

Submitted to Future Grant Support for Forestry
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Ministerial Foreword - Forestry in Scotland is a sector that we can be justly proud of.

1 - Introduction and Rationale for Providing Grant Support for Forestry

1. Do you agree that grant support for forestry should continue to be improved and developed as a discrete scheme within the overall package of land support?

Yes

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Forestry and woodland creation are a distinct form of land management that need specific consideration – new woodland can bring important benefits but there may also be particular impacts to mitigate in some situations. It seems appropriate for grant support to remain a discrete scheme so that the implications can have specific consideration. However, it should also sit within the overall package of land support so that proposals can be brought forward within a wider context and can be developed alongside the management of the wider area.

2. Are there any changes that would allow for better complementarity between the forestry and agriculture funding options?

Yes

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Forestry can usually deliver more significant environmental benefits when it is delivered alongside other forms of land management. For example, open ground may be appropriate within parts of a forestry scheme and this is likely to need to be managed, as recognised by UKFS. Controlled grazing can be important to keeping archaeological sites within or adjacent to forestry in good condition. There can be a lack of incentives to deliver grazing of open ground, but better complementarity between forestry and agriculture funding options could address this.

2 - Forests Delivering for Scotland's Climate Change Plan

3. How can the support package for forestry evolve to help tackle the climate emergency, to achieve net zero, and to ensure that our woodlands and forests are resilient to the future climate?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Forest resilience and climate change can impact on the historic environment. While we recognise the benefits woodland offers in mitigating climate change, without good management forestry can pose a substantial risk to the condition of the historic environment, which includes nationally important scheduled monuments. The historic environment should be considered as an integral part of adaption planning and some areas of forests may require particular management, for example some sensitive archaeological sites may need to be managed as open ground. Support for Forestry should foster resilience by considering the species and structure of woodland. This should benefit historic environment features eg by helping to ensure that woodland is not susceptible to wind blow.

4. Private investment through natural capital and carbon schemes can make a valuable contribution to climate change. Do you agree that the grant support mechanism should have more flexibility to maximise the opportunities to blend private and public finance to support woodland creation,

Not Answered

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Nil response

5. How could the current funding package be improved to stimulate woodland expansion and better management across a wide range of woodland types, including native and productive woodlands?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

6. Do you agree that it should be a requirement of grant support that woodlands are managed to ensure that they become more resilient to the impacts of climate change and pests and disease?

Yes

How can the grant scheme support this?:

The scheme could place greater emphasis on ensuring the species, structure and felling of trees is appropriate to developing windfirm woodlands that can tolerate increasing storm events. Windblow can have a significant impact on historic environment features as well as on trees and woodlands themselves. Our scheduled monument monitoring regularly records instances of uncontrolled wind blow damaging scheduled monuments and this could become more common because of more frequent and intense storms, and because a forest is less resilient.

3 - Integrating Woodlands on Farms and Crofts

7. Which of the following measures would help reduce the barriers for crofters and farmers wanting to include woodland as part of their farming business? Please select all that apply.

Are there others not listed above?:

Nil response

8. Establishing small woodlands can have higher costs. What specific mechanisms would better support small scale woodlands and woodland ownership?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Nil response

4 - Forests Delivering for People and Communities

9. How can forestry grants better support an increase in easily accessible, sustainably managed woodlands in urban and peri-urban areas?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Where there are significant historic environment features in existing or proposed woodland close to urban areas, there would be particular value in funding to support management of these features in an appropriate setting, with provision of public access routes and interpretation.

10. How can grant support for forestry better enable rural communities to realise greater benefits from woodland to support community wealth building?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Forestry can provide multiple benefits for communities. Many communities value being able to see, understand and appreciate heritage features from their past within woodlands. As well as providing benefits to people from being in nature, woodlands provide opportunities for the historic environment to be appreciated and understood. Grant support can enable this by incentivising appropriate management of heritage features in line with UKFS, alongside provision of access routes and interpretation. Managing these features appropriately is also likely to encourage biodiversity and deliver a range of complementary benefits.

11. How can the forest regulatory and grant processes evolve to provide greater opportunities for communities to be involved in the development of forestry proposals?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Where communities value heritage features within proposed or existing forestry, grants could incentivise the appropriate management of those features, potentially alongside access improvements and interpretation.

12. How can the forestry regulatory and grant processes evolve to ensure that there is greater transparency about proposals and the decisions that have been made on them?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Processes could make more use of the forestry public registers and portal to provide information showing how applications have been determined. Officer handling reports could be published in a similar manner to how planning authorities publish reports on handling of planning applications.

13. Forestry grants have been used to stimulate rural forestry businesses by providing support with capital costs. Do you agree that this has been an effective measure to stimulate rural business?

Not Answered

a. How could this approach be used to support further forestry businesses?:

Nil response

b. How could this approach be used to support further skills development?:

Nil response

14. How could the FGS processes and rules be developed to encourage more companies and organisations to provide training positions within the forestry sector?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Nil response

5 - Forests Delivering for Biodiversity and the Environment

15. The primary purpose of FGS is to encourage forestry expansion and sustainable forest management, of which a key benefit is the realisation of environmental benefits. How can future grant support better help to address biodiversity loss in Scotland including the regeneration and expansion of native woodlands?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

There is a strong complementary link between positive management of the historic environment and objectives relating to landscape and the natural environment. For example, elements of the historic environment, such as abandoned stone buildings or drystone dykes, provide habitats and ecosystems that are important for protected species. More widely, it should be recognised that most 'natural environment' features are a product of human construction or management, and therefore have a strong historic environment component.

Future grant support could incentivise appropriate active management of heritage sites within woodland areas, either as open ground or as part of an environment that will support the preservation of heritage sites and their survival in good condition. As well as benefiting the historic environment and communities that appreciate it, this should increase biodiversity by promoting a mosaic of land in different management regimes.

16. Herbivore browsing and damage can have a significant impact on biodiversity loss and restrict regeneration. How could forestry grant support mechanisms evolve to ensure effective management of deer populations at:

Landscape scale?:

Nil response

Small scale mixed land use?:

Herbivore browsing can have a positive effect on the maintenance of heritage features in good condition within woodland. For example, on sensitive archaeological sites where uncontrolled tree regeneration would cause damage, herbivore browsing can promote survival of earthwork features in good condition. Deer populations may have a role here, but browsing can be promoted and incentivised in a more controlled way if funding supports the use of cattle or sheep to prevent the development of rank vegetation or scrub, whose roots are likely to damage buried archaeological remains. Areas of managed grazed land within a larger woodland area can promote greater biodiversity than woodland alone supports, producing a range of environmental benefits.

If you wish to make any other relevant comments, please do so in the text box below.

Please add your comments here.:

Our Past, Our Future is the five-year strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment. The new strategy aligns with the key Scottish Government ambitions to build a wellbeing economy, create more resilient, inclusive and sustainable places, and deliver net zero in response to climate change. The strategy notes we owe it to future generations to leave them assets that they can value, enjoy, and benefit from just as we do today. Achieving this requires our historic environment to be in good shape, and to be used responsibly and sustainably.

Detailed decision-making that affects the historic environment in Scotland is informed by the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS) - <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/historic-environment-policy-for-scotland-heps/> . HEPS is non-statutory, which means that it is not required to be followed as a matter of law or statute. However, it is relevant to a wide range of decision-making at national and local levels.

HEPS should be taken into account whenever a decision will affect the historic environment. This includes in plans and policies that deal with specific topics such as forestry. It is also a material consideration for planning proposals that might affect the historic environment ('material consideration' means that decision-makers should take it into account when coming to a decision).

The Scottish Government produces national policies for addressing land use matters and decisions. HEPS sits alongside these policies and should be used with them.

About you

What is your name?

Name:

Historic Environment Scotland

What is your email address?

Email:

hmenquiries@hes.scot

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Organisation

What is your organisation?

Organisation:

Historic Environment Scotland.

Scottish Forestry would like your permission to publish your response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

Publish response with name

We may share your response internally with other Scottish Forestry policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Forestry to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Yes

I confirm that I have read the privacy policy and consent to the data I provide being used as set out in the policy.

I consent