

NatureBid: Upper Aire Auction

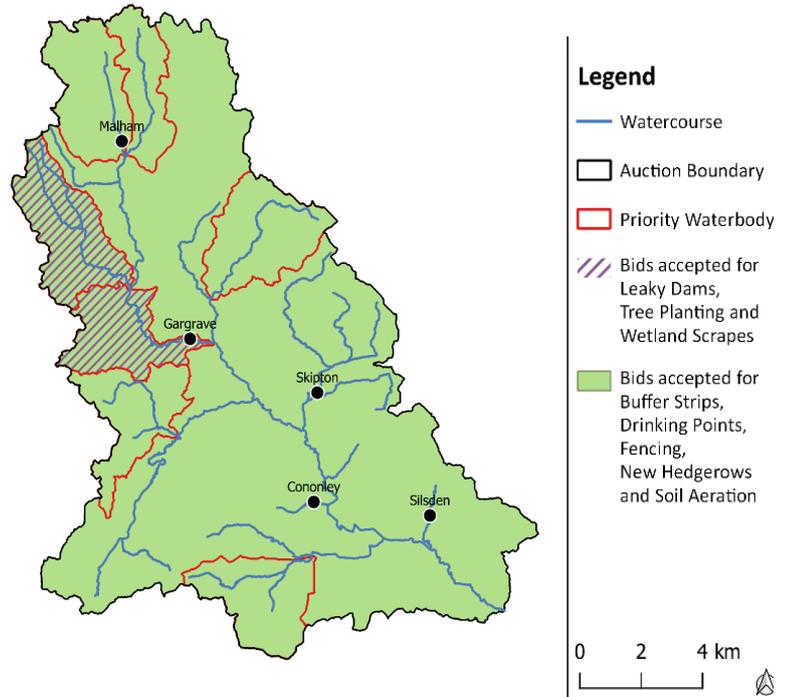


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The Upper Aire NatureBid auction was a pilot project which provided an opportunity for landowners and farmers to bid for funding to carry out targeted interventions on their land. These interventions provide natural flood management benefits and help improve water quality as well as creating habitat for greater biodiversity, carbon sequestration and benefitting soil health.

Landowners and farmers were able to select locations on their land for the measures, and submit a bid to carry out these works themselves. Following a review to assess the best possible outcomes for the catchment, the most competitive bids received funding. The auction was live for a two week period between 15-28th March 2021.

This pilot was considered a success and NatureBid 21-22 is due to open in April xxxxx.



Primary project aims:

- Engage with known and new landowners across the catchment
- Raise awareness of and deliver environmental interventions which enhance habitats, improve water quality provide natural flood management
- Utilise an online reverse auction style platform to deliver the auction and ensure competitive, balanced outcomes for the catchment.

Available interventions:

Anywhere in the Upper Aire

- Buffer Strips
- Fencing
- Drinking Points
- New Hedgerows
- Soil Aeration

Otterburn Beck from Source to River Aire and Aire from Otterburn Beck to Eshton Beck only

- Leaky Dams
- Tree Planting
- Wetland Scrapes

Partners and Support:

NatureBid is part funded by Leeds City Council as part of the Leeds Flood Alleviation scheme NFM programme, in addition to Defra Test and Trials funding and Environment Agency Water Environment Investment Funding (through the Upper Aire Project).



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Seven priority waterbodies received double weighting for this funding as these were deemed most in need of attention in order to improve their WFD status. The waterbodies were considered a priority by the Environment Agency as they do not meet good ecological status. By weighting these water bodies in the auction, we were encouraging improvements to their water quality and improving natural flood management in these areas. The spatial distribution of the bids received show that the majority of successful bids (37/43) are for measures within the priority waterbodies.



Key achievements:

- 64 bids made in 2 weeks totalling £52,273.90
- 43 successful bids received a total of £40,802 funding
- Successful bids were received for drinking points, new hedgerows, riparian fencing and soil aeration
- Soil aeration received the most bids across the catchment compared to other interventions
- There were a total of 6 bidders in the auction, all of whom were successful in at least one bid
- Both known and new landowners were engaged in the process

With environmental works being implemented largely in priority areas across the Upper Aire, the aims and objectives of this study were addressed and the pilot was deemed to be a success. These works will seek to improve habitat, water quality and flood management within the catchment. Moreover, with the auction being available to all landowners in the catchment, the project has been able to engage with new landowners. In response to the NatureBid auction, there is a growing appetite for future environmental projects and awareness of environmentally friendly farming has increased.

Final totals delivered:

- 1151m of new riparian fencing
- 961m of new hedgerow
- 133ha farmland soil aeration
- 1 new livestock drinking point

Case study to be updated upon completion of the project in March 2022

We would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to our funders and partners, for not only funding the project, but also for the ongoing support of their project teams.