

## Invitation of expression of interest

### Catering and retail business opportunity at Wyre Forest in Worcestershire.

#### Contact details

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#### The Forestry Commission

The Forestry Commission is the government department that oversees the nation's woodlands on behalf of the Government.

Forestry Commission delivers the Government's forestry policies through:

- Management of the Nation's woodlands
- Working in partnership with others to promote the interests of forestry.
- Encouraging good forest management, which maximises public benefit by providing targeted grant-aid for woodland owners.
- Regulating forest practice in both public and private woodlands through consultation, the use of felling controls and environmental impact assessments.

Our strategic goals include access to woodlands, the use of forests for tourism, health and well being, social inclusion, employment and education as key targets. The environment, renewable energy, active community participation, rural and economic development and well-managed woodlands are also key delivery areas.

More detailed information on the work of Forestry Commission can be found on the Commission's website, [www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk)

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## Background

The Forestry Commission manages 1100 hectares of the Wyre Forest for multiple benefits including public access, timber production and wildlife conservation. The main visitor facilities are located at Callow Hill and include a café (currently named `The Whitty Pear`), public toilets, play area, Go Ape high wire course, waymarked trails and the Wyre Forest Community Discovery centre. The centre accommodates over 10,000 school children and a number of adult meetings each year. In addition it is estimated that the site hosts approximately 130,000 day visits each year. Usage on the site is currently fairly seasonal with the majority of visitors coming during good weather, weekends and during school holidays.

The main visitor site is located at Callow Hill on the A456 and is close to other visitor attractions including the West Midlands Safari park and the Severn Valley Railway. The site is within easy reach of the Birmingham conurbation, Dudley, Kidderminster, and Worcester, the nearest town is Bewdley.

The site is located in the heart of an ambitious project, Grow With Wyre, which seeks to restore the forest to its former glory on a landscape scale. The programme includes elements designed to regenerate the local economy, encourage the use of wood fuel and improve access as well as a wide range of environmental and social projects. One element that could prove beneficial for the successful applicant is the desire to encourage and reintroduce traditional crafts and the production of traditional forest goods including fruit. It is envisaged that the Wyre café could provide a real focal point or `hub` for this local produce in the future.

The visitor centre plays an important part in the visitor experience of the site. The provision of information and literature is a key role that the successful applicant would be expected to undertake. The site is owned and managed by the Forestry Commission.

Additional information including a site plan, building plan and photographs of the building and site are attached as appendix 2.

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## The business opportunity

The Forestry Commission is seeking a partner to help operate the site and in particular the catering and retail experience. We are interested in proposals that provide details of

- Basic background information about the applicant
- `The offer` in terms of the catering and retail experience.
- Main income streams
- Projected audience (numbers and demographics)
- Links to key government agendas such as big society, localism, health, education and climate change as well as links to local communities and potential knock on economic benefits and job creation.
- How to engage with less mobile visitors and under represented groups to provide a better forest experience.
- How the site operation would seek to minimise environmental impacts.
- How the café and retail centre would integrate with other activities and the Forestry Commission brand.

We are anticipating an initial agreement of up to seven years to fully evaluate the potential of the business opportunity but will be considering the most suitable arrangement and duration as part of the business opportunity process.

## Process

The table below sets out our intentions regarding selection process and likely timetable. This is dependent on identifying suitable business partners at the expression of interest stage and subsequent parts of the process. We reserve the right to alter the timetable to ensure that we get the right partner to deliver the service.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Description</b>
Receipt of expressions of interest	To be submitted by 12 noon on the 24 <sup>th</sup> January 2011.	The applicant should provide information about the nature of the business and proposals to deliver a catering and retail offer at Wyre. The FC wishes to understand what the market might want to offer so that we can develop a detailed requirement for stage 2 of the process.
Review of submissions	Late January 2011	Including clarification where necessary and development of detailed specification of requirements
Formal bid and selection process	Late January until late February 2011.	Selection based process to be outlined following review of submissions. Likely to include a formal bid and competency process followed by an interview process for shortlisted applicants.

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## Returning expressions of interest

It is strongly recommended that applicants arrange for a site visit before returning the expression of interest.

Completed expressions of interests must be submitted in the format provided in Appendix 1, and as outlined in the `Questions to be addressed` section above, by the following method:

2 copies via the postal system or by hand. With an additional set provided on Mass Storage Device or CD, Ensuring that the information provided is not protected as the information has to be transferred to a central storage system.

Respondents are advised that responses may be reproduced, solely for the purposes of this exercise.

Date for Return:

**The final date for the return of completed expressions of interest is 1200hrs noon 24<sup>th</sup> January 2011. Any expression of interest received after the date and time specified may not be considered.**

### **Return address**

Sue Hardwick (Wyre Proposal)  
Forestry Commission – West Midlands  
Birches Valley  
Rugeley  
Staffordshire  
WS15 2UQ

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## Appendix 1.

### Questions to be addressed as part of the expression of interest

1. In no more than 300 words please give a brief overview of who you are, what your current business / occupation is and outline any directly relevant experience that you may have. Applicants invited to stage 2 of the process will be given the opportunity to supply more detailed information.
  - A. Describe the type of catering and retail offer that you think would work at Wyre Forest and:
    - B. main activities or elements of the business, i.e. mode of operation
    - C. main income streams
    - D. the projected audience (numbers and demographics)
    - E. links to key government agendas such as big society, localism, health, education and climate change
2. As well as developing our own business interest we would like to develop Wyre to maximise benefits for the local community and the local economy. There is also a possibility that the centre could act as a `hub` for local forest produce as mentioned in the `background information` above. Please provide examples of how you would help achieve these aims.
3. Outline how you would ensure that the business is inclusive (so that all sections of society can access the site, activities and services) and in particular any ideas around engaging under represented groups.
4. Briefly describe how your business would seek to minimise any environmental impacts associated with its operation on the site. For example sourcing local produce, recycling etc.
5. How would you integrate the activities that you would undertake with the Forestry Commissions other business areas, brand and requirements for the site?
6. What would be the likely infrastructure implications or requirements for your business, i.e. power, storage, security, transport, etc?
7. What would be your strategy for marketing the attraction?

Continued overleaf

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## About your business

Please tell us about your business.

<b>Name of Organisation</b>	
<b>Address for all correspondence</b>	
<b>Contact Name</b>	
<b>Telephone Number</b>	
<b>Fax Number</b>	
<b>E-mail address</b>	
<b>Website Address (if applicable)</b>	
<b>If applicable, address of Registered Office</b>	
<b>Nature of Organisation (E.g. Plc, Partnership etc).</b>	
<b>Number of employees:</b>	
<b>Length of time Organisation has been operating</b>	
<b>Company Registration Number</b> (Or alternative EU registration number).	
<b>VAT Registration Number</b> (Or alternative EU registration number).	