

Brief for consultants for Production of an invasive non native species control plan for reach 10 river Blythe SSSI, and for the Cuttle Brook from the Temple Balsall Nature Reserve to the river Blythe confluence.

This brief has been written by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, which is undertaking work on behalf of Environment Agency and Natural England. The work is part of the implementation of the River Restoration Plan for river Blythe SSSI, produced in 2017 by JBA consulting.

The brief covers a specific reach of river Blythe SSSI, reach 10 and part of Cuttle Brook. A map is appended to show the relevant reach.

1. Introduction:

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust requests fixed cost quotations from suitable consultants for the production of an Invasive non native species control plan.

2. Background:

Natural England and Environment Agency have been working to address failure of the river Blythe SSSI. They commissioned a River Restoration Plan in 2017, and following significant input from Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WWT), commissioned an Implementation Plan, Communication and Monitoring Plans from WWT to progress the plans into action.

One of the key themes for the River Restoration Plan is control of invasive non native species: 'Eradicate non-native invasive riverside plants and undertake a programme of removing them whenever they re-occur'.

The River Blythe is a lowland river in Warwickshire rising principally at Spring Brook, near Earlswood Lakes, and flowing in a predominantly northerly direction before discharging into the River Tame north-east of Coleshill. The River Blythe is an exceptional and rare example of one of Britain's semi-natural lowland rivers on clay, supporting a diverse range of flora and fauna. In recognition of its ecological and morphological value, the river has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The variability and progression of hydromorphological features and diverse bed substrates found in the Blythe, are amongst the reasons for its designation, along with the diverse plant communities. The River Blythe SSSI is currently in an 'unfavourable no change' condition, due to physical habitat modification, namely weirs, dams and other flow obstructions, and invasive non-native species. (River Restoration Plan, JBA 2017)

3. Work required:

To write an invasive non native species control plan for reach 10 river Blythe SSSI and for the Cuttle Brook from the Temple Balsall Nature Reserve to the river Blythe confluence.

The plan should be clear and concise, identifying priority species and associated control actions to be taken, with control timeframe per species.

The control plan's purpose is to set an action plan to be followed to manage and control existing invasive non native species present in the reach and brook, to identify potential future threats to be monitored, and thereby to improve the condition and the biodiversity value of the river Blythe.

Aims / Scope of the work:

Specifically the plan should:

Provide a strategic and practicable approach towards INNS prevention, control and management in reach 10 of river Blythe SSSI and the identified part of Cuttle Brook, prioritising species and identifying effective actions to implement over the next 5-10 years, and beyond if deemed necessary.

Use and reference accurate and current information on INNS prevention, control and management.

Reference the importance of INNS prevention, control and management to all users of the reach, including the biosecurity measures required to be implemented.

Objectives / Purpose:

- ❖ Develop an action plan to address the species of most urgent concern.
- ❖ State the relevant control and eradication methods for high priority species.
- ❖ State any specialised skills required for stated methods, and associated training requirements.
- ❖ State the risks and impacts associated with the high priority invasive species.
- ❖ Work with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England and Environment Agency to assess data and implications on the distribution and spread of invasive non native species in river Blythe, reach 10 initially, and Cuttle Brook section. Use a framework that can be used in further reaches of river Blythe for INNS control plans.
- ❖ Identify existing invasive non native species, and in addition INNS species which are likely to arrive in the reach in next 3-5 years and for which monitoring should be undertaken.
- ❖ Outline proposals for communication of the INNS plan, and key sectors and stakeholders to involve including farmers, landowners, riparian land owners/users, angling clubs. Other key groups to be identified.
- ❖ State outline costings of the identified priority actions.
- ❖ State the review period for the plan.

Species included in the plan should be divided into the following categories, or these categories adapted to make this a practicable piece of work and fit for purpose:

- Species not currently present but present nearby, or of concern because of the high risk of negative impacts should they arrive.
- Species of high impact or concern present at specific sites along the reach that require attention (control, management, eradication etc.).
- Species of high impact or concern which are widespread on river Blythe SSSI and require concerted, coordinated and extensive action to control/eradicate.
- Species which are widespread for which eradication is not feasible but where avoiding spread to other sites may be required.
- Species for which insufficient data or evidence is available in 2019 to be able to prioritise.
- Species that were not currently considered to pose a threat or have the potential to cause problems in river Blythe.

You will need to state in the plan:

Timeframe and Priority: Timeframes and priorities of the identified actions, stating the basis of the assessments per species (see keys below):

Priority Key

High; Medium; Low

Timeframe:

Ongoing (over 10 years); Long term (5-10 years); Medium term (3-5 years); Short term (1-2 years)

4. Time frame of work:

Deadline for Quotations to be returned: 4th February 2019

Planned inception meeting: 8th February 2019

Please return quotation to: gina.rowe@wkwat.org.uk

Contact for any queries: Gina Rowe 024 7630 2912

Draft plan to be returned by: **8th March 2019**

Comments from WWT and partners by: **13th March 2019**

Final version of Plan to be completed by: **22nd March 2019**

5. Resources:

There is a maximum of £5,200 including VAT available for this piece of work.

The successful consultant will have access to the River Restoration Plan, walkover survey results and photographs, and contact with staff involved in walkovers.

Consultants quoting for this work must demonstrate their knowledge of invasive species management and control, and experience of writing INNS control plans or equivalent.

Quotations should include a sample of an equivalent report, or a link to a report accessible on line.

6. Project Details:

Project Lead: Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

Delivery Partners: Appointed Consultants

Location: Reach 10, river Blythe SSSI and Cuttle brook, from Temple Balsall Nature Reserve to the confluence with river Blythe.

Audience: Stakeholders that should be consulted/involved:

Environment Agency, Natural England, local farmers and landowners, local organisations, NFU, Severn Trent, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Warwickshire County Council, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust,

7. Skills Required: The Consultant would benefit from having the following skills and experience:

- Understanding of the control techniques, opportunities and threats related to invasive non native species;

- Working with partnerships and consultation with local organisations;
- Consulting a range of stakeholders including public, private and third sectors;
- Strategic planning for control of INNS at landscape scale, working in the wider context of landscape-scale conservation and connectivity;
- Strong report writing and communication skills;
- Knowledge of the river Blythe SSSI;
- Mapping and use of GIS layers;
- Production of INNS control plan for large sites or wider areas.

8. Response to this Brief:

A quotation document is required in response to this Brief, outlining:

1. How you will deliver the required elements outlined above, including meeting the timeframe and how you will allow for contingencies re delays/sickness etc;
2. A fixed cost quote for the work stating any VAT element;
3. Details of your team's skills, expertise and experience relevant to the tasks outlined;
4. An example of previous relevant work.
5. An outline list of the INNS species anticipated to be included

The contract will include all preparation time, research, consultation with staff and key stakeholders including partner organisations and other audiences where relevant, travel, report writing, and VAT.

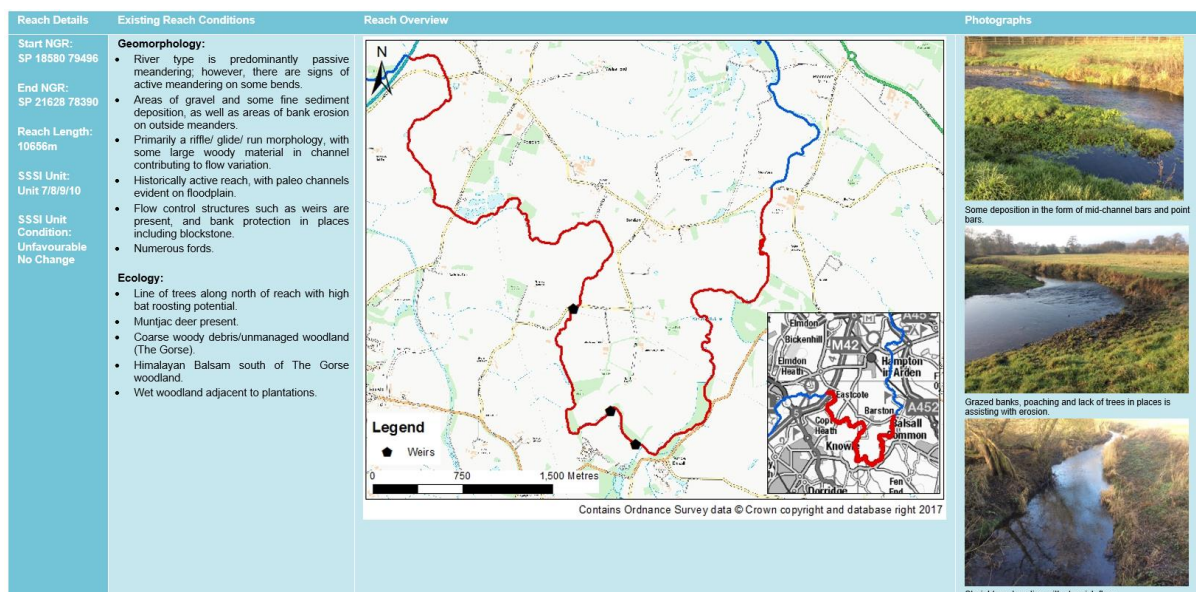
9. Assessment of quotations:

All quotations that demonstrate they can fulfil the brief will be scored on the description of how work will be undertaken, availability and contingency planning, costing, and quality of example report.

The quotations will be assessed by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust staff: Living Landscapes Manager and Wetlands Project Officer, with input from Natural England and Environment Agency staff.

10. Overview Map of reach 10.

Note that the INNS plan needs to also include the section of Cuttle brook through Temple Balsall Nature reserve to the confluence with river Blythe. Cuttle brook is on the southernmost part of the long meander in the river Blythe.



Background to project:

Extract from London LISIS

'Why address Invasive Non-Native Species?

As information and the rationale for managing invasive non-native species are well documented both nationally and globally only a brief synopsis has been provided within this plan.

To provide continuity between the relevant key stakeholders the following definitions have been adapted from both the Defra and the Great Britain Non-Native Species Secretariat (GBNNSS) definitions.

Non-native species are virtually any species (terrestrial, freshwater) that did not naturally occur within the United Kingdom before people first arrived. An invasive non-native species has been defined as any non-native species that causes, or is thought may cause, serious negative impact on our native species and habitats, our health or our economy. It is important to make the definition between non-native and invasive as there are many non-native species that are not invasive and do not pose a threat. Similarly, it is important to note that a native species to one country, such as Great Britain, can become invasive if introduced to an area outside its natural range.

Over time, plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms have become increasingly mobile throughout the world. This has brought species into ecosystems that have developed without them and, under some circumstances, the conditions that limit their growth in their natural system (such as nutrients, moisture, pests and diseases) are not present in the new systems to which they have been introduced. This allows a unique subset of species a chance to grow and reproduce unchecked. The invaded ecosystem is unable to cope with this newly arrived species and this is when INNS become a major issue and management is needed. Invasive species can also be a threat to human health, agriculture and industry. Furthermore, many INNS can out-compete and significantly reduce crop yields through either direct competition or predation.

Species not covered by this plan: It is important to note that this plan solely focuses on 'invasive' non-native species, as there is a very important distinction between 'invasives' and simply non-natives. Similarly, this plan does not cover native species that behave in an invasive manner as their management is a specific issue for individual sites rather than as part of a management programme.'

(extract from London LISIS)