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deal with complex proposals including all projects where Environmental Impact Assessments are required.

Mr Ewing has accepted all the proposals and called for an update in the spring - and the practical recommendations should start to have a real impact in late 2017 and especially the planting season of early 2018.

Ian Gambles, Head of Forestry Commission England, told the EFRA inquiry in late 2016 that he was following developments in Scotland with interest - an approach encouraged by Confor as only around 1.3 million trees have been planted in the last 18 months in England, the same number as were planted at the Jerah site in central Scotland in five months.

Chris Davies MP, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Forestry, has highlighted the danger of a timber gap from the 2030s, where the drop-off in softwood planting sees supply fall short of demand.

In Wales, the new grant scheme has restarted planting and it is attractive to both softwood and hardwood planting. However, the attitude of agencies and stakeholders is still largely negative to planting, especially of softwoods, and as well as securing political support Confor is seeking to build partnerships with other stakeholders to secure a significant increase in planting levels.

In Northern Ireland, there is also a favourable new scheme and an interest in planting productive forests, but making the process attractive to applicants and securing interest from the farming community is a continuing challenge.

At the start of 2017, there is real hope of a stronger future - especially with the whole forestry sector pulling in the same direction. Beccy Speight, Chief Executive of the Woodland Trust, told the EFRA inquiry that there needed to be more woodland of all types, while Rebecca Pow MP, co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Ancient Woodland & Veteran Trees, said there was much greater potential to grow the timber industry and expressed concern about future supply.

2030s

**DEMAND FOR
SOFTWOOD IS
FORECAST TO
EXCEED
UK SUPPLY**



A bright future for forestry after Brexit

Confor has started work to develop a detailed position on Brexit, with the aim of pursuing an integrated land use policy and funding framework for the UK with forestry at its heart.

In 2016, Confor produced discussion papers before and after the UK vote to leave the European Union, following up with broad recommendations for the future in *A Thriving Forestry and Timber Sector in a post-Brexit World*.

Eleanor Harris has been brought on board to work with the Confor team to develop its vision of "a truly integrated rural policy and funding framework", which was at the heart of the Thriving Future document.

Stuart Goodall, Confor's Chief Executive, said: "Throughout this debate, Confor has always tried to look ahead at the emerging policy debate for rural areas. We have a vision for forestry, and we want to present that vision in a broader picture of future integrated land use."



Woodland Carbon Fund

www.forestry.gov.uk/england-wcf

Woodland Creation Planning Grant

(part of Forestry Innovation Fund)
www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/bee-h-a4lgde

MacKinnon report can be viewed or downloaded from the Confor website

www.confor.org.uk/resources/publications/reference-publications/



“Confor has already worked closely with organisations like The Woodland Trust and CLA and will continue discussions with them and other key organisations interested in rural land use. We want Confor to be right at the heart of that debate.”

Although the shape of future rural policy and funding has not yet emerged, the government has made it very clear that the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) will disappear and that any new support system is likely to be very different from the current set-up.

“We envisage a mixed future policy, based around developing the supply chain and market demand, Natural Capital outcomes and public subsidy with a focus on delivering public benefit,” said Mr Goodall. “We know forestry can deliver in all these areas and we are working on the specific detail of how the post-Brexit regime will look.”

Confor will continue detailed engagement with its members, the wider forestry and wood processing sector and broader rural land use sector - through events, political engagement including the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Forestry at Westminster and evidence-based publications.

Beyond the big issue of post-Brexit policy and funding, Confor will continue associated work to develop its policy in other important areas affected by the UK's decision to leave the EU - in areas like plant health, access to seasonal labour and the future shape of environmental legislation.

The Confor approach involves three key strands:

WHY

should forestry play a more central role? This will involve building on Confor's successful work in 2016 to explain how forestry and timber can deliver sustainable solutions to a wide range of 21st century problems by: delivering rural jobs and investment; reducing the impacts of both flooding and climate change; providing habitats for threatened wildlife; providing the raw material (timber) to help address the housebuilding crisis.

WHAT

is the ultimate objective, the outcomes that would deliver for both the forestry sector and rural land use as a whole? This will include realistic annual planting targets which, in the case of England, will set a clear and evidence-based vision to reverse the modern tree planting low of 2016.

HOW

can Confor build the relationships with all the other organisations with an interest in future rural land use policy and funding?



A Thriving Forestry and Timber Sector in a post-Brexit World can be viewed and downloaded from [www.confor.org.uk/Resources/Publications/Confor publications](http://www.confor.org.uk/Resources/Publications/Confor%20publications)