Water Environment Improvements
Feasibility Project Evidence Form

Assurance

Information provided in this form will be used by the Bluespaces Team and the Bluespaces Governance Group to confirm that the project has delivered the outputs previously identified at project approval. The form presents evidence of outputs achieved to support development of projects that will deliver benefits above and beyond NWG;s baseline and regulatory obligations to improve the water environment accessible to customers across at least two out of three aspects.

Assurance Level*	Project Approval Date*	Completed Project Sign-Off Date*
Bluespaces Team / Governance Group	28 November 2025	20/05/2026

Project Information

Project Name

River Breamish Restoration at Hedgeley Estate

Project Lead

Company/ Organisation	Named Lead	Position
Tweed Forum	Craig Marshall	Senior Project Officer

Project Timescales

Feasibility Project Approved	Project Initiated	Project Completed
November 2025	December 2025	March 2026

Project Summary and Highlights

Northumbrian Water and Tweed Forum have conducted feasibility and development work to inform planned improvements of approximately 9 km of bluespaces on the River Breamish at Hedgeley Estate.

The River Till in North Northumberland is one of the best rivers of its type in the UK, supporting a diverse range of plant and wildlife species. In recognition of this, it has national and international designations: River Tweed Catchment Rivers (England: Till Catchment) Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and River Tweed Special Area of Conservation (SAC). As designated sites, the Till Catchment Rivers should provide favourable habitat conditions for their characteristic biological communities but none of the seven Till SSSI units are currently in 'favourable condition' due to a long history of modification to support agriculture and infrastructure development. Legacy impacts include channel straightening, historic dredging, flood bank construction, and intensive floodplain drainage, which have collectively simplified channel morphology, disconnected the river from its floodplain, and reduced the natural diversity of in-channel and riparian habitats. These alterations have constrained natural processes such as sediment transport and flood storage, resulting in a loss of ecological function, reduced habitat quality, and diminished resilience to extreme weather events such as flooding and drought.

The River Breamish Restoration Project at the Hedgeley Estate will address these legacy impacts by restoring a 7.2 km reach of the River Breamish and its adjacent floodplain to a more natural, self-sustaining condition. Through a combination of embankment lowering, channel realignment, floodplain reconnection, and the creation of new wetland features, the project will re-establish the natural interaction between river and floodplain, enhance habitat for priority species, and improve the system's capacity to adapt to a changing climate. Capital works are scheduled for August to October 2026 and this Bluespaces feasibility funding supported development of the necessary understanding of ecological risks and mitigations, assessing existing and post-design biodiversity habitat units and designing 5 education and interpretation boards for installation across the site. Final pre-implementation tasks supported by Bluespaces were essential to ensure that the River Breamish Restoration Project is fully compliant, technically robust, and will maximise its environmental and community benefits.

Highlights

- Completion of a baseline Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, and River Condition Assessment;
- Agreed locations for five education and interpretation boards, with approved Planning Notice from landowner;
- Agreed specification for board design and content, and supplier quote;
- Completed applications for Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP), Planning and Water Resources;
- Finalised project design, construction methodologies, access logistics, sequencing of works and costings: and
- Completed Bluespaces Candidate Project Form for funding to support some of the capital delivery costs.

Figure 1: River Breamish at Hedgeley Estate

Maps

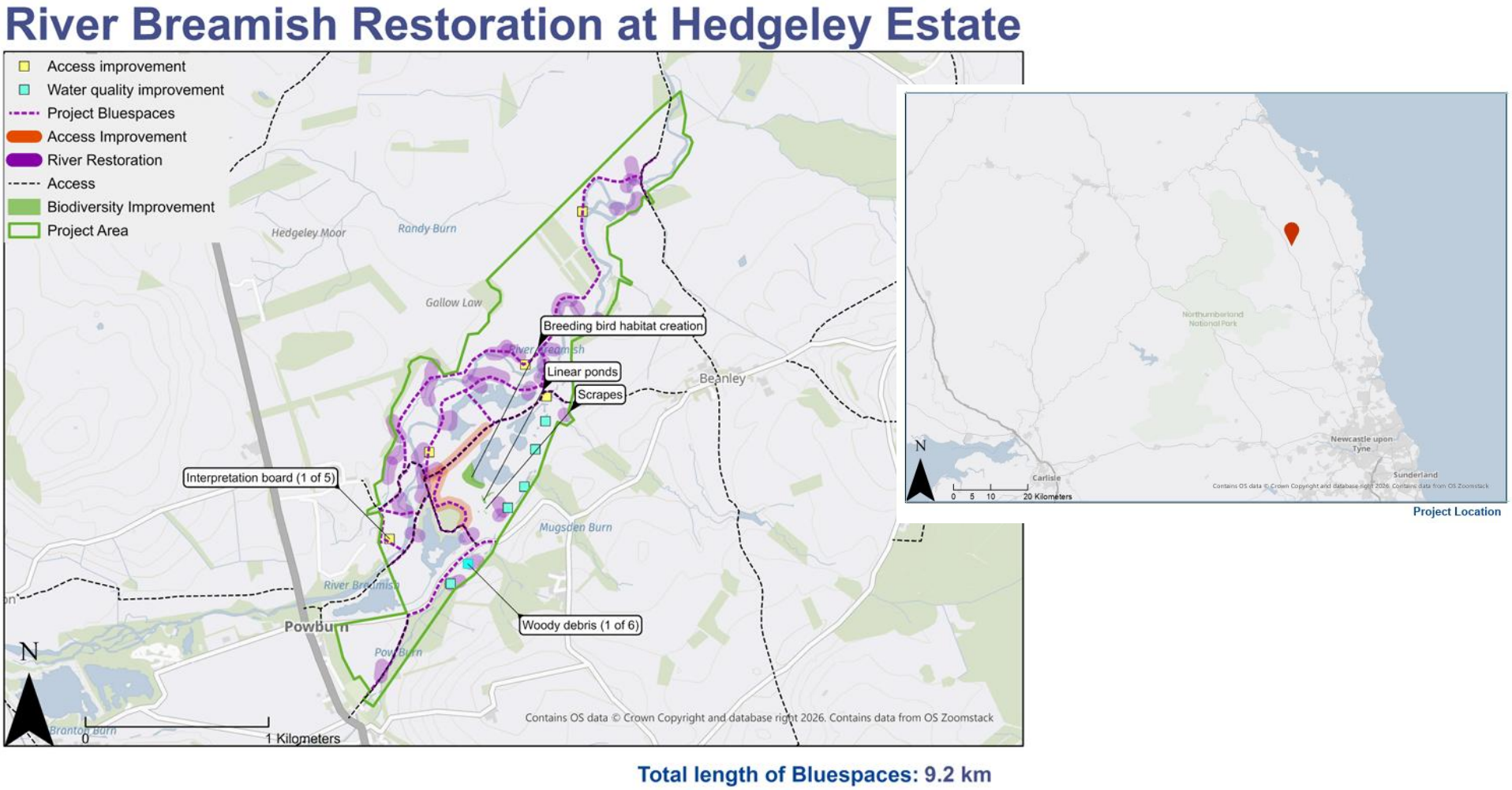

Figure 2: Proposed bluespace improvements on the River Breamish and Pow Burn. See p.9 for final design plan for river restoration interventions

Feasibility Project Activities & Outputs

Activity	Outputs
Appoint/ undertake Rive Condition Assessment using the MoRPh5 methodology to enable the production of baseline condition report to meet statutory BNG requirements	Completed BNG Watercourse metric, EcIA report, and overall BNG calculator metric completed for the project to meet the statutory BNG requirement (reports available on request).
Landowner Liaison	Approved Notice 1 Planning Notice from the Landowner (available on request).
Design and development of community engagement boards, locations, content etc	Supplier quote, approved Notice 1 Planning Notice from the Landowner, approved map showing proposed location of 5 interpretation boards and content designed (all documents available on request).
Coordinate application of required plans and permits (Water Resources Consent, Full Planning Permission; Flood Risk Activity Permit)	Staff time used to coordinate permit applications for water resources, planning and FRAP (copies of completed applications available on request).
Develop costed project plan for capital delivery	Fully costed project plan developed (see p.7) and Bluespaces Candidate form completed and submitted River Breamish Restoration Candidate Form.

Customer Testimonies & Media

Not applicable for this feasibility project; evidence to be submitted on delivery of capital works.

Lead Partner Quotes & Testimonials

"*The Bluespaces development funding allowed us to undertake critical baseline assessments of the river and floodplain to understand the impact our project would have on the biodiversity present. Without these statutory BNG assessments we would not have been able to submit our application for planning permission and it is likely we would have needed to scale back on an element of the design. It has been essential and we are very grateful.*"

Craig Marshall, Senior Project Officer, River Till Restoration

Other Supporting Evidence

Summary of Outputs

Staff Time

14.5 days of staff time were spent on the following:

- Landowner liaison around board location and design.
- Supplier liaison around board design and specification.
- Development of permit applications.
- Contact management for EcIA, BNG reports.
- 1x site walkover with river condition assessor.
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Education Boards

- Successful liaison with landowner to confirm board location and general content.
- Successfully obtained costed quotes for the design and procurement of the boards.

Ecological Impact Assessment, River Condition Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Metric

- Successful completion of the EcIA to inform the permitting applications as well as Construction Environment Management Plan.
- Successful completion of both the watercourse and terrestrial BNG assessment to inform planning application.

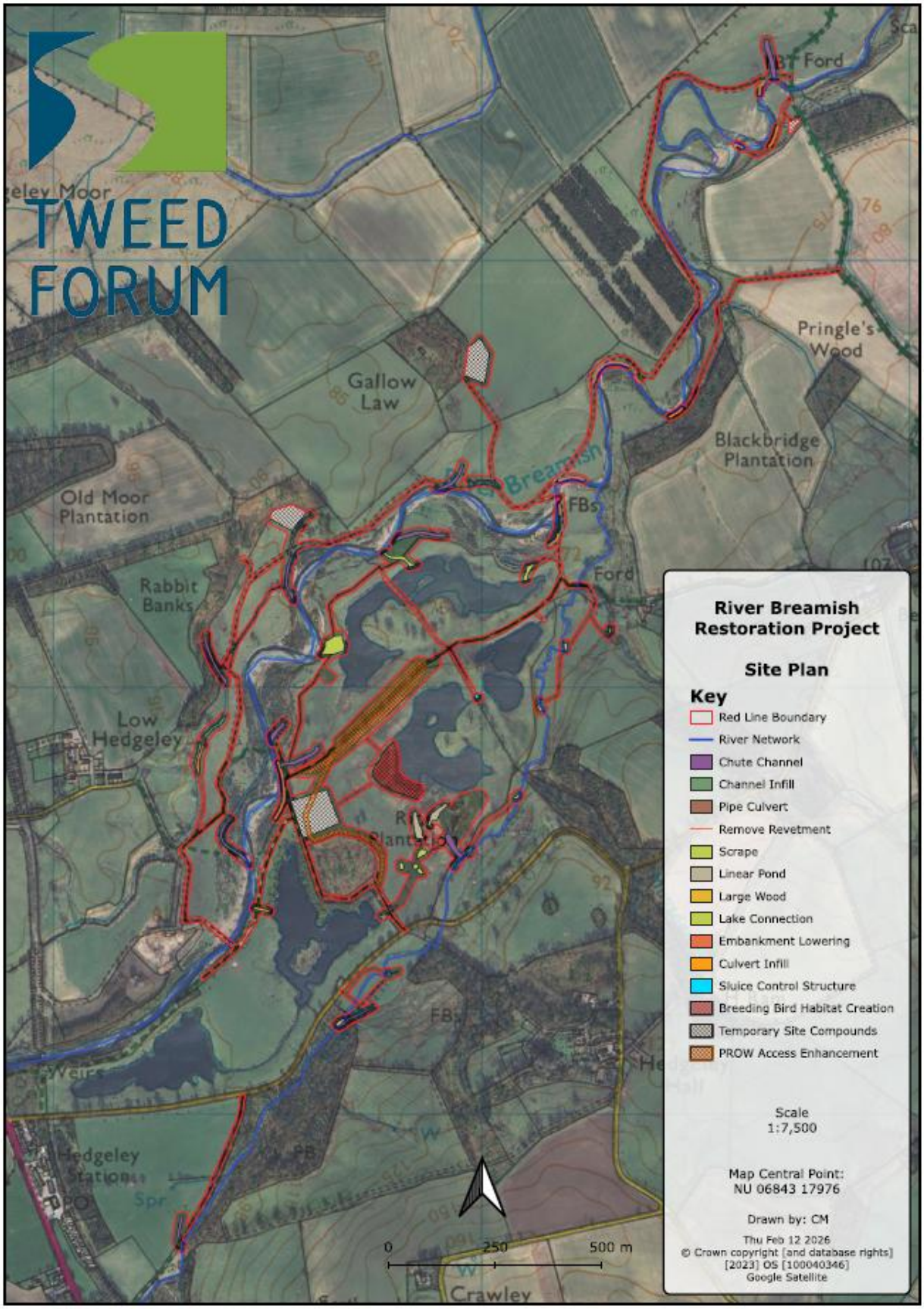

Figure 3: Map showing finalised design plan of river restoration interventions within project area