


**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL
OFFICER DECISION NOTICE AND RECORD
(PUBLISHED)**

1. DECISION TAKEN

To appoint a provider who will supply and plant the trees for the Northern Forest project and provide associated activities including tree aftercare, recruitment of volunteers and community involvement.

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|---|---|----------------------|--|-----------------------------|------|
| EXECUTIVE | ✓ | NON-EXECUTIVE | | (Please tick either) | |
| IS THIS A 'KEY DECISION' ? (see definition overleaf) | | | | Yes | No ✓ |
| DOES THIS DECISION RELATE TO EXEMPT INFORMATION? | | | | Yes | No ✓ |
| EXEMPT PARAGRAPH REFERENCE (NOT TO BE PUBLISHED) | | | | | |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| 2. OFFICER DECISION TAKER | NAME | Helen Manderson |
| | POSITION/POST | Director of Business Development |
| | SIGNATURE | ...  |
| | DATE | 05/11/2020 |

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| 3. REASONS FOR THE DECISION (Please ref to any report/minute/background documents attached) | A voluntary sector partner would lead and coordinate all tree ordering, volunteer recruitment, tree planting, aftercare and the coordination and leadership of volunteers and community groups for the Northern Forest work on North Lincolnshire. This option would have the advantage of minimising demands on already-committed Council staff. This model already operates in Hull and East Riding, demonstrating that there is at least one voluntary sector organisation with the capability to deliver such projects within the limits of Northern Forest funding and a proven track record of doing so. |
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| 4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED (BY DECISION TAKER(S)) | Option 1 – Do not procure and the Council will provide the service. Option 2 – Procure the planting and after care service and the Council will purchase the trees. |
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TO BE COMPLETED BELOW - ONLY WHEN A DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION REQUIRES PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH A MEMBER (LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CABINET MEMBER/CHAIRMAN OF A COMMITTEE) IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE 'SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS TO OFFICERS' OR DECISION/MINUTE OF COUNCIL/COMMITTEE OR DECISION/MINUTE OF CABINET/CABINET MEMBER.

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| 5. DECISION REQUIRED TO BE TAKEN IN | COUNCILLOR |
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|---|---|
| CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBER | POSITION SIGNATURE DATE |
| 6. ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARED BY ANY EXECUTIVE (CABINET) MEMBER (S) CONSULTED, WHICH RELATES TO THE DECISION, OR (NON-EXECUTIVE) – ANY MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE THAT DELEGATED THE DECISION TAKEN | |
| 7. WITH REFERENCE TO 6. ABOVE - HAS ANY DISPENSATION BEEN GRANTED TO THE EXECUTIVE (CABINET) MEMBER? (ONLY APPLIES TO EXECUTIVE) | |

PLEASE REMEMBER TO ATTACH ANY ACCOMPANYING REPORT.

WHEN COMPLETE, PLEASE SEND TO SERVICE MANAGER: DEMOCRACY FOR PUBLISHING.

(The definitions of a key decision are when an executive decision is likely -

(i) to result in the Council incurring expenditure or the making of savings (including the receipt or loss of income) over £350,000 in any one financial year; or

(ii) to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the local authority).

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

Director of Business Development

PROCUREMENT OF THE NORTHERN FOREST VOLUNTEER TREE PLANTING SCHEME

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

1.1 The Council has allocated a capital budget to procure a tree planting and aftercare scheme including recruitment of volunteers and community involvement.

1.2A procurement is proposed to appoint a provider who will supply and plant the trees and provide associated activities.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 The Northern Forest is the government's 25-year vision to plant 50 million trees across the North of England, stretching from Liverpool to Hull. This is set out in the 25-year Environment Plan:

- £5.7 million of government funding;
- Delivered through the Community Forests in urban areas and the Woodland Trust in rural areas;
- Involving landowners, farmers, the community and key forestry stakeholders;
- Balancing the various environmental, social and economic benefits of forestry, including for agroforestry and bio-energy production purposes.

2.2 The local Community Forest is HEYwoods. Their primary focus is on Hull and East Yorkshire, but North Lincolnshire is in their "halo" area. HEYwoods staff have offered their time to support the Council in working up tree planting projects and selecting the best funding option for each landowner, group or site, either from Defra or from a number of other options. In urban areas, Defra funding provides £7 per tree, covering:

- The tree and shelter.
- Planting labour.

- 2 years' aftercare.
- 2.3 North Lincolnshire Council has budgeted to spend £100,000 capital funding on the Northern Forest in 2020/21, matched by £667,000 from Defra and other sources. Members have set a target of 110,000 trees to be planted in this period.
- 2.4 Experience gained through the National Forest, Northern Forest and Council projects has demonstrated the value of involving local people in tree planting projects. This promotes healthy exercise, contact with nature, mental well-being, a sense of community pride, "ownership" of the woodland and a reduced likelihood of vandalism and tree removal. This approach also reflects the Council's Social Value Charter.
- 2.6 An OJEU procurement using the open procedure is being recommended to tender for a framework arrangement with a single Provider. The length of the framework proposed is 4 years. The framework arrangement will ensure that the Council can call off the framework whenever it requires tree planting and the associated aftercare services from the selected provider..

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Option 1 – Do not procure and the Council will provide the service.
- 3.2 Option 2 – Procure the planting and after care service and the Council will purchase the trees.
- 3.3 Option 3 – Procure a contract that will provide all the requirements.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 Option 1 – The Council has a limited number of staff with experience in delivering conservation volunteer projects, but their time is already fully committed to natural environment policy, planning and the management of existing Local Nature Reserves and greenspaces. Furthermore, a review of the Council's provision of depots has revealed that there may not be sufficient space available to "heel-in" trees in sufficient numbers for the proposed projects.
- 4.2 Option 2 – This option would have the advantage that Council staff would not be required to cease current work programmes to lead voluntary activities. However, there would still be a significant demand on staff time in ordering trees, taking delivery, "heeling them in" and sending them out to volunteer groups. As with Option 1, there may not be sufficient space

available to “heel-in” trees in sufficient numbers for the proposed projects.

- 4.3 Option 3 – This is the preferred option, a voluntary sector partner would lead and coordinate all tree ordering, “healing-in” delivered trees, volunteer recruitment, tree planting, aftercare and the coordination and leadership of volunteers and community groups for the Northern Forest work on North Lincolnshire.

They would work closely with HEYWOODS and the Council to achieve this. This option would have the advantage of minimising demands on already-committed Council staff. This model already operates in Hull and East Riding, demonstrating that there is at least one voluntary sector organisation with the capability to deliver such projects within the limits of Northern Forest funding and a proven track record of doing so.

- 4.4 The procurement route for option 3 is through the OJEU process using the open procedure. This process will meet the requirements of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and although it is envisaged there are only a small number of suppliers in this market the exercise will ensure that value for money is tested.

5. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)

- 5.1 The estimated financial spend for 2020/21 is £660,000 to £770,000 to plant and maintain 110,000 trees with volunteers, based on the Defra estimate of £6-7 per tree. Over 4 years, this spend will increase in proportion to the tree planting targets set by Cabinet. The Council will contribute a maximum of £100,000 per annum and the additional funding will be sought from Defra and other external sources. The Council contribution is confirmed in this year’s budget and Cabinet have expressed their intent to continue in future years.

6. OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)

- 6.1 It will make a significant contribution towards the Government’s Northern Forest vision, set out in the 25-year Environment Plan.
- 6.2 It also provides formal and informal volunteer and training opportunities helping to instil community pride and to embed woodland management skills in the local community. Working with volunteers brings significant leverage, allowing the secured funds to give much greater results than would otherwise be the case. Funding bodies such as the National Lottery value volunteer effort at at least £50 per volunteer per day. Research carried out by TCV has shown that every £1 invested in

conservation volunteering is worth up to £4 to the local economy and environment.

7. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

7.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment recorded largely positive impacts.

For example:

Volunteering tends to enhance health and wellbeing, social inclusion and acquisition of skills.

Increasing woodland cover will increase the provision of ecosystem services such as the interception of rainwater.

Absorption of air pollution.

Capture and storage of carbon; regulation of temperature.

Contact with nature and improved physical and mental health and wellbeing.

7.2 Negative impacts can be avoided through targeting tree planting away from underground services, residential boundaries, existing priority habitats and historic environment assets.

8. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

8.1 Extensive internal consultation has taken place.

8.3 Through the Local Plan Preferred Options consultation, the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), Environment Agency, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, Severn Trent Water, Town and Parish Councils and several individuals all expressed support for significant tree planting in North Lincolnshire.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That the contents of the report are noted and that procurement commences as outlined in the preferred option.

DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Church Square House
SCUNTHORPE
North Lincolnshire

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Date: 06 October 2020

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report –