

Confor response to Defra's England Tree Strategy Consultation

09 SEPTEMBER 2020

INTRODUCTION

Confor is the representative organisation for the UK's sustainable forestry and wood-using businesses. It has more than 1,500 member companies (730 in England) representing the whole forestry and wood supply chain. Confor focuses on strategic issues vital to the success and future sustainability of the sector, including: helping to build the market for wood and forest products; creating a supportive policy environment; and helping members become more competitive and successful.

The UK forestry and wood sector is worth £2 billion in annual economic value and employs more than 50,000 people. It can employ considerably more people and deliver much greater economic value. It is an unusual industry, because an increase in sustainable economic activity can also deliver environmental and social benefits, unlike many other business sectors. This is because growing trees can lock up carbon, which can then be stored in wood products.

Confor welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation on behalf of its members and welcomes the fact that it comes so early in the lifetime of this Government. The consultation presents an excellent opportunity to produce a Strategy for our economy, environment and society at a time when policy interventions delivering multiple benefits must be prioritised.

The value of forests and woodlands to our physical and mental health was highlighted during the pandemic as many people found pleasure during lockdown by walking, cycling and bird watching in local forests.

As the UK plots a way forward beyond the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, our forests and woods have an equally vital role in delivering a Green Recovery - as well as a crucial part to play in meeting longer-term targets, including the UK's ambition to be Net Zero by 2050 to tackle the climate emergency.

Our industry provides rural jobs and economic growth AND supports the UK's climate change ambitions, enhances biodiversity, and provides wide-ranging social and recreational opportunities.

The key to unlock these multiple benefits is an approach to public policy and funding which works in tandem with woodland owners' and businesses' interests. Doing that will ensure benefits are sustainable and enduring, not just for the lifetime of a grant or specific initiative.

The Tree Strategy needs to be joined up, from the forest to the end product, supporting three main and very closely linked objectives, which bring together the entire forestry and wood supply chain:

- Plant more trees;
- Manage more of our existing woodland;
- Use more home-grown wood.

Confor highlighted these points in its 2019 General Election manifesto, which can be read [here](#).

While we should aspire to increase the amount of hardwood we produce and consume, the current reality is that 95% of the home-grown wood we use is conifer - because that is what the UK is competitive in growing and manufacturing.

That won't change fundamentally in the short term, as it will take many decades to grow the broadleaf timber supply and market. Therefore, to achieve the successful end results of the Strategy in the coming years, we need to do what previous strategies haven't done - invest in productive conifer trees as well as broadleaves.

Plant more trees

The UK Government has set an ambitious annual target of 30,000 hectares of new woodland creation by 2025, in line with Confor's Woodland Carbon Targets, [published in April 2019](#). This ambition is welcome and Confor believes it should be enshrined in legislation. The best means of doing this will be through an appropriate amendment to the Government's Environment Bill.

It is important that the UK Government also takes responsibility and commits in the Strategy to a meaningful tree planting target for England.

However, as the Committee on Climate Change has noted, tree planting policy has failed in all parts of the UK apart from Scotland.

In 2015, the UK Government set a modest target of 11 million new trees in five years in England - but fewer than 7 million trees were planted, according to the [Forestry Commission's statistical report](#).

This means a far more ambitious target will be very challenging, but Confor is committed to working closely with the UK Government, and devolved administrations, to rise to the challenge.

In Scotland, the success in planting 22,000 hectares of new woodland in the last two years - more than 80 per cent of the UK total - has been based on a strong, supportive relationship between the public and private sector, and a willingness to embrace high quality tree planting of all types, recognising that modern standards and regulatory safeguards ensure these deliver a wide range of benefits. In Scotland, the private sector is planting 90 per cent of all new trees.

Scotland's success has also been based on strong political leadership and streamlining procedures for planting applications and approvals. Confor is pleased to see Environment Minister Lord Goldsmith giving such strong personal backing to the planting targets and we believe that a review similar to the Mackinnon review in Scotland should be carried out in 2021, to look at all current arrangements for the consideration and approval of woodland creation proposals.

Manage more of our existing woodland

Too much English forest and woodland, particularly broadleaf woodland, is not in active management. The level of English woodland in active management (59 per cent) has not significantly

improved for five years. Confor agrees we need to manage woods better. If this were done, it would deliver huge benefits for climate change and nature because there is more existing woodland than any new planting scheme could create. Established woodlands, when thinned by the removal of certain trees, soak up carbon much more quickly than newly planted ones.

Part of better management is much more active control of grey squirrels. Confor agrees that successful management of deer and a new approach to grey squirrels is important if we are to expand and regenerate our woodlands, increase the range of plants that live in them and reduce the need for other forms of tree protection.

Use more home-grown wood

Global timber demand is predicted to treble by 2050 and the UK imports more than 80% of the wood it uses. The UK must produce more domestic timber to reduce pressure on an over-stretched global supply chain, resulting in illegal logging and exploitation of intact forest habitats. Using more home-grown wood in construction means carbon is locked up for longer and carbon-intensive materials like concrete and steel are replaced. At the end of its life, wood can be recycled and reused as biomass fuel, chipboard or in biochemical products. The UK Government should set targets for greater home-grown timber use and align them with low-carbon policies such as the BEIS Clean Growth Strategy and Committee on Climate Change net zero recommendations. The UK Government should also lead the way through its own procurement; leaving the EU puts new power in the hands of Ministers.

The multiple benefits of modern forestry

The diagram below shows the multiple environmental, economic and social benefits that can be delivered if the UK can plant more trees, manage more woodland and use more home-grown wood.

This fits perfectly with the UK Government's desire to fund our rural areas on the basis of delivering public benefits - or public goods. The forestry and wood sector has a vital role to play in a post-Brexit approach to land use which can deliver these multiple benefits - and this Tree Strategy must be carefully aligned with the new Environmental Land Management scheme (ELMs).

The benefits of forestry and wood are not either/or options - creating jobs and economic growth can go hand in hand with tackling the climate and nature emergencies and providing beautiful places for people to enjoy the natural world. This Tree Strategy is a fantastic opportunity to put forestry and timber at the very heart of a Green Recovery and set the UK on a path to a net-zero economy by 2050, and a long-term sustainable rural future. **#TheFutureIsForestry.**



Confor comments on the four pillars of the consultation

Confor has responded to the specific questions in the consultation, but would like to make the following additional points - covering the four areas of the consultation, plus the vital topic of future industry skills and training:

Expanding and connecting trees and woodlands

- A review of all current arrangements for the consideration and approval of forestry planting proposals - based on the Mackinnon review¹ in Scotland in 2016 - should be undertaken alongside the England Tree Strategy. This was flagged up as an action in the 25-Year Environment Plan in 2018 (Page 50) but has not been taken forward. It should be done without delay.
- There need to be clear and measurable planting targets for England and the UK Government must rise to the challenge and commit to 10,000 hectares by 2030 and 8,000 hectares by 2025 in England. These targets should be drilled down for different regions of England, as well as the devolved administrations - with online and real-time reporting of applications, approvals and completions showing progress versus annual targets.
- In England, these targets must indicate a reasonable split between productive conifer and native planting with two thirds of the planting target to be of productive woodland and two

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/mackinnon-report/>

thirds of that productive woodland to be productive conifer with one third productive broadleaf.

- The England Tree Strategy must be consistent with and aligned with ELMs. Woodland creation and management should be supported under both Tiers 1 & 2 of ELMs, ensuring that support for land use is consistent across all sectors.
- The England Tree Strategy must have support from all departments of state and all agencies of those departments dealing with forestry policy. This should include DEFRA, Forestry Commission, Forestry England, Natural England and the Environment Agency as well as BEIS, DCLG, the MoD and National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).
- If applications for new planting or restocking (replacing trees that have been harvested to provide wood products) are in line with the UK Forest Standard, they should be approved automatically unless there are compelling reasons for refusal.

Protecting and improving our trees and woodland

- The old mantra ‘The wood that pays is the wood that stays’ must guide efforts to protect and improve trees and woodland. This means clarity for landowners on the cost of maintaining woodland in good condition to deliver an income stream and provide long-term benefits, whether primarily economic, social or environmental (or a combination). Public funds for managing woodlands should require a long-term plan beyond the simple achievement of the short-term objectives for which grant is provided.
- Improving the quality of our woodland, particularly broadleaves, and the survival rates of trees, requires consistent support to remove the impact of the non-native grey squirrel and to responsibly manage negative deer impacts. This requires effective incentives, collaboration and research into new control measures, such as immuno-contraception and gene editing for grey squirrels.

Engaging people with trees and woodlands

- The Forest Research *Public Opinion of Forestry* survey published in June 2019² showed 88 per cent of people in both the UK and in England agreed or strongly agreed that ‘A lot more trees should be planted’. This figure has been above 80 per cent in every biannual survey since at least 2009.
- Research by YouGov in October 2018³ found 93% of British people are willing to support planting new trees to combat climate change.
- A September 2020 report by Climate Assembly UK said 99% of Assembly members (drawn from a representative sample of the population) supported creating more forests and managing existing woods better. When faced with a set of policy choices on removing greenhouse gases, this was their top choice.

² <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/statistics-by-topic/public-opinion-of-forestry/> (accessed September 2020)

³ <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2018/10/07/how-should-we-combat-climate-change> (accessed September 2020)

- During the pandemic we have seen more people using forests and woodland for recreation at a time when exercise outdoors was limited. The increased focus on forestry and tree planting offers an excellent opportunity to explain to the public why these woods exist and how they contribute to society’s economic development and environmental needs - and not just their aesthetic value.
- “All trees matter”. Work to increase public recognition of the environmental, economic and social benefits of all tree species and reject native/exotic and conifer/broadleaf distinctions for broader concepts of long-term forest resilience and multiple benefits. DEFRA should consider how this can best be done, perhaps commissioning research to provide facts to counter “single issue” arguments against woodland creation.

Supporting the economy

- Forestry and wood processing is a £2 billion industry in the UK supporting 50,000 plus jobs, so the economic benefits of forestry need to be recognised and supported in this Strategy. As our introduction says, the key to unlock multiple benefits is ensuring public policy and funding works with woodland owners’ and businesses’ interests.
- Public funding of all land use should be directed towards clear public benefit. Woodland owners should primarily decide whether this is timber production, natural capital benefits like flood mitigation or biodiversity, tourism or other activities - but there should be a clear benefit.
- The focus for new planting in suitable areas should be productive conifer species with a definable route to the market. This can reduce the UK’s demand for imports and support its housebuilding agenda. Currently, around 80% of new homes in Scotland use timber frames, but the figure is less than 25% in England. Innovation to increase long-term storage of carbon through significantly increasing the use of long-life wood-based products, particularly in construction, should be encouraged. [Conifer trees also supply timber for everyday products like fencing, decking, flooring and kitchen or bathroom units].
- Government should work with industry to support the development of technologies to use wood-fibre for the replacement of fossil fuel/petro-chemical based products, such as bioethanol.
- Government should work with industry to improve the efficient use of wood-fibre, including adding value to the use of recycled wood.
- Government should work with industry to look at new public sector construction and retrofit programmes using existing and new UK wood-based products and systems, such as the timber off-site construction model and mass timber manufacture in the UK. This will increase UK manufacturing, provide higher skilled employment and deliver more carbon sequestration.
- Much of the forestry managed in the UK, including the Public Forest Estate, is audited annually against the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme, providing the basis for international FSC and PEFC certification. However, certification still remains out of reach for the majority of private woodland owners. Government should work with industry to promote and incentivise the uptake of certification, in a competitive market, to UKWAS alongside Grown in Britain.

Skills and training

- Most forestry and wood employers feel there is a shortage of skilled workers coming into the sector according to the [Forestry Skills Plan](#) for 2019.
- Confor believes that there is a real need to ensure there are sufficient skills and training opportunities for a growing industry.
- Confor urges the government to work with the partners who drew up the Forestry Skills Plan to deliver the expanded workforce required to deliver the Government's ambitious new tree planting targets.

Please tell us who you are

1. *Would you like your response to be treated as confidential (please see this consultation's Data Privacy Notice)?*

No.

2. *What is your name?*

Caroline Ayre

3. *What is your e-mail address?*

caroline@confor.org.uk

4. *Please tell us about yourself (select one option):*

A membership organisation

5. *What is your organisation?*

The Confederation of Forest Industries (known as Confor)

Expanding and connecting our trees and woodlands

6. *Which actions would address the financial barriers that prevent the creation of new woodland? (select all that apply – **selection in bold text**)*

- Consolidating the current range of woodland creation grants into one
- Increasing the payment rates for incentives for woodland creation
- Widening the eligibility criteria for applicants to our woodland creation grants so more applicants can apply
- Widening the eligibility criteria for the type of woodlands and tree planting that can be funded
- Providing a clear explanation and guarantees of how trees planted between now and 2024 will be considered under Environmental Land Management Scheme
- A quicker approval process for grant agreements (see Comment)
- Support if trees fail to establish due to no fault of the owner (for example, due to tree health or severe weather)
- Introducing mechanisms that provide an annual cash flow in the woodlands' early years
- Introducing mechanisms to realise a secure long-term cash flow for ecosystem services
- Introducing measures to stimulate more private investment (e.g. green finance) in woodland creation
- Developing new approaches to partnerships between landowners and woodland investors or managers which enable the landowner to derive an ongoing annual income from the land

Comment:

The approval processes must be quicker, but also less expensive to navigate and administer, and with a more predictable approval process for grant agreements.

7. *Which actions would be most effective in addressing the financial barriers that prevent the creation of new woodland? (select up to three options – **selection in bold text**)*

- Consolidating the current range of woodland creation grants into one
- **Increasing the payment rates for incentives for woodland creation**
- Widening the eligibility criteria for applicants to our woodland creation grants so more applicants can apply
- Widening the eligibility criteria for the type of woodlands and tree planting that can be funded
- Providing a clear explanation and guarantees of how trees planted between now and 2024 will be considered under Environmental land management Scheme
- **A quicker approval process for grant agreements**
- Support if trees fail to establish due to no fault of the owner (for example, due to tree health or severe weather)
- **Introducing mechanisms that provide an annual cash flow in the woodlands' early years**
- Introducing mechanisms to realise a secure long-term cash flow for ecosystem services

- Introducing measures to stimulate more private investment (e.g. green finance) in woodland creation
- Developing new approaches to partnerships between landowners and woodland investors or managers which enable the landowner to derive an ongoing annual income from the land
- Other (if added, your own entry to question 6)

8. *Woodlands provide a range of ecosystem services that provide benefits to businesses and society. How could government better encourage private investment in establishing trees and woodland creation? (Maximum 150 word response)*

Woodland creation already involves significant private investment by the landowner in terms of the land value, which for forestry land at present is around £4-5000 per hectare (approximately match-funding the grant). Landowners often also contribute additional investment either financially or in kind (e.g. labour) to woodland creation; and at present all management, such as grey squirrel and deer control, thinning, access maintenance and liability for dangerous trees is funded by the landowner alone. The investment repays as high quality forested land increases in value, but to plant woodland on better land such as peri-urban or cultivated land, the length of the return on investment goes up substantially. Encouraging more investment could be done by:

- de-risking woodland creation so investors can be confident land can be planted;
- acknowledging and celebrating the contribution and natural capital benefits already being delivered by private investors to encourage new green investors to come forward.

9. *Which actions would address the non-financial barriers to the creation of new woodland? (select all that apply – **selection in bold text**)*

- Consolidating the current range of woodland creation grants into one
- **Providing access to better information on the income streams well managed woodland can provide**
- **Providing land managers with better access to expert advice on woodland creation and forestry knowledge and skills**
- **Providing the investment community with access to expert advice on woodland creation and forestry knowledge and skills**
- **Outreach to present the benefits of trees and forestry to land managers**
- **Outreach to present the benefits of trees and forestry to the investment community**
- **Outreach to present the benefits of trees and forestry to local communities**
- **Changing policy so it does not treat afforestation as a permanent land use change**
- **Increasing availability and access to contractors to plant and maintain the trees**
- **Increasing availability of desired bio secure planting material**
- **Educate and enthuse a new generation to expand the forestry industry**
- Developing new approaches to partnerships between landowners and woodland investors or managers which enable the landowner to retain ownership of the land

- Developing a supply of diverse and locally-appropriate seed and planting material by supporting community tree nurseries and other small nurseries that provide UK sourced and grown trees.
- Providing best practice guidance on how best to achieve tree cover through natural establishment (e.g. most suitable locations, ground preparation, fencing requirements and decisions on management over time).
- Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

10. *Which actions would be most effective in addressing the non-financial barriers to the creation of new woodland? (select up to three options – **selection in bold text**)*

- Consolidating the current range of woodland creation grants into one
- **Providing access to better information on the income streams well managed woodland can provide**
- **Providing land managers with better access to expert advice on woodland creation and forestry knowledge and skills**
- Providing the investment community with access to expert advice on woodland creation and forestry knowledge and skills
- **Outreach to present the benefits of trees and forestry to land managers**
- Outreach to present the benefits of trees and forestry to the investment community
- Outreach to present the benefits of trees and forestry to local communities
- Changing policy so it does not treat afforestation as a permanent land use change
- Increasing availability and access to contractors to plant and maintain the trees
- Increasing availability of desired bio secure planting material
- Educate and enthuse a new generation to expand the forestry industry
- Developing new approaches to partnerships between landowners and woodland investors or managers which enable the landowner to retain ownership of the land
- Developing a supply of diverse and locally appropriate seed and planting material by supporting community tree nurseries and other small nurseries that provide UK sourced and grown trees.
- Providing best practice guidance on how best to achieve tree cover through natural establishment (e.g. most suitable locations, ground preparation, fencing requirements and decisions on management over time)
- Other (if added, your own entry to question 9)

11. *Which actions would address the regulatory barriers that prevent the creation of new woodland? (select all that apply – **selection in bold text**)*

- Providing access to better guidance on how to meet the UK Forestry Standard
- **Local partners agreeing and setting priorities for woodland creation and other habitat restoration across landscapes**
- **Enabling regulatory decisions by the Forestry Commission which reflect the national obligation to meet net zero emissions by 2050 and achieve the investment in natural capital set out in our 25 Year Environment Plan**

- **Implementing a joint approach to land management across central government and its agencies including those responsible for protected landscapes**
- **Providing a clear explanation and guarantees of how trees planted between now and 2024 will be considered under Environmental Land Management Scheme**
- **Reduce the time and costs associated with Environmental Impact Assessment for afforestation.**
- Other -please specify in no more than 25 words

12. *Which actions would be most effective in addressing the regulatory barriers that prevent the creation of new woodland? (select up to three options – **selection in bold text**)*

- Providing access to better guidance on how to meet the UK Forestry Standard
- Local partners agreeing and setting priorities for woodland creation and other habitat restoration across landscapes
- **Enabling regulatory decisions by the Forestry Commission which reflect the national obligation to meet net zero emissions by 2050 and achieve the investment in natural capital set out in our 25 Year Environment Plan**
- **Implementing a joint approach to land management across central government and its agencies including those responsible for protected landscapes**
- Implementing a joint approach to land management across central government and its agencies including those responsible for protected landscapes
- Providing a clear explanation and guarantees of how trees planted between now and 2024 will be considered under Environmental Land Management Scheme
- **Reduce the time and costs associated with Environmental Impact Assessment for afforestation**
- Other (if added, your own entry to question 11)

13. *How can we most effectively support the natural establishment of trees and woodland in the landscape? (Maximum 100 words)*

Natural regeneration is effective in certain locations. Fencing upland riparian zones where there is still a natural seed bank has proved effective in parts of Scotland, while ancient woodlands can be restored and expanded through deer control, where older trees are still providing seed. However, regeneration is likely to have more potential in England as a woodland management tool than a woodland creation tool. The favoured locations for woodland creation – those with low existing ecological value such as improved grazing – are the least likely to have regeneration potential, so the great majority of new woods will require to be planted.

14. *Are there any other actions - beyond the options you have already selected or submitted - that would help landowners and managers to transform the level of woodland creation and increase the number of non-woodland trees in England? (Maximum 150 words)*

See previous answers and comments.

15. Which of the following actions would be most effective in helping expand woodland creation in locations which deliver water, flood risk benefits and nature recovery? (select up to three options – **selection in bold text**)

- Widening the eligibility criteria for woodland creation grants so more applicants can apply and more forms of woodland are eligible
- Widening the eligibility criteria for woodland creation grants so more sizes of woodland are eligible
- **Increasing grant payments for tree planting along water courses, steep sided slopes and difficult sites**
- **Quicker approval process for grant agreements**
- Providing a clear explanation and guarantees of how trees planted between now and 2024 will be considered under Environmental Land Management Scheme
- **Implementing a joint approach to land management across government, including authorities responsible for protected landscapes**
- Providing better access to advice and guidance on woodland creation, forestry expertise and training
- Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

16. What role could the nation’s National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) play in increasing woodland cover? (Maximum 150 word response)

When drawing up National Park Management Plans, each National Park Authority should have a statutory duty to identify appropriate levels of woodland creation, having regard to the Government’s tree planting targets.

At a regional level, they can draw on the experience of Forestry England, which has created and managed public benefit forests for timber, people and wildlife for a century.

National Parks have potential to showcase the best in modern forestry as rural land use, creating jobs and local, sustainable wood. This has been done on Exmoor where, under the management of a professional forestry team, timber produced from National Park woodlands is used to build signage and bridges around the estate and sold to create income for conservation activities. Schoolchildren are involved in woodland management activities such as installing bird boxes and ‘adopting’ natural regeneration in clearings for management.

Protecting and improving our trees and woodlands

17. Which actions would be most effective to increase protection for trees and woodland from unsustainable management? (select up to three options – **selection in bold text**)

- **Introducing measures to support compliance with the UK Forestry Standard**
- More effective information sharing between government departments and their delivery bodies to inform decisions impacting on woodland, including to prevent woodland loss

- Introducing clearer processes for licencing tree felling, with felling licences that can be suspended, withdrawn or superseded
- Greater penalties for non-compliance with the requirements of the Forestry Act
- **Powers to set wider felling licence conditions, for example to enable enforcement of compliance with the UK Forestry Standard**
- **A clearer policy presumption that all trees felled without a licence will be replaced (except in exceptional circumstances)**
- Refining the process of making Tree Preservation Orders, and clarifying the criteria to improve consistency in application of the policy across local authorities
- Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

18. *Which actions would best help the planning system support better protection and enhancement of the ancient and wider woodland environment and trees? (select up to two options – **selection in bold text**)*

- **Providing support to fully complete revision of the Ancient Woodland Inventory (to include ancient woodlands under two hectares in area)**
- **Commissioning research into effective size and use of buffer zones around woodland for different impacts**
- Providing better monitoring and recording of decisions on planning applications affecting ancient woodland
- Sharing best practice guidance and training to support implementation of National Planning Policy Framework policy on ancient woodland with local authority planners
- Encouraging more woodland to be brought into management where impacted by development
- More effective information sharing between agencies and local planning authorities to inform decision making impacting on woodland including to prevent woodland loss
- Refining the process of making Tree Preservation Orders and clarifying the criteria to improve consistency in application of the policy across local authorities.
- Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

19. *What actions would be most effective in reducing the use of plastics in forestry? (select one option – **selection in bold text**)*

- **Providing support to land managers for deer control and fencing**
- Supporting further testing and trial of non-plastic alternatives such as tree guards
- Introducing stronger control on the recovery and disposal of plastics in grant agreements and public sector contracts for woodland creation and management
- Promoting the use of non-plastic tree guards
- **Other - please specify in no more than 25 words**

Develop a national policy on sustainable deer management and control measures.

20. *Which actions would overcome financial barriers to woodland management? (select all that apply – **selection in bold text**)*

- **Providing better information on timber prices, grant schemes and market opportunities for wood and non-wood products**
- **Providing grant support for a wider range of management activities**
- Providing grant support for the restoration of Plantations on Ancient Woodlands Sites (PAWS)
- **Providing support for woodland infrastructure such as roading**
- **Providing grants or loans for equipment, for example, harvesters**
- **Support to increase the productivity/supply chains for woodland products**
- **Support for landowner collaboration in woodland management**
- **Government requiring more domestic timber through procurement policies**
- Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

21. *Which actions would be most effective at overcoming the financial barriers to woodland management? (select up to three options – **selection in bold text**)*

- Providing better information on timber prices, grant schemes and market opportunities for wood and non-wood products
- Providing grant support for a wider range of management activities
- Providing grant support for the restoration of Plantations on Ancient Woodlands Sites (PAWS)
- **Providing support for woodland infrastructure such as roading**
- Providing grants or loans for equipment, for example, harvesters
- **Support to increase the productivity/supply chains for woodland products**
- Support for landowner collaboration in woodland management
- **Government requiring more domestic timber through procurement policies**
- Other (if added, your own entry to question 20)

22. *Which actions would address the non-financial barriers to woodland management? (select all that apply – **selection in bold text**)*

- **Providing user friendly woodland management services aimed at ‘non forester’ woodland owners**
- **Ensuring public recognition of woodlands that are managed sustainably (for example, like Green Flag awards)**
- **Providing better communication of the benefits and need for woodland management with land managers and investors**
- **Providing better information on timber prices, grant schemes and market opportunities for wood and non-wood products**
- **Training to increase the forestry skills capacity in agricultural workers**
- Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

23. Which actions would be most effective at overcoming the non-financial barriers to woodland management? (select a maximum of three options – **selection in bold text**)

- Providing user friendly woodland management services aimed at ‘non forester’ woodland owners
- Ensuring public recognition of woodlands that are managed sustainably (for example like Green Flag awards)
- **Providing better communication of the benefits and need for woodland management with land managers and investors**
- **Providing better information on timber prices, grant schemes and market opportunities for wood and non-wood products**
- **Training to increase the forestry skills capacity in agricultural workers**
- Other (if added, your own entry to question 22)

24. Which actions would overcome the regulatory barriers to woodland management? (select all that apply – **selection in bold text**)

- **Streamlining delivery of current regulations (for example, self-service felling licences for tree felling proposals that would not reduce woodland cover)**
- **Placing responsibility for complying with woodland regulation on the woodland manager rather than the woodland owner**
- **Placing a legal obligation on all landowners to manage their woodland**
- Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

25. Which actions would be most effective at overcoming the regulatory barriers to woodland management? (select one option – **selection in bold text**)

- **Streamlining delivery of current regulations (for example, self-service felling licences for tree felling proposals that would not reduce woodland cover)**
- Placing responsibility for complying with woodland regulation on the woodland manager rather than the woodland owner
- Placing a legal obligation on all landowners to manage their woodland
- Other (if added, your own entry to question 24)

26. If you own and/or manage woodland(s) that is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) what actions would help you most to bring that woodland(s) into management? (Maximum 100 word response)

SSSI woodlands which are part of a larger forest managed for production and audited under UKWAS, are required to be maintained in good condition. This could be expanded to include all types of production by creating an integrated land use framework under ELMs, so landowners are required to maintain designated sites as a condition of production management for the whole unit. At present there is an unequal situation where a SSSI woodland is treated differently depending on whether it is part of a larger unit whose production is sheep, wheat or timber.

27. Which of the following actions would be most effective in improving plant biosecurity across England's trees and woodlands? (pick up to two options – **selection in bold text**)

- Increasing the number of nurseries that meet the 'Plant healthy' management standard
- Providing better best practice guidance and information about biosecurity
- **Introducing conditions which require suppliers to meet the "Plant Healthy" management standard for those public sector contracts and government grants that relate to tree planting and restocking**
- **Amending planning policy to encourage local planning authorities to source trees from suppliers who meet the 'Plant healthy' management standard**
- Sharing the Forestry England's experience and case studies
- Managing the impact of invasive non-native plants which provide a pathway for disease through targeted action, ongoing management and monitoring, and wider education
- Developing a supply of diverse and locally appropriate seed and planting material by supporting community tree nurseries and other small nurseries that provide UK sourced and grown trees
- Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

28. Which of the following actions are or would be most appropriate for England's trees and woodlands to contribute to climate change mitigation and helping to achieve net zero? (pick up to three options – **selection in bold text**)

- **Bringing woods into management to enhance their future resilience to climate change and secure greenhouse gas emissions reduction in other sectors through wood replacing 'carbon intensive' materials (acknowledging that this will lead to a short to medium reduction on carbon stored in the woodland)**
- **Planting UKFS-compliant productive forests to provide a strong carbon sink over the coming decades and then a source of sustainable timber to meet the needs of future generation**
- Planting predominantly native woodland to act as a long-term store of carbon
- **Establishing 'energy forest' plantations (short rotation coppice and short rotation forestry) to satisfy future biomass demand for bioenergy with carbon capture and storage**
- Encouraging agroforestry to increase the amount of carbon stored on productive farmland
- Strengthening the protection of all woodland to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation

Comment:

Planting UKFS-compliant productive forests to provide a strong carbon sink over the coming decades and then a source of sustainable timber to meet the needs of future generation.

Recent work by the James Hutton Institute in Scotland demonstrated that when both soil and tree carbon are taken into account, growing high-yielding timber crops and short-rotation forestry on better land is by far the best way to draw down carbon by 2050, even before the carbon benefits of the timber harvest. Native woodlands, while they may have many other benefits, require far more high-quality land to sequester the same amount of carbon, and on upland sites with high soil organic content may in fact release carbon for several decades.

29. Which of these actions would be most effective in reducing damage to trees and woodlands caused by deer? (select up to two options – **selection in bold text**)

- **Develop a national policy on sustainable deer management and control measures**
- Facilitate landscape scale control by land managers
- Deer control as a requirement of grant or felling agreements
- Incentives for the management of deer
- **Supporting a range of approaches to tree protection, including fencing and other alternatives to plastic tree guards**
- Better advice and guidance on the value of and options to control damage by deer
- Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

30. Which of these actions would be most effective in reducing the damage to trees and woodlands caused by grey squirrels? (select up to two options – **selection in bold text**)

- Making grey squirrel control a requirement of grant or felling agreements
- **Providing incentives for the management of grey squirrel**
- **Researching contraception to prevent breeding**
- Reintroducing animals to help control squirrels, such as pine martens and goshawks
- Providing better advice and guidance on grey squirrel control
- **Other - please specify in no more than 25 words**

Provide effective incentives for collaboration and research into new control measures, such as immuno-contraception and gene editing for grey squirrels.

Engaging people with our trees and woodlands

31. Are any of the following significant barriers to securing and maintaining street trees? (select up to three options – **selection in bold text**)

- Appropriate standards and guidance for securing the right trees in the right places
- Practical challenges in terms of street design, planting requirements and compatibility with other infrastructure provision
- The adoption of street trees by local highway authorities, or alternative arrangements where streets are not adopted
- **The skills and resources needed to deliver new street trees, including funding for planting**
- **The funding and skills for ongoing maintenance of street trees over their lifetime**
- Other – please specify in no more than 100 words

32. How could government overcome the barriers to securing and maintaining street trees you have identified in question 30? (Maximum 150 word response)

Resource Local Authorities adequately to sustain a planting and maintenance regime.

33. *Which of these actions would be most effective in increasing the number/coverage of trees in and around urban areas? (rank the following options in order of preference)*

- Promotion through national policy (including England Tree Strategy and national planning policy) including recognition that trees and woodlands are key components of green infrastructure, with equal status to other green and built infrastructure
- Promotion through national guidance (such as green infrastructure, planning and design, and code/street guidance, e.g., Manual for Streets) - stronger inclusion of appropriate engineering solutions
- Development and implementation of Local Tree and Woodland Strategies and local planning policies - setting local targets for tree canopy cover and recognition that trees and woodlands are key components of green infrastructure, with equal status to other green and built infrastructure
- Training for practitioners, including highways engineers and others
- Providing better support for community forests in areas of greatest need
- Creating new community forests in areas of greatest need
- **Other - please specify in no more than 25 words**

Resource Local Authorities adequately to sustain a planting and maintenance regime (1)

34. *Which actions would most help the preparation and implementation of local Tree and Woodland Strategies? (rank the following options in order of preference)*

- Preparing national guidance on developing Local Tree and Woodland Strategies
- Setting local targets for tree canopy cover
- Using canopy cover as a measure to monitor the scale and development of the urban forest
- Agreeing national data standards for urban trees
- Standardising the approach to measuring the value of the urban forest resource
- Adopting Local Tree and Woodland Strategies as supplementary planning documents
- **Strengthening technical expertise in tree and woodland management in local authorities (1)**
- Recognising trees and woodlands as key components of green infrastructure, with equal status to green and built infrastructure

35. *Which actions would most effectively engage people in the management and creation of their local woodlands? (rank the following options in order of preference)*

- **Providing more training opportunities to support woodland management and creation (3)**
- Providing legal support to community groups for the acquisition or lease of woodland
- Enabling community groups to influence decision making about the management of their local woodland
- Enabling community groups to participate in the management of their local woodland
- **Facilitating networks to exchange ideas and share good practice (1)**
- Providing better support for community forests in areas of greatest need
- Creating new community forests in areas of greatest need

- **Supporting the growth of woodland social enterprise in and around towns and cities (2)**

36. *Which actions by government would be most effective in addressing barriers to peoples' access to trees and woodlands? (rank the following options in order of preference)*

- Supporting woodland access through existing incentives and rights of way
- Offering more generous woodland management incentives for those woodlands with public access
- Creating new accessible woodlands in and around towns and cities
- Supporting woodland access with bespoke incentives, simply to allow access
- Improving the quality of access by investing in infrastructure (car parks, trails, path surfacing, signage, seating)
- Regulating to maintain access rights when creating new woodland
- Supporting people to become trained/accredited to better facilitate contact (learning and health) with nature
- **Other**

No comment.

37. *Which of the following do you most value about trees and woodland? (select up to two options – **selection in bold text**)*

- Places to exercise and relax and engage with nature
- Places for nature
- **A source of sustainable products and employment**
- A resource that provides water management
- A resource that cleans the air
- **A resource that stores carbon**
- As a feature within towns and cities
- As part of urban green space
- Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

38. *Which of these actions would best address the funding challenge for the planting and on-going maintenance of trees in urban areas? (select up to two options – **selection in bold text**)*

- Making central funding available to supplement private finance for establishing trees in existing developments.
- Using planning levers to require developers to plant trees relating to new development on streets and other public spaces
- **Using planning levers to raise funds for on-going maintenance**
- Ensuring the value of tree's longer-term benefits are captured to access financing
- Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

Supporting the economy

39. *What could the England Tree Strategy do to encourage the use of timber in construction? (select up to two options – **selection in bold text**)*

- Improving, encouraging or incentivising the growth of necessary skills such as those in green construction, design or forestry
- Promoting and incentivising Grown in Britain Certification
- **Encouraging planning requirements to incorporate sustainable materials**
- **Amending public procurement standards to support Grown in Britain certified forest products, incorporate sustainable materials and signal long-term demand**
- Increasing the availability of knowledge and stimulate an understanding of sustainable building practices
- Supporting new innovations in developing timber building materials such as cross laminated timber
- Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

40. *How could policy about the permanency of woodlands better support tree establishment for agro forestry or energy crops? (select one option – **selection in bold text**)*

- Changing policy so it does not treat afforestation as a permanent land use change
- **Adjusting policy so energy forestry crops (short rotation coppice and short rotation forestry) are not permanent land use change**
- Retaining the current position whereby afforestation is generally a permanent land use change
- Not sure

41. *Which actions would best increase the uptake of energy forestry? (select up to two options – **selection in bold text**)*

- Providing financial support for the capital costs of energy forestry
- Clarifying the taxation of energy forestry (as either agriculture or forestry)
- **Clarifying the regulatory position for energy forestry (for example, can I change land use in the future)**
- **Providing support to develop a secure supply chain (such as forward contracts for feedstock)**
- Providing better advice and guidance on energy forestry
- Increasing skills capacity in energy forestry
- **Other - please specify in no more than 25 words**

Comment:

Energy crops must be referred to as fibre crops. The term energy crops could limit any future support and the end use of that crop to energy only rather than chip or pulp for board manufacture, or potential emerging markets such as biorefining.

42. *Which actions would best increase the planting of more trees on farms? (select up to two options – **selection in bold text**)*
- Clarifying the regulation of agroforestry as either agriculture or forestry
 - **Clarifying the implications for the land holding's tax status of planting more trees**
 - Providing better advice and guidance on woodland creation and management
 - Providing incentives for a wider range of tree planting on farms
 - Funding for the advice and the design of schemes for trees on farms and agroforestry
 - **Providing better advice and guidance on how woodland creation and management can contribute to farm business models**
 - Other - please specify in no more than 25 words
43. *Which actions would best increase agroforestry, woodland creation and management on tenanted farmland? (select up to two options – **selection in bold text**)*
- **Providing industry led guidance, best practice and case studies of how tenants and landlords can work together to deliver benefits for both parties from diversification into tree planting and agroforestry on tenanted land**
 - Providing eligibility criteria for tree establishment grant agreements to discourage the proactive resumption of tenanted farmland
 - Reviewing how tenancy agreements approach the responsibility for and rights to trees
 - **Confirming the property rights to long-term carbon benefits**
 - Other - please specify in no more than 25 words
44. *What are the most urgent shortages in the workforce capacity needed to increase woodland creation, maintenance and management? (select up to two options – **selection in bold text**)*
- Professional forester
 - Supervisor for forest works
 - Machine operator, for example, tractor/harvester/forwarder drivers
 - Hand cutter / chainsaw operator
 - Tree planter
 - Tree nursery workers
 - Forestry educators
 - Land agents, surveyors and architects with specialist forest knowledge
 - **All of the above**
 - Other - please specify in no more than 25 words
45. *Which actions would best strengthen productivity in forestry supply chains? (select up to three options – **selection in bold text**)*
- Providing grant support for wider range of management options
 - **Providing support for woodland infrastructure such as roading**
 - Providing grant or loans for equipment (for example, harvesters)
 - **Providing support for productivity/supply chains for woodland products**

- Providing better information on market prices and opportunities
- **Training to increase the skills capacity in agricultural workers**
- Facilitating collaborative working between woodland owners
- **Developing options for private investment for ecosystem services that drive woodland management**
- Other - please specify in no more than 25 words