



Rockingham Forest for Life

“By 2025, the Forest for Life will be nationally recognised as an exemplar climate change initiative for the regeneration of the Rockingham Forest. It will enhance the natural and cultural environment, reinforce ancient woodlands, capture carbon, link fragmented sites and create wildlife corridors to provide a sustainable landscape for all to enjoy.

The regeneration of the Rockingham Forest will raise awareness of a wide range of environmental and related issues and be fully supported locally. It will be an innovative and purposeful means of bringing businesses and communities together around a common cause. It will make the area more resilient and contribute to it being one of the most attractive landscapes in England to live in, work in and visit.”

Aims:

- To establish a methodology to deliver significant areas of new woodland within the Rockingham Forest area as a local response to climate change. This contribute to part of Northamptonshire's share of the aspirations set out in the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan (around 80ha per year) and will eventually lead to measureable carbon abatement over a 15 year period significant.
- To pilot an innovative partnership approach embracing public, private, third sector and community involvement.
- To make a break with traditional public funding methods and pioneer part or wholly privately funded establishment models.

In addition to carbon capture, the establishment of new woodland will provide many other benefits associated with the creation of green infrastructure:

- It will provide greater leisure, recreational and educational facilities, positively impacting health and well-being and stimulating tourism to the area.
- It will contribute to making North Northants an attractive and prosperous place to live and work.
- By the involvement of local communities and businesses it will unleash greater community involvement and cohesion.
- It will enhance the natural and cultural environment, and re-inforce ancient woodlands.
- It will directly and indirectly benefit the local economy by attracting inward investment, establishing a source of sustainable fuel and creating land management and woodland based employment opportunities.
- It will increase biodiversity, link fragmented sites and create wildlife corridors contributing to a sustainable landscape.
- It will contribute significantly to the delivery of sustainable green infrastructure networks already identified.

Progress

- The Project has been successful in attracting funding from Defra (via the Forestry Commission) to establish innovative new ways of creating woodland and working together.
- River Nene Regional Park (RNRP; a community interest company) have been tasked to co-ordinate delivery of this phase of the Project
- The Project has received wide support and backing, including from local landowners and businesses, including the offer of planting sites
- A corporate breakfast event is planned for June in order to engage with the business sector
- A dedicated project website link will shortly be established with background information and latest news

A steering group has been established to decide on objectives and terms of reference. Partners include: *North Northants Joint Planning Unit; Forestry Commission, Natural England, Environment Agency, Northamptonshire County Council, River Nene Regional Park, Groundwork Northamptonshire, Rockingham Forest Trust, Northants Wildlife Trust, North Northants Landowners, Woodland Trust, Northants ACRE*