

York Community Woodland - Brief re. Detailed site appraisal and design concept work Nov/Dec 2020

Context/Background:

City of York Council has recently purchased 154 acres of arable land to the west of York between the village of Knapton and Rufforth. The site is adjacent to existing council landholdings (currently under lease) that provide future opportunities to expand and link to the woodland.

It plans to create a multi-functional community woodland with the following objectives:

- Planting 50,000 trees by 2023 for carbon sequestration, as part of a wider commitment to reach net zero carbon by 2030
- New woodland amenity to increase and enhance access to green space in York
- Enhanced health and wellbeing outcomes for local residents and resultant savings for health budgets
- Increase in biodiversity and wildlife habitats
- Enhancements to York active travel network, including walking and cycling
- Opportunities for green jobs, green skills development and volunteering opportunities

The development of woodland design proposals needs to be informed by detailed knowledge of the site (including opportunities and constraints) and widespread public and stakeholder engagement.

CYC plan to work to a community identified and 'owned' vision for the site that will spring out of the consultation and engagement work Jan-Mar 2021.

In preparation for community and stakeholder engagement (and to be used as a tool during the engagement) we now wish to commission the following work:

Key outputs:

1. **Detailed site appraisal report** to enhance our understanding of the site from a range of different perspectives to include:
 - Landscape
 - Heritage
 - Archaeology
 - Ecology
 - Do we have an ecologist? Or can we borrow one from a University?
 - Biodiversity and the presence of any rare species
 - Wildlife habitats and the presence of wildlife
 - Soil
 - Water
 - Wayleaves
 - Silviculture
 - Links to surrounding landscape, transport networks, community initiatives and local planning frameworks
 - Any other perspectives that will be required for FC EIA pre screening

The report must be comprehensive in nature but produced in a way that is publicly accessible (i.e. non-technical). It should include a non-technical short summary in plain

english. It should include an assessment of the site's key features including opportunities and constraints in relation to its intended use as a multi-functional amenity woodland.

Whilst the report will be accessible, it should also be robust enough to satisfy Forestry Commission EIA pre-screening purposes.

2. **Detailed and large scale annotated** maps of the area showing:
 - The site's natural and man-made key features (archaeology, heritage assets and natural assets)
 - Transport networks (including walking/cycling/bridleway/car)
 - Identified wildlife habitats / populations
 - Fauna and flora across the site
 - Water courses
 - Wayleaves and public rights of way
 - Key interfaces with existing infrastructure and adjacent sites / initiatives (e.g. Harewood Whin re-establishment / Harewood Whin ponds, Rufforth and Knapton allotments, recent hedge planting work by Treemendous etc.). This information will be supplied by City of York Council.

3. **A large-scale site design concept plan** – informed by the site appraisal, opportunities and constraints identified above and incorporating the initial 'shopping list' of ideas contained in the council's executive report 27 August 2020. These include:
 - New pedestrian connections to neighbouring residential areas and villages
 - Cycle route connections
 - Fitness trail
 - Children's outdoor play area
 - Adults gyms
 - Running trails
 - Forest school space
 - Woodland café
 - Sensory gardens/areas
 - Ponds
 - Commercial uses to provide revenue funding for upkeep
 - Any other possible features gleaned from good practice and 'what works'

The concept design plan/s could incorporate or reference examples of best practice from other amenity woodlands across the UK and beyond to inspire and educate re. 'what work's'.

The concept design plan/s would be produced in a way that:

- Helps communicate what **may** be possible on site (and even what not)
- Helps spark ideas about where things could be located (and where not due to known constraints)
- Opens up dialogue and discussion and is not presented in a way that suggests a 'done deal'

City of York Council would need full intellectual rights to all the products/outcomes listed above, including any maps/plans photographs, graphics or images used as part of the commission. Prompt support would also be needed in customising the materials for use in community consultation.

Timescales:

- Site appraisal report by 20 Dec 2020
- Annotated map/s by 20 Dec 2020
- Concept design by 20 Dec 2020