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Northumberland Wildlife Trust

People taking action for wildlife



Invitation to Tender – Catch My Drift Project

Masterplan creation for East Chevington Nature Reserve



1) Introduction

Northumberland Wildlife Trust is inviting tenders for the creation of a site masterplan including full ecological survey for our East Chevington Nature Reserve, in Druridge Bay, Northumberland.

The Catch My Drift project has secured funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to undertake the necessary surveys, consultations and investigations to develop detailed plans and proposals to improve East Chevington Nature Reserve for biodiversity and people. The information gathered from the development phase of the project will be used to support a second round application to HLF to secure the funding needed to deliver all of the identified works.

It is important that all aspects of the bid are developed in close consultation with the local community so that the outcomes are fully supported.

2) Project background

The Catch My Drift Project will deliver biodiversity and access improvements at our East Chevington Nature Reserve in Druridge Bay. Our wider vision is to make Druridge Bay the best year round wildlife-watching destination in the North East. The project will contribute to the creation of a landscape that comprises a mosaic of connected and healthy habitats, rich in biodiversity and able to adapt to future natural and manmade changes; and one that is well used by and delivering benefits to local people and visitors.

Our East Chevington Nature Reserve is 185 hectares in size. Its natural heritage is, like many other sites across the Bay, the result of past industrial land use. The site was the location of the East Chevington Drift Mine from 1882 -1962 and then the East Chevington Opencast Coal Site from 1982-1994. The nature reserve was established from the restoration works to the opencast and was passed to NWT in 2003.

The site contains a variety of habitats including lakes, ponds, reedbeds, woodland, grassland, pasture and arable farmland. Many of these are priority habitats within the Northumberland Biodiversity Action Plan and provide homes to nationally significant species such as marsh harrier and bittern and other important species including otters, red squirrels, great crested newt, lapwing and curlew. Whilst the site itself is not included within any of the formal national and international wildlife designations along the Druridge Bay coastline it is of great importance to the mobile species that live within the Bay. Particularly the bird life, which use it as a high-tide roost. Different species use the site at different times of the year for a variety of reasons; breeding, feeding, over-wintering and as a rest stop on a migration route.



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Our East Chevington Nature Reserve, whilst already home to a variety of habitats and species, is not the best it can be for the conservation of natural heritage or people's enjoyment of it. There are large areas of improved grassland and plantation woodland. Arable land on the site is managed through tenancies. Visitor access to the site is poor, with the remnants of former coal mining roads the only main passageways. Interpretation for site access, wildlife and its history are scarce.

3) Description of work required

Consultants are required to work with the Catch My Drift project team on a masterplan for the site. This should include proposals for habitat creation, habitat restoration, improved habitat management, proposals for access routes (including disabled access) and locations for interpretation. The site will also require a full ecological survey to establish a baseline. This is required so that improvements can be measured as capital works take place. Appropriate tests should be carried out for specific proposals, e.g. soil analysis for wildflower meadow creation.

The final report should provide recommendations with detailed costings for their implementation as well as indicative annual management costs. All ecological data from surveys should be sent to the Environmental Records Information Centre North East (ERIC NE).

4) Consultation & Research

We would expect the following organisations to be consulted when carrying out the study:

- Tenant farmers who manage arable land within the site
- Flexgraze who undertakes grazing on NWT land
- Natural England
- Northumberland County Council - Ecologists
- Northumberland County Council - Countryside and Green Spaces Manager (responsible for neighbouring Druridge Bay Country Park)
- ERIC NE - to determine agreed format for ecological data submission
- Consultants who are carrying out the site hydrological study contract
- Architect who is carrying out the hide design contract
- Project team – explore and agree habitat changes; agree and implement volunteer programme; regular updates; attend a meeting with HLF Grants Officer if required

A fundamental part of the Catch My Drift project is community consultation so that we create a nature reserve that people feel a sense of ownership of and are proud to share with visitors to the area. A project assistant will be employed by NWT for the duration of the development phase. Their principal role will be to carry out public engagement on all aspects of the project, through both informal on site liaison and structured events and activities. They will coordinate the gathering of information from site users. Contractors will be required to attend formal engagement events to understand the local community's perceptions of the current management of the site and aspirations for future development to help guide this contract.

Volunteers play a significant role within our organisation as they increase our delivery capacity and Catch My Drift presents an excellent opportunity to provide training through involvement in ecological survey. The appointed consultant will work with the project assistant to organise events and activities for volunteers to learn new skills.

5) Tender format and content

Tender submissions must include the following:

Methodology and timescale	proposed method and programme of work
Key sources	key sources and contacts to be used in undertaking the work
Presentation	how findings and recommendations will be presented and proposed format of outputs
Proposed team	details and relevant experience of the team who will be involved in delivering the contract including the number of days and daily rates of staff.
Budget	a breakdown of costs to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total cost for professional services excluding VAT - Total number of days required to undertake the work and each section of the work - total number of days input and relevant day/hourly rate for each team member - estimated costs allowed for travel and, separately, accommodation and other subsistence, if relevant - total cost for all work and expenses, excluding VAT
Milestones	based on the overall timescale for the contract (as identified in section 6) a timetable of key milestones in delivery of the contract including how volunteers will be engaged.
Relevant Experience	links to/details of past work within this sector and within the scope of this work



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The Contractor must:

- Have proven experience in ecological survey and design of nature reserves
- Have a demonstrable experience of working in rural areas and engaging rural communities
- Be able to draw together a delivery team for this project to ensure all the skills required are available
- Provide a minimum of £1 million public liability insurance cover for their activities

The contractor should comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act and subsequent additions and amendments. All fieldwork must be carried out under an agreed Health and Safety Policy. A risk assessment should be carried out prior to the commencement of work and the project should have a nominated Safety Officer.

6) Budget and Timetable

A budget of £13,000 (not including VAT) has been allocated to this study and tenders will be evaluated based on technical expertise and value for money.

The tender will be open until 12:00 on 28th February 2019. Consultancies will be notified of the decision of the panel by 13th March. An initial meeting with the successful consultancy will be called within 2 weeks of notification. Final reports and other deliverables will be submitted to the nominated officer in the required formats by 9th January 2020.

The nominated officer for the project is Elaine More, Druridge Bay Development Manager. All enquiries about this brief should be sent to Elaine at elaine.more@northwt.org.uk or 0191 2846884.



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