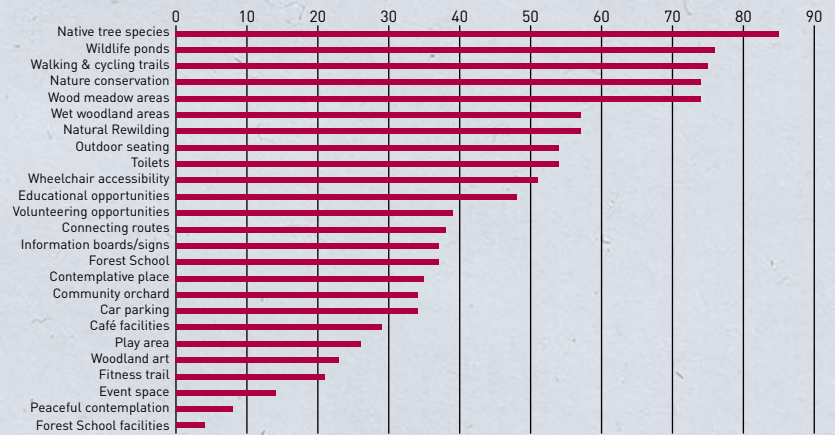
- Native tree species **85%**
- Wildlife ponds **76%**
- Walking & cycling trails **75%**
- Nature conservation **74%**
- Wood meadow areas **74%**
- Wet woodland areas **57%**
- Natural Rewilding **57%**
- Outdoor seating **54%**
- Toilets **54%**
- Wheelchair accessibility **51%**
- Educational opportunities **48%**
- Volunteering opportunities **39%**
- Connecting routes **38%**
- Information boards/signs **37%**
- Forest School **37%**
- Contemplative place **35%**
- Community orchard **34%**
- Car parking **34%**
- Café facilities **29%**
- Play area **26%**
- Woodland art **23%**
- Fitness trail **21%**
- Event space **14%**
- Peaceful contemplation **8%**
- Forest School facilities **4%**

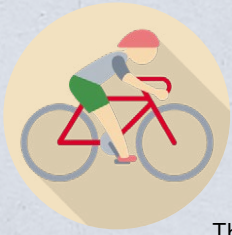
KEY OUTCOMES

It is clear that respondents valued natural features above built forms and hardstanding areas. Planting, ponds and trails will be included in the design, alongside areas of different habitat types to support a variety of wildlife.

Educational and volunteering opportunities will be provided for using low impact facilities and no formal events space, visitors centre or café will be included.

An accessible network of paths will also be included for all user groups.

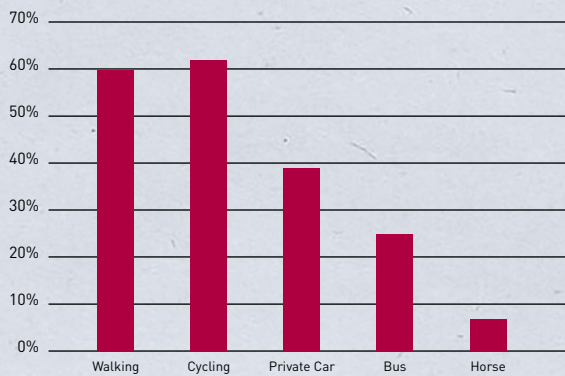




Transport

The survey asked how people were most likely to travel to the Woodland and the responses were as follows (more than one mode could be selected):

- 60%** anticipate walking to the woodland.
- 62%** anticipate cycling to the woodland.
- 39%** would travel by private car.
- 25%** would travel by bus.
- 7%** would travel by horse riding.

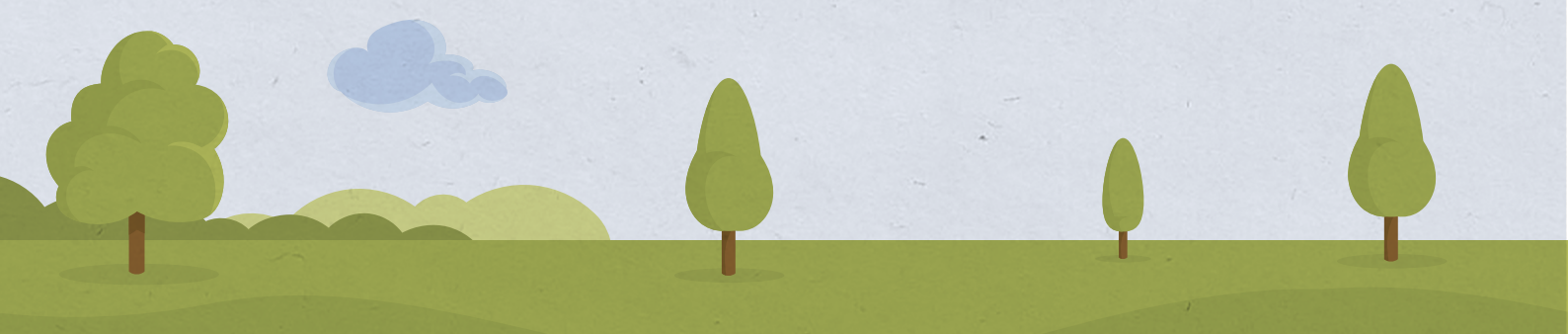


KEY OUTCOMES

The majority of respondents intended to walk or cycle to the woodland. The site is already well served by footpaths, cycle routes and bridle ways and these will be retained through the proposals to encourage sustainable travel.

Some visitors will drive, and a small amount of parking will be provided for this, away from local residents.

Provision will also be made for cycle parking, disabled parking, minibus parking and a drop-off point for visitors. All of these elements will be carefully incorporated to maximise accessibility whilst minimising the potential for disruption in the local area.





Community Involvement

Respondents were asked if and how they would like to be involved in the creation of the Woodland, their responses were:

Over half of respondent want to be involved in tree planting.

26% want to be involved in citizens science projects.

A quarter want to help create trails.

13% would get involved in running events.



Maintenance

The survey asked how respondents thought the Woodland should be maintained, the feedback suggested:

28% thought the woodland could be maintained by the community.

22% thought a "Friends of YCW" group could maintain it.

23% thought York Council could maintain it.

13% thought a social enterprise could maintain it.

72% thought a mixture of the groups above would be best.

KEY OUTCOMES

Respondents are keen to be involved in the creation and ongoing maintenance of the woodland, fulfilling its purpose as a community facility.

The final design will include a management plan which will incorporate opportunities for volunteering and potential for on-going activities such as fruit harvests, forest schools and educational pursuits.

KEY OUTCOMES

A mixture of groups should be involved in maintaining the woodland to ensure it is well managed in perpetuity.

The final design will include a programme and funding for this, to safeguard the Woodland for generations to come.

4.0

Further Analysis

4.1 This section of the report provides an overview of the qualitative data submitted as part of the engagement exercise. This includes responses to the open-ended questions from the survey, as well as feedback from the webinars and separate email submissions made during the consultation period. It also includes responses from the following groups:

- York Civic Trust;
- Friends of Fishponds Wood and Beech Grove;
- Knapton Allotments Association;
- Residents of North Field Lane;
- York Rotary Clubs;
- Knapton with Rufford Parish Council;
- York Environment Forum;
- Stakeholder Advisory Group.

School Survey Responses

4.2 The school survey utilised different questions, as shown in **Appendix 2**, targeting the key objectives, what children want to see in the woodland and how they would use it. The responses are summarised below and align well with the feedback from the main survey. The overall emphasis being that natural features were key, alongside space for leisure and exercise.

- Approximately half saw useable green space as the main function of the woodland;
- One third thought improving biodiversity was important;
- Roughly 15% thought carbon reduction was a key function;
- The following features were most important to the children:
 - Flowers and trees 25%;
 - Somewhere to learn about nature 20%;
 - Space to run around 20%;
 - Somewhere to ride your bike 18%;
 - Somewhere to play 18%.

KEY OUTCOMES

The children's responses aligned with the vision and objectives – looking for a useable woodland space which can support a variety of wildlife, plants and trees.

Space for children's play areas should be included in the detailed design.

The Council's High-Level Vision

4.3 The Council's vision for the YCW, as stated in Section 1 of this report, was put to members of the public and stakeholders in the consultation. As set out in Section 3, 78% of those responding to the survey supported the vision as currently drafted. As part of the survey, participants were asked if they would make any changes to the vision.

4.4 Some participants took this opportunity to make more general comments on the proposed designs and those points will be considered under the relevant section of the chapter.

4.5 The list below summarises the additional elements which respondents felt should be included or given more emphasis in the vision statement. It is worth noting that most of these are included in the objectives proposed so may not need to be repeated here.

KEY OUTCOMES

The Woodland vision is widely supported and aligns with feedback from respondents.

An additional reference to carbon capture/environmental benefits should be added to reflect what members of the public consider to be the key objectives.

4.6 Proposals to add into the vision statement:

- Reference Carbon Capture / environmental sustainability / climate change;
- Well-managed into the future;
- More emphasis on biodiversity;
- Stronger direction / use of objectives;
- The goal should be to provide a place where all people can engage with the natural world;
- Balance between biodiversity and leisure use, is one a priority?
- The number of trees to be planted;
- Accessibility for all, including disabled people, horse riders and people with dogs;
- It should be accessible by sustainable modes of transport;
- More emphasis on community use;
- Use it to encourage activity / exercise and healthy lifestyles;
- Reference to educational aspects.

4.7 The majority of feedback from respondents aligned well with the vision which has been set out. Most requests for additions covered elements set out in the objectives and whilst linking these is key, it is not essential for them to be repeated in the vision.

4.8 The detailed designs will need to balance the creation and long-lasting maintenance of new habitats and biodiversity assets, whilst ensuring the YCW is a useable space for all members of the public, from dog-walkers, to disabled users, to children, horse riders and runners.

Objectives

4.9 The consultation included sharing 5 key objectives with respondents. These have been ranked by importance in Section 3, however there was also an opportunity for respondents to add other objectives which they felt were important. Again, some respondents used this opportunity to make design suggestions, these will be dealt with later. The suggested objectives submitted are summarised below:

- For the woodland to be multi-functional and appealing to all;
- Providing open space for those living in high density areas;
- Opportunity for foraging, reducing food waste;
- For the woodland to be easily accessible for all and well linked with sustainable transport opportunities;
- A way to engage with charities and other community groups;
- Accessibility for horse riders.

4.10 As shown in section 3, the key objectives for respondents were the nature and environment focused statements. This is a theme identified throughout the consultation, that respondents see the habitat creation and environmental benefits of the proposal as the most important aspect, with their use of the space coming second. Accessibility is important but respondents were clear that they do not want the woodland to be harmed by too much use.

4.11 Accessibility is clearly a key theme from these first two sections. This relates both to people travelling to the woodland without over-reliance on private cars, as well as ensuring that the woodland can be used by all members of the public. As set out in the travel section below, provision will be made to encourage sustainable transport methods as much as possible.

4.12 In terms of accessibility within the woodland, a network of different routes will be provided using a mixture of surfacing appropriate for different user groups. This will ensure there are paths for those with limited movement, families, cyclists and horse riders. This is considered further within the design feedback section below.

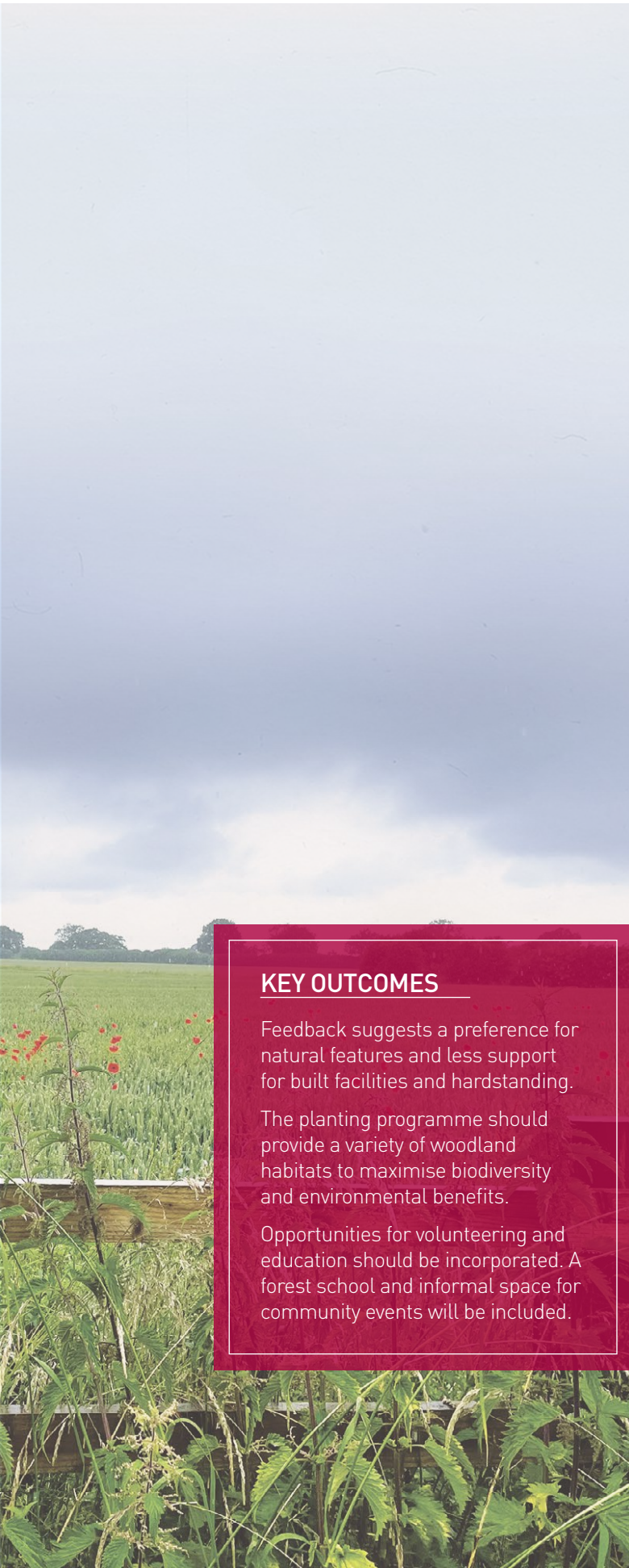
4.13 Overall, the feedback clearly showed that respondents aligned with the objectives set out by the Council and supported their implementation through the design process.

KEY OUTCOMES

The objectives reflect the public's feedback. Respondents clearly felt that nature and the environment should take precedence over humans dominating the space.

The design should include accessible routes for all users, areas of "untouched" woodland and carefully considered parking provision.





KEY OUTCOMES

Feedback suggests a preference for natural features and less support for built facilities and hardstanding.

The planting programme should provide a variety of woodland habitats to maximise biodiversity and environmental benefits.

Opportunities for volunteering and education should be incorporated. A forest school and informal space for community events will be included.

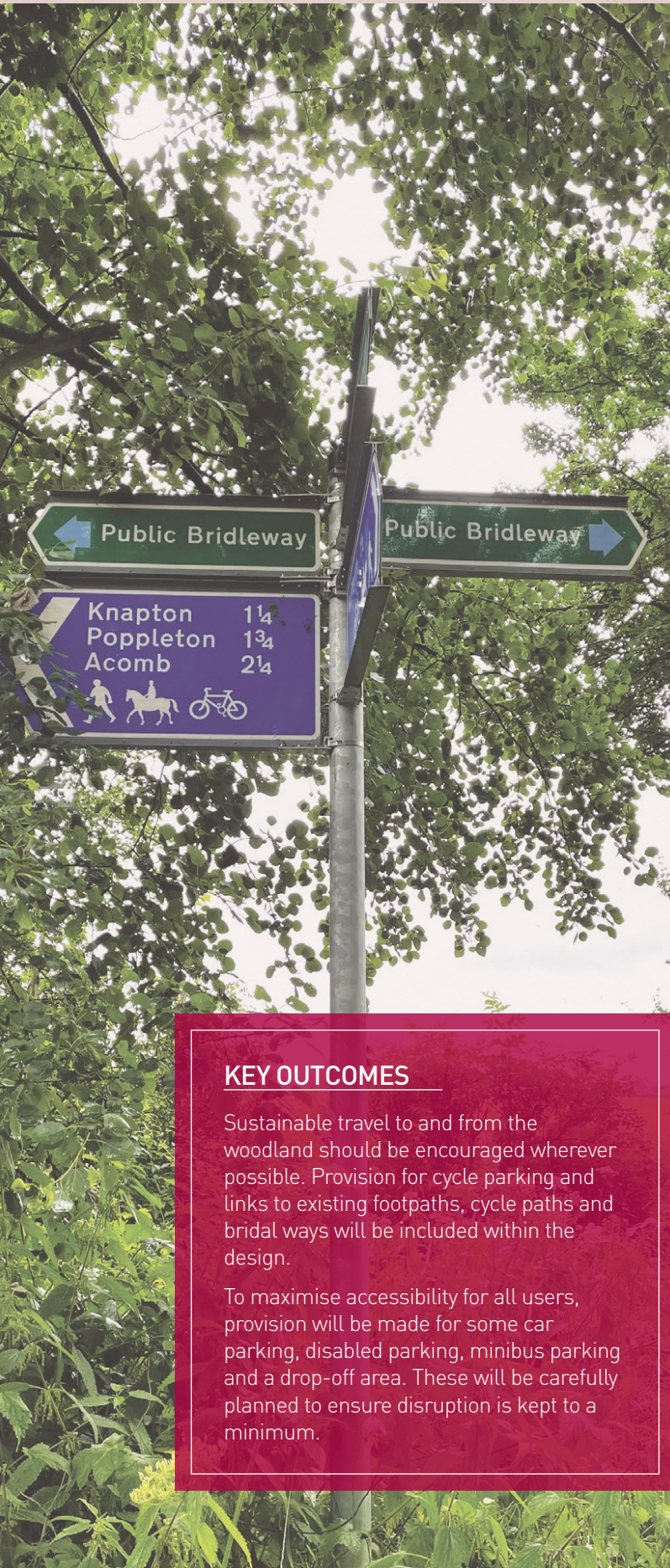
Features of the Woodland

4.14 As set out in section 3, respondents were asked to note the features of the woodland which were most important to them. The results will be carried through into the detailed design phase. Other suggested features are summarised under the Design feedback section.

4.15 It is clear from the statistics set out in Section 3 that respondents were more drawn to the natural features suggested for the woodland and were less keen for built form and hardstanding to be introduced if it could be avoided. This direction has been clear across the survey and further feedback with respondents clearly valuing the environmental benefits the woodland can provide over a visitor centre for example. This clearly aligns with the feedback received on the objectives presented.

4.16 In particular, feedback suggested that the woodland should provide a variety of habitat types and planting species to ensure the project can support the most wildlife possible. In line with the objectives, respondents also wanted to see opportunities for volunteering and education. Both of these key elements will be incorporated into the detailed designs.

4.17 Particular features which have been suggested or had concerns raised regarding them have been addressed in the design feedback section below. As the responses set out, the design will focus on a careful balance between allowing natural habitats to thrive and providing controlled accessibility to ensure members of the public can use and enjoy the space. This feedback aligns well with the vision and objectives that the proposal set out to achieve.



KEY OUTCOMES

Sustainable travel to and from the woodland should be encouraged wherever possible. Provision for cycle parking and links to existing footpaths, cycle paths and bridle ways will be included within the design.

To maximise accessibility for all users, provision will be made for some car parking, disabled parking, minibus parking and a drop-off area. These will be carefully planned to ensure disruption is kept to a minimum.

Travel

4.18 As set out above, the accessibility of the woodland has been a key theme in the responses received. As set out in Section 3, the majority of respondents intended to walk or cycle to the woodland. The site is already well served by footpaths, cycle routes and bridle ways and these will be retained through the proposals to encourage visitors to make use of sustainable transport options.

4.19 It is acknowledged that some visitors will drive to the site and a small amount of parking will be provided for this, away from local residents.

4.20 Provision will also be made for cycle parking, disabled parking, minibus parking and a drop-off point for visitors. All of these elements will be carefully incorporated to maximise accessibility whilst minimising the potential for disruption in the local area.

4.21 There was an opportunity through the consultation to provide other responses not included in the options and the results are summarised below:

- Park & Ride/Shuttle bus/Tram system;
- Extended cycle paths;
- E-scooter;
- Parking provision for blue-badge holders.

4.22 As noted above, requirements for cycle and car parking (including disabled provision) will be included within the detailed design and links to existing routes will be included wherever possible.

Community Involvement

4.23 As part of the engagement exercise, respondents were asked if they would like to be involved in creating the woodland. As set out in Section 3, members of the public are keen to be involved in a number of different aspects.

4.24 In addition to the responses set out in those statistics, various respondents offered expertise in specific areas including:

- Practical assistance (planting etc);
- Educational input;
- Wheelchair use;
- Marketing & admin tasks;
- Donations and fundraising assistance;
- Horse riders safety & bridal ways;
- Cycle trails;
- Mindfulness;
- Tree climbing;
- Natural History;
- Events;
- Ongoing maintenance & litter picking.

4.25 Local Scout leaders responded saying their groups could assist, others suggested local schools and students could get involved. Around 20 respondents expressed an interest in being involved but were concerned their age or mobility would restrict them from helping.

4.26 This feedback aligns well with the objective for the Woodland to support jobs, education and volunteering opportunities, as well as ensuring that the Woodland is a genuine community asset in the long term.

KEY OUTCOMES

Respondents are very keen to be involved in the creation and long-term use of the Woodland. Provision should be made for volunteers and educational pursuits within the woodland design, as well as informal community space.

Maintenance

4.27 Alongside the statistics provided in Section 3, other suggestions regarding maintenance were made through the engagement process. These included existing community groups like schools or young offenders in the locality. Some respondents suggested fundraising to allow for some jobs to be created.

4.28 Overall, the majority thought the groups suggested in the survey would be best placed. Long-term maintenance and management will be key to the success of the Woodland and will need to be planned as part of the final design.

KEY OUTCOMES

Respondents consider the long-term management of the woodland to be an important element in its success. Funding and provision for this must be secured through the proposal's development and accommodated within the detailed design.

5.0

Design Feedback

5.1 This section sets out the suggestions and concerns raised throughout the consultation process. It must be noted that the designs provided for comment were high-level draft options and that there is considerable research and planning to go into the more detailed design phase.

5.2 Key themes from this section included sustainable travel options, accessibility for all, consideration of the species mixes and an overall focus on the ecological benefits of the scheme. Respondents were keen to ensure a balance is achieved between allowing members of the public to enjoy the space whilst protecting the habitats and biodiversity which will be introduced. Overall, there was preference for not providing the events space as other facilities are available and nature should come first.

5.3 The most frequently mentioned concerns included vandalism, dogs, cyclists and the ongoing management of the project in perpetuity. Respondents wanted to see separate trails and paths for separate users allowing disabled visitors, families, cyclists, etc to enjoy the space without disrupting each other.

5.4 Consideration of parking provision brought conflicting opinions. Some respondents were keen to see plenty of parking to ensure local roads would not be affected, but others thought less parking would encourage people to use more sustainable modes of transport. This will need to be further examined through the detailed design process.

5.5 The below table further summarises the concerns and suggestions received. Responses have been made to the comments made showing how feedback will be incorporated as the detailed designs progress. Further surveys, including archaeological and ecological, will be carried out and the results will also feed into the developing design.

Feedback	Response
Maintenance / Management	
Concerned about potential vandalism and littering.	Robust detailing will form part of the design proposals to address potential vandalism. Provision of litter bins at the key entrance points for easy emptying will be considered.
Concerned about Dogs causing disruption and Dog mess.	A system of key routes will be laid out to guide the majority of visitors around the site. Provision of dog waste bins at the key entrance points for easy emptying will be considered.
Concerned regarding the costs of ongoing management and security provision.	Management and maintenance requirements form part of the project and are considered at all stages of the design. The final proposal will include a long-term management programme.
Design comments / Features	
The events area is not required and could cause disruption	A series of open spaces will be provided in the woodland to allow flexibility for a range of potential community events but it is envisioned that these would be low key and linked closely to the activities related to the proposed woodland. E.g. Nature days, Apple harvest etc.
The woodland should be accessible for all, including disabled people, older people and families / children of all ages. Cyclists and horse riders should be catered for.	It is proposed that there is a hierarchy of routes catering for a range of users from main surfaced routes of different distances through to less formal main routes to quieter parts of the woodland. Different features will be included to appeal to different users (e.g. play area, forest school, etc) Routes for cyclists and horse riders will tie into existing provision around the site periphery. Cycle parking will also be included.
Not too much provision for humans, nature should be the focus / The balance of accessibility vs biodiversity will be key	The concept is to be as light touch as possible in terms of infrastructure for visitors with the focus being on the planting of the woodland, habitat creation and the enjoyment of the woodland as a new community resource. The proposals are seeking a balance between public access for enjoyment and quiet areas for nature to flourish
Would like to see emphasis on mindfulness	Quieter, less formal routes will be provided off the main circulation routes including areas for quiet contemplation and woodland yoga etc.
Would like to see a picnic area	This will be included.
The pond is a nice addition but could be a hazard	This will be detailed with shallow sides and devices for safe supervised access such as dipping platforms and boardwalks.
There is no need for a café or events space.	Agreed, these are not currently proposed but could be included in future expansion if appropriate.
Concerned that the location isn't sustainable, parking will be a problem, other modes of travel should be encouraged	Links into the existing footpath and cycle networks will be provided as part of the layout to encourage sustainable transport choices and walking to the site. New dedicated parking and drop off areas will be integrated into the layout. A main parking area will be located off the main road link to the south west with a secondary parking area located off the existing road access to the north.

Feedback	Response
Planting	
The planting mix must be carefully considered and responsibly sourced. Fruit trees should be included.	There will be an emphasis on being reflective of local conditions and character and sourcing material as locally as possible. Fruiting species will form part of the proposals.
Agricultural land / is the soil right for a woodland to thrive?	The site soils and former arable use provide an excellent basis for the establishment of a woodland and associated habitats. Species will be selected to be locally appropriate and reflective of the local character.
The project should be in keeping with the existing landscape	Agreed, the planting mixes will be reflective of the local conditions/ landscape character and will include the integration of existing features such as the hedgerows.
Some part of the canopy should be open to encourage ground level biodiversity	Agreed there will be woodland glades and rides as part of the proposals

Other	
The woodland project should be protected from policy changes and future developments	Potential future expansion of the A1237 road has been fed into the constraints plan underpinning the layout and consideration given to future circulation within the woodland. Funding will be secured for the project through grants etc and this money will be ringfenced for the woodland and its long term management.
Nearby airfield to be aware of	This has been noted and will be taken into consideration during the detailed design phase.
A robust archaeological survey will be required	This has been undertaken including trenching and the results used to inform the design.
Ecological surveys should be carried out	These have been undertaken and the results used to inform the design.

KEY OUTCOMES

The additional feedback provided on the design and management of the woodland remained in line with the key themes established throughout:

- The balance between nature and human use
- Accessibility and facilities for all
- The importance of long-term management and security
- The best mix of planting to support a wide variety of wildlife
- Encouraging sustainable travel whilst accommodating all users

These themes will be considered in detail through the design process.

Technical Responses

5.6 Alongside responses from stakeholders and member of the public, a number of more technical responses were submitted following engagement with relevant organisations. These included:

- Yorkshire Wildlife Trust;
- The Forestry Commission;
- Natural England;
- The Woodland Trust.

5.7 Additional feedback was received from the Forestry England following the consultation to say that:

‘Strongly support the feedback you received at consultation for ‘the simple enjoyment of woodland’

5.8 This quote is considered to tie in well with the overall woodland vision and serves as an important reminder that, as set out by many respondents, the woodland itself provides enjoyment and interest, other extravagant facilities and attractions are not needed.

5.9 The comments and recommendations made by the above organisations were really positive and we will continue to engage with these organisations throughout the design process.

5.10 The comments submitted are summarised below and provide useful feedback to incorporate into the ongoing site assessment works and detailed design stages. The surveys recommended, including soil and ecology, have either been completed or are underway, and Landscape Architects have been brought on-board to progress the detailed stage of design works.

5.11 The majority of the points below have also been raised through the wider engagement programme and are addressed above. The organisations responding agreed with members of the public that the natural and environmental function of the woodland is key and that access for members of the public should be provided in a way that will not hamper the success of the habitat creation. They also noted that different users of the space may prefer separate routes, and this is being incorporated into the detailed design.

The Forestry Commission

- Consideration of historic landscape could lead to a historic footpath network based on boundaries and landscape features.
- Categorisation of permission footpaths/public rights of way should be considered.
- Soil survey should be undertaken to identify best suited species.
- Permeability and drainage will need to be considered.
- The location is suitable for the proposals.
- The multi-functional design will need to balance public access and environmental goals.
- Landscape architects should provide design input.

The suggestions made by the Forestry Commission predominantly reflect feedback set out in the rest of this report. Footpath networks and historical features/boundaries will be carefully considered during the design process and incorporated where possible. The necessary surveys are underway or completed and are feeding into the design process which is being led by qualified landscape architects. The balance between natural habitats and human impacts is being carefully considered. Support for the location is acknowledged.

Natural England

- Proposals of this type are supported by National Planning Policy.
- Comprehensive ecological surveys will be required to ensure existing assets are protected/replaced/mitigated.
- A long-term management plan should be established early on.
- Existing habitats on adjacent sites should also be considered.
- Defra Biodiversity Net Gain metric should be considered.
- Inclusion of ponds encouraged – the west/southwest area appears most suitable.
- Areas of the woodland should be left undisturbed by humans, a visitor strategy should be put in place to manage this.
- Native species should be used wherever possible.
- Planting specimens should be of local provenance.
- Potential use of plot south of Wetherby Road as an operations compound.
- Butterfly species have been recorded in the area and additional advice is provided to manage this.

Support for the scheme is acknowledged. Agree that there are benefits of a “planned” recreational space to reduce impacts on other environmental assets. Local community groups and projects are being reviewed as part of the design process and it is hoped that the woodland will bring about a variety of benefits for the local community. Ponds will be included and their location will be carefully considered.

The Woodland Trust

- Highest potential woodland cover possible should be aimed for.
- Trees will need to be protected from wildlife in early stages.
- Feedback should be requested on transport planning requirements for parking/access etc.
- Parking location will need to be carefully considered.
- Separate routes within the woodland for different users would be beneficial.

We are aiming to achieve approximately 60% canopy coverage due to constraints such as overhead lines, existing hedgerows, etc. The protection of young trees is being carefully considered as is parking provision. A network of routes for different users will be provided.

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

- Proposals of this type are supported by National Planning Policy.
- Comprehensive ecological surveys will be required to ensure existing assets are protected/replaced/mitigated.
- A long-term management plan should be established early on.
- Existing habitats on adjacent sites should also be considered.
- Defra Biodiversity Net Gain metric should be considered.
- Inclusion of ponds encouraged – the west/southwest area appears most suitable.
- Areas of the woodland should be left undisturbed by humans, a visitor strategy should be put in place to manage this.
- Native species should be used wherever possible.
- Planting specimens should be of local provenance.
- Potential use of plot south of Wetherby Road as an operations compound.
- Butterfly species have been recorded in the area and additional advice is provided to manage this.

Support for the proposal is acknowledged. The necessary surveys are underway or completed and are feeding into the design process.

A long-term management plan will make up part of the final design.

Some natural spaces will be left undisturbed and ponds will be included in the scheme. Local, native planting will be key to the woodland's success and is being carefully considered.

6.0

Conclusion & Recommendations

6.1 Following a review of the consultation materials, it is clear that the vast majority of those involved support the York Community Woodland Project. The responses received align closely with the existing vision that the Council had agreed.

6.2 The existing vision statement reads as follows:

“The new woodland will be a well-designed, bio-diverse, green space providing a place for peaceful contemplation and leisure for the people of York. This will create a new stray for the city, enhance the setting of the city and make York an even greater place to live, work and visit.”

6.3 It is recommended that this is amended slightly to better reflect the carbon capture / environmental benefits of the proposal as one of the project’s key objectives.

6.4 The objectives of the project which were put forward in the consultation were as follows:

- Planting trees for carbon capture, as part of a wider commitment to reach net-zero carbon by 2030;
- Increase access to green space to improve health and wellbeing;
- Increase biodiversity, wildlife habitats and protect endangered species;
- Enhance York’s active travel network, including new walking and cycling routes;
- Opportunities for new green jobs, green skills development and volunteering opportunities.

6.5 Overall, these were well supported by the public and stakeholders, although some noted they could be reflected in the overall vision statement. Starting with the objectives and then running as a clear theme throughout, respondents strongly supported the creation of natural habitats and the environmental benefits that this would bring. Whilst they were keen for the space to be useable, it was made clear that the use of the woodland should not restrict or harm the trees, plants and wildlife within it.

6.6 The public have provided detailed and varied feedback to be considered during the continuing site assessment and design process. Throughout this report key outcomes have been identified relating to each theme. These have fed into the below recommendations which will lead the remaining stages of the design process:

Key themes

- The balance between public access and biodiversity, habitat and environmental benefits;
- How parking provision will be incorporated to an extent which will reduce impacts on local residents, whilst encouraging sustainable travel;
- Ensuring the woodland is accessible for all users, whilst ensuring a peaceful visitor experience (potential separation of routes for different users);
- Achieving a sustainable mix of planting species which will be robust and provide biodiversity assets;
- That the woodland will be well managed and maintained, to be enjoyed by generations to come.

Recommendations

- That access through and around the woodland is well managed through a network of paths and that built form and hardstanding is avoided where possible;
- That a small amount of parking is provided with a main parking area to the south west and a secondary (restricted) parking area located off the existing road access to the north;
- That a hierarchy of routes is provided to serve different woodland users and pockets of space will be made available for contemplation and quiet;
- That planting stock and seeds are sourced locally wherever possible and qualified experts are consulted on planting mixes;
- That the final design include a medium-long term management plan for the woodland.

6.7 Overall, the feedback from the engagement exercise was extremely positive and aligned closely with the vision and objectives in place. The recommendations above will lead the detailed design process to ensure the scheme proposed evolves to reflect the feedback received through the consultation exercise.

Appendix 1



YORK York Community Woodland Survey

Survey Information

Our survey asks for some personal information which you may choose not to give. We do not publish or share any information which can identify you. Please read our [privacy notice](#) to find out more about how we protect your personal information. We will ask for your consent to this at the start of the survey.

You can withdraw your consent at any time by contacting business.intelligence@york.gov.uk.

* Do you confirm that you have read and understood the privacy notice? You must select 'Yes' in order to take the survey.

Yes No



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York Community Woodland Survey

* Have you already seen the concept design images regarding the woodland on the York Community Woodland Website?

Yes

No

Appendix 1

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York Community Woodland Survey

The link to the York Community Woodland page is here: [York Community Woodland Concept Designs](#) . On the page you will see the concept designs and related landscape visualisations show some of the different ways we could design the woodland to meet the objectives we have set out. **Please click on the link and return to the survey afterwards.**



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York Community Woodland Survey

To what extent do you support the creation of a new community woodland in York?

Strongly support

Strongly do not support

Support

Don't know

Do not support

No opinion

Appendix 1

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York Community Woodland Survey

York Community Woodland High Level Vision

'The new woodland will be a well-designed, biodiverse, green space, providing a place for peaceful contemplation and leisure for the people of York. This will create a new Stray for the city, enhance the setting of the city and make York an even greater place to live work and visit'.

Do you agree with the council's high level vision for York Community Woodland?

Yes

No

If your answer is no, please tell us what you'd like to change or see included:



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York Community Woodland Survey

Which of the objectives are most important to you:
(Rank 1 - 5)

	Very important	2	3	4	Not at all important
Planting trees for carbon capture, as part of a wider commitment to reach net-zero carbon by 2030	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increase access to green space to improve health and wellbeing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increase biodiversity, wildlife habitats and protect endangered species	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enhance York's active travel network, including new walking and cycling routes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities for new green jobs, green skills development and volunteering opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

Appendix 1

What do you feel is most important for a community woodland?

(Tick all that apply)

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Native tree species | <input type="checkbox"/> Wet woodland areas | <input type="checkbox"/> Café facilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forest School | <input type="checkbox"/> Community orchard | <input type="checkbox"/> Nature conservation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peaceful contemplation | <input type="checkbox"/> Connecting routes | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational opportunities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walking and cycling trails | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Rewilding | <input type="checkbox"/> Play area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Forest School facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Wheelchair accessibility |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor seating | <input type="checkbox"/> Car Parking | <input type="checkbox"/> Information boards/signs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fitness trail | <input type="checkbox"/> Contemplative place | <input type="checkbox"/> Toilets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife ponds | <input type="checkbox"/> Event space | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wood meadow areas | <input type="checkbox"/> Woodland art | |

Please note your top three woodland features below:

1

2

3



How would you prefer to travel to the woodland site?

(Please tick all that apply)

Walk

Cycle

Car

Public bus

Horse

Other (please specify)

Appendix 1



York Community Woodland Survey

If you have any concerns about the new woodland, please tell us below?

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York Community Woodland Survey

Would you like to be involved in creating the woodland? Please choose from the below options to tell us how you would like to be involved:

(Tick from the options below)

- Tree planting
- Wood meadow creation i.e. seeding
- Creating paths / trails
- Running special events i.e. nature conservation, forest school activities etc
- Citizens science projects i.e. monitoring changes in wildlife and plant life
- Not interested in being actively involved
- Other (please specify)

Appendix 1

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York Community Woodland Survey

The woodland site will require ongoing management and maintenance. We would love to hear your thoughts as to how you think the woodland would be best maintained?

(Tick box options)

- Community based management and maintenance
- Joining a new 'Friends of' group
- City of York Council maintenance
- Social enterprise
- A combination of the above

Other (please specify)

York Community Woodland is the working title. We'd like to hear your ideas about what the woodland should be called. Please feel free to be creative! And tell us why you have suggested this name.

Have you answered this survey as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

- Individual
- Organisation (please specify)



About you

Please provide your postcode:

ZIP/Postal Code

Your age: (please select the appropriate range)

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say | <input type="radio"/> 40-55 |
| <input type="radio"/> Under 16 | <input type="radio"/> 56-59 |
| <input type="radio"/> 16-24 | <input type="radio"/> 60-64 |
| <input type="radio"/> 25-39 | <input type="radio"/> 65+ |

Appendix 2

York Community Woodland



York City Council are creating a woodland in your city! This will have lots of trees, plants, flowers, wildlife and green spaces to play! We would love to hear what you would like to see and do in the woodland and have created some questions for you below.

Q1: You might have visited a woodland or seen one on the television.

What is your favourite thing about a woodland?

.....

Q2: Do you think that a new woodland in York would be a good idea? Please tell us why (including if you answer no):

.....

Q3: Using the ideas below, what do you think is most important to be found in a woodland? You can tick more than one box!

	✓
Open spaces with lots of space to run around	
Somewhere to ride your bike	
Lots of flowers and trees	
Somewhere to play	
Somewhere to learn about the woodland's trees, animals and plants	





Q4: What do you think is a good name for a woodland in York?

.....

Q5: What sort of animals do you think live in a woodland?

.....

Thank you very much for filling our survey in!

The York Community Woodland Team



Appendix 3

Groups & Stakeholders

- Friends of the John Lally Community Wood
- York Civic Trust
- St Nicks
- Minster Equine Vets
- Wild York
- York Rotary Clubs
- UPPC
- Ride Yorkshire
- 2nd Acomb Scout Group
- Primary Care Social Prescribers
- York Civic Trust
- Friends of Fishponds Wood and Beech Grove
- Knapton Allotments Association
- Residents of North Field Lane
- York Rotary Clubs
- Knapton with Rufford Parish Council
- York Environment Forum
- Stakeholder Advisory Group
- Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
- The Forestry Commission
- Natural England
- The Woodland Trust
- Rufforth Primary School
- St Pauls Primary School

Appendix 4

YEF Attendees

Ian Anderson

The eco group at st Michael le belfrery church

Rachel Tumman

Head of Visitor Operations for the JORVIK Group of Attractions

Phil Bixby

(YEF Treasurer) and independent member (plus part of My Future York)

Philip Birch

York Archaeological Trust, individual & YEF member

Rose Hilton

Heslington Parish Council

Caroline Lewis

The Membership Secretary.

Richard Smith

Professional ecologist & Friends of Beech Grove and Fishponds Wood

Penny Bainbridge

Rep of Edible York

Adrian Lovett

Chair of Good Food York, a Trustee of St Nicks & One Planet York

Graham Collett**Dave Merrett**

Appendix 5

Stakeholder Advisory Group

Iwan Downey

White Rose Forest

Alistair Crosby

Woodland Trust

Jonathan Dent

St Nicks

Dan Carne

Woodmeadow Trust

Barry Otley

Treemendous

Marina Martignoni

Forestry Commission

Sam Cooper

Forestry Commission

Peter Rollins

Rufforth with Knapton Parish Council

Roger Rippon

Rufforth with Knapton Parish Council

Ken Groom

Sustrans

Mark Hoyle

Askham Bryan College

Alison Dyke

University of York

Caroline Ward

University of York

Olalekan Adekola

York St John Uni

Joe Bailey

York St John Uni

Richard Powley

Lowfield Farm

Steve Beckett

Landowner local

Chris Lancaster

Landowner

Keith Clarke

Knapton Allotment Association

Sheri Scruton

Nether Poppleton and Upper
Poppleton Parish Councils

Shaun Gibbons

Head of Carbon Reduction, CYC

Paul McCabe

Project Manager, YCW, CYC

Laura Redhead

Woodland Engagement Manager,
CYC

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