

Environment workshop



6th October 2021

together
we are
the **network**

Thank you

Thank you again to those of you who joined us for our Environment Workshop on 6th October 2021. We got a great deal out of the session and we hope you did too.

Overview of key themes from workshop

We dedicated October's workshop to discussing Northern Gas Networks' (NGN) tree planting scheme for the 2021 to 2026 period. We presented the details of our scheme and its drivers, how it will be delivered and the potential benefits of tree planting to our region. We identified how we propose to identify and prioritise sites for tree planting under our scheme and then discussed other factors that stakeholders considered important and how they could be incorporated into the planting site selection methodology.

Your feedback:

- Air quality benefits of tree planting are important, but other aspects should be taken into account in site selection as well, including carbon storage, opportunities for community engagement and biodiversity.
- Incorporation of larger (standard) trees and hedgerows alongside smaller (whip) trees allows potential for delivery of broader benefits.
- Avoidance of single use plastic tree guards is important to stakeholders to maximise the sustainability of the planting scheme.
- There are a wide range of stakeholders across many sectors we could speak to about the scheme to look for opportunities to collaborate.

A detailed account of the workshop discussions and feedback is provided later in this document.

Best wishes,

Hannah Jewison

Business Sustainability Lead
Northern Gas Networks

Neil Whalley

Environment and Sustainability Manager
Northern Gas Networks

Purpose of the workshop

The purpose of the workshop was to understand stakeholder's views and priorities regarding the selection and prioritisation of planting sites for NGN's 2021 to 2026 tree planting scheme to maximise the benefits delivered.

The agenda for the workshop was as follows:

- Summary of our business, regulatory setting and Environment Strategy
- Overview of NGN tree planting scheme
 - What it is and what it isn't
 - The benefits delivered by tree planting
 - How the tree planting will be delivered
 - Where the tree planted will be and how we propose to select planting sites
- Stakeholder priorities regarding tree planting site selection factors and benefits of tree planting
- Discussion groups

- How can NGN refine our site selection methodology to maximise the scheme benefits?
- Who else should we be talking to about this scheme?

11

delegates

8.7

overall satisfaction with the event (out of 10)

Feedback received:

"Good workshop well managed."

"I thought all did a fantastic job of delivering/facilitating an engaging session, leading to very interesting conversations. It looks like the stakeholders present at this workshop could be helpful with making the tree planting programme a success."

Acting on your feedback – our commitments

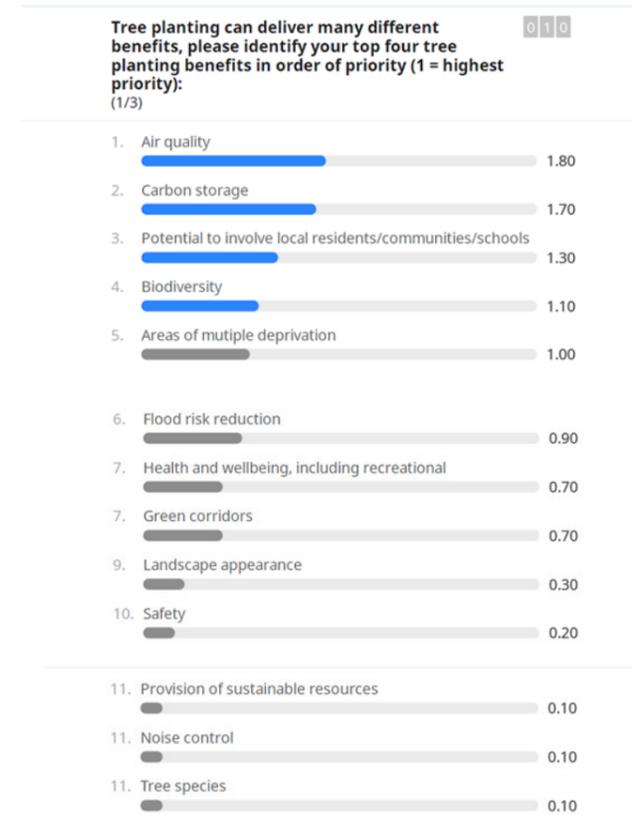
The feedback you gave us during this workshop is helping to shape the way we work both now and in the future.

You Said	So we will
Air quality benefits of tree planting are most important to stakeholders, but other factors should be taken into consideration in selection of planting sites, such as carbon storage, opportunities for community engagement and biodiversity.	We will review our tree planting selection methodology for the 2022/23 planting season to see how we can incorporate other factors.
Broadening the mix and types of trees planted (including standards and whips) and including hedgerows, whilst still having a focus on air pollutant removal, can increase the benefits of the scheme, including carbon storage, biodiversity, noise control and visual screening.	We will expand the scope of our tree planting scheme to include hedgerows in addition to trees.
There are opportunities to work with many different organisations to maximise and share the benefits of this scheme and broaden participation, including social housing providers, schools, charities, community interest groups, and other businesses. It was noted that our delivery partners (White Rose Forest and HEYwoods) already have well established partnerships to enable this.	We will explore opportunities for stakeholder engagement in delivery of the tree planting scheme.
Planting near roads can deliver multiple environmental and social benefits but we need to be wary of potential negative impacts on road safety from impact on lines of sight.	We will ensure planting scheme designs near roads take lines of site into consideration.
Avoidance of single use plastic tree guards is important to stakeholders to maximise the sustainability of the planting scheme.	Avoid the use of single use plastic tree guards where possible via scheme design or use of reusable guards.

Key themes emerging from this workshop

Stakeholder Priorities

During the workshop stakeholders were unanimous in their view that NGN should select tree planting sites based on factors in addition to air quality benefits. Stakeholders prioritised air quality, carbon storage, opportunities for community engagement and biodiversity as the benefits of tree planting.



How can NGN refine our site selection methodology to maximise the scheme benefits?

Stakeholders identified the following factors that NGN could consider to broaden the benefits delivered by our tree planting scheme:

- Use of hedgerows to provide visual, noise and air pollutant barriers in addition trees, but also to provide biodiversity connection corridors between tree stands and other habitats.
- Broadening the mix of trees planting to maximise carbon storage benefits.
- Planting large trees in urban streets to make immediate impacts

to an area, although pedestrian safety issues (visibility to traffic and personal security) need to be thought about in the design for all sites.

- Sustainable urban drainage, flood control benefits and 're-naturalising' of watercourses.
- Improving access to woodland (ref: Woodland Trust Access to Woodland Position Statement) and green space, for example via creation of urban pocket parks.
- Targeting areas of multiple deprivation to maximise benefits (ref: Indices of Multiple Deprivation dataset).

Next Steps:

We want to keep the conversation going. Zoom worked well again and we will continue to use this platform. We intend to run another session at the end of the 2021/22 planting session to feedback on the outcomes of the first year of our planting scheme and identify the types of sites where planting was done to see if they met stakeholder's expectations.

We also welcome your ideas on any aspects of our business and the work that we are doing together.

Feedback on this session. Have you had further thoughts on some issues raised during this session? Or a great idea of things we should be doing in response to your feedback? We'd love to know. Please contact us directly on stakeholder@northerngas.co.uk.

Event Evaluation and Future Engagement

3 responses out of 11 attendees fed back

Summary:	Environment Workshop	6th October 2021
Event Evaluation		
Q1	Choose 2 words from this list below to describe this event	Insightful, interesting, thought provoking, challenging
Q2	Overall, how satisfied were you with the event?	8.67 (overall)
Q3	How would you rate the discussions?	9.00
Q4	How would you rate the event contact and speakers?	8.67
Q5	Did you find it useful to have a subject matter expert presenting in the session	Yes (all)
Q6	How would you rate the networking opportunities?	5.33
Q7	Is there anything you think could be improved / changes for future workshops?	<p>Key themes - "No, I thought it was really well thought out and look forward to hearing what comes from the discussions."</p> <p>"No, thank you"</p>
Q8	Is there anything else you would like to tell us?	<p>Key themes -</p> <p>"Good workshop well managed."</p> <p>"I thought XXX, XXX and XXX all did a fantastic job of delivering/facilitating an engaging session, leading to very interesting conversations. It looks like the stakeholders present at this workshop could be helpful with making the tree planting programme a success."</p>



Q9	Thinking of yourself as a stakeholder of NGN, how satisfied are you with the relationship that you have with NGN	7.00
Q10	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	
		No of respondents answering with the following options
	NGN keeps me up to date on their business plans	Somewhat agree – 2 Neither agree nor disagree – 1
	NGN provided me with clear information about their business performance	Agree – 1 Somewhat agree – 1 Neither agree nor disagree – 1
	NGN provided me with opportunities to give feedback on the topics that interest me	Agree – 2 Neither agree nor disagree – 1
	NGN allows me to give feedback through my preferred method	Agree – 2 Neither agree nor disagree – 1
	NGN makes it clear how they have used feedback to change	Agree – 1 Somewhat agree – 1 Neither agree nor disagree – 1

Future Engagement		
Q1	How else would you like to engage with NGN in future?	"It would be good to see more opportunities for stakeholders to hear from other parts of NGN on what they are doing to help improve sustainability through their day-to-day work/projects rather than just relying on the great things that XXX and XXX are driving."

Tell us what you think

Thank you for reading this report. We welcome any further feedback, thoughts or ideas you have. Please drop us a line at stakeholder@northerngas.co.uk

For further information contact:
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