

Herefordshire and Gloucestershire (including the Wye Valley AONB) Deer targeting Project Area**Specification of Requirements:**

1. The Forestry Commission, in partnership with Natural England, has offer a contract to The Deer Initiative, to support the collaborative and coordinated management of wild deer (i.e. not farmed or in deer parks) in England in order to help achieve better outcomes for woodland and other habitats associated with woodland. We want to see: more natural regeneration, more diverse ground flora, better structural diversity more successful planting and restocking and easier establishment of productive and diverse woodland.
2. We also want wild deer to be part of sustainable forestry in England, sustainable forestry being defined in the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS). However, wild deer continue to have increasing negative impacts on woods and forests and we aim to help landowners reduce these impacts.
3. We want to support landowner and land manager collaboration and cooperation to improve woodlands, contain invasive deer species and ensure sustainable, well managed deer populations.
4. Woodland management objectives will vary, but high densities of wild deer impair environmental and economic outcomes and this work will help landowners tackle this. The work will contribute to our priority of **protecting** the nation's trees, woodlands and forests and is significant in helping achieve Biodiversity Strategy outcomes.
5. Protecting woodland is a long term undertaking and many of the outcomes we seek will take time to achieve. We want this work to show clear trends of change towards positive outcomes for woodlands in the future.
6. This contract is for supporting and developing collaboration and coordination between private landowners and others in managing wild deer. It does not include deer management on the Public Forest Estate (managed by Forest Enterprise England, FEE) but FEE is an important partner in deer management at both national and local levels.
7. Our intention is to award this contract for a period of four years.
8. The Forestry Commission, in partnership with Natural England, will provide an initial indication of priority areas with concentrations of woodland in England where deer are having greatest negative impacts. This will include priority UK BAP habitat and protected areas e.g. SSSIs and SACs. It may also include other areas that deer are using. See the below map of the local target under Geographical Area
9. The DI will be required to identify within these areas and suggest other woods where current deer management activity is unsuccessful in controlling deer populations and where populations may be spreading for the first time, e.g. Muntjac spread.
10. The DI will identify the areas where both negative impacts and the need for greater levels of management should be addressed.

Collaborative working in action areas:

Extend, improve and support local stakeholders' (especially landowner, land manager, stalker) understanding of:

- a) The negative impacts of deer in woodland and how to assess and record these.
- b) The spread of deer and in particular Muntjac into areas under threat and methods to arrest this.
- c) The need for and methods of deer management.
- d) Signpost appropriate technical training for land owners and land managers aimed at improving the highest standards of effectiveness, efficiency, animal welfare and human safety in deer management.
- e) Ensure that before each species' open season, cull targets are agreed between key local stakeholders, the Forestry Commission and Natural England based on population data and impact data and that targets aim to reduce the negative impacts of deer on woodland while achieving a sustainable deer population.
- f) Lead the design and implementation of co-ordinated management activity, liaison and communication with relevant local stakeholders to achieve agreed cull targets to best practice standards. This will include challenging some deer managers' objective of maintaining high deer numbers.
- g) Consult with stakeholders and agree responses to specific issues, e.g. action to arrest the spread of Muntjac in some areas.

Measures:

- Active and effective deer management programmes operating in action areas including action plans for Muntjac where appropriate.
- Agreed cull targets being achieved.
- Increasing numbers of landowners and land managers either actively engaged or willing to allow deer management on their land.
- Increasing area of contiguous land where deer management is taking place within action areas.
- Completion and return of Deer Impact Assessment (DIA) data records established as standard practice. The volume and quality of records centrally collected increases and is used as evidence.
- Increasing levels of signposting achieved for landowners and land managers in technical training.
- National organisations facilitating and help support delivery within a target area.

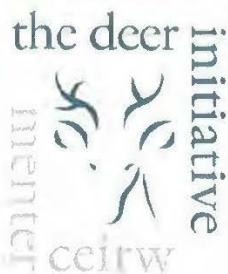
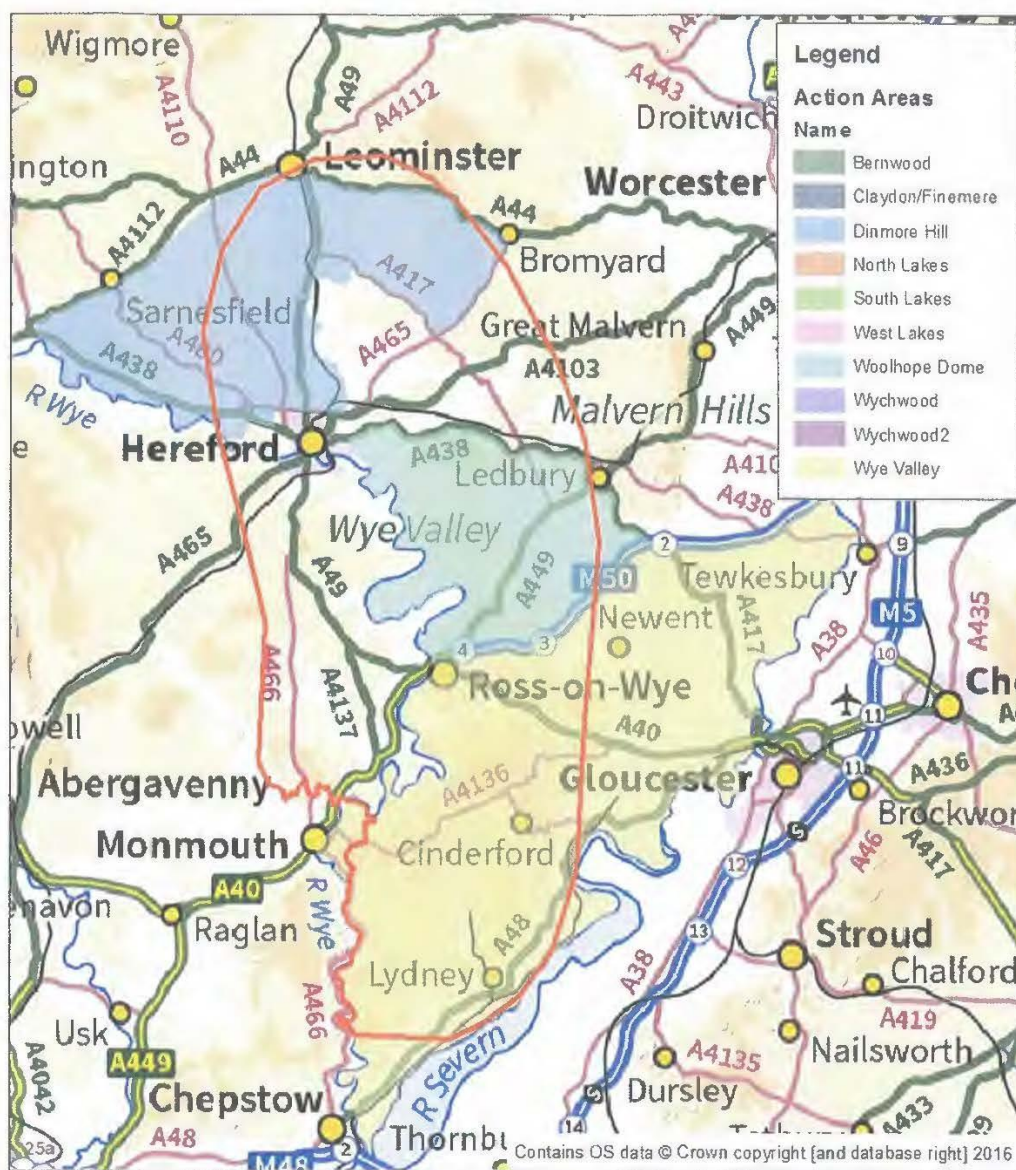
Effective Resource:

- Signpost opportunities for financial support, investment and business advice that will help increase and sustain deer management at levels that ensure woodland is not negatively impacted by deer.

Evidence:

- Improve the reliability, consistency, uptake and reporting of deer impact assessments.
- Within the first year of the contract, establish for each action area a baseline assessment for woodlands negatively impacted by deer including those factors shown above.
- Monitor and report annually for each action area on trends in the negative impacts of deer on woodland.
- Monitor and report on changes to the coverage and effectiveness of collaborative activity in action areas by landowners, land managers and others.
- Provide supporting information on wild deer populations, density and range by species in action areas.

Target Geographical Area:



The Deer Initiative
Midlands Priority Area
and Action Areas