

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

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Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

Invite to tender for Feasibility Study – River Cole

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) has been awarded National Highways funding via The Wildlife Trusts' Network for Nature programme to develop a feasibility study of project sites along the river Cole.

WWT's aspiration is to develop a regionally important, landscape-scale area rich in wildlife, from Solihull to Coleshill and the river Blythe, with enhanced connectivity for biodiversity along 12 km of river. The project will produce a full feasibility and costed detailed design work in preparation for application for capital delivery grants. Ultimately the river, which has been previously dredged and channelised, will be reconnected to its flood plain.

This is a tender briefing for a feasibility study along a 12km section of the river Cole, noted further in this document, to propose enhancements and restoration of the river and associated habitats, including areas not directly attached to the floodplain or river itself.

Tenders are invited which meet the following brief.

Project Description & Purpose:

The project will undertake a feasibility study along 12 km of the river Cole, to develop projects for river restoration/renaturalisation, which will include opportunities to reconnect to the floodplain and wider habitat enhancement. This will help to progress the aspirations of the Cole Valley Landscape Vision 2019 report : <http://www.tamevalleywetlands.co.uk/cole-valley-catchment-landscape-vision-reports/>, which is supported by the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Nature Partnership.

The area for study starts where the river Cole runs under Cooks Lane in North Solihull and ends at the confluence with the river Blythe. Feasibility work will develop a series of options for delivering multiple benefits along this length of the river to include potential in-channel works but also benefitting the wider landscape. Tributaries will not be considered in the scope of this study. The report should identify any constraints that will need to be considered as part of the proposed enhancements.

The feasibility report will feed into the wider aim of both improving community connection with the river Cole, improving the WFD status of the river and restoring the SSSI, Coleshill and Bannerley Pools.

The river Cole is situated within a significant area of green infrastructure between East Birmingham, North Solihull and North Warwickshire. The area contains major transport infrastructure with the existing motorway network and future HS2 route passing through the river valley. The Cole Valley also forms part of the Tame Valley Wetlands Nature Improvement Area (NIA) designated in 2017, and the Birmingham and Black Country NIA designated in 2012.

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Beth Nicholson

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The ultimate project aims to deliver a landscape-scale nature area with the creation or enhancement of a mosaic of semi-natural habitats along the river Cole in North Warwickshire. The proposed project area joins Cole Bank Park Local Nature Reserve in Solihull with Cole End Park Local Nature Reserve in Coleshill, and the river Cole/river Blythe confluence. The river Cole is a blue corridor connecting sites including several Local Wildlife Sites.

Project Outputs	
1.	1 Feasibility study of the Cole Valley landscape area
2.	Detailed designs and costings for enhancements across each zone
3.	Flood modelling of designs
4.	Production of FRAP
Project Outcomes	
1.	Clear action plan for improved connectivity of habitats along the river Cole valley
2.	Schemes ready for delivery to enhance habitats
3.	Increased stakeholder awareness and ownership of proposed projects

Table - National Highways funding via the Network for Nature – Project outputs and outcomes

Methodology:

The overall project between the successful consultant/contractor and WWT will take place in a staged manner. At each phase of the feasibility study, discussions will take place to agree the next steps ensuring each zone is recognized alongside the key sites noted below and, where possible, additional sites are added.

As discussed, this study is funded via the National Highways funding via The Wildlife Trusts’ Network for Nature programme and therefore has a set budget in the region of £75,000 to £85,000.

Initial discussions have begun with some of the stakeholders in the project area and the length of the river has been spilt into zones. A number of key sites have also been identified through previous work. Detailed project designs across the zones will be developed as part of this feasibility study.

The key sites are:

1. Cole End Park
2. Coleshill and Bannerley Pools SSSI
3. Cole Bank Park

A review of existing data has not been completed. The data will be available as part of this study and it is expected that a review is included at the initial phase of developing the feasibility study program by the consultant/contractor.

The route of HS2 runs through the study area and includes an area of realignment of the river Cole. As part of this study it is expected that the plans and landscapes designs for the HS2 area will be considered and appropriate integrations put in place for once HS2 is completed. This will include consideration of sustainable travel options.

Working with the chosen consultant/contractor, the feasibility study will consider potential ecological and hydromorphological opportunities in relation to the 12km section of the river Cole and associated landscape. This includes, but is not limited to, the following opportunities:

- Potential for in-channel works
- Restoration or creation of wetland habitats adjacent to the river Cole
- Restoration or creation of other habitats in the wider landscape around the river Cole such as wet woodland, etc
- Creation of additional riparian areas where flooding is acceptable, to reconnect the river with its floodplain

- Control and management of invasive non-native species (INNS), in particular Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed, and re-establish native species on areas affected by INNS.
 - Creation of mapped areas of INNS

The feasibility work will look to include:

- Desk top study of existing data
- Opportunity mapping of appropriate sites where enhancement/restoration opportunities exist. This will include walkover surveys and production of ARCGIS layers where appropriate
- **Detailed designs of options within each zone including each key site (options can be discussed during review phases with WWT)**
 - **To include design drawings/schematics and cost estimates for proposed works**
- **Stakeholder engagement: as part of this study engagement of the local community, landowners and other stakeholders is required**
- Identification of potential funding sources if proposed works are taken forward, such as Biodiversity Net Gain
- Flood risk modelling for proposed enhancements/changes
- Recognition of areas where noise may disturb people
- Desk top study of any further ecological surveys required prior to site work (e.g. otter, water vole, Phase II, flora and other key species, including birds, bats). Consideration for National and Local Biodiversity Action Plan Priority habitats and species
- Works and timings to consider bird, fish and other relevant breeding seasons
- Any other beneficial ecological recommendations to the site including LBAP species etc.

Estimated Timescales:

- Initial meetings with successful contractor – w/c 21st August
- Consultation with stakeholders – by w/c 2nd October
- Review point with WWT – w/c 4th December
- Draft reports received by – 10th May 2024

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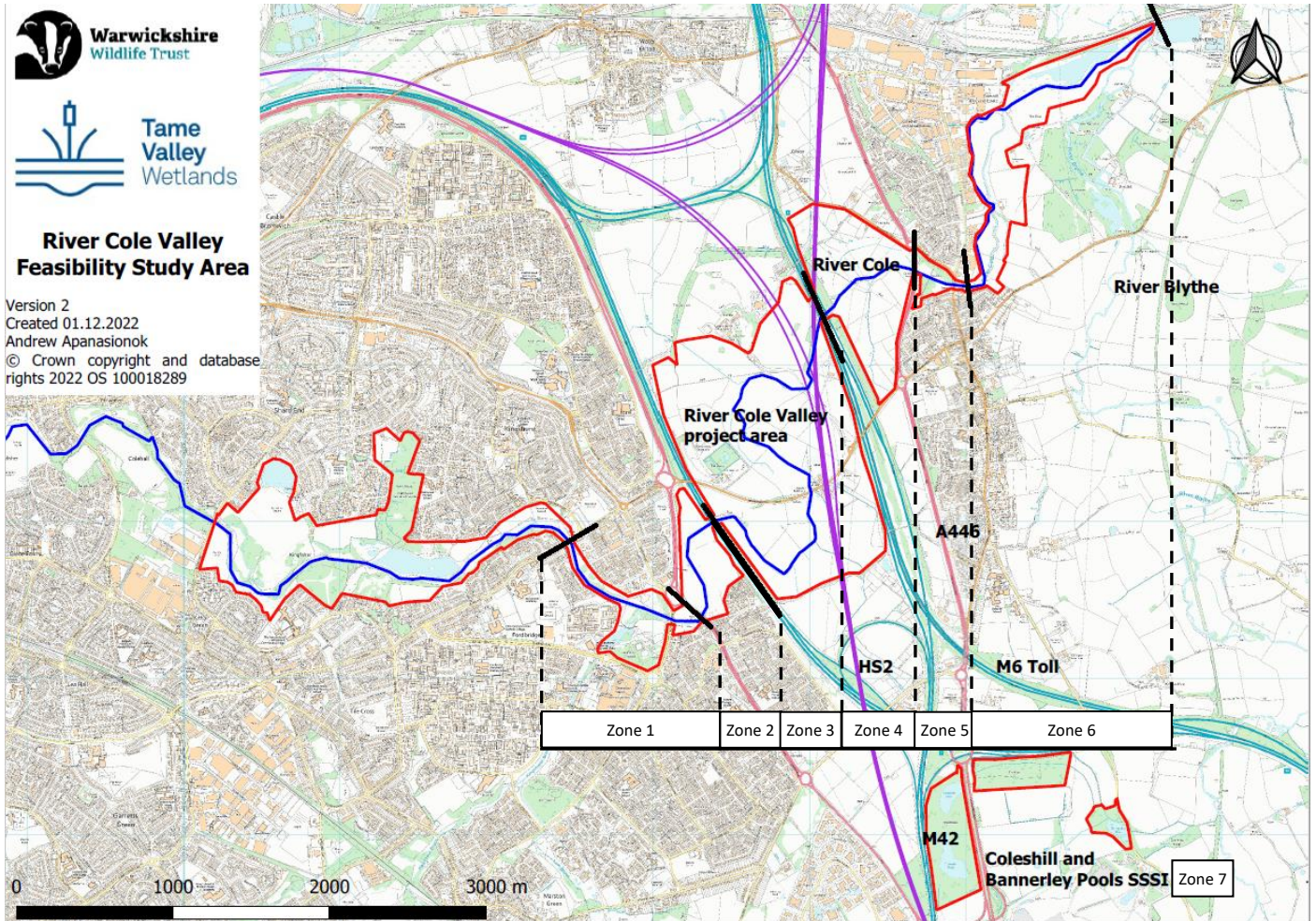
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River Cole Valley Feasibility Study Area

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The above map shows the zones. Designs for restoration/enhancements in these zones will be developed further as identified through this study.

- Zone 1 – Cooks Lane to Cole Bank Park
- Zone 2 – Cole Bank Park
- Zone 3 – Cole Bank Park to M6/M42. Including the HS2 construction zone to be considered via desktop study
- Zone 4 – M6/M42 to Cole End Park
- Zone 5 – Cole End Park
- Zone 6 – Cole End Park to river Blythe confluence
- Zone 7 – Coleshill and Bannerley Pools SSSI

All information/data/drawings will need to be processed in a suitable compatible format as they will be sent to local authorities, Natural England and the Environment Agency as part of the final feasibility report.

The results will be reviewed and discussed with appropriate authorities and key stakeholders to identify key points and the preferred options from the feasibility study. A plan for the best options to take forward will then be agreed.

Contact:

Susan Hartland Smith, Tame Valley Wetlands Manager is lead contact for the project.

To discuss further please contact her on:

Susan.hartlandsmith@wkw.org.uk

Mobile number: 07864 703567

Tel: 01675 470917

Format of the tender:

We will require details of:

1. A clear program of work, showing how you will deliver the required elements outlined above, including meeting the timeframe, and how you will allow for contingencies such as delays/sickness etc.
2. A fixed cost quote for the work stating any VAT element; with a breakdown of costs clearly stating VAT element and total cost per element of the work
3. Details of your team's skills, expertise and experience relevant to the tasks outlined
4. An example of previous relevant work

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.

Selection:

The process of selection will be by sealed tender, which will be opened and recorded in the presence of Tame Valley Wetlands Manager Susan Hartland Smith, Landscape Recovery Development Manager Gina Rowe, and Landscape Recovery Support Officer Emily Reilly.

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

The quotations will be assessed by relevant staff to assess the technical aspects and the financial basis, including the Tame Valley Wetlands Manager and Landscape Recovery Development Manager with input from Senior River and Catchment Restoration Officers. Assessment will include scoring on the detail of quality and on value for money.

Timescales:

Please submit your sealed bids by **3.00pm, 31st July 2023**.

To: susan.hartlandsmith@wkw.org.uk with the heading "Sealed Tender: Feasibility Study River Cole – [Your Company]"

An electronic transfer can be arranged to meet procurement requirements.

If necessary, paper copies may be sent to: Susan Hartland Smith, Tame Valley Wetlands Manager, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Brandon Marsh Nature Centre, Brandon Lane, Coventry, CV3 3GW

The tenders will be scored on **1st and 2nd August 2023**. Any queries or follow up will be undertaken between 1st August and 4th August 2023. We anticipate awarding a contract by the **4th August 2023**.

Planned inception meeting: To be in week commencing 14th August 2023.

It is planned that the study should be undertaken, reported and completed by **1st October 2024**. If there are key reasons for extending or delaying this deadline to enhance the outcome, options may be considered.

Audience: Stakeholders that will be involved in development of projects: Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Local Authorities, Natural England.

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