Scottish Forestry
Coilltearachd na h-Alba

Preparing Woodland Creation Applications

A guide for land managers

November 2020

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Scottish Forestry is the Scottish Government agency responsible for forestry policy, support and regulation.

Is e Coilltearachd na h-Alba na bhuidheann Riaghaltas na h-Alba le uallach airson poileasaidh, taic agus riaghladh coilltearachd.

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Introduction

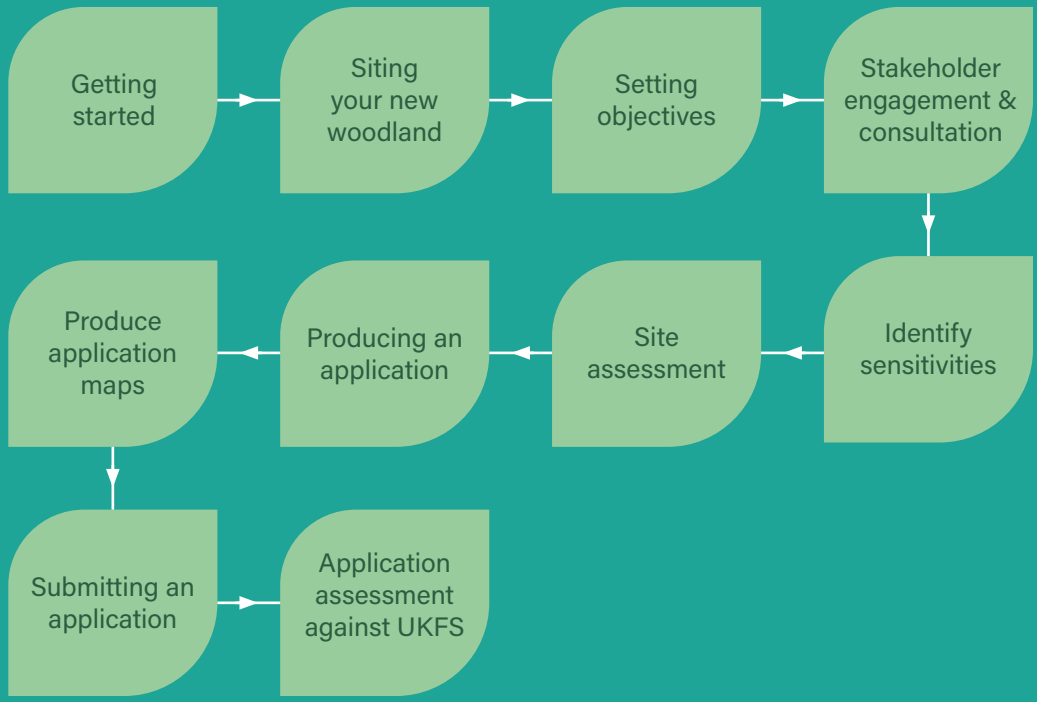
This guide will help you prepare your own Woodland Creation Grant Application by bringing together various sources of information on tree planting and planning. You will need to learn a lot about forestry throughout the process. Creating an application can be time consuming, but is achievable on your own. A forestry consultant can do this on your behalf if you don't have the time.

We recommend that you read this guide before committing to creating your own application. Working with one of our local offices (also known as a Conservancy office) will equip you with the relevant information and documents to submit an application.

Woodland creation grants are aimed at incentivising the creation of new woodlands and we manage these on behalf of the Scottish Government. Applications for grant funding are assessed against the current grants scheme's eligibility criteria and the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS). Have a look at Appendix 1 for details on the current grant scheme.

If you realise that the grant payment doesn't cover the cost of your scheme, the Woodland Carbon Code is a further opportunity to generate more income from selling carbon units.

The boxes below highlight the key steps in creating an application. Click on a box to jump straight to different sections:



Siting your new woodland

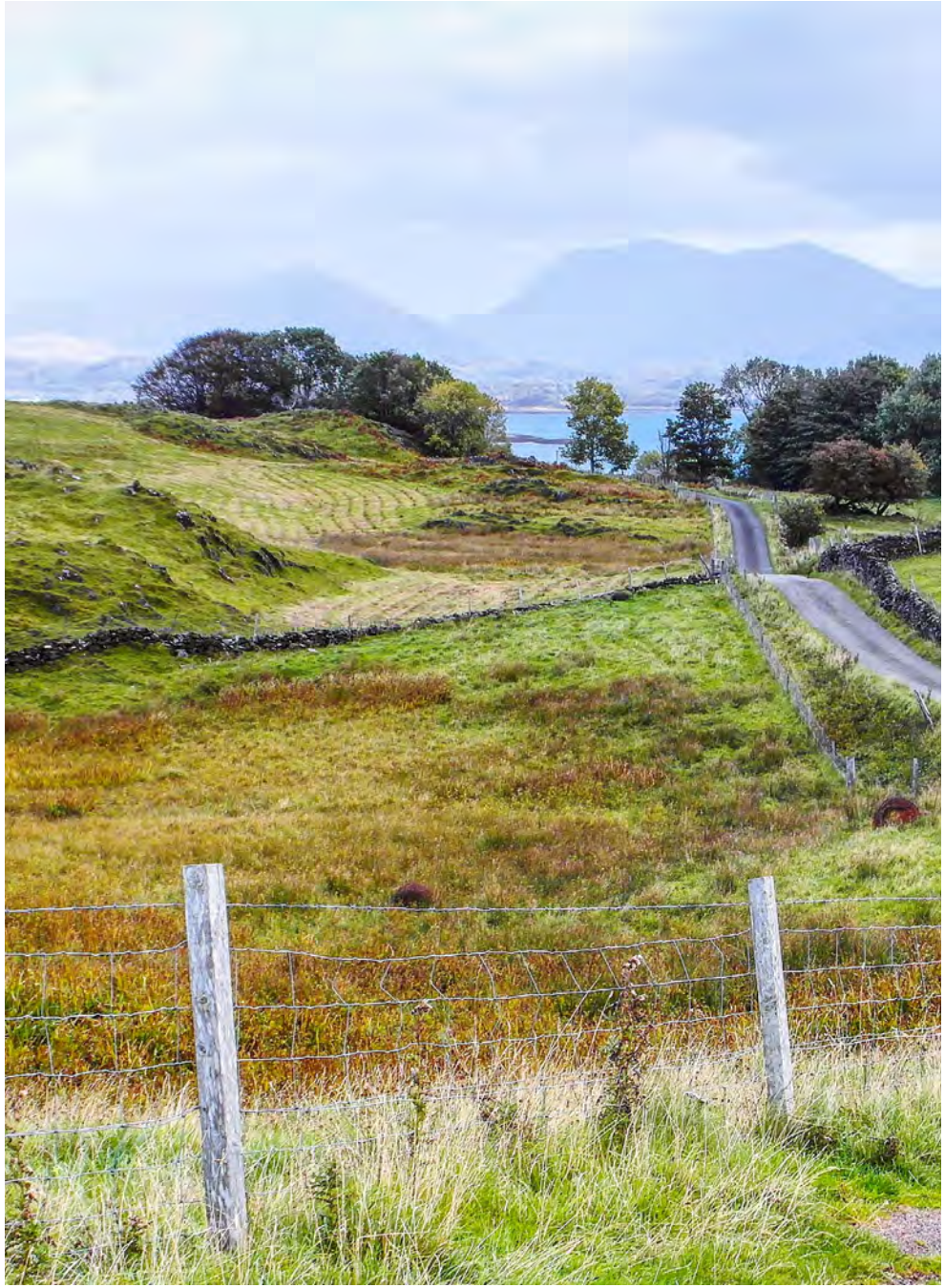
3.1 Choosing the location

The first part of planning a new woodland is identifying the general area where the woodland will be planted. Depending on the ground conditions, some tree species may be more suitable than others.

We have advice and further resources to help you plan the location and design of your new woodland on the Landscape section of our website.

For new woodlands on farms we recommend you read the available guide 'The creation of small woodlands on farms'. This provides good advice on creating woodlands in specific agricultural settings.

Once you have decided on the area or areas you want to plant, we recommend that you should produce a map that that outlines the area. Please send us the map when you are ready to talk about your woodland creation plans.



3.2 Site accessibility

Considering access and maintenance early in the design process is essential. This is even more important beyond the early maintenance phase if you are planting woodlands that requires active management such as thinning.

That piece of unused, remote hill ground might look like the best place to plant trees, but if suitable access is not included it could increase the cost of managing the woodland in the long term, and make the timber less saleable.

3.3 Identifying existing woodland

The protection and expansion of existing native woodlands can be one of the most environmentally beneficial outcomes of creating new woodland. The habitats and long term carbon stores these woodlands provide are of high value. Your proposal should aim to enhance and expand existing woodlands where possible.

Consider where, if any, woodlands exist on your property. You can identify areas of existing native trees or woodland using OS maps and/or satellite and aerial imagery. Most of this data can be found on our Map Viewer, but you'll need to use other sources for aerial imagery, as this isn't available on our site due to licence conditions.

If your proposal is likely to negatively affect other woodlands or important habitats, for example non-native conifers seeding into native woodland, it's unlikely that we will approve your application.

Setting Objectives

Setting objectives at the start will help you decide what type of woodland you want to plant and the reasons for planting it.

Objectives should always be considered within the wider context of your property. You should take into account other considerations like access when setting objectives. For example, sites that can't be easily accessed by forestry machinery are typically not suitable for woodlands with productivity in mind, due to the need for frequent intervention.

The table on the right provides types of woodland and the typical objectives they can meet when they mature.

Woodland Type	Typical Species	Typical Objectives
Conifer	Mainly Sitka spruce, with sub species of conifers such as Norway spruce and/or Scots pine, and a component of native broadleaves.	Timber production, livestock shelter/forage, reduce soil erosion and/or water runoff, capital asset growth, carbon storage, future income.
Diverse Conifer	Mixture of alternative conifers with little-to-no Sitka spruce. Typical species include Norway spruce, Scots pine, and firs, and a component of native broadleaves.	Timber production, livestock shelter/forage, reduce soil erosion and/or water runoff, capital asset growth, carbon storage, future income.
Broadleaves	Oak, beech, sycamore, cherry, silver birch etc. planted at productive density	Timber production, livestock shelter/forage, reduce soil erosion and/or water runoff, capital asset growth, carbon storage, future income.
Native Scots Pine	Caledonian Scots pine with some native broadleaves and juniper.	Timber production, livestock shelter/forage, biodiversity and amenity, carbon storage.
Native Upland Birch	Downy birch and other broadleaves such as willow, hazel, hawthorn, holly etc. Possibly include small amounts of juniper.	Reduce soil erosion and/or water runoff, firewood, biodiversity and amenity, carbon storage.
Native Broadleaves	Various options, such as wet woodlands, oak woodlands, and birch woodlands. Specifics will depend on your ground conditions.	Timber production, livestock shelter/forage, reduce soil erosion and/or water runoff, firewood, biodiversity and amenity, carbon storage, future income.
Native low-density Broadleaves	Same as upland birch but planted at lower density. Normally only suitable for use in montane regions.	Biodiversity and amenity, carbon storage.
Small or Farm Woodland	Contains both the Conifer and Broadleaves options above.	Timber production, livestock shelter/forage, reduce soil erosion and/or water runoff, firewood, capital asset growth, carbon storage, future income.
Native Broadleaves in the Northern or Western Isles	Same as Native Broadleaves option but planted at significantly higher density due to exposure.	Livestock shelter/forage, firewood, biodiversity and amenity, carbon storage.

Note: This table is indicative only

Identify Sensitivities

A sensitivity is anything that may be negatively impacted by your proposed new woodland, or may have a negative effect on your proposal. This section will assist you to identify them and determine whether your site is considered to be low sensitivity. If it isn't, that's ok. It doesn't necessarily mean that woodland creation won't be possible on the site, but it may mean the process of developing your woodland creation proposal is more complicated and you may require assistance from a forestry specialist.

We have an issues log template which you should complete once you identify any issues, constraints or know sensitivities. It is broken down into categories defined by the Environmental Impact Assessment regulations. Here you can show what the issues are, how they were identified, and how you propose to mitigate them so you can proceed with your proposal.

See Appendix 3 in our Woodland Creation Application Guidance for the correct use of an issues log.

5.1 Identify constraints

Scotland's Environment Web Land Information Search (LIS) is a useful tool to help identify any sensitivities.

This map based tool allows you to highlight an area of land and then conduct a search for any data held, which includes things like Historic Environment records and Environmental Designations (i.e. legally protected sites).

The LIS is not guaranteed to be a complete record so you should still survey the site to check for sensitivities. If you find any, note these in your Issues Log and discuss them with us.

The table on the right gives examples of sensitivities that may have an effect on your proposal.

Examples of Sensitivities

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Special Protection Area (SPA)
RAMSAR Site
Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)
National Scenic Areas
Special Landscape Areas
Local Landscape Areas
Public or Private water supply catchments
Electricity, gas, oil, or water infrastructure

You should note any potential sensitivities found in or around your proposal area in your Issues Log.

5.2 Stakeholder engagement/consultation

Please discuss your proposals with your neighbours and local community and seek their views when preparing your application. Early engagement with them will help you to identify any constraints and opportunities associated with the planned woodland.

Not carrying out stakeholder engagement early may result in significant delays to planting your woodland, particularly if there are disputes or if constraints have been missed during the design process.

Using the issues log template you should record your conversations with stakeholders, their responses, and your proposed mitigation, where necessary. If identified constraints can't be easily mitigated through discussions with stakeholders or require specialist input you should contact us for advice on how to proceed.

5.3 Identify deep peat

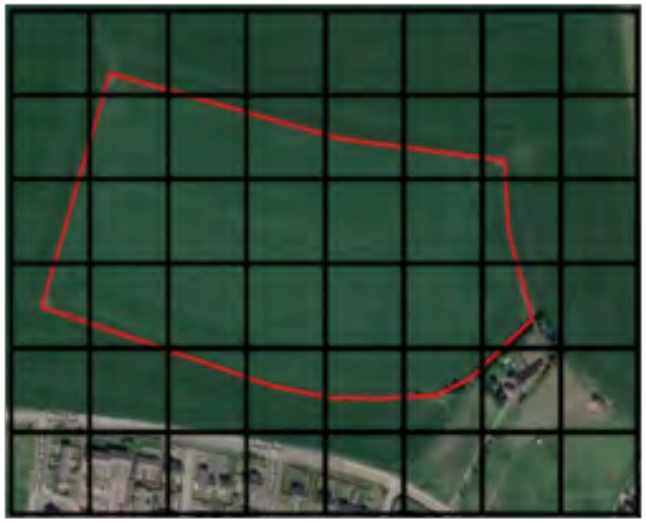
Trees must not be planted on peat that is over 50cm in depth. Even areas of shallower peat may not be suitable for cultivation or planting trees. Before progressing you should identify the depth of peat on your proposed area to ensure that it is suitable for planting. This can be done using a peat probe and undertaking a survey of the site.

On many sites, it will be clear that peat soils aren't present and the site can go forward. However where soils are heavier, you should check to make sure that deep peat isn't present.

You can find out more about peatlands and soils on our website – Protecting and Managing Soil in Forests.

If you have peaty soils, a peat depth survey should be conducted by systematically walking the area, probing the soil at appropriate intervals and recording the depth on a map. This is normally carried out by mapping out a grid over the site (see example on the right) at an appropriate scale and probing at the intersection points.

If you find peat that is 40 to 50 centimetres in depth you should contact us for advice on how conduct a more thorough investigation to establish the extent of the deep peat. Any areas of deep peat (50cm+) should be avoided and must be excluded from your application.



Example grid

5.4 Important habitats and species

Priority habitats are areas that are ecologically rich due to their associated vegetation or fauna. They normally require more detailed planning when developing your proposal. Commonly encountered habitats include:

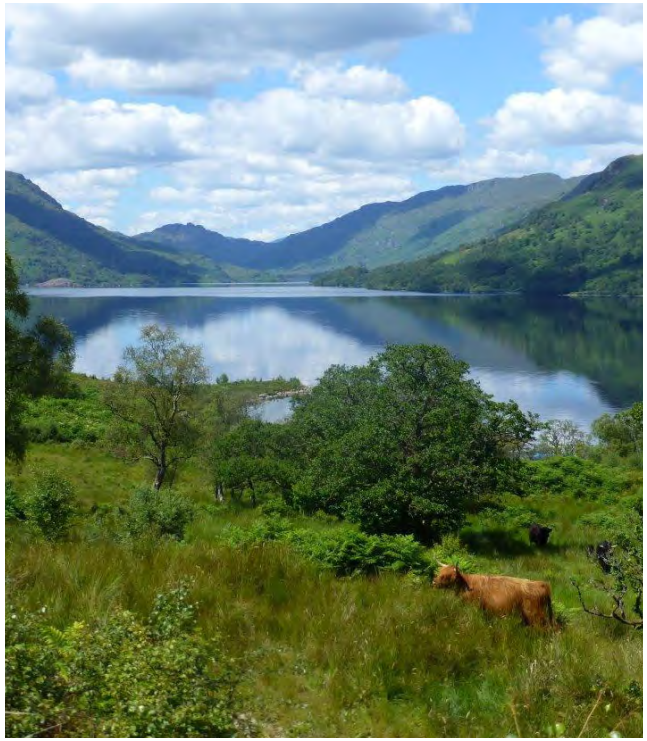
- Species Rich Grassland
- Wetlands
- Heathland

Priority Species such as birds and mammals may also be present within your proposed area. Many of these have high levels of legal protection. The National Biodiversity Network Atlas is a useful tool to identify priority species that may be in your area.

You should attempt to familiarise yourself with these habitats and species and survey your site to identify whether they are present. Our woodland creation supporting information provides more details on desk and field surveys.

You should try to undertake surveys at the most relevant time of year in relation to what you are surveying. For example peak bird breeding season is typically between 1 March and 31 July and is the best time to conduct a breeding bird survey.

If you're not familiar with surveying for priority habitats and species we recommend you employ an ecologist or a forestry consultant to assist you. We can provide you a list of forestry consultants.



If you discover priority habitats that may be affected by your proposal you should contact us in the first instance to discuss your proposal. We may take advice from NatureScot on how to proceed.

All surveys conducted and their results must be noted in your Issues Log.

5.5 Archaeology

The records on the Land Information Search (see 5.1) may not highlight all existing archaeological features on the site. Looking at previous use of the land can help identify any features. For example, a previously cultivated field is unlikely to have any features. Areas such as hill ground used primarily for grazing, with little recent human intervention could have undiscovered features.

You should conduct a walk-over survey of the area you intend to plant and attempt to find any features that were not identified using the LIS. It should be noted that this method might still not show results, but doesn't mean features are not present.

You and any contractors working on your behalf should pay close attention when carrying out operations that break ground, such as cultivation or erecting fencing. If you discover any features, or suspect there may be features present during operations, you should stop work immediately and contact your Local Authority archaeologist or Historic Environment Scotland for advice.

5.6 Climatic suitability

Checking the suitability of trees you intend to grow on your site is important. This can be done using climate suitability - a term to describe the general suitability of species to a site, based on broad climatic data.

Using the Scottish Forestry Map Viewer you can check the suitability of various species and grant options against your site by selecting the 'FGS Climatic Site Suitability' data set in the 'layers' tab on the left of the screen. Using this you can identify which species are suitable to your site.

The codes used on the website, for example 'W4', correspond to the woodland types as described in the National Vegetation Classification Field Guide to Woodland. This guide provides codes for each type of woodland in the UK and details which species are normally present and their normal geographic range.

If the species you intended to plant is not shown as 'very suitable' or 'suitable' in terms of climatic suitability, further investigation would be required by a forestry consultant and it is unlikely that we will approve your application.

Site Assessment

If your site is found not to be sensitive, or you have mitigated any sensitivities, you can move on to assessing the area you'd like to plant. The site assessment focuses on the ground condition, ground preparation, and protection methods. Look out for features that were not previously identified– particularly archaeological features or protected wildlife.

6.1 Ground conditions

The condition of the ground in your proposal area is likely to affect the fertility and wetness of the site. This will determine how you need to cultivate the ground, as well as what species are suited to the site. The key issues to consider are:

- how wet is the ground?
- is the ground wet all year round?
- is there compaction present that will restrict rooting and/or drainage?
- is there a lot of competing vegetation?
- what types of vegetation are present?

If you are not familiar with assessing ground conditions you should seek advice from a forestry consultant.

6.2 Ground preparation

Soils that have been grazed or cultivated may be compacted, causing drainage or rooting problems.

This may require specific cultivation methods such as hinge or inverted mounding or drainage to be used.

If you intend to use drainage there are a number of potential issues, such as existing field drains, that must be considered. For example it's not good practice to connect new drains or furrows into existing drainage features. If you think your site requires intensive drainage, you should contact us early to discuss.

Cultivation methods will affect planting uniformity and may not be suitable for all options or objectives (see 6.3 for further information).

Machine cultivation isn't always needed: improved and unimproved grassland might only benefit from weed control to suppress competing vegetation. Cultivation for Upland Productive Woodland Creation Sites - an Applicant's Guide can assist you in selecting the most appropriate method for your ground. The most commonly used techniques are hinge mounding, inverted mounding, or screefing (chemical, mechanical, or manual).

6.3 Planting densities and layouts

Trees need to be planted at certain densities to achieve certain objectives. For example, productive conifers should be planted at high density to ensure fast growth and less branching, whereas broadleaves for amenity purposes could be at lower density.

Typical planting densities are:

- 2,500 – 3,100 trees per hectare for conifer or broadleaved schemes with productivity as the main objective
- 1,600 trees per hectare for schemes with other objectives.

Depending on your objectives or woodland type, the layout of the planting may vary.

For example, if creating a productive conifer woodland for shelter then the planting may be uniformed in rows. If you are going to create native woodland, the planting should mimic natural patterns, appearing more irregular in a mixture of tight clusters and sparser densities, as described in the publication Creating New Native Woodland.

On many sites conditions will vary. This means it may be more appropriate to plant native woodlands at higher densities in some areas and lower in others. You can see what densities are required for the current grant scheme in Appendix 1.

6.4 Protecting the trees

To ensure the trees establish they must be properly protected. The type of protection required can vary on any given site can vary depending on local factors. Common reasons for protecting new woodland include damage from Deer, Hare, Rabbits and Vole.

You can view the current grant rates associated with protection costs in Appendix 1.

Deer fencing

You can use a 1.8 metre high deer fence to protect the trees - particularly broadleaves - from deer. Deer fencing should be considered in conjunction with the size, layout, and location of the woodland as they are not appropriate in every setting. In areas of high rabbit/hare populations, fences may also use rabbit netting.

Tree tubes

0.6 to 1.2 metre, or 1.2 to 1.8 metre tree tubes may be used for smaller schemes or where the use of deer fences is not feasible. It's important that tubes are removed once the trees are safe from browsing.

Tree tubes are not recommended for use in areas with frequent, high winds.

Vole guards

Vole guards should only be used where there are high vole populations on site and can be used in addition to deer fencing.

Vole guards should also be removed once the trees are unlikely to be ring-barked through vole damage.

We can offer advice on the most appropriate protection for your proposal and also when the various protections can be removed.

As they're made of plastic, tree tubes and vole guards should be removed as soon as they become redundant then disposed of responsibly (recycled where possible) to minimise their impact on the environment.

Drafting an Application

Now you've established the objective for the site, identified any sensitivities including deep peat, and assessed the most appropriate way to plant, you can use this information to prepare a draft application.

7.1 Finalise woodland design & produce a planting proposal map

When you've decided what and where you want to plant, you should finalise the design of your new woodland. The final design may look different to when you started, taking into account any issues or sensitivities you have encountered.

You should refer back to the guidance highlighted in section 3.1 when finalising your woodland design. You may find 'The creation of small woodlands on farms' particularly helpful.

To assist with designing new woodland you may want to use small flags or canes with bright colours to mark boundaries on the site. Marking these areas can assist in visualising the scheme, preparing a map for the application, and can save time demarcating the site in future before planting.

We recommend that you mark:

- the boundary of the site, if different from existing boundary features such as fences
- any discreet areas where different species groups may be planted, for example the boundaries between conifer and broadleaved areas
- appropriate buffer zones around archaeology
- appropriate buffer zones for water courses
- areas of deep peat over 0.25 hectares to be excluded (and areas below 0.25ha not to be planted)
- any other areas or boundaries that may need to be noted or excluded (such as access routes)

The map of your final design is normally referred to as a 'planting proposal map'. It doesn't need to go into specific details about exactly what species will be planted where, but should show the intended boundary of your proposal, taking into account sensitivities, and indicate the type of woodland you intend to plant.

7.2 Contact your local Scottish Forestry office

It's helpful to establish good lines of communication at an early stage of the process. If you haven't been in touch by now, you should get in touch with us to discuss your proposal with one of our Woodland Officers. They will be dealing with your application once submitted. We recommend that you submit a copy of your planting proposal map with your enquiry.

Your Woodland Officer will agree a date to meet you to discuss your planting proposal map and look over the site. It is important to do this now in case any adjustments need to be made before the application is submitted. During the visit you'll normally cover:

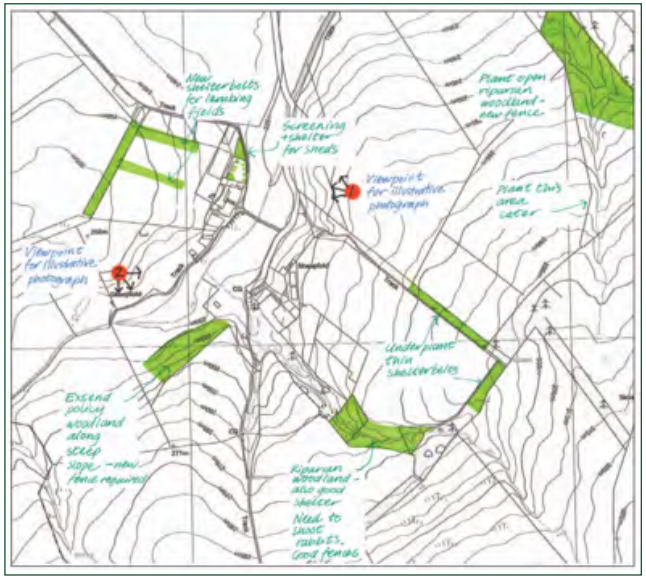
- your objective(s)
- your ground conditions
- your choice of tree species
- appropriate ground preparation techniques
- recommended protection measures
- general feedback on your proposal

You should keep in touch with us to discuss your proposal, particularly if any changes are required as a result of the visit. Engaging with us early in the process is likely to reduce the need for changes to your application after submission and normally speeds up the approval process.

7.3 Choose a suitable woodland creation grant option

Using the information provided in Section 3 you should select a woodland creation grant option that best meets your objective(s) for the site. Always read the guidance fully for each option before making a final decision to ensure the option you select will meet your needs. Have a look at the current grant options available in Appendix 1.

If you feel that the options don't meet your objectives, you may want to get in touch with us to discuss your proposal before proceeding further.



Example planting proposal map. Image from 'The creation of small woodlands on farms'

7.4 Target areas

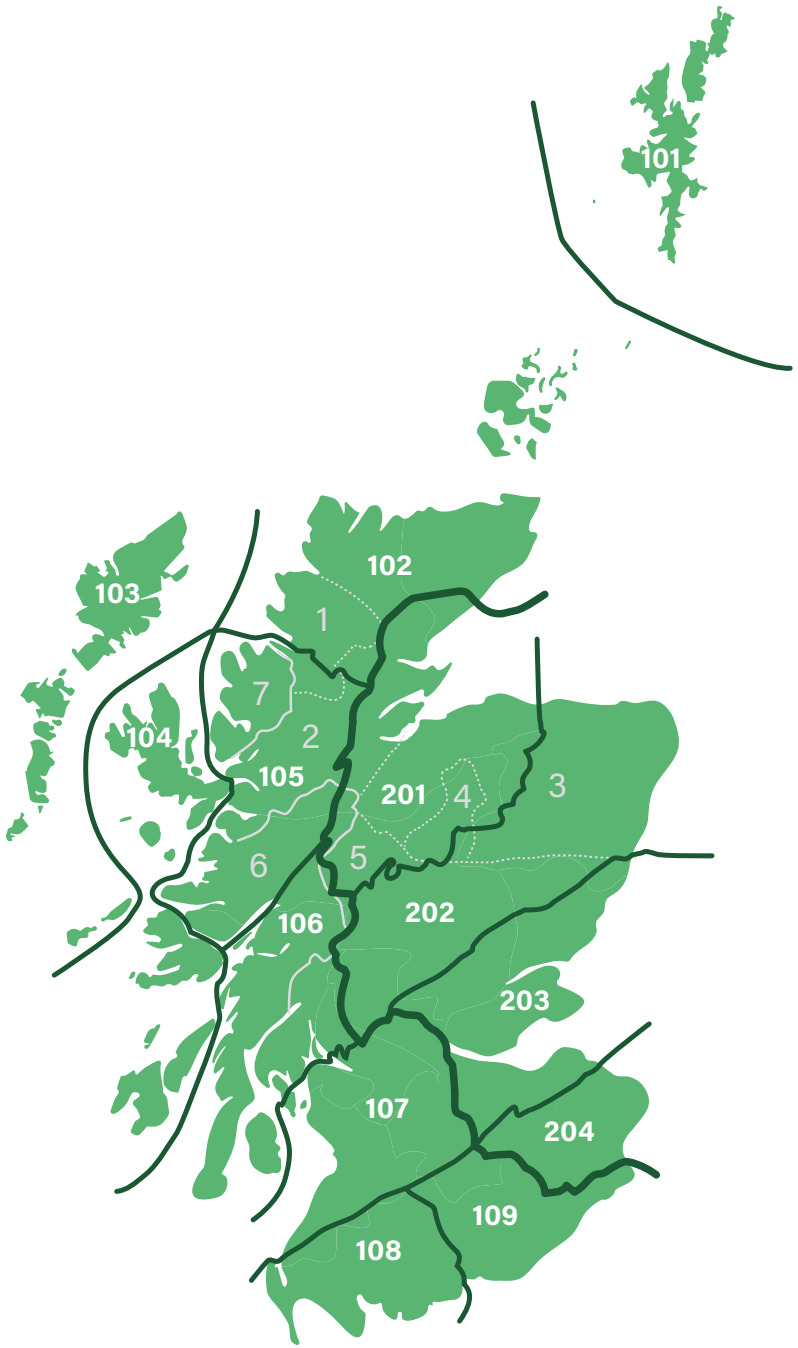
Certain types of woodland creation offer higher rates of grant funding as an incentive to plant in particular areas or where the costs of implementation may be higher.

You can check this using the Scottish Forestry Map Viewer. Further details can be found in Appendix 1.

7.5 Select an appropriate seed source for native woodland

When planting native species, you should select an appropriate seed source of local origins to ensure that native woodland is planted within its native range and is adapted to the local climate.

In some instances it may not be possible to source trees from the correct seed zone, or harsh climatic conditions may limit certain species. You should discuss this with us as soon as possible and prior to submitting your application.



Regions of Provenance (large numbers)

Native seed zones (small numbers)

Indigenous Scots pine seed zones (continuous lines are 'exclusion zones')

1. North (N)
2. North Central (NC)
3. Northeast (NE)
4. East Central (EC)
5. South Central (SC)
6. Soutwest - exclusion zone (SW)
7. Northwest - exclusion zone (SW)

Proof of provenance will be provided by nurseries and tree suppliers in the form of a seed certificate.

The certificate will show one or more of the codes shown in the image [left] and whether the tree is grown from seeds or cuttings.

You are required to submit copies of these certificates with your grant claim.

Producing an Application

8.1 Complete the application documents

Using the information gathered so far, the next step is to complete the documents required to apply for grant funding. These documents will form the basis of your application and are required as part of the current grant scheme eligibility criteria. You can find out what documentation is required and links to helpful templates in Appendix 1.

Your issues log is an integral part of an application and will assist you in producing your application documents.

We recommend you re-evaluate all the appropriate woodland creation options before making a final decision.

If you have any difficulty or require assistance when completing your supporting documents, please contact us for help.

8.2 Produce application maps

You should produce a high quality, clear map to go with your application. It should have all the relevant information in a logical manner to reduce explanations in your operational plan.

Your application should come with two maps. The first showing your chosen grant option ('Options Map'), and the second demonstrating the location you intend to plant the different tree species ('Species Map'). Both maps must meet our General Mapping Guidance as well as the mapping guidance contained on the woodland creation web page.

Your maps must include the following:

- on an OS Backdrop and a legible scale (preferably no larger than 1:2500)
- the boundaries are clearly delineated
- the Grant Option is clearly shown (Option Map)
- the species are shown clearly (Species Map)
- open Ground and Other Land are clearly shown
- any sensitivities have been marked (see 8.2.3)
- a North arrow
- a scale bar
- a clear legend

Remember: If your proposal is for a productive woodland you should consider suitable access for harvesting timber in your design.

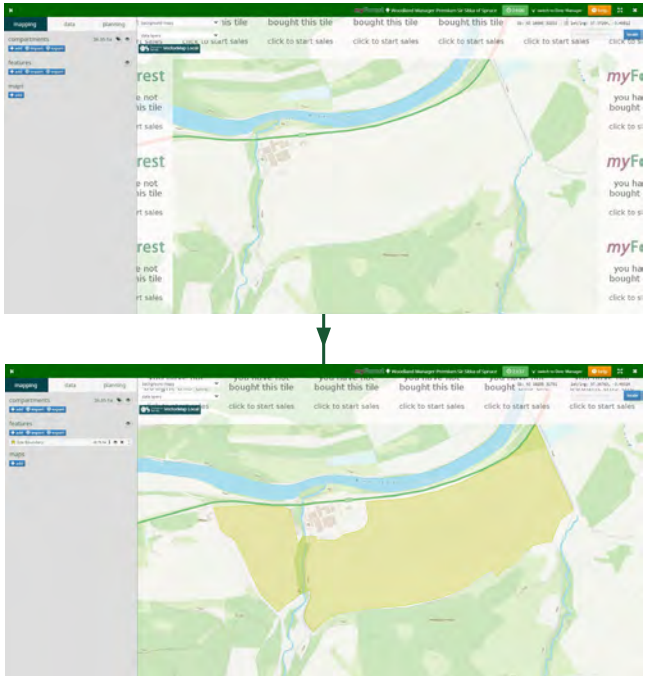
More information on designing woodlands can be found in the Landscape section of our website.

For a fee, you can use myForest, a mapping and forest management tool from the charity Sylva Foundation, to create your own application maps. Guides on how to use the platform to create application maps are available in the resources section of their website.

8.2.1 Mark the boundary

Your map should clearly mark the boundary of the application area so it stands out. This is normally in red but can be any other colour that is clear and will not be confused with other aspects of the map.

Here are some examples created using myForest.



Example showing boundaries

8.2.2 Exclude sensitivities

Next you want to exclude any sensitive areas and apply the buffers as outlined in section 5.5:

- appropriate buffer zones around archaeology
- appropriate buffer zones for water courses
- areas of deep peat over 0.25 hectares to be excluded (and areas below 0.25ha not to be planted)
- any other areas or boundaries that may need to be noted or excluded or as advised by your local Woodland Officer (such as access tracks)

Remember to colour these in a way that is distinguishable from any other colours used, and label them in the map legend:

Example showing sensitivities

8.2.3 Show option/species and open ground

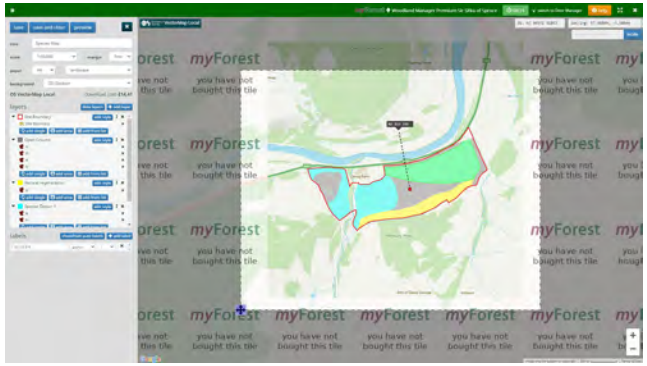
For your Option map you need to show the Woodland Creation Grant Option you intend to use, as well as the placement of your capital items such as fences or gates; the quantity of which must be noted in the legend. You should identify the option area on the map using a distinct colour such as green or yellow. Remember to use colours that are identifiable from existing colours on the OS backdrop, or the other colours you have already used.

For your Species Map you need to show where the main component species are going to be planted on the ground. These should be identified using colours that stand out; each of which must be clearly labelled in the map legend.

For both maps you need to show areas that you want to leave as Open Ground (OG). OG is used where creating space is required by the UK Forestry Standard and is payable as recompense for not planting areas that would otherwise be suitable for planting, for example wayleaves, buffers around archaeology and watercourses, or to soften the edges of the woodland. Your Woodland Officer can help you identify eligible areas of Open Ground.

Open Ground should always be coloured grey on an application map.

Note: Ground not suitable for planting (e.g. deep peat or watercourses) cannot be included as OG and should be shown as Other Land (OL). OL is not payable and should not be coloured on the map but should be noted in the maps legend.



Example of Species Placement

Example of Finalised Map

8.2.4 Finalise maps

Finally a map needs to be completed with the following:

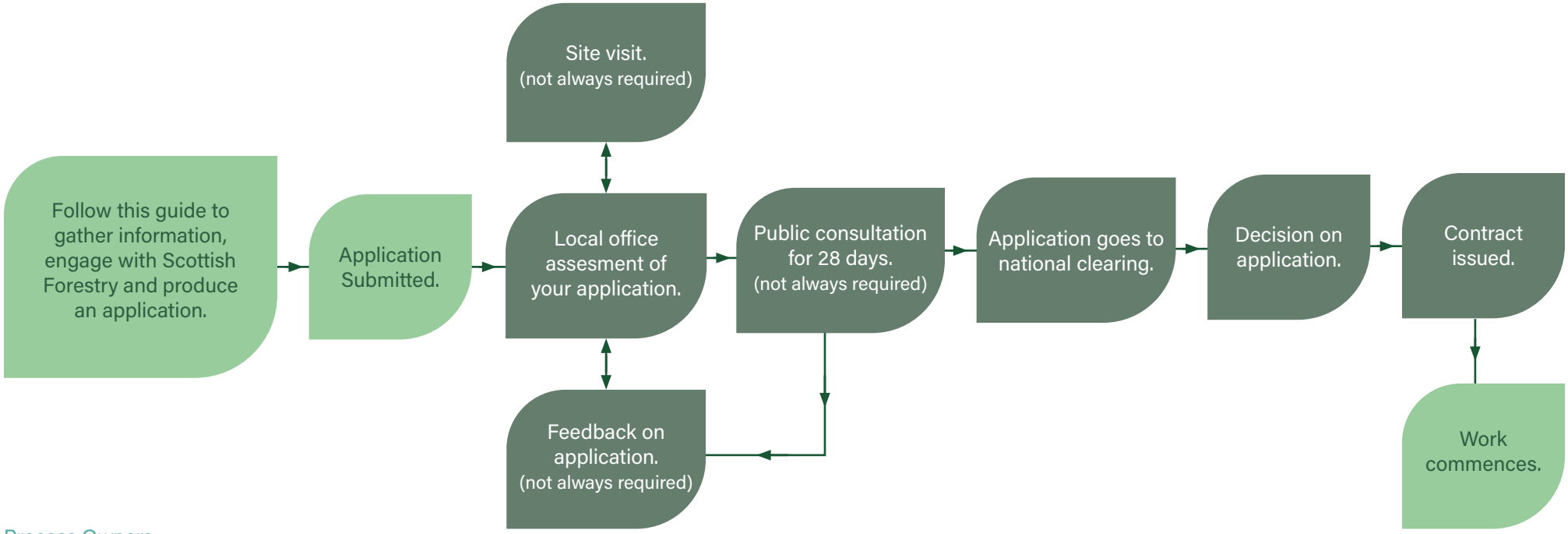
- a name (the same name that you will use for your grant application)
- a North arrow
- a scale bar (ensure the scale is an even number such as 1:2500, 1:5000 or similar)
- a grid reference [1]
- a legend

[1] A grid reference can be discerned from the LPID(s) of the land you intend to plant. Using the first two characters, then the first three digits of each section. For example: LPID NH/12345/67891 gives the NGR of NH123678.

Submitting an Application

You can now proceed with creating a grant application for your proposal. Your application will be assessed against the UK Forestry Standard and current grant scheme eligibility criteria. You can find out where and how to submit your. application in Appendix 1.

9.1 Application process overview



9.2 Application assessment

We will contact you to confirm we've received your application and to let you know the name of the Woodland Officer assigned to you. This is normally the same person you have worked with during the preparation of your application.

Your Woodland Officer may arrange a further site visit, as well as provide feedback on your application documents. If you have engaged with us early on, it is unlikely that this will happen.

Your application will be assessed against the current grant scheme eligibility criteria and the UK Forestry Standard.

If your application exceeds two hectares we will make it available for comment via our public register for 28 days before making a final decision.

If your application meets all of the eligibility criteria and the minimum threshold score, it will be recommend for approval. It then goes through a national competitive funding approval round known as 'clearing.'

If approved at clearing you will be issued with a contract, at which point you can start work.

Please don't start any work before you receive your contract – works can't be funded retrospectively so this may jeopardise your funding.

9.3 Implementing your project

It's important to consider timing and/or seasonality of the works required to complete your proposal. For example the tree planting season in Scotland is normally November to March [inclusive] in a given year. It can take up to - and in some cases exceed - six months from start to finish, even for a small woodland once you factor in activities such as putting up deer fences and cultivating the ground.

You need to carry out the works within your chosen claim year. Your claim year is the year you have applied to carry out your capital works and is included in your contract. Claim years run the same as a financial year: 1 April in one year to the 31 March in the following year. Claims for capital items must be submitted by the end of February of the following calendar year, of the year stipulated in your contract.

So, if you have a claim year of 2020 in your contract, your works must be initiated in 2020 and your claim must be submitted when the works have been completed and before 28 February 2021. If you submit your claim before the contractual claim year we may reject the claim and ask you to resubmit at a later date.

You can find more information on claims and payments in Appendix 1

Appendix 1 – Current Grant Scheme Details

Overview and Entry Requirements

The Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS) is the current grant scheme and is a points-based scheme with a limited budget. To ensure that we make the most cost effective use of funding and meet Scottish Government objectives, we will assess each application using scoring criteria. You can find out more about scoring on the Rural Payments and Services (RP&S) website.

To apply to the Forestry Grant Scheme you will require the following:

1. Business Reference Number (BRN) – you can register for a BRN through the Rural Payments and Services (RP&S) website. BRNs may be obtained by businesses or individuals;
2. A Main Location Code (MLC) –you will receive this once you have registered your business; and
3. Land Parcels – area(s) of land that you have registered against your business. Once you receive your BRN and MLC you can register your land through the submission of a Land Maintenance Form.

For assistance with registering your business and land you should contact your local Rural Payments and Inspections Division (RPID) office.

If you are a non-croft tenant or official sub-tenant of a croft you must submit a signed Landlord Declaration Form in which your landlord or main tenant confirms that your lease will extend beyond the duration of an FGS contract (20 years).

If you and a neighbour or neighbours (at least two separate businesses) are interested in creating woodlands, you may be eligible for grant support to cover planning costs through the Forestry Co-operation grant.

What is eligible for funding?

Woodland creation funding is only available for the creation of new woodland, also known as 'afforestation.' Areas that would be considered as existing woodland (felled or standing) are not eligible for funding.

Grant Options, Rates (£), Species & Densities

For all currently available grant option and their respective rates please see the FGS Woodland Creation Option[2] page. Allowable species percentages and densities of each species under each relevant option.

Protection Costs

For the current grant rates associated with protection costs, please see the 'capital grant operations' section on the Woodland Creation web page.

Target Areas

You can check the current target areas by opening the 'FGS Target and Eligibility Areas' data set in the 'layers' tab on the left of the screen in our Map Viewer.

Required Supporting Documents

You will need the following documents:

Operational Plan: this provides the details for your proposal. For applications up to five hectares you may use our Small Woodlands Operational Plan (SWOP) template. For larger woodlands you must apply using the standard Operational Plan;

Component Table: this breaks down what you want to plant into species, areas, percentages, and planting densities;

Option Map: a map showing which grant option(s) you will be applying for and where they are located in your proposal; and

Species Map: a map showing which tree species you will be planting and where.

You can find all of the templates and examples of the above in the 'supporting information' section on this page.

[2] click 'view all sections' through the hyperlink and scroll down to the first table

Submitting your application

You can submit your application and all supporting documents through the Rural Payment and Services (RP&S) website.

You will need to log in (top right of page) to the RP&S website to access your landing page.

From here you should follow the Online Application Guidance that will walk you through the creation of your application.

You will need your application documents and your map(s) (as per section 8) ready to upload and will have to select a year by which you will complete the work (your 'claim year', see section 9.3).

By the end of the guide you should have submitted your application, at which point it will be assessed by us (as per section 9.2). If you are having problems submitting your application, please contact us.

Claims and Payments

Grant payment for woodland creation under FGS is split into distinct payments: one capital payment for capital works, and five subsequent annual maintenance payment to help with the cost of maintaining your new woodland.

The total contract period for FGS woodland creation is 20 years. Further information on this can be found on this page.

Annual maintenance payments must be claimed by May each year using the Single Application Form (SAF).

To find out more about claims and for our claim forms please visit the 'claims and payments' page on the rural payments website.

We aim to process your claim within three months of submission, providing the claim form is complete and correct. Payments will be made to the nominated bank account held in the RP&S online system.

Appendix 2 – Woodland Creation Application Checklist

This checklist can be used to record your progress when preparing an application. Initial and date the right-hand column when the step is completed:

Application Steps	Initial & date
BRN obtained through registration with RPID. BRN:_____	
Main Location Code received. MLC:_____	
Proposal area land registered and LPIDs received. LPID(s): _____	
Objective(s) set	
Read the Woodland Creation Application Guidance	
Contacted local SF office to notify them of potential proposal	
Neighbours and local community notified/consulted on proposal	
Desk research for constraints carried out	
Desk research for protected habitats and species carried out	
Field survey for peat carried out	
Field survey for protected habitats and species carried out	
Specialist survey(s) carried out (if applicable)	
Issues Log completed	
Existing woodland identified and removed from proposal area	
Climatic suitability checked for proposal area to eliminate options/ species that are not suitable	

Application Steps	Initial & date
Ground conditions surveyed and recorded	
Proposed ground preparation method noted	
Proposed planting densities noted	
Proposed protection methods noted	
Read the Woodland Creation Application Guidance	
Finalised planting design completed. Site marked out (optional)	
Contact local Conservancy to submit planting proposal map and arrange a meeting/site visit (if not already done by now)	
FGS Woodland Creation option selected	
Target area (where applicable) noted	
Seed source for native trees noted	
Operational plan completed	
Map(s) completed	
Application for FGS funding created on RP&S website	
Operational Plan, Map(s), Issues Log, and other relevant information (e.g. survey reports) uploaded to FGS application	
FGS application submitted	

Appendix 3 – Further Advice

Highland & Islands Conservancy
Woodlands
Fodderty Way, Dingwall
Ross-shire IV15 9XB
0300 067 6950
highland.cons@forestry.gov.scot
(for Highland, Western Isles, Orkney Islands and Shetland Island Councils)

Grampian Conservancy
Portsoy, Huntly AB54 4SJ
0300 067 6210
grampian.cons@forestry.gov.scot
(for City of Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils)

Perth & Argyll Conservancy
Upper Battleby, Redgorton
Perth PH1 3EN
0300 067 6005
panda.cons@forestry.gov.scot
(for Angus, City of Dundee, Perth & Kinross Clackmannanshire, North Fife, Stirling and Argyll & Bute Councils)

Directions to our offices can also be found in the contact section of our website.

Central Scotland Conservancy
Bothwell House
Hamilton Business Park
Caird PArk, Hamilton, ML3 0QA
0300 067 6006
centralscotland.cons@forestry.gov.scot
(for North Ayrshire, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire. East Renfrewshire, North & South Lanarkshire, City of Glasgow, East & West Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, East, Mid & West Lothian, City of Edinburgh and Fife Councils)

South Scotland Conservancy
55-5 Moffat Road
Dumfries DG1 1NP
0300 067 6500
southscotland.cons@forestry.gov.scot

- Selkirk Office
  Weavers Court, Forest Mill
  Selkirk TD7 5NY
  0300 067 6007
  (for Scottish Borders, Dumfries & Galloway, South Ayrshire and East Ayrshire Councils)

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