

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.:

grant support for forestry (and the creation of new Urban woodland and urban tree planting) should continue to be improved and developed, along with the Central Scotland Green Network Funding and Uplift. As the latter is an essential and key component in helping deliver new woodland across central Scotland. As the creation of new urban woodland and urban tree planting, is imperative, if the Cities of Scotland especially, the largest cities Glasgow & Edinburgh that between them hold over approximately 40% of Scotland's population, are to reach the Scottish Government target increase in tree cover to 21% by 2032. As there are numerous benefits woodlands and new woodlands bring, such as improving community health and wellbeing, through delivering and creating a feel-good factor. That can also be a catalyst to producing many other positive actions and outcomes.

In addition, although the current SFWGS is beneficial for rural forestry, it does not cover all the challenges of urban woodland creation. Hence, ideally there should be a separate specialised woodland grant support package for all Urban, Peri-Urban areas that takes cognizance of the greater level of challenges that are aligned to establishing new woodlands in these areas.

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.:

funding tailored for Agro forestry/woodland that can demonstrate a strategy for sustainable food growing and approach that return suitable yields and creates training opportunities should be considered.

A greater emphasis and funding packages should also be made available for new woodland sites that are within a reasonable distance e.g. within 3Km from SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Areas) and are close to Active Travel Routes. Thus, to encourage people to use environmentally friendly green modes of transport or walk or cycle to these locations.

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.:

It is not enough for the support package to consider just whether woodlands and forests contribute to net zero and are themselves resilient to the future climate. The support package should also consider how woodlands and forests can contribute to increasing resilience of the wider community as part of catchment scale nature-based approach to adaptation, to make a clearer link with the Scottish Government Water Resilient Places policy framework - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/water-resilient-places-policy-framework-surface-water-management-blue-green-infrastructure/>.

The support package should also recognise that establishing and maintaining trees in urban areas is disproportionately costly compared to rural settings due to constraints and challenges associated with utilities, contaminated land, risk of vandalism, constrained sites presenting smaller planting area scale, etc. As the benefits of urban forests are arguably greater than rural settings, consideration should be given to increasing the grant rates available for planting in urban settings to increase uptake, delivery and maintenance.

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,

Yes

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

this should consider the benefits of relaxing any financial year spend conditions of grant funding, to reduce the risk of loss of full or partial funding stymieing overall delivery of a project.

In addition, consider designing and launching a Scottish Forestry platform where corporate stakeholders could sponsor a woodland or an area at a minimum funding contribution per hectare. To help with the long-term maintenance and stewardship of Local Authority woodlands. Where governance

and management would remain with a Local Authority.

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.:

Although the current SFWGS is beneficial for rural forestry, it does not cover all the challenges of urban and peri-urban woodland creation. Therefore, there should be a separate specialised Woodland grant support package for all urban, and peri-urban new tree sites that takes cognizance of the greater level of challenges that are associated with these types of new woodland.

In addition, enhancing the Woods In and Around Towns (WIAT) option to help address the costly complex issues relating to buildings, roads, creating/upgrading entrances and footpaths etc would allow urban and urban edge/green belt areas to contribute more through being corridors and linkages to the creation of 18,000 hectares of woodland per annum by 2024/45, to tackling the climate and biodiversity crises, while simultaneously enhancing the setting of Scotland's towns and cities, strengthening inner green belt boundaries thereby encouraging investment and directing more development to urban vacant/derelict sites, and highly benefitting people's mental and physical health.

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?:

Woodlands should be managed in line with good silvicultural and thinning practice along with any suitable innovative woodland developments which helps ensure they are resilient to the impacts of climate change and pests and disease. In order that their contribution to mitigating the climate change and biodiversity crises is maximised throughout their lifespan, thereby making the most of grant awards.

In addition, trees have in many instances been integral to the development of the urban landscape and the green spaces that are embedded within it. There is the designed landscape of parks and formal spaces through to street trees and although, native species are a major component there has been a reliance on cultivars, selected forms and non-native or exotic tree species. The selecting of a native species was for some notable attribute such as flower colour, leaf form, overall form and stature of that tree has been done for millennia and the same can be said for the exotic species with the plant hunters of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The industrial revolution, rapid urban growth, and the pollution that it brought singled out species that could grow and thrive in some instances under these challenging conditions and this trait is one that should not be dismissed in a drive to utilise only native species in the urban setting.

Although, we aim to mitigate climate change and reverse biological decline with the use of natives, the use of non-natives as part of the matrix, can in many instances support this endeavour. It would also be wise to embrace species diversification within the urban setting and environment does place additional stresses on trees and therefore, the risk and susceptibility to diseases and pandemics cannot be underestimated as evidenced by Dutch Elm, the range of Phytophthora tree diseases and now Ash dieback. It is also recognised that urban setting creates an extended season of activity for many forms of wildlife and therefore, meeting the need for pollen and nectar sources earlier and later in the year is most often supplied by non-native species.

There is a balance to be achieved but one that is reachable through consideration of the specific location, right tree in the right place, the planting aesthetics in colour, tree form, spatial limitations and importantly what additional benefits the species selection brings to supporting and reversing biodiversity decline.

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?:

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.:

YES: however, to undertake effective woodland management of urban and peri urban small woodland would require enhanced rates, in comparison to normal rates. To take account of the higher unit costs associated with working in smaller woodlands, particularly, those located across urban areas. Higher unit costs are derived from the down time elements of moving equipment and machinery on a more regular basis, the time taken to move equipment, the challenges of getting equipment through narrow urban streets and lanes that can have high volumes of vehicles parked and additional security measures normally need to be taken if machinery is going to be on site for more than one day.

The forestry grant scheme conditions for reaching a specified forestry/woodland stocking density should be relaxed and be flexible to account of the challenges that can sometimes occur especially, when trying to establish new woodlands in urban and peri urban neighbourhoods.

As the standard grant funded approach for tree establishment protection should be more flexible and site specific. As the standard option to use deer fencing as a control does not fit within an urban setting and the use of tree shelters are normally subject to vandalism, as they are too noticeable. Hence,

there are much greater challenges in trying to achieve the grant funded stocking density. Therefore, special dispensation should be considered by Scottish Forestry for where an WGS applicant has taken all the right steps across the first two years including replacement tree planting and a site is still showing a shortfall in year 3 from repetitive vandalism.

In addition, enhancing the Woods In and Around Towns (WIAT) option to help address the costly complex issues relating to buildings, roads, creating/upgrading entrances and footpaths etc would allow urban and urban edge/green belt areas to contribute more through being corridors and linkages to the creation of 18,000 hectares of woodland per annum by 2024/45, to tackling the climate and biodiversity crises, while simultaneously enhancing the setting of Scotland's towns and cities, strengthening inner green belt boundaries thereby encouraging investment and directing more development to urban vacant/derelict sites, and highly benefitting people's mental and physical health.

Scottish Forestry should consider providing additional funding for training towards thinning practice and thinning operations, to encourage a higher level of urban and peri-urban landowners to undertake thinning of woodlands that would be beneficial to the resilience and long-term retention of their woodlands for the wider communities.

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.:

Forestry grants should recognise that establishing and maintaining trees in urban areas is normally disproportionately costly compared to rural settings, due to challenges associated with utilities, contaminated land, risk of vandalism, constrained sites presenting smaller planting area scale, etc. As the benefits of urban forests are arguably greater than rural settings, consideration should be given to increasing the grant rates available for planting in urban settings to increase uptake, delivery, and maintenance.

Enhancement of urban woodlands through appropriate practice is paramount, as they provide a welcome escape and are seen as essential in improving people's wellbeing

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.:

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.:

Proposals seeking grant awards should be required to take appropriate cognisance of the local authority's Forestry and woodland strategy, which are required by National Planning Policy 4, to ensure any available grant funding contributes towards achieving wider national and local land-use planning goals, such as connecting fractured habitats and restoring degraded landscapes/sites and incorporating native and non-native sound resilient species . This could be particularly important for urban areas where reconnecting fractures habitats, developing existing green networks are more likely to be the priorities, rather than commercial forestry. This would also enable urban areas to better support the aims of Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy.

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.:

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?:

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

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.:

Any training positions should be aligned to the current and future needs of the forestry and woodland industries and are made available for various set durations e.g. 6 weeks, 3 months, 6 months & 12 months or more type apprenticeships, to gain key forestry skills that all should be a pre-requisite to an offer of employment.

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.:

Relating funding to regenerative habitat creation under the auspices of 'urban re-wilding' and the connectivity of existing habitats and greenspaces along with the creation of new diverse and accessible green spaces for wildlife and people on degraded former industrial or housing land, geotechnically compromised situations and former recreational land. Trees are the major element of such initiatives and therefore, being able specifically fund trees as an individual component or being able to fund a project in its entirety to include all environmental actions (wetlands, transitional habitat creation – woodland to meadow).

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?:

Enclosing land within the urban context comes with its own challenges as to the placement of fencing and access points for the public and how the urban population adapt to the new landscape and tree planting and therefore, consciously, or unconsciously support in excluding deer.

Small scale mixed land use?:

Enclosing land within the urban context comes with its own challenges as to the placement of fencing and access points and how the urban population adapt to the new landscape and plantings and therefore, consciously, or unconsciously support in excluding deer.

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

Please add your comments here.:

Ideally, Scottish Forestry should be taking the right steps that promotes the creation of significant new woodland and their aligned opportunities, which could be experienced by many and not the few although, a balanced approach would also be beneficial.

Consideration should be given to increasing the rates available for Woodlands for Water Target Areas, to encourage woodlands and forests that can contribute to increasing resilience of the wider community as part of catchment scale nature-based approaches to adaptation and creating water resilient places.

Forestry grants should also recognise that establishing and maintaining trees in urban areas is normally disproportionately costly, compared to rural settings due to challenges associated with utilities, contaminated land, risk of vandalism, constrained sites presenting smaller planting area scale, etc. As the benefits of urban forests are arguably greater than rural settings, consideration should be given to increasing the grant rates available for planting in urban settings to increase uptake, delivery, and maintenance.

Much greater consideration should be given for the inclusion of grant funding of hedgerows as an integral component of the next SFWGS, (to take account of the high volume of hedgerows that have been removed, due to rural practice and urban development). As hedgerows are an excellent habitat that host several ecosystems and normally align to a matrix of vegetation, species rich grasslands and flora up to an inner woodland edge.

Well established hedges can also create superb shelter and be a buffer to high winds to help increase woodland resilience. Along with the natural ability to capture carbon, reduce noise, help mitigate flooding and provide food and shelter to wildlife, invertebrates, and birds . New hedgerows and woodlands are also vital, as they attract a high volume of pollinators for many months of the year.

About you

What is your name?

Name:
Glasgow City Council

What is your email address?

Email:
[Redacted]

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Organisation

What is your organisation?

Organisation:
Glasgow City Council

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

Publish response only (without 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.

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