

**Name of meeting:** Cabinet Meeting  
**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021  
**Title of report:** White Rose Forest – Northern Forest and Urban Tree Challenge funding agreements.

**Purpose of report:**

Kirklees Council as the lead organisation and accountable body for the White Rose Forest, has been offered further grant funding to support the White Rose Forest tree planting programme. The funds being offered are from the government’s ‘Nature for Climate’- Northern Forest programme and from the Forestry Commission’s Urban Tree Challenge Fund. Cabinet approval is required for Kirklees Council to accept these grant agreements, receive, and administer the funds.

1. The decisions being sought are as follows:

To confirm Kirklees Council’s role as the accountable body of the White Rose Forest and the Northern Forest Urban Tree Challenge Fund by granting an authority for Kirklees Council to –

- i. enter into a grant agreement with the Community Forest Trust for funding from the Nature for Climate - Northern Forest fund.
- ii. enter into a grant agreement with the Forestry Commission for funding from the Urban Tree Challenge programme.
- iii. receive capital and revenue funding from the ‘Nature for Climate Fund’ – Northern Forest fund and the Urban Tree Challenge Fund, both as the accountable body for the White Rose Forest and the Northern Forest Urban Tree Challenge Fund and as a grant recipient.
- iv. enter into both capital and revenue grant agreements (in its capacity as accountable body) with the other parties to the White Rose Forest Project and the Northern Forest Urban Tree Challenge Fund (from time to time).
- v. enter into grant agreements (in its capacity as accountable body) with third party landowners who are not party to the White Rose Forest Project joint venture agreement.
- vi. use the grant funding to recruit and, or procure the resources required to deliver the programme over multiple years.
- vii. pursue and secure further funding including match-funding opportunities to support the creation of the Northern Forest.

<b>Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?</b>	<b>Yes</b> This next tranche of secured grant funding offers Kirklees Council approximately £3.7m of funds towards the cost of tree planting in areas of North and West Yorkshire between 2021 and 2025.
<b>Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council’s Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u></b>	<b>Key Decision – Yes</b>  <b>Private Report/Private Appendix –No</b>

<b>The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> &amp; name</b>	<b>David Shepherd – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021</b>
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</b>	<b>Eamonn Croston – 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021</b>
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</b>	<b>Julie Muscroft – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021</b>
<b>Cabinet member <a href="#">portfolio</a></b>	<b>Councillor Will Simpson – Culture and Greener Kirklees</b>

**Electoral wards affected:** All wards

**Ward councillors consulted:** n/a

**Public or private:** Public

**Has GDPR been considered?** No details of third-party landowners contained in report.

## 1. Summary

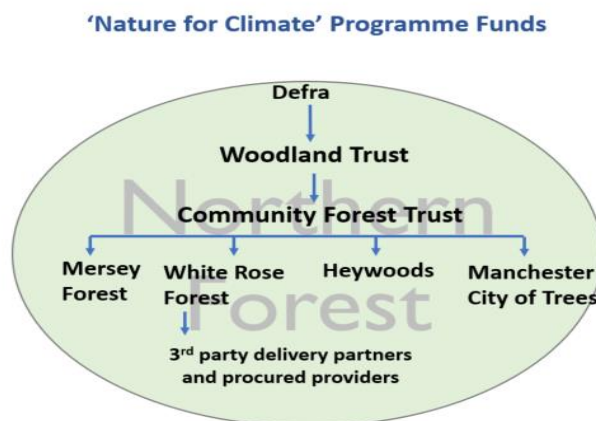
- 1.1 Kirklees Council has been the lead organisation and accountable body for the delivery of the White Rose Forest (WRF) programme since 2002. The WRF is a local authority based joint venture with over 30 members, led by a steering group of experts in the field. It is one of England's 13 Community Forests and is supported by a partnership of local authorities, national parks, national and local charities, Defra organisations and community enterprises.
- 1.2 The WRF Action Plan, officially launched on 17th November 2021 describes its vision and its plan for tree planting over the next four years. Its ambition is to plant trees across West and North Yorkshire to mitigate flood risk, support economic investment, improve public well-being, and adapt against the impacts of climate change.
- 1.3 The WRF and three other community forests are working in partnership with the Woodland Trust and the Community Forest Trust (CFT) in creating a Northern Forest (NF). Their aim is to plant 50 million trees over the next 25 years, transforming the landscape from Liverpool to Hull.
- 1.4 WRF activity is delivered through a myriad of different funding streams, including Trees for Climate, Northern Forest, Northern Gas Network and Forestry Commission's England Woodland Creation Offer, etc. The focus of this report is to inform Cabinet of the next tranche of grant funding offered to Kirklees Council from two funding sources; the government's 'Nature for Climate' – Northern Forest programme and the Urban Tree Challenge Fund administered by the Forestry Commission.
- 1.5 Kirklees Council is seeking authority to enter into this next phase of grant agreements which will help secure funds for the continued delivery of the WRF tree planting programme.

## 2. Information required to take a decision

### Background

- 2.1 On 1st August 2000 the WRF was launched to create a "well wooded landscape" in West Yorkshire. Following this in 2002, Kirklees Council took the role of accountable body for the partnership which had formed and the WRF became a joint venture agreement with over 30 signatories committing to its tree planting ambition for West and North Yorkshire. The WRF Action Plan and the joint venture that underpins this was recognised in April 2018 by the Leeds city region Chief Executives as our contribution to the Northern Forest.
- 2.2 The WRF Action Plan – Planting for Our Future (2021 – 2025) outlines its aim to plant 3500 hectares of new woodland by 2025 under its Landscapes for Water and Green Streets programmes. Over the years the partnership which forms the WRF has identified the key phases to delivering a quality community forest scheme and this is now presented as the WRF Delivery Pathway. The Delivery Pathway offers a bespoke service to Stakeholders (landowners, tenants, community groups) their agents and signatories to the WRF joint venture, supporting them through the process from initial enquiry through to delivery of new trees and woodland. This helps ensure all tree planting schemes receive the best possible support through all the delivery stages.
- 2.3 In January 2018 the government announced its intention to provide investment to the creation of a Northern Forest. Grant funding was allocated to the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) who then entered into an agreement with the Woodland Trust (WT) enabling them to work with the Community Forests in delivering this programme. This group has helped deliver the first three years of the DEFRA Northern Forest grant. This has confirmed to DEFRA that the community forest network is capable of planning and delivering programmes of woodland creation.

- 2.4 A more recent government announcement on 11 March 2020 launched a £640m 'Nature for Climate' Programme. This funding is to support climate mitigation programmes, sequestering and storing carbon from the atmosphere in trees and peat. The 'Nature for Climate' programme is part of an array of actions needed to reach the UK government target of net zero carbon by 2050 to help avoid dangerous global temperature rises.
- 2.5 **'Nature for Climate' – Northern Forest funds**  
The Northern Forest now forms part of the delivery of the UK wide Nature for Climate Fund Programme which means DEFRA has profiled grant funding for the NF up to FY2024/25, although this is only released on a year-on-year basis.
- 2.6 To enable the funding to be passed down to all the delivery partners, including the WRF, the WT have worked with DEFRA to finalise a grant agreement which outlines the target outputs and funding allocations for the next four years. Further sub-grant and collaboration agreements will be put in place with each delivery partner i.e., the CFT and the four CFs; WRF, HEYwoods, Manchester City of Trees and Mersey Forest.
- 2.7 The diagram below shows the current flow of funding from Defra.



- 2.8 The funds the WRF receive will pay for the ongoing delivery costs of their Green Streets programme. This urban based tree planting programme aims to establish 1000 hectares of new tree canopy in our urban areas and along our major transport routes by March 2025. Its aims to improve air quality, expand and strengthen ecological corridors, encourage the uptake of active travel, reframing the urban space through placemaking interventions and to manage storm water through water sensitive design. The primary target for programme activity is based around –
1. Priority urban communities
  2. Key employment sites
  3. Key transport corridors.
- 2.9 Green Streets project activity seeks to secure the participation of local authorities in tree planting and increased community involvement and buy-in. The ongoing payment of NF grant monies will ensure the continuation and growth of this project activity covering the capital cost of the tree planting as well as some project officer costs carrying out engagement work and initial site assessments. This tree planting work will be delivered by our core local authority partners, who own much of the identified land. Two project officers will either be recruited or procured to support programme delivery.
- 2.10 The Green Streets programme is expected to plant 121.6 hectares of trees and 2,271 standard trees across the four-year delivery window using NF funding.
- 2.11 **Urban Tree Challenge Fund**

The Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCF) is offered by the Forestry Commission. The fund opened for applications on 26 April 2021 and closed on 25 July 2021. Five local authority partners worked with the Green Streets Development Officer to create a block bid. The local authorities involved are Kirklees Council, North Lincolnshire Council, Craven Council, Leeds City Council, and Wakefield Council. The bid asked for further urban tree planting funds for North and West Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire. The partnership was notified in early November the bid had been successful and funds of £622,223 would be awarded for 50 percent of the cost of standard tree planting in urban and peri-urban areas, between 2021 and 2023. The remaining costs are to be made up through match funding, either through revenue or capital contributions from each partner. Kirklees Council will take responsibility for this programme in its role as the accountable body for the WRF.

2.12 The UTCF funds will complement the Northern Forest funds as both programmes will contribute to the WRF target to plant two million urban trees by 2025. Together they will form a standard tree planting programme. The UTCF funds will be used to plant a total of 1042 standard trees by March 2023.

2.13 **Options**

Option 1- For Kirklees Council to pass over the responsibility of overseeing grant agreements and programme delivery to another authority or WRF partner organisation. If this option was chosen it would considerably delay the delivery of these new programmes as no other third party has requested to take on this role.

2.14 Option 2 – Pass over the management of these grant agreements to the Community Forest Trust (CFT), a WRF signatory based in Manchester. The CFT would be unable to manage the volume of activity across the Yorkshire and N Lincolnshire area as they do not have the capacity within their organisation to take responsibility for this. Passing over management to the CFT could be viewed as a significant shift away from the current structure of the WRF.

2.15 Option 3 – Do nothing and not be part of the ‘Nature for Climate’ - Northern Forest or Urban Tree Challenge programmes. This would provide significant reputational risk to Kirklees Council, in the light of its committed to tackling climate change and its 20 years standing as the WRF accountable body. It would also undermine the national programme given WRF is providing up to 25% of the land outputs.

2.16 Option 4 – The preferred option. To confirm Kirklees Council’s role as the accountable body of the White Rose Forest and the Northern Forest and Urban Tree Challenge Fund.

2.17 **Cost breakdown**

**‘Nature for Climate’ - Northern Forest**

The WRF funding allocation and the outputs expected from the new ‘Nature for Climate’ – Northern Forest grant arrangement are shown in the table below. Most of the funding is for capital expenditure, tree planting costs however there is a small revenue element to cover the cost of project development activity. This involves working with landowners to identify sites for future tree planting which will then be registered onto the Delivery Pathway. Some internal Kirklees Council administration costs will also be met through this revenue stream and some procurement of specialist services if required, will also be met through the revenue stream.

<b>Target Outputs</b>	<b>2021 - 2025</b>
Hectares of tree planting	121.6
Standard Tree Planting	2271

<b>Funding Breakdown</b>	<b>2021 - 2025</b>
Capital Funding	£3,065,923
Revenue Funding	£ 370,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,435,923</b>

2.18 The funding shown above will be released to Kirklees Council yearly as Defra receives approval from Treasury. Kirklees Council will administer these funds for the lifetime of the programme making funding commitments with partners as appropriate and only as funds are confirmed.

**2.19 Urban Tree Challenge Fund**

At the time of drafting this report Kirklees Council had not received their grant agreement from the Forestry Commission, it is expected once due diligence checks are complete. The funding breakdown however is shown below:

	Leeds	Wakefield	Kirklees	Craven	North Lincolnshire	Total
<b>Number of trees to be planted</b>	232	105	890	26	233	<b>1486</b>
<b>Grant funding available</b>	£97,145	£43,967	£372,670	£10,887	£97,565	<b>£622,234</b>

2.20 As the lead organisation the WRF core team will take responsibility for managing the full programme grant, equating to £622,234. The Kirklees funding allocation is £372,670 with an expectation that 890 new trees will be planted in the Kirklees area by 2023.

2.21 As has happened in the past once Kirklees Council has entered into an agreement with the Forestry Commission, it will then draw up sub-agreements with the partner organisations delivering the project activity. These agreements pass the terms and conditions of each grant agreement on to each delivery partner helping to mitigate any liabilities and risks associated to receiving the grant funding.

**2.22 Timescale**

The Nature for Climate Northern Forest programme grant agreement is set to run until the end of March 2025. The UTCF programme is set to run until March 2023.

**2.23 Expected impact/ outcomes, benefits & risks (how they will be managed)**

**Impact and benefit**

Should approval be given for Kirklees Council to enter into these grant agreements the WRF, its stakeholders and the communities of North and West Yorkshire will benefit from receiving more investment for tree planting. These funds are needed to pay for the resources for tree planting and to pay for ‘boots on the ground’ engagement with landowners to find suitable sites for planting. It will also provide ongoing capacity to the partnership arrangements already in place delivering the WRF Action Plan across North and West Yorkshire.

2.24 Green Streets is focused on priority urban areas where we know that increasing tree canopy coverage will bring investment and health benefits for our economy and communities. We want to link priority communities to employment areas along key transport corridors, with trees, woodlands, and high-quality green infrastructure, including cycle paths and other active travel routes.

**2.25 Outcomes**

The funding received from both these programmes will contribute directly to the continued development and Vision of the White Rose Forest in North and West Yorkshire and therefore along with the other Community forests, support the Northern Forest initiative. The WRF has already played a significant role in contributing to the Government’s target to increase national tree cover, by planting 500,000 trees since 2018. The WRF Action Plan describes how the WRF could potentially increase tree cover in North and West Yorkshire from 11% to 19% by 2050 and therefore absorb half the remaining residual carbon dioxide emissions. The community forest is a process of widening and deepening everybody’s involvement in the planning, planting and management of trees and woodlands, to create healthy, inspiring, and resilient places for humans and nature to live side by side.

**2.26 Key risks**

Grant funding from key funders is currently released on a yearly basis and most funders are not issuing their grant agreements until late into a financial year. This presents several challenges. Planting trees is seasonal, it takes place between November and March so if a season is missed for whatever reason, i.e., delays with bird surveys, short supplies of tree saplings etc, the planting is then delayed for a whole year. The late confirmation of funding also reduces the delivery window in which to plan and organise the planting, as trees need to be ordered and sites prepared. For the WRF programme to be able to meet its targets it needs firm commitment to the funds for the lifetime of the programme. To address these issues the WRF partnership along with its Communities Forest partners have been collectively lobbying their funders to find ways to secure multi-year contracts which will offer continuity and some sustainability to the delivery of its programmes over the next 3 – 5 years. The WRF has recently been informed that Defra is now moving towards multi-year capital funding arrangements, so this should help mitigate some of the current funding issues.

2.27 Another risk arising from late receipt of grant agreements and funds is the restriction this puts on appointing resources for the programme. Without the commitment of long-term funding, it is difficult to commit to any long-term staffing plans, filling short term recruitment contracts is often problematic. The WRF core team, therefore, will continue to challenge key funders on the lateness of issuing yearly contracts and in the short term look at ways of filling any resource gaps in other ways like using short-term procurement exercises.

2.28 As the accountable body for a range of differently funded programmes it is Kirklees Council's responsibility to manage any risks which may arise in passing funding onto delivery partners. By passing on the terms and conditions of the original grant agreements to partners delivering the activity they can minimise these risks. In most situations the grant payments Kirklees Council pass on to delivery partners is following completion of their tree planting activity and after monitoring and evaluation has been carried out.

### **2.29 Evaluation**

All the tree planting schemes funded through the WRF programme are asked to demonstrate the direct benefits of their funded activity back to the programme administrators. Results data is collected from all the schemes as progress is monitored and recorded on the programme's database – Kompass. Schemes are given clear output expectations which must all contribute to WRF tree planting targets.

2.30 The core administrative team report on programme performance to the WRF Management Board who act as the steering group to the programme in overseeing the implementation of the WRF Plan and its actions. Other evaluation reports are completed periodically for funders as set out in the terms and conditions of each grant agreement.

### **2.31 Sustainability**

The sustainability of the WRF programme is wholly dependent on the availability of external grant funding, donations, and the possibility of other forms of match funding like future private sector investment. All programme activity is funded through external funding therefore the delivery window is dependent on each separately funded programme. The "Nature for Climate" Northern Forest programme is dependent on the success of the full 4-year capital programme being signed off by Treasury. The Urban Tree Challenge Fund is funded through the Forestry Commission and runs for 2 years up to 2023. The purpose of this report is to have the necessary key decisions in place to continue to secure the funding required to deliver the programme over the next few years and beyond 2025.

### **2.32 Services & agencies involved**

Support for these key decisions will enable the Kirklees Major Projects Service to work with legal, finance and human resources to set up the appropriate mechanisms to act as an effective accountable body across North and West Yorkshire and for the UTCF programme this arrangement has been expanded to include North Lincolnshire.

## **3. Implications for the Council**

### 3.1 Working with People

For Kirklees Council owned land, Streetscene will involve the local community and its representatives to fully understand how best to convert land if appropriate over to trees and woodlands. The goal is to establish well-designed urban treescapes and woodlands, considering community usage as well as providing opportunities for carbon sequestration, landscape improvement, improving air quality and biodiversity. Integrating access into urban woodlands is an essential prerequisite to good design. There will be a need to involve schools and communities in the identification of planting sites, collecting suitable tree seeds for growing, planting and aftercare. By creating new woodlands, a wide range of additional benefits can be achieved. Some of these relate to adaptation to the climate emergency. Others include health and well-being and air quality benefits, an increase in biodiversity and the improvement of ecological networks to improve resilience of our biodiversity

### 3.2 Working with Partners

The WRF is a joint venture agreement with 30 plus signatories including 9 local authorities. It is dependent on partnership working to function. Nationally, Kirklees Council has represented the WRF on the England's Community Forest Network and has worked with four other community forests to secure the latest phase of 'Nature for Climate' funds. It also worked in partnership with four other partner local authorities in bidding for the Urban Tree Challenge Funds. On a regional basis, Kirklees Council represents the North and West Yorkshire (White Rose Forest) on the Northern Forest Board, so conversations are ongoing with the Community Forest Trust (based in Manchester), The Woodland Trust and the other 3 community forests Mersey Forest, Manchester City of Trees and HEYwoods.

### 3.3 Place Based Working

Kirklees Council provides a Geographic Information System platform called Kompass for its partners to understand the spatial qualities of a given project site. Data sets are mapped to indicate for example if a given place if planted with trees might help reduce flooding, strengthen biodiversity corridors, or improve air quality where it matters. This background spatial information provides a starting point for the multi-disciplinary design process. Our priorities for land search include a Leeds city region wide dataset called Green Streets which shows areas of deprivation (worst 10%), areas of key employment sites and the key route network transport corridors that link them. Targeting planting opportunities in these areas will greatly contribute to positive economic and health outcomes

### 3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

The WRF Plan fully supports the Kirklees Climate Emergency response, which was approved by Cabinet in November 2019.

3.5 The decisions required from this report will impact positively on the environment as they seek to sustain the funding needed for the White Rose Forest tree planting activity, which is a key part of the largest environmental regeneration initiative in England. Trees make a significant and essential contribution to removing residual carbon dioxide from the earth's atmosphere and are a key tool that can support our collective response to the climate emergency and nature crises we all face.

### 3.6 Improving outcomes for children

There will be a positive impact for the whole community include children, from increased tree planting across North and West Yorkshire. Trees help to create healthier open spaces and encourage activity outside which has positive outcomes for both mental and physical health.

### 3.7 Other (e.g., Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

#### Human Resources

The human resource cost associated to delivering both grant funded programmes will be recouped from the external funding awarded to Kirklees Council. An allocation of revenue funding is provided through the 'Nature for Climate' - Northern Forest funds, this will be used to pay for new project officers either recruited into Kirklees Council and/or by other delivery partner organisations. Funds



will also be used to cover some of the core team cost as well as other internal support costs. Some revenue may also be used to procure specialist technical services as and when required.

### 3.8 Legal

Advice from Legal services has been sought and received. The different elements have been teased out and informed the request for authorities within this report. Legal will need to have an input into:

#### **Northern Forest**

- (i) A grant agreement between DEFRA and the Woodland Trust and the proposed grant agreement between Woodland Trust and the Community Forest Trust re revenue and capital expenditure for Northern Forest Project;
- (ii) The entering into a grant agreement re capital and revenue expenditure with the Community Forest Trust (in its role as accountable body to the Woodland Trust) re:
  - (a) Kirklees Council's role as accountable body to the Community Forest Trust for the WRF part of the Northern Forest;
  - (b) as a grant recipient for the funded posts within Kirklees Council;
  - (c) as a grant recipient for capital projects taking place on Kirklees Council owned land;
- (iii) Kirklees Council as accountable body entering into capital and revenue expenditure grant agreements with the other parties to the WRF Project; and
- (iv) Kirklees Council as accountable body entering into capital grant agreements (approximately 15-20 in number) with non-local authority landowners for the planting of trees etc.

#### **Urban Tree Challenge Fund**

- a) The entering into a grant agreement with the Forestry Commission for funding from the Urban Tree Challenge Fund as accountable body for the Northern Forest Urban Tree Challenge Fund and as a grant recipient.
- b) Kirklees Council as accountable body entering into capital expenditure grant agreements with the other local authority partners for the Northern Forest Urban Tree Challenge Fund.
- c) as a grant recipient for capital projects taking place on Kirklees Council owned land.

#### **Joint venture agreement**

- (i) A revised WRF joint venture agreement to provide for the updating of the WRF and Northern Forest plans (and to provide for additional parties to join the project).

<b>Northern Forest</b>		
Item (I) - Consider DEFRA and Woodland Trust revenue and capital expenditure grant agreements	:	November 2021

Item (ii)	Entering into capital and revenue expenditure grant agreement with Community Forest Trust for WRF	:	December 2021
Item (iii) –	Entering into revenue and capital expenditure grant agreements with WRF joint venture partners for the funding of the Northern Forest.	:	January 2022
Item (iv) –	Entering into third party capital grant agreements with non-local authority landowners	:	Shortly after item (iii) is completed
<b>Urban Tree Challenge Fund</b>			
Item (v)	Entering into a grant agreement with the Forestry Commission		December 2021
Item (vi)	Kirklees Council as accountable body for the Northern Forest Urban Tree Challenge Fund entering into grant agreements with the other local authority partners		Shortly after item (v) is completed
Item (vii)	Revised Joint Venture Agreement	:	January 2021
Items (viii)	renewal of grant agreements and third-party grants	:	Each year during the duration of the White Rose Forest and the Northern Forest Projects

Project Duration - Assuming the Northern Forest and the Urban Tree Challenge Fund programmes are secured there will be instructions each year (2022/3 onwards) for:

- 1) A “renewal” of all the revenue grant agreements – both between Kirklees Council and the Community Forest Trust / Forestry Commission and between Kirklees Council (as accountable body) and the other parties. (Strictly speaking the grant agreements will not be renewed as the revenue granted will change considering inflation changes in public expenditure profiling etc).
- 2) A “renewal” of all the capital grant agreements - both between Kirklees Council and the Community Forest Trust / Forestry Commission and between Kirklees Council (as accountable body) and the other parties. (Strictly speaking the grant agreements will not be renewed as the capital granted will change considering both DEFRA's priorities in the taking forward of the Northern Forest and the priorities within the WRF project).
- 3) Third party grants to non-local authority landowners (probably in the region of 15 – 20 per annum) to fund capital projects.

It is likely that if the Northern Forest capital programme is secured over the following 4 years for the Northern Forest and until financial year 22/23 for the Urban Tree Challenge Fund, then there will likely be a need to secure the ongoing legal input into the project. Costs for this will be taken from the capital programme.

If the revenue costs are secured for this year, then the legal costs will be covered for revising the joint venture agreement in early 2022.

### 3.9 Financial

Advice from Kirklees Finance Team has been sought and received.

Kirklees Council has been acting as accountable body for the WRF since 2002 and over the last year has administered the funding associated to the Trees for Climate programme on behalf of the WRF partnership. These recent grant awards will be a continuation of the current arrangement Kirklees and the WRF have in place to draw down grant funding at appropriate times and pass this on to its delivery partners, who in the main are local authorities.

To ensure the grant terms and conditions do not result in any material financial risks for the Council the team will continue to work closely with legal colleagues, seeking advice on the content of the grant agreements and negotiating amendments to mitigate any potential risks, where required.

3.10 Do you need an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)?

No.

The targeting, design and consultation work of urban tree planting schemes will provide overwhelming positive impacts for our priority communities. The multi-disciplinary design approach will ensure that any negative impacts are reduced. For Forestry schemes over 2 hectares schemes will automatically require an Environment Impact Assessment.

#### 4. **Consultees and their opinions**

A full consultation exercise was carried out during the development of the White Rose Forest Plan. This plan drives the activity of the programme as it sets out the programme's vision and goals. The Plan was formally launched on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021. As the plan is updated and refreshed further consultation will be conducted with the wider partnership

#### 5. **Next steps and timelines**

- Respond to the expected contract from the Community Forest Trust to secure the Northern Forest capital and revenue funding for 2021/22 onwards.
- Respond to the expected Forestry Commission contract for the Urban Tree Challenge Fund for funding for 2021/23.
- Set up new budget management systems for each newly funded programme.
- Carry out either a recruitment or procurement exercise to appoint any specialist support needed for the delivery of programme activity.
- Draft any relevant sub-grant agreements with delivery partners.
- Monitor progress of the new funded programmes and report back to the Council further into the programme delivery.

#### 6. **Officer recommendations and reasons**

The officer recommends that Cabinet grant authority to Kirklees Council as the accountable body for the WRF, to -

- i. enter into a grant agreement with the Community Forest Trust for funding from the Nature for Climate - Northern Forest fund.
- ii. enter into a grant agreement with the Forestry Commission for funding from the Urban Tree Challenge programme.
- iii. receive capital and revenue funding from the 'Nature for Climate Fund' – Northern Forest fund and the Urban Tree Challenge Fund, both as the accountable body for the White Rose Forest and the Northern Forest Urban Tree Challenge Fund and as a grant recipient.
- iv. enter into both capital and revenue grant agreements (in its capacity as accountable body) with the other parties to the White Rose Forest Project and the Northern Forest Urban Tree Challenge Fund (from time to time).

- v. enter into grant agreements (in its capacity as accountable body) with third party landowners who are not party to the White Rose Forest Project joint venture agreement.
- vi. use the grant funding to recruit and, or procure the resources required to deliver the programme over multiple years.
- vii. pursue and secure further funding including match-funding opportunities to support the creation of the Northern Forest.

## **7. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holders recommends that Cabinet grant authority to Kirklees Council as the accountable body for the WRF, to -

- i. enter into a grant agreement with the Community Forest Trust for funding from the Nature for Climate - Northern Forest fund.
- ii. enter into a grant agreement with the Forestry Commission for funding from the Urban Tree Challenge programme.
- iii. receive capital and revenue funding from the 'Nature for Climate Fund' – Northern Forest fund and the Urban Tree Challenge Fund, both as the accountable body for the White Rose Forest and the Northern Forest Urban Tree Challenge Fund and as a grant recipient.
- iv. enter into both capital and revenue grant agreements (in its capacity as accountable body) with the other parties to the White Rose Forest Project and the Northern Forest Urban Tree Challenge Fund (from time to time)
- v. enter into grant agreements (in its capacity as accountable body) with third party landowners who are not party to the White Rose Forest Project joint venture agreement.
- vi. use the grant funding to recruit and, or procure the resources required to deliver the programme over multiple years.
- vii. pursue and secure further funding including match-funding opportunities to support the creation of the Northern Forest.

## **8. Contact officer**

Guy Thompson, Programme Director White Rose Forest – [guy.thompson@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:guy.thompson@kirklees.gov.uk) Tel no – 01484 221000

## **9. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

A report was presented to Cabinet on 13th July 2020 ([Agenda for Cabinet on Monday 13th July 2020, 3.00 pm | Kirklees Council](#)) which sought authorisation for Kirklees Council and the WRF team to enter into an agreement for Trees for Climate funding for the WRF programme.

## **10. Service Director responsible**

Edward Highfield – Service Director of Skills and Regeneration