



A Landscape Recovery Scheme for Sherwood Forest

What could this mean for landowners and managers in the area?

Defra has invited applications for Landscape Recovery areas in England, which would ***enable access to a new scale of funding, both public and private, to invest in the land of the chosen areas.*** *The Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, National Trust and Miner2 Major Project Team are working together to take forward a multi-partner, multi-landowner bid for the Sherwood Forest area.* By sharing the workload we can share the risk, and also provide a chance for farmers and other landowners to become part of this project, where the complex bidding process is undertaken on their behalf, *for free*, by the NGO partners.

The Landscape Recovery programme will support:

- Working towards net zero through land management
- Managing protected wildlife sites and the creation and management of wildlife-rich habitat, including hedgerows
- Regenerative agriculture

The Project would be in two stages;

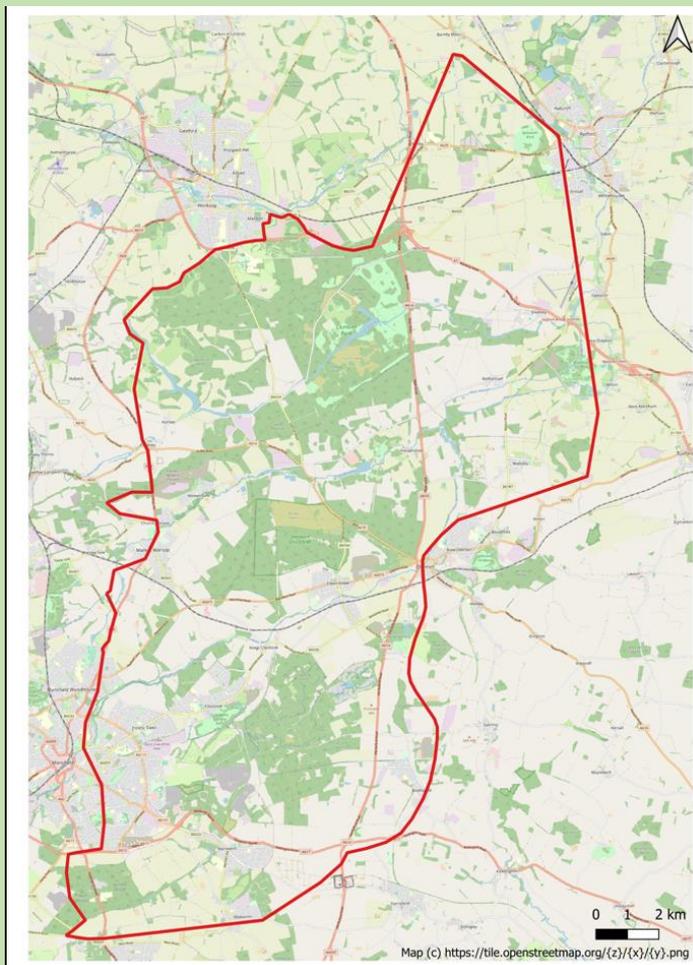
A Development Phase of 18 months- 2 years to find out what each landowner would like to do on their land to reach net zero and create habitats and/or undertake regenerative agriculture, and test the viability, identify potential future income streams, and benefit from shared knowledge and information, particularly in the fast moving areas of BNG, Carbon, nutrient neutrality and payment stacking.

A funded Delivery Phase – 20 years of mixed public and private funds to deliver what has been agreed in the Development Phase, to meet the needs identified by those landowners and managers. This is a second bidding process for projects that have completed the Development Phase, but Defra's assumption is that projects that have

undertaken the Development Phase should successfully secure funds for the Delivery Phase.

At this stage, we are looking for expressions of interest from farmers and landowners who might wish to be included in a bid for the Development Phase of the project, this is not a binding commitment to then going into the bid for the long term funding, as each landowner will need to decide for themselves if it will meet their aims and benefit their business, after the development work has been done, evidence gathered and likely payments calculated. For landowners not involved in the Development Phase, however, Defra have indicated that it may not support new land being added in for the delivery phase.

The area provisionally chosen for the bid is shown on the map below, there is flexibility around the edge of the red line, but it will be crucial to secure a good level of contiguity of land, which could include river corridors, linear strips, stepping stones of habitat, and areas of regenerative agriculture and agro-forestry interventions, in between blocks of habitat interventions of varying sizes:



For the Sherwood area the following would meet Defra's priorities:

Working towards net zero will include managing, restoring or creating:

- woodland and trees, including ancient woodland and wood pasture
- other sequestering habitats, such as hedgerows
- Carbon sequestering practices, such as regenerative agriculture, including buffer strips, herbal leys, cover crops
- acid grassland
- ponds, bogs or fens
- rivers or streams
- scrub or hedgerows

Protected sites will include SSSIs and the SAC.

Defra is also expecting all projects to provide extra benefits, such as:

- improved water quality
- helping threatened species to recover
- improved soil health
- increasing resilience to natural hazards, for example, flooding, drought, erosion, fire
- social benefits such as physical access, participation and engagement with nature

The minimum area is "broadly connected 500ha" there is now no maximum area, a welcome change from last year's funding round, but Defra have indicated that contiguity of land will be a strong consideration.

Any land in other schemes such as SFI and CS is still eligible, as long as the same actions are not double-funded.

Landowners don't have to bring forward whole farms, or their whole holding (for public bodies like Councils and FE).

There is a strong emphasis on finding ways to secure private finance for habitat creation and management, the development stage would pay for specialist green finance assessments for each landholding and would include testing the market for payment stacking eg. CS plus Carbon credits, or BNG. This has evolved significantly since last year, and the Green Investment Readiness Toolkit is now available to help make the process easier.

You may be interested to see one of the Projects that was successful in securing LR Pilot phase funding last year, which is now working through their Development Phase, on similar soils to ours, The Breckland Farmers Wildlife Network: [The Breckland Farmers Wildlife Network - Breckland Farmers Wildlife Network](#)

The closing date for the funding bid is the 21st September, if successful, then there would be funding available to develop the delivery details of the project, *including*:

- Agreeing the details of potential habitat schemes with interested landowners, including costs, long term management plans and payment rates, with support towards the cost of preparing those agreements.
- Undertaking any necessary mapping, including the potential for stacking nature-based solutions, such as priority areas for Nature Flood Management, Carbon sequestration and new habitat creation.
- Supported by Defra, developing a payment model and most effective form of brokering to bring funds through BNG, Carbon offsetting and Phosphate offsetting to invest in the habitats and landscape of the area. This could include business plans for each land holding to see how the payments could stack up for you for your chosen interventions.
- Developing a plan for the recovery of key species.
- Setting up relevant legal agreements such as conservation covenants.
- Testing the feasibility of some of the options, eg. the value of new wood pasture to sequester Carbon or reduce run-off, and increase water infiltration to the aquifer.
- Engaging local communities in protecting and valuing their local landscapes, particularly on publicly owned land.
- A new part of the development stage introduced by Defra will be to consider impacts on food production at a broad level.
- Establishing the viability of some of the core operations that could serve the area, such as a local origin tree nursery.

- Developing a multi-partner access plan to achieve a better balance between visitor access, protection of sensitive sites and farmland, and the health and wellbeing of local communities. By engaging multiple parties, the plan will also agree to measures to reduce pressures on the most sensitive sites, and tackle illegal and unwanted access.

The final stage would then be to apply for all the necessary funding for the next 20+ years to deliver the programme of work on the ground. Delivery could include:

- Create and manage Sherwood's habitats, with funding for 20+ years to manage them. This could apply to any Sherwood habitats including wood pasture, agro-forestry, new native woodland, hedgerows, heathland, acid grassland and riverine/floodplain habitats. Any part of a farm or landholding may be entered into the bid, it does not need to be a whole farm.
- Develop regenerative agriculture on your land, test new approaches, and see what might work for you, such as cover crops and herbal leys.
- Find other land-based solutions to help reach net zero for Carbon.
- Connect areas of habitats across the landscape, so that there is more wildlife within a thriving, productive and sustainable farmed landscape
- Deliver nature-based solutions, such as Natural Flood Management, Carbon sequestration and pollinator services with appropriate funding to recompense lost income for landowners.
- Bring back species that have been lost or are near extinction, such as water voles, silver studded blue butterfly, and bilberry, and expand populations of farmland, heathland and woodland birds and bats.
- Work together to establish a consistent way to secure private finance for habitat creation from Biodiversity Net Gain, Carbon offsetting and Phosphate offsetting/Nutrient Neutrality, that can be accessed by all landowners (private, public, NGO) who are interested.
- Provide a network of high quality habitats that links key protected nature conservation sites together, demonstrates how farming and wildlife can benefit each other, and creates a platform to complement the Sustainable Farming Incentive and Countryside Stewardship.
- Increase the positive engagement and awareness of local communities for their local Sherwood Forest landscape.

Next steps:

The closing date is the 21 September 2023 , but the bid preparation work is quite extensive, so if you are interested in exploring the potential for any part of your land (no matter how large or small) to be part of this bid, then we would like to hear from you. *There is no commitment at this stage*, all discussions are exploratory. Stepping stones and corridors of habitat, such as along rivers, which will link protected sites through the farmed landscape, as well as land adjacent to protected sites, will be particularly helpful to securing this chance to bid.

For more information and to explore potential options on your land and how they might benefit you and your farm business, please contact:

Janice Bradley, Head of Nature Recovery (North), Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust.

jbradley@nottswt.co.uk

07734 012 458

