



Staffordshire
Wildlife Trust

STAFFORDSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

Invitation to quote for the creation of a Natural
Heritage Audit



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Transforming the Trent Headwaters

Specification for producing a Natural Heritage Audit and Masterplan for the Trent Headwaters landscape.

Summary

This contract is for the production of a Natural Heritage Audit for the Trent Headwaters landscape. The focus will be on watercourses and associated habitats, exploring the current condition of natural heritage in the landscape and identifying opportunities that will lead to future restoration and enhancement projects.

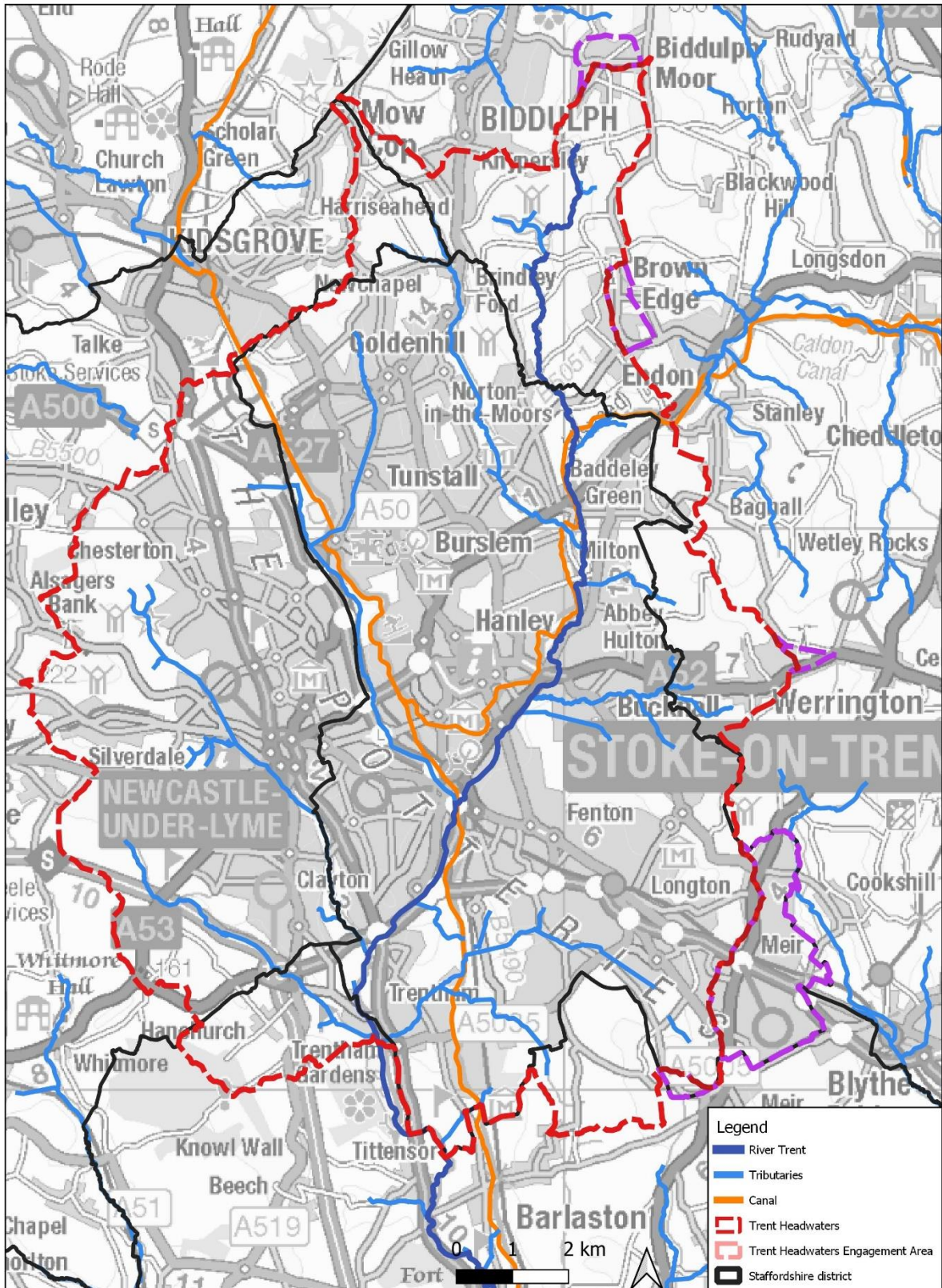
About the project

Transforming the Trent Headwaters is a partnership project headed by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) and funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund through a Resilience and Recovery grant. Our project will be delivered between 1st April 2024 and 30th September 2025. We are exploring opportunities to work with local partners, stakeholders and communities on projects that focus on our natural and cultural heritage, which will culminate in a package of research that we anticipate leading to a future funded landscape-scale scheme. This package of research includes the creation of natural and cultural heritage audits, which will proceed in tandem. Focussed on the headwaters of the River Trent, we are exploring what has come before and identifying where needs and opportunities for new projects exist.

The current focus area of our project is the headwaters of the River Trent encompassing Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and the surrounding areas between Biddulph and Trentham (see figure 1). Part of our work will be to refine this area through audits, research and community consultation and engagement.

The boundary, which is largely based on water body catchments, has been extended in some places with Engagement Areas. These cover communities that have been divided by the main headwaters boundary. In these locations we would only be looking to undertake engagement work and not any habitat restoration.

Trent Headwaters



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Figure 1. Transforming the Trent Headwaters current landscape area

Specification

Natural Heritage Audit

The contract involves the creation of a Natural Heritage Audit focussed on watercourses in the project area as well as the natural habitats associated with these watercourses. The predominant watercourse is the River Trent, however there are a number of tributaries that form the headwaters.

The contract includes a desktop study as well as walk over studies and liaising with project partners. A mapping exercise has already been undertaken that identifies key information including previous, ongoing projects and potential projects, priorities for the project area and species and habitat data, however this will not be exhaustive.

This is a partnership project and part of our work outside this brief includes building that partnership and connecting with community groups and stakeholders. There is a wealth of information that is being gathered and therefore an important part of this contract will be collating this information where it is relevant to the audit. Part of this process will involve collaboratively feeding into our in-depth community consultation activities (still to be established, but likely through the provision of maps, information, priorities and professional feedback), delivered concurrently with this contract by others, whilst also taking on board the ideas, concerns and feedback from this consultation.

A detailed report that brings together maps, information and recommendations should be written with a summary of the key elements at the start. This will be made available to our partners and will be publicly available. Recommendations should explore project ideas proposed by partners and communities, as well as any opportunities identified through the audit, and should consider projects and interventions that operate at a site level and a catchment level. These projects may be community focussed (for example, opportunities for citizen science activities or community-led projects) and volunteer focussed (opportunities for voluntary groups to undertake activities, particularly ongoing work) as well as habitat creation or watercourse restoration and enhancement. Some projects may be small in scale whilst others should be ambitious in their size and reach.

Masterplan

Alongside the Natural Heritage Audit, a Cultural Heritage Audit is also being written, by others. With the in-depth community consultation and our partner engagement, there will be detailed information and research about the headwaters, focussed on the natural and cultural heritage.

We will combine the research into a Masterplan for the Trent Headwaters, led by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, with the natural heritage at the forefront of our proposals, and we look to our natural heritage consultant to assist with this process. All natural heritage proposals should consider the cultural heritage of the landscape as well as the requirements of its communities. This aligns with Natural England's ['Nature recovery and the historic environment'](#) publication.

The masterplan should be forward-thinking and set out a vision with project ideas that interconnect and contribute to that vision to be delivered over the next 10 to 30 years. The masterplan should identify the priorities and key opportunities for the next three, five and 10 years. The aim is to use the audit and masterplan to secure funding to deliver those projects.

The priority projects need to be scoped with clear aims, requirements and an outline budget. These should be identified and scoped in partnership with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and Staffordshire Ecological Record, and should consider all three local authority areas within the Trent Headwaters landscape.

Project steer

The project will have a steering group comprising representatives from Staffordshire County Council (SCC), Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Environment Agency, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and other partners involved in the scheme. Day-to-day liaison on all matters will be Victoria Edwards (Senior Ecological Data Officer), who will also feed in information from the wider project, communities and stakeholders.

The successful tenderer should look to update the project steering group by email as to project progress and through attendance at steering group meetings (online) as appropriate. The project steering group will oversee the project and it is anticipated that five meetings will be required, the first for project initiation, three with the project steering group and one for the masterplan. Costs for attendance at meetings should be considered in the cost breakdown.

Scope of the brief

Desk study

This will include the following:

- Review the maps and report created as the first stage of this piece of work by Staffordshire Ecological Records (SER).
- Research and review other material that will contribute to the audit.
- Review material provided by the partnership relating to consultation work undertaken to date and attend some community consultation events.
- Online and occasional face-to-face meetings with key stakeholders including project team, project partners and external stakeholders. This may include attendance at community engagement events.
- Review and refine opportunities, needs and priorities. Identify locations or projects that are already being undertaken by others.
- Work collaboratively with SER on compiling and interpreting the data, focussing on watercourses while SER will focus on terrestrial habitats.

Walk over study

Not all watercourses and habitats will need to be visited; it is important that a walk over study is undertaken of sites that are missing key information or are identified as priorities or opportunities.



Natural Heritage Audit

- This should provide a detailed overview of watercourses and the associated habitats in the focus area. It may also lead to refinements of the focus area and any recommendations must be clearly expressed.
- An audit of potential project sites should be produced with a summary of each site, potential measures to be taken, partners identified, approximate costs and an approximate timeline.
- The report will be written collaboratively with SER; the consultant will lead on the collation of information, interpretation and design for riparian habitats and SER will lead on terrestrial habitats. SER will then combine the two elements.
- A short summary of findings and recommendations should be given at the start of the report.
- Contribute to production of an attractive and public-friendly editable pdf version document summarising the key natural heritage attributes of the study area and its significance, and outline projects for future development focusing on riparian habitats.

A Natural Heritage Audit was written for a previous scheme on the lower reaches of the River Trent in 2017 and can be used for reference when considering this contract.

Masterplan

- Work collaboratively with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to compile a Masterplan for the Trent Headwaters combining all research with natural heritage at the forefront.
- This should outline a 10-year and 30-year vision for the landscape focusing on the riparian element, while SER will lead on the terrestrial element.
- Projects that will contribute to achieving the vision should be specified.
- Projects that contribute to the 10-year vision need to be set out with detail that will help us to develop the projects as a next step. This should include the scale of the project, the scope of works, partnership requirements, landownership and an outline budget for delivery. Where possible, the project should also be given a priority to help us allocate funding accordingly.
- Where possible, projects should give consideration to the historic landscape as well as communities and accessibility.
- The report will be written collaboratively with SER. A public friendly PDF document will also be produced. In both cases the consultant will lead on the riparian element and SER will lead on terrestrial habitats. SER will then combine the two elements.

Access to data

A free, perpetual, non-exclusive licence to use all data will be made for all project partners for any purpose which the partners see fit.

Timeline

This contract will be delivered by a consultant working collaboratively with Staffordshire Ecological Records and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. We expect the contract to be delivered in early 2025 with the indicative timings below:

- Desk study and research: January 2025
- Walkover surveys and research: February 2025
- Site work proposals, detailed spatial design and stakeholder engagement: March 2025
- Production of Natural Heritage Audit report and public-friendly document: April 2025
- Input into the Masterplan: May 2025

Project budget

The maximum budget available for this work is **£14,400** inclusive of VAT.

It is essential that your quotation does not exceed the total budget available. All costs must be shown with the VAT detailed. The successful consultant will be required to submit detailed invoices clearly stating the line of expenditure with the net, VAT and gross costs.

Quotations

Quotations will be assessed based on their demonstrable value for money using the criteria below to evaluate the most economically advantageous quotation. Quotations exceeding the budget will not be considered.

The score for the total cost will be generated as a percentage of the lowest quotation cost using the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total cost of lowest quotation}}{\text{Total cost of quotation}} \times \text{Percentage weighting}$$

Eligible quotations must include the following information:

Criteria	Details	Weighting
Breakdown of costs	Details on how the budget will be used against the requirements of the specification, including a spend forecast.	20%
Previous experience	Demonstrate your ability to evaluate watercourse condition and determine key priorities for restoration at a landscape scale factoring in evidence from a range of sources. Demonstrate your knowledge of the local area in question Demonstrate your ability to develop detailed project proposals for watercourse restoration that address key priorities.	35%
Methodology and conformity with specifications	Details on how you will meet the requirements of the specification, using examples from previous experience.	35%
Added value and additional offer	Please detail suggestions for added value that you can offer to the scheme or additional information or proposals that exceed the specification and scope of the brief.	10%

Timetable

Your quotation for the above works, along with any accompanying information or evidence, should be emailed to **Victoria Edwards by 10am on Monday 4th November 2024.**

Only quotations submitted in accordance with the details given within this document will be considered. Any quotations that are incomplete, or received after the time indicated may be disregarded.

If you have any queries relating to this specification prior to submitting your quotation, please email Victoria Edwards clearly stating the nature of your query.

If you do not wish to provide a quotation for this specification please let us know.

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Quotation submission deadline	10am on Monday 4th November 2024
Contract awarded	w/c 11 th November 2024
Project initiation meeting	TBC – November or December 2024
End of contract	31st May 2025