STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT TO INFORM DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL WOODLAND CREATION FRAMEWORK

Final report

May 2020

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The Borders Forest trust

southern uplands partnership

living land, living community

Stakeholder engagement to inform development of a Regional Woodland Creation Framework

Final report

A contribution to the Scottish Borders Strategic Woodland Creation Pilot Project

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Contents

Table of acronyms

The stakeholders in this study, and the facilitators of workshops, used a large number of acronyms sometimes more in the taking of notes than in conversation. Because of the overlaps and cross-connections between sections, we do not follow convention of spelling out each acronym the first time it is met, but instead encourage the reader to refer to the list below.

ASHS	Association of Scottish Hardwood Sawmillers
BFT	Borders Forest Trust
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
CCF	Continuous cover forestry
CONFOR	Confederation of Forest Industries
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FCS	Forestry Commission Scotland (predecessor to Scottish Forestry)
FLS	Forestry and Land Scotland
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
LA	Local Authority
LDP	Local Development Plan
LIDAR	Light Detection and Ranging- remote sensing method used to reveal three-dimensional topography
LUS	Land Use Strategy
MW	megawatt
NFM	natural flood management
NGO	Non-government organisation
RLUF	Regional Land Use Framework
RLUP	Regional Land Use Partnership
SBC	Scottish Borders Council
SEPA	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
SF	Scottish Forestry
SG	Scottish Government
SGRPID	Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate
SLC	[Scottish] Land Commission
SOSE	South of Scotland Enterprise
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
SS	Sitka Spruce
SUP	Southern Uplands Partnership
SWSEIC	South West Scotland Environmental Information Centre
TWIC	The Wildlife Information Centre
UKFS	UK Forestry Standard
WIAT	Woods In and Around Towns (a funding programme)

Executive Summary

1. The study was commissioned as part of a wider project to develop pilot woodland creation areas in the Scottish Borders. This study, as a stakeholder consultation, had two functions – to develop a suitable methodology, and to understand and incorporate stakeholders' views on opportunities for them to benefit from appropriate woodland creation within pilot areas. 'Appropriate' woodland creation can be assumed to have benefits for climate, natural capital, society, culture and the economy.

2. This report aims to summarise the views of those who engaged rather than present a feasibility study of specific future developments. It is notable that stakeholders engaged with enthusiasm and energy, and that while many were not content with their experiences of upland afforestation, they wanted to look ahead positively, and contributed generously with proposals and innovative ideas.

3. The approach was based on a conventional stakeholder consultation, modified to take account of strong local interest, and the need to move from understanding of perspectives, through discussion of possible solutions, to more systematically presented proposals. The report includes an account of various tools used and adapted, and ways in which subsequent iterations of the process were adjusted. A recommended approach for future consultations is included, based on experience of what worked best in this pilot study.

4. Discussion of issues and solutions was organised through roundtable discussions in workshop contexts, organised around eight themes: community involvement, farming, landscape and cultural heritage, timber transport, local economy, natural capital and ecosystem services, innovation and enterprise, and policy and regulation. The workshop discussions, and stakeholder consensus or divergence, around each theme, are reported in order to provide a detailed flavour of the depth and quality of conversation.

5. On the whole the forestry and landowning sector was most content with the status quo, while other stakeholders varied in their views and experiences. While many local stakeholders feel side-lined in major land use change, most are not opposed to woodland creation in the broader sense. Other recent policy reviews have made recommendations for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of new planting application processes. The present study focuses rather on the value and possibility of reduced opposition and stress among stakeholders, and increased benefit sharing, for increasing reliability of outcomes for all stakeholders. This requires recognition of the ways in which woodland creation can contribute to multiple stakeholder objectives, more equitable benefits of land use and rural economy, and processes that value local knowledge and innovation.

6. Proposals for solutions were identified and organised under twelve headings which cut across the themes. In brief, the solutions represent a wish and willingness to:

    a. **Make the current system work more smoothly and fairly, from planning to implementation.** Many opportunities were identified to use the existing system more effectively and efficiently, to given local communities more informed and timely opportunity to not only react but also to contribute to plans, and to ensure close correspondence between approved planting proposals, and implementation. Mechanisms were also proposed, for sharing the benefits of land use change more equitably.

    b. **Shift the focus to more integrated planning.** Many looked forward to the roll-out of the Land Use Strategy as Regional Land Use partnerships and frameworks, and highlighted the need to plan forestry within that wider context. There was also a strong interest in more integrated land use within farms, and across neighbouring ownership units.

    c. **Review incentives and standards to accommodate more diverse and resilient forestry.** While the forestry sector viewed current planting grants as desirable, most other stakeholders felt there was scope for government to be more encouraging and supportive of a wider range of species, silvicultural systems, planting sizes and ownership structures. Specific constraints to planting smaller woodlands, native species, mixtures, etc. are well known and many have been addressed effectively in the past. Deer control is a key part of effective mechanisms. The next review of the UK Forestry Standard presents an opportunity to steer forestry in this direction.

    d. **Work creatively with ownership structures, markets and product innovation, and forestry education to create more opportunities for ecologically and socially fair forestry.** The project identified notable levels of creativity, innovative ideas and interest. Constraints to developing small-scale local forest-based businesses were clearly identified, with opportunities for cross-sectoral solutions.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those who gave their time to speak to us or to contribute their thoughts and ideas at the various workshops. The consultation work was carried out by staff of the Southern Uplands Partnership and Borders Forest Trust, especially Anna Craigen and Julie Nock. Particular thanks to John Thomas, Board member of BFT, who put in a huge amount of his own time and energy. Dr Andy Tharme and Siobhan McDermott of Scottish Borders Council and Louise Payne of Scottish Forestry provided excellent support and guidance. Thanks to Derek Robeson for the cover image.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Policy purpose

This report forms part of a wider project to consider woodland creation at a regional, strategic level: *Exploring Opportunities for New Woodlands at Landscape level*. The proposal is to develop and pilot an integrated approach to considering land use and new opportunities for larger scale woodland creation as part of this.

Scottish Government has ambitious targets to increase woodland cover in Scotland from 18% to 21% by 2032. To achieve this may require the current 12,000ha p.a. planting target to increase to 15,000ha p.a. by 2024-25. A second key driver for the targets is to ensure stability of timber supply to support an important sector of the rural economy.

A review of the application process for woodland creation and the extent to which it might be improved and streamlined recommended that: *A pilot scheme with a willing local authority to identify areas for large scale planting schemes should be considered.* The Regional Strategic Woodland Creation Project takes forward that recommendation. Scottish Borders is one of four local authority areas taking part, the others being Dumfries and Galloway, East Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire.

1.2 Background

Woodland creation in Scottish Borders is guided by a number of documents including the Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy (2005) and its update (Technical Advice Note 2012) as part of the Local Development Plan. The approach is also informed by a pilot regional land use framework. As part of the national Land Use Strategy (LUS), the Scottish Government was required to test and evaluate the practicality of preparing regional land use frameworks to guide land use and the provision of ecosystem services. The two pilots were conducted in Aberdeenshire and Scottish Borders and include timber production and native woodland expansion.

The Regional Strategic Woodland Creation project provides an opportunity to develop a framework that seeks to balance the needs of competing land uses and investigate the opportunities to deliver multiple benefits to the region. This includes ensuring that the benefits of woodland creation are shared e.g. through community ownership and engagement and sustainable local employment and training opportunities, considering wider impacts of this land use change on farming, population, housing and connectivity, flood protection and cultural heritage, addressing key infrastructure such as the Timber Transport Network, considers and addresses the cumulative impact of new planting and increase the diversity of ownership of woodland created.

Local authorities have been asked by the government to identify particular areas (of suitable scale) where these pressures are apparent and where a new approach could be explored.

In the first stage of the project, the Scottish Borders Council identified two pilot areas, Area 1 Ale, Ettrick and Yarrow and Area 2 Teviot and Hermitage, the area from the upper Ale to the mid-Ettrick and that from the Hermitage to the upper Teviot as suitable pilot areas. [1,2]

In order to progress the project into the second stage focused on stakeholder engagement, Scottish Borders Council appointed The Southern Uplands Partnership working in partnership with The Borders Forest Trust to facilitate stakeholder engagement. The project is funded by Scottish Forestry.

1.3 Objectives of this work

- To develop and pilot an approach in identified areas to consider the capacity for Woodland Creation in the context of overall land use.

- To engage with local communities, landowners and farmers and land managers to explore the opportunities for them to benefit from appropriate woodland creation within pilot areas.

- Within pilot areas, to consider, and develop solutions with partners and wider stakeholders, which realise benefits and minimise impacts associated with larger scale Woodland Creation.

The work reported on here fits into the overall project by i) developing a methodology to engage with key stakeholders, consider the main issues and seek to develop solutions to these issues; in order to ii) inform the development of a woodland creation Framework, which may be both spatial and criteria based, in the next (third) stage of the overall Scottish Borders Regional Strategic Woodland Creation project.

1.4 Structure of the report

This report follows the structure of the objectives: develop an approach, engage with stakeholders, discuss and propose solutions. These broadly map on to conventional report structures of methods, results, and discussion. In conclusion we relate this study back to the wider study of which it forms part, and list criteria which would help to ensure that stakeholder concerns are covered in future updates of the Woodland Strategy and Framework.

[1] Regional Strategic Woodland Creation Project. Mapping Methodology (2019) Scottish Borders Council

[2] Further details on Storymap at: https://forestry.gov.scot/support-regulations/woodland-creation/regional-strategic-woodland-creation-project

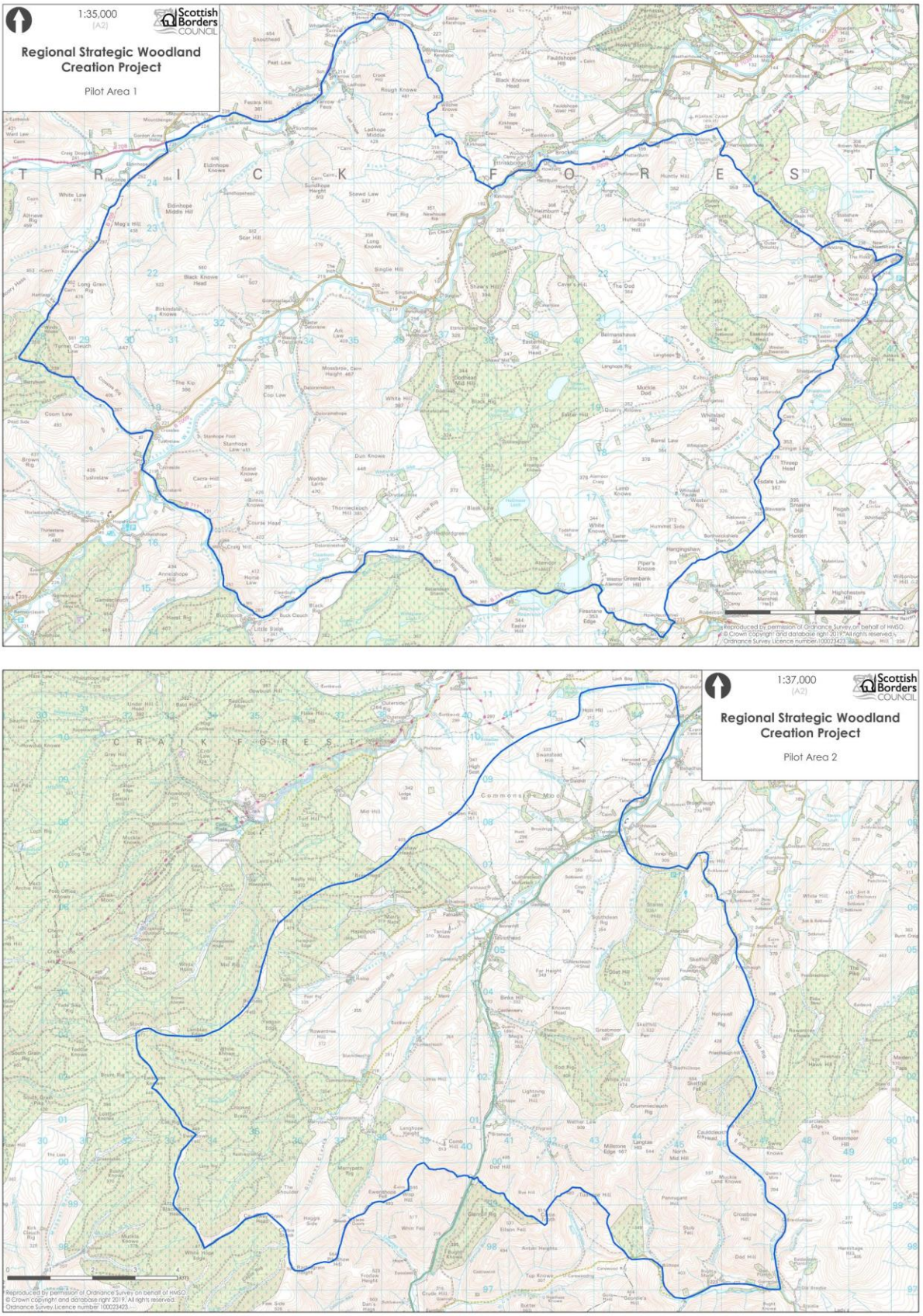


Figure 1. The pilot areas

2 Objective 1: Develop and pilot an approach

2.1 Pilot

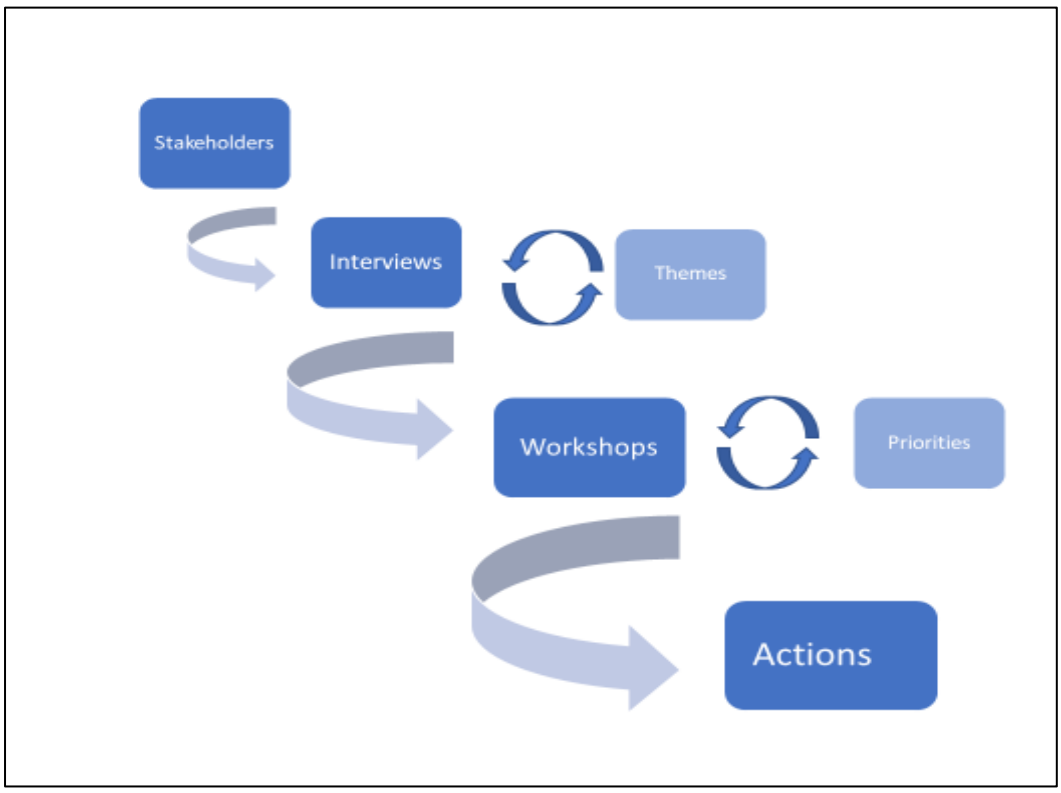
As a pilot project, part of the remit was to test an approach that would be usable elsewhere. This provided some leeway to explore methods and select those that were most effective in providing relevant information. The project collected and adapted to feedback e.g. after the workshops.

The testing took place in two areas known for strong feelings about forestry and some stakeholders were concerned that the process would provoke a strong reaction. Several comments during and after the process reflected the value of the method which allowed people to contribute and share strong views, but also to acknowledge the views and experience of others.

2.2 Overall process

The process followed a stepwise progression from identifying and publicising the study to stakeholders; conducting interviews; analysing themes; discussing themes at workshops; analysing priorities, and proposing actions.

Figure 2. Schematic representation of process



2.3 Communication and publicity

Much effort was put into advertising the project and inviting contributions. The consultants attended four local Community Council meetings in August 2019 and September 2019 to explain the project and give advance warning of workshops. SBC put out a press release announcing the project in early July 2019 and a second was released in mid-September which included details of the first two community events. Articles appeared in Southern Reporter also in the Berwickshire News, Borthwick Water Newsletter, Eskdale and Liddesdale Advertiser, The Hawick Paper. A notice was also placed on the Ashkirk Village Hall notice board. The events were further promoted by direct emails and phone calls to local contact groups, stakeholders, key individuals in the wider community as well as community groups, local businesses, key farmers and the main estates.

To increase coverage of local people and businesses a brief survey was put together in "Survey Monkey". The questions sought to capture people's experience of woodland creation as land managers or as land-users. So, for example we asked what people felt about a range of possible changes in land use in their area, from no-change, more woodland, more diversity to more productive woodland. We asked about what features of the land they valued (scenic quality, wildlife, businesses, housing, etc) and how these features might be affected (positively or negatively) by an increase in local woodland. We asked what additional benefits they would want to see if there was an increase in productive woodland and we also asked them to suggest where there might be opportunities that could be developed as part of any expansion of woodland. The link to the survey was widely publicised and circulated through local networks and social media. We received 73 responses.

A wide range of Facebook groups and pages were identified and information was circulated through them. These included: Ettrick and Yarrow Valleys group, Ettrick Yarrow Valleys, Visit Ettrick and Yarrow, Ettrickbridge Brigend, Ettrickbridge SWI, Cross Keys Ettrickbridge, Cross Keys Inn Ettrickbridge, Ettrick Forest Sports and Recreation, Ettrick Forest Riders, Ettrick Forest Natives, Ettrick Valley textile company, Borthwick Water Arts Project, Ettrick Forest Archers, Roberton SWI, Roberton Village Group , Teviothead Show, Teviothead Hall, Tushielaw Inn, Branxholm Park Venue, Lilliesleaf Ashkirk and Midlem Community, Eskdale and Liddesdale Advertiser, Gordon Arms Group, Newmill and Teviot SWI Group, Chisholme Institute, Friends of Chisholme House, East Lothian Young Farmers.

Two day-long drop-in sessions were held in the Kirkhope Hall in Ettrickbridge on 26th September and in Teviothead Parish Hall on 30thSeptember 2019. These events allowed people to find out more about the project, to explore the range of maps that can be used to influence woodland creation and they also offered the chance to interview one or two key local people who had not responded to our approaches before. These were followed-up by invitation-only evening workshops held in Teviothead on 26th November and Ettrickbridge on 3rd December. A further all-day workshop took place at Council Headquarters on 27th January 2020. Finally, two additional session were held to seek input on specific issues.

A community drop-in at Ettrickbridge to seek information on community interest in woodland management and on sites of particular local community value. The last event was an evening workshop in Teviothead specifically for farmers and agricultural advisors to seek to develop a better understanding of how they saw woodland creation.

Stakeholders expressed their wish for the stakeholder report to be made publicly available. The project originally planned to hold a regional event to report back to stakeholders on the findings of the report. Plans for this are on hold until such time as the Covid-19 situation allows this to take place and alternatives to a public event may be explored.

2.4 Methods used

As a pilot project, a number of different methods were tested. The views of the team and of feedback from participants are summarized in table 1. The SurveyMonkey questions and a summary of responses are provided in Appendix 1. The interview guide is provided in Appendix 2.

Table 1. Assessment of methods used in pilot study

Step	Method	Reason for trialling	Usefulness	Comments
Interviews	Simple recording form	Easier to sort interview into broad headings	High	We set out to interview circa 30 key stakeholders but this grew to over 40 owing to interest in participating.
	Drop-in sessions	Engage views from wider range of local stakeholders	Moderate	Good engagement with people who attended but the low numbers made this poor value for money.
Survey	On-line survey monkey	Allow a wider range of local people to comment	Moderate	73 responses. Good return rate, less interactive method so provides support to but does not replace workshops.
Analysis	Interview notes structured	Helps members of a team to share findings	High	
	Building up themes from the ground	Needed to approach with an open mind	High	
Drop-in sessions	Access to maps	Provided by SBC to illustrate current / potential constraints and targets	High	Lots of interest in the maps although the sheer number of maps made it difficult to display them all effectively. Having a GIS system / operator would have helped.

Step	Method	Reason for trialling	Usefulness	Comments
	Landscape use modelling tool	Provided by Scottish Forestry on tablets	Low	People tried this but quickly lost interest. Needed a task to be set to encourage deeper engagement.
Workshops	Structuring by themes	Encourage people to contribute to theme they felt strongest about	Moderate to High	All workshops had sufficient participants. The theme structures enabled participants to work in break-out groups.
	Graffiti sheets	Encourage stakeholders to engage with views of other stakeholders	Moderate	• Lots of work to prepare graffiti • Not enough time to engage • Workshop participants spent time in greeting and networking instead
	Other posters	Keep a holistic perspective on the findings	Low	Few people really engaged
	Presentations	Short orientations	Moderate	Important to put consultation in wider context
	Group discussions	Review topics and priorities	Moderate	Initial attempts included too many options. Initial format was, for each theme to take a selection of issues identified through interviews and drop-in sessions, and discuss, establish how easy it would be to resolve the issue, and where appropriate to mark up areas on map where this issue might apply.
	Group discussions	Assess pre-selected list of options and develop solutions	High	An evolution of the earlier method which asked participants to assess each 'issue' for priority, and propose actions to address.
	Storybook	Provided by Scottish Forestry	Low	Too much information to absorb in workshop setting. Link was circulated but no data on usage outwith the workshops.

2.5 Issues around mapped data

Maps and mapped data are a popular tool for engagement. During the consultation work, we were given access to a large number of maps showing a variety of data. These ranged from agricultural land classification, peat, forest roads flood-risk, wildlife sites and landscape designations. Many people were amazed at so much information being available and the maps attracted a lot of interest. Indeed, as a part of this study, three more datasets were produced, looking at landscape capacity, upland waders and black grouse leks. The aerial photographic maps were also very popular.

There were also a number of constraints around the use of the maps. While they were good for stimulating discussion, participants found it a rather abstract exercise to be asked to map the constraints or opportunities that they were discussing in the workshops. Furthermore, most knew their area well and on several occasions complained that they were being asked to comment on maps which are out of date (not showing areas already afforested) although this information was provided at subsequent events.

Having access to a GIS system at the workshops would have allowed these layers to be overlaid and this might have generated some new ideas. Participants suggested that both for the purposes of the workshops, and for planning consultations, if all the maps were overlaid, it would be possible to identify where there were multiple constraints or conversely, where there no (or very few) constraints. If such constraints were converted into a heat-map – it would allow developers to understand where it might be difficult to get permission for new forestry and perhaps guide them to areas where there are fewer constraints. A GIS system that allowed this, could also allow developers to drill down to see which constraints they would need to address in any one location. This approach would encourage the development and maintenance of good datasets the value of this data would only be realised if there was an interpretation facility, i.e. someone who could manage and manipulate the data and help explain the maps.

This GIS approach requires further development; it was not available at the stakeholder events at this stage of the work, and for stakeholder engagement it would act as a focus of a rather different set of questions which would start to make concrete, the issues discussed in this report.

2.6 Recommended method

Taking into account the range of methods used (Table 1) and the way they fit together into a process (Figure 1), we recommend the following outline for future consultations with stakeholders to develop woodland creation pilots and identify issues and solutions. Key features of the final method include:

- The approach to stakeholders must be inclusive – although this generated more data than anticipated, it is important to be welcoming to all who want to contribute.

- All contributions must be analysed, and an efficient system for doing so is essential. The approach suggested below, where interview notes are copied and pasted into an evolving document which identifies themes through section headers, proved helpful in dealing with a very large amount of qualitative data.
- Maintain the thread of continuity through interviews, workshops and final focused workshops. Quotes from interviews were fed into workshops, and all proposals discussed were derived from interviews. The data collected in interviews needs to be respected and translated into the workshop context, and finally into the report.
- The report must represent the views of stakeholders without undue interpretation by the facilitators.

Steps in the approach

1. **Identify stakeholders**
   a. Identify broad stakeholder categories, and then populate them. These are unlikely to vary widely between different regions of Scotland. Different landowner types, or forest industry types, might feature in different places. Useful broad categories are likely to be:
      i. Local community
      ii. Farmers and landowners (depending on land ownership pattern, this might be useful split into small-scale / tenant / community / estate / large-scale commercial forest owners
      iii. Local business
      iv. Forest industry (forest management companies, harvesting contractors, fencing contractors, deer management contractors, sawmills etc.)
      v. NGOs (environmental NGOs both national and local, community museums, archaeological associations etc.)
      vi. Government agencies and advisors (Scottish Forestry, RPID, SEPA, SNH, HES etc)
   b. Simultaneously advertise the consultation widely to ensure that all interested parties have an opportunity to contribute.

2. **Interviews**
   a. Agree how to introduce the project and invite key respondents in each stakeholder group. Aim to cover the range of stakeholders, with some duplication. Aim for about 25, expect more if the consultation is popular.
   b. Agree how to document interviews. We settled on writing 'notes and quotes', with direct quotes clearly indicated. Each interviewer then wrote up the interview under headings:
      0. [Experience with woodland creation (introductory remarks)]
      i. **Impacts** of woodland creation
      ii. **Constraints** to further woodland creation
      iii. **Solutions:** Ways forward to address the obstacles
      iv. **Opportunities** to create synergy / local benefits
      v. Take home messages

c. Have a system for logging every interview, along with the stakeholder category and name of interviewee. Keep track of all interview notes to ensure they all contribute to the analysis.

3. Analysis

a. Set up a main analysis document with headings for each section of the interview:
   i. Impacts
   ii. Constraints
   iii. Solutions
   iv. Opportunities
   v. Landscape scale planning
b. Copy and paste statements from interview notes into appropriate headings. Create subheadings for themes as they emerge.
c. Identify the main themes, which are likely to be the eight, or similar to the eight, that we identified. Set up one new document for each theme, and copy quotations and notes from the analysis document into these theme documents, which serve as resources for the workshops.
d. For each theme select from these notes:
   i. Range of quotations illustrating contrasting points of view, for discussion under the 'graffiti' activity in workshops
   ii. 4-6 proposals for solutions to be discussed at the roundtables in the workshops.

4. **Workshops**

a. Identify and invite participants. We allocated several themes to each workshop.
b. Plan workshop structure:
   i. Short **introduction** to purpose of project and workshop; themes to be discussed; proposals to be discussed. If possible, demonstrate use of GIS as a tool to steer woodland creation decision making.
   ii. Use '**graffiti sheets'** as a way to bring the interviews into the workshop space: for each theme, quotations from a range of stakeholders are printed and displayed on flipcharts; participants are asked to comment and add to the quotations using post-its.
   iii. Work in **break-out groups** or **roundtables** to consider the proposals selected at the analysis stage. Allocate about 25-30 minutes per proposal, to discuss:
      1. possible impacts – pros and cons of implementing
      2. obstacles to implementation
      3. steps to overcome obstacles.
      4. Finally score the proposal as 'Quick win' / 'Needs negotiation' / 'Challenging issue'
c. Reconvene in plenary, where rapporteurs **share findings** and the plenary group is given opportunity to comment.
d. Ensure that the group facilitators and rapporteurs provide their notes to the report writer.
e. Write up each workshop as:
   i. Theme description
   ii. Issues prioritised as 'quick wins' 'need negotiation' and 'challenging issues'

iii. Discussion points on each issue noted

Further development of methods would be desirable if a GIS platform and mapping layers were made available. There was much interest in the maps but some frustration in the accuracy and scope for interacting in a participatory and meaningful way.

5. **Synthesis.** Bring together all the inputs, by identifying a manageable number of solutions (we settled on 12) which between them cover the main issues discussed. Sort through the notes and reports, to summarise the feasibility and steps needed to address each solution.

2.7 Reflections on the value of the method

Many stakeholder consultations have been carried out, and the method proposed here is not radically innovative, but does contain some features tailored to the challenge at hand.

The topic is a sensitive one, and press releases had to be carefully worded to explain the scope of the work and to minimise risks of unduly raised expectations beyond the scope of the pilot. The response to invitations to participate was much larger than expected; as a result, workshops were standing room only (although drop-in sessions were poorly attended); and an extra table / break-out group had to be accommodated at the final workshop owing to last minute registrations. In a very few cases, break-out groups at workshops were dominated by individuals with particularly strong views; workshop facilitation techniques to ensure all are included, are helpful here.

It is of course important that the facilitating team takes a neutral approach. In some regions the topic of woodland creation is perceived as divisive, and it may be challenging for facilitators to be seen as open to all views. In this pilot study, this issue was raised frequently. In order to provide reassurance, it is important to:

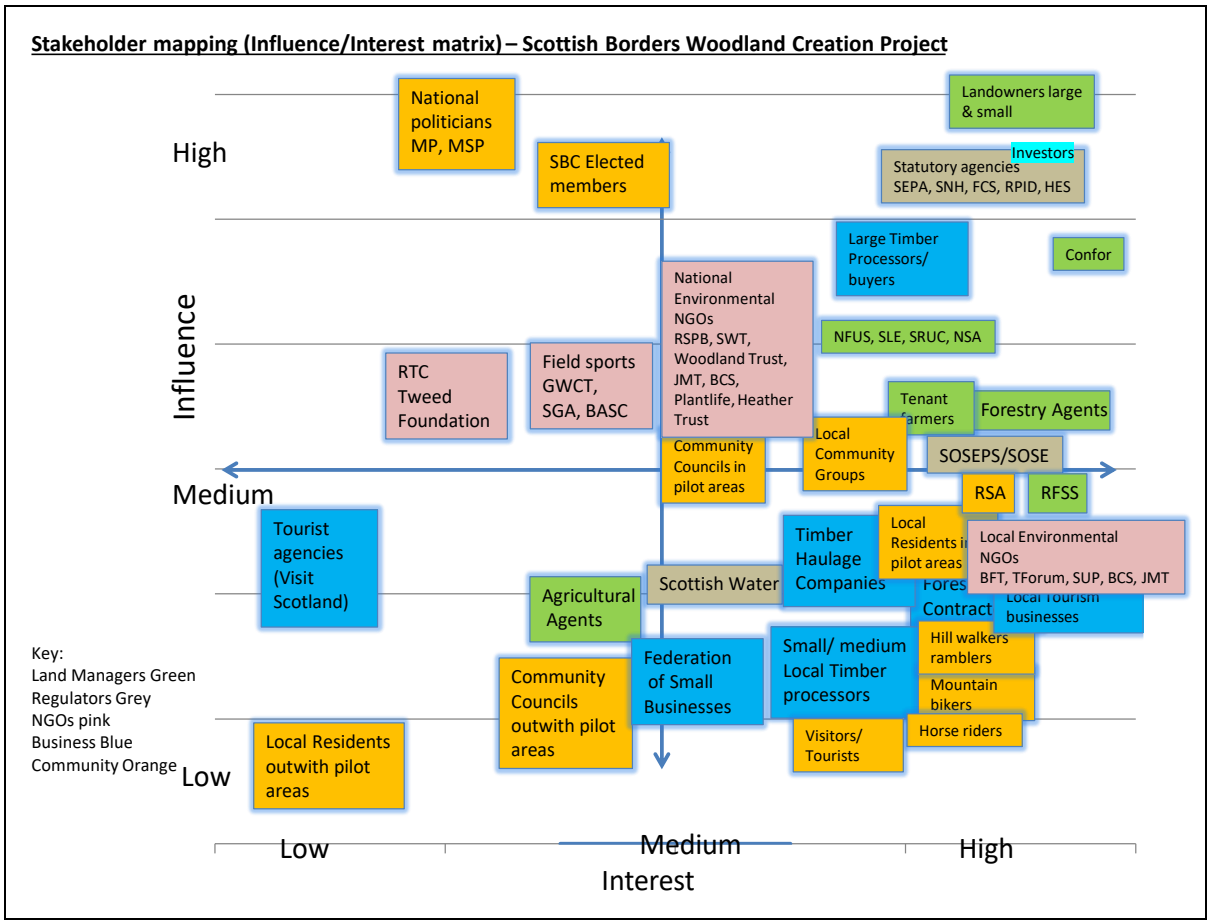
1. Include space to listen to respondents' experiences
2. Assure respondents of confidentiality if that is their preference
3. Provide opportunities to share perspectives
4. Be clear that the project is seeking to understand perspectives *and* find solutions
5. Communicate the process at all stages of the consultation – so that interviewees are aware that later stages will work towards solutions and workshops participants are aware that material at workshops is derived from interviews.

3 Objective 2: Engage with stakeholders

3.1 Defining stakeholders

The project team was provided with a ready-made list of stakeholder groups, and a preliminary analysis of their importance and influence. This is a standard step in a stakeholder analysis. It came from SBC. They had mapped key stakeholder groups in Stage 1 of the report, based on an approach used with the LUS pilot, using an Influence/Interest axis. SUP developed this further for this pilot project, to target key stakeholder groups.

Figure 3. Stakeholder analysis



For the purposes of analysing interviews, stakeholders were collected into six broad headings:

- Community members
- Local businesses
- Land managers: Farmers and estates
- Forest industry
- NGOs
- Government agencies and advisers

However, it is important to keep in mind both that groups contain subgroups, and overlap with each other. Hence:

- Local businesses were also community members
- Farmers were tenant farmers and/or owner occupiers
- Advisers including government and NGO sources
- Forest industry included contractors and multi-national forest investment companies

This degree of overlap suggests that a simplistic separation of stakeholder views is not advisable. It also provides confidence that many individuals are able to see the issues from multiple perspectives.

3.2 Level of engagement achieved

The project attracted a high level of engagement. Originally about 20 interviews were planned, but interest in being heard was so high that ultimately 40 interviews were conducted. Except for the community drop-ins, every event was over-subscribed: more people turned up than had accepted invitations, and last-minute arrangements had to be made to adapt methods to larger numbers. In two of the workshops more breakout groups were formed than originally planned.

The on-line survey included a question about age group, which indicates a scarcity of input from younger people. We did target young farmers groups but had no response. We were able to interview one young tenant farmer, farming adjacent to the pilot areas; and we visited the two primary schools within the pilot areas to promote the work and hear from the older children about where they liked to play. We could have visited Selkirk and Hawick High Schools, but both cover a much wider catchment than the pilot areas.

Table 2. Numbers of participants from each stakeholder category

Stakeholder group	No. inter-viewed	No. at drop-ins	No. at evening work-shops	No. at daytime work-shops	Total	Unique participants	Plus: No. in Survey-Monkey
Local community	6	25	25	5	61	56	33
Farmers / land owners	7	12	13	3	35	30	7
Local business	9	5	4	2	20	19	25
Forest industry	6	1	8	6	21	19	8
NGOs	9	0	8	9	26	24	0
Government agencies	6	4	23	14	47	43	0
Total	**43**	**47**	**81**	**39**	**210**	**191**	**73**

3.3 Prioritization of issues

Keeping in mind the fact that sequential workshops learnt from the experience of previous workshops, the following subsections summarise information gained about how participants see the priority level of issues to be addressed.

3.3.1 Forestry and Community Involvement

This theme was addressed through workshops at Teviothead (which did not lead to prioritisation) and at Ettrickbridge (which did lead to prioritisation). The 'statements' were provided to the groups and are summaries of issues that arose from the interviews.

Theme summary

> *Rural communities are fragile and many are struggling to maintain basic services as young people leave and property prices make it hard for businesses to attract workers. Forestry represents a significant investment in the rural sector. How could this investment help sustain rural communities and local businesses?*
>
> *Does the current system of consultation provide enough information to allow debate about the impacts? Could it do more to explore local opportunities e.g. through better planned access, interpretation, cultural or natural heritage conservation, local tourism/recreation related business opportunities?*

Table 3. Community involvement. Stakeholders' assessment of intervention level needed

Statements in the tables are based on views presented in stakeholder interviews and were offered for discussion in the workshops.

Quick wins	Needs negotiation	Complex issue - needs policy development
More time is needed for proper consultation. Large forestry schemes have major and long-lasting impacts and time and energy are required to consider these.[1] The consultation process needs to be clearer to communities.[1] Dialogue is seen by both "sides" as being valuable. Whose role is it to facilitate this so that all concerns can be taken into account in a timely way?[2] Forestry represents a significant investment in rural areas, but little of the investment actually benefits local communities. Forestry developers could do more to help explore local opportunities e.g. through better planned access, interpretation, cultural or natural heritage conservation, local tourism/recreation related business opportunities.[3] Forestry schemes should provide enhanced access both local walks and more strategic links. Ideally these routes should be designed for ease of access, with native species, good views and interesting destinations.[4]	Any one scheme could be regarded as tolerable. But the effect of many schemes over time becomes significant. How should a community address this incremental impact? The pressure for afforestation is taking place at the same time as communities are being encouraged to become more empowered.[5] There are opportunities for them to take ownership of land and thereby to benefit from the current demand for timber, but capacity to do this is often lacking. The capacity for commercial woodland has been reached in some areas. [6] There is strong support for more trees (especially native tree species) but much less support for commercial monoculture. Forestry represents a significant investment in rural areas, but little of the investment actually benefits local communities. It seems public funds are driving land-use change that is not what the public actually want.[7]	Many people accept that land-use change is inevitable, that there is a danger that the benefits will all be exported. [8] The systems that are driving land-use change are complex (e.g. grants, tax rules, regulations, Govt targets, industry lobbying etc). Unless these are fully understood, it is hard to understand what is happening and why Some rural communities are no longer "viable". Why should resources be used to try to keep them going?[9]

Notes based on discussion at workshops:

[1] Clarification of the consultation process was sought by community members during the workshops. It was suggested that discussion was at the wrong starting point, it should consider the benefits of new forestry and what would the local community like to see from it if it was theirs. It was felt this was a serious issue and one that could be relatively easily addressed, perhaps with input or oversight from a neutral party to ensure that the issues are fully considered.

[2] Some community members expressed a lack of capacity, knowledge and experience in the local community, and problems with long term involvement. Some felt there had been a lack of support for community involvement in the past from FCS.

[3] General consensus that this was achievable

[4] There was agreement on this as a quick win but it would need the better consultation processes identified above to realise it.

[5] There was agreement on empowerment as an ambition. If communities had more influence and capacity then some of the solutions outlined could be developed.

[6] Discussion focused on who decides that capacity has been reached and the need for a suitable landscape or local development plan approach. Participants expressed a need to focus on cumulative impact. This was seen as a more complex challenge requiring policy solutions at the Ettrickbridge workshop. There was no agreement on this – views varied significantly. It was agreed there were areas in pilot area 1 where additional commercial forestry could be fitted.

[7] What type of woodland is wanted by the public? Discussion on this did not reach a consensus but it was agreed that greater community benefits should be delivered. Wind farms provide a local benefit fund which forests do not. These benefits do not need to be financial; they could be qualitative by for example improving access to the land, providing timber, allowing community to manage some areas, seeking opportunities for community enterprises, considering tourism potential etc.

[8] Mixed views. Some agreed that forestry provides local jobs, others did not. Disbenefits cited included lack of/loss of access. Some see forestry as a net disbenefit.

[9] This was felt to be too big an issue to tackle but it was felt by some that people were a vital component of the landscape. Points included: “Because it’s our (rural) culture we are talking about.” “Rural communities are not just farmers.” “Elsewhere in Europe there is a woodland culture – but we lost ours when we felled our forests, and it takes time to redevelop.”

3.3.2 Forestry and Farming

This theme was explored through interviews, and the Teviothead and Ettrickbridge workshops.

Theme summary:

In both pilot areas, there is a perceived shift from farmland to commercial forestry, which is likely to be long-lasting. Some of this is driven by current public support (grants and tax incentives) to the two sectors. Many have called for a more integrated approach, with farms producing trees as an alternative crop, but this is still uncommon. Tenant farmers are rarely attracted to forestry because they are unlikely to benefit from any investment they make in woodlands. It has been suggested that groups of farmers could develop forestry schemes between them, sharing the resulting benefits, but there are few examples of such collaboration. The current system largely promotes a binary choice: farm or forest.

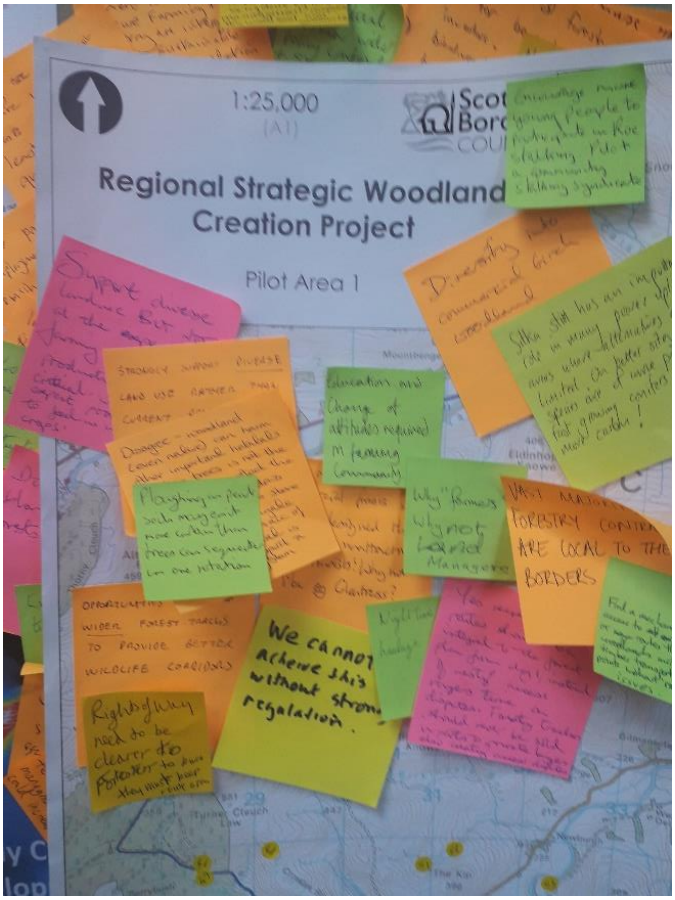


Table 4. Forestry and Farming. Stakeholders' assessment of intervention level needed

Statements in the tables are based on views presented in stakeholder interviews and were offered for discussion in the workshops.

Quick wins	Needs negotiation	Complex issue - needs policy development
Afforestation does not consider and support farmers, provide local employment or contribute much to the local economy. [1] Acknowledge the cultural heritage of upland farming as a material consideration when planning forestry Take into account negative impacts of afforestation on neighbouring farms (sheltering crows, foxes, deer, badgers etc). Forest industry to promote the benefits of forestry to the public.* Farmers enabled to influence forest designers so that access grazing land is not lost through poor design.[2] Change mindsets of farmers so they see trees as a crop.* Grant schemes modified to favour broadleaved schemes because of the additional benefits they deliver.	Those involved in afforestation must consider and support local employment and the local economy. Current approval mechanisms (especially whole farm applications) make it difficult to maintain better agricultural land. Once the better drained land is planted with trees it is lost. We need a system that allows "repackaging" of the best bits of land help to ensure some ongoing viable agriculture. Develop mechanisms to avoid whole-farm conversion. Approaches which allow "repackaging" of better land will ensure some viable agriculture: • restructuring two or more farms to allow larger scale forestry and viable agricultural units • boundaries of farm units are redrawn to provide sustainable areas of productive agricultural land within a farm unit. Less productive areas available for woodland creation/ forestry[3, 4]	Conflict between the current target for trees and the drive to produce more food.[3, 6] Develop mechanisms for forestry to generate a steady income for the farmer and not interfere with farming practice. This could possibly be based on cooperative system of a suite of forestry blocks owned by multiple farmers. Address the underlying drivers which are pushing up land prices and excluding young people from entering the farming sector.[7] Commercial forests have an economic value from the moment they are planted. Smaller farm woodlands and native woodlands are more expensive to establish and are considered to have little if any economic value. [3, 8] Farm business planning tends to be year by year. Income from forestry is on a much longer cycle. How can a small farmer invest in something that generates no income for 20+ years? [9]

Quick wins	Needs negotiation	Complex issue - needs policy development
Carbon credits used to encourage more on-farm woodland creation. Address the problem of rising deer numbers. Farmers to collaborate with private forestry sector.*	Explore ways to make farm-scale (small) woodlands economically viable.[3] Address the higher costs of establishment of small-scale native woodlands. Carbon credits used to encourage more on-farm woodland creation. Use landscape level planning to reduce landscape fragmentation and reduced connectivity for wildlife, caused by *ad hoc* forestry schemes. This may require more timber movements on public roads. Tenancy agreements modified to create incentive for tenants to consider tree-planting.[5] Encourage more agroforestry.	

* examples of proposed actions which are incompatible with the views of other stakeholders or which put the onus on 'others' to modify their behaviour

Notes based on discussion at workshops:

[1] High consensus among participants; it was felt it could be tackled immediately by measures from teaching about forestry in schools and colleges to creating opportunities for local people to take on forestry work and management and providing training for them to do so.

[2] This was ranked 'needs negotiation' at one workshop, and 'quick win' at another. There was little disagreement that all that was needed to put it into practice was willingness of the forest management companies when preparing plans and SF when approving plans to ensure that the local farming interests have been consulted and any concerns taking into account.

[3] There was agreement that the existing map of land classifications for agriculture in this area was broadly correct and that this was not the time and place to refine it. But this exercise did stimulate a lively discussion on at what point in the classifications was land considered less suitable for farming and more suitable for forestry. The foresters said around classification 5.3/6.0, the farmer at the table felt it should be around 6.2 depending on location. A negotiated approach would be a helpful guide in identifying land which should be retained for farming and where forestry should be focused. Identifying where 'smaller farm woodlands' might go through the map would be a first step in addressing how these farm woodlands could have some 'economic value'

[4] The suggestion that owner-occupier farmers and landowners and their tenants might co-operate in planning forestry across a number of properties was considered interesting but difficult. There is an issue with the upland parts of farms being converted to forestry with lower ground remaining as farmland – the result is that the lower ground has to be farmed more intensively to remain viable, potentially leading to further habitat loss.

[5] SF advised that it has already set up a working group to discuss forestry with the Tenant Farmers Association with input from Scottish Land and Estates on behalf of landowners. A particular focus is 'limited partnerships'.

[6] No agreement on how challenging this is.

[7] That the economics of forestry is pushing up land prices making land unaffordable to farmers, was agreed by all and applied right across the map. Prices in excess of £2k per acre (not long ago the price of prime agricultural land) were quoted. Considered as a statement of fact, unanimous agreement and no prospect of that changing unless the government changes the current incentives to buy out farmers and plant the whole farms.

[8] General agreement that small woodlands are more costly largely because of a higher ratio of fencing costs to trees planted. Secondly agreement that small native woodlands had no economic value. But there was uncertainty about the prospective value of a sizeable plantation of native hardwood, so as native woodland, this was placed as 'Complex issue'. However, recognition that small conifer plantations can generate at maturity surprisingly large sums. However the return on investment would be reduced by the high cost of fencing.

Again the idea of land owners/farmers in an area co-operating to establish several smaller plantations/woods of say up to 50ha came up and was of interest. (see note 5).

[9] A farming family needs an annual income. General agreement on this. It was noted that Rural Payments directorate now continued to pay the Basic Payment Scheme on productive farm woodland, also payments were available for woodland with a grass understorey, but it was understood that carbon payments were a single payment of c.£1,000 per ha which helped towards planting costs but not farm income. Income from thinnings, now having a market value, was appreciated but again very intermittent and the forest as a source of firewood was acknowledged but from a small farm wood insufficient to generate a family income in between 30-40 year rotations.

3.3.3 Forestry and Landscape and Cultural Heritage

This theme was explored through interviews, and the Teviothead and Ettrickbridge workshops.

Theme summary:

The Border hills are considered to be of high landscape quality. Woodland can change the landscape in significant ways and this can have an impact on a range of issues, from cultural heritage to biodiversity as well as on local business. It can make access to heritage sites more difficult, traditional routes and trails can be lost, and the diversity of the landscape (created by the historic mix of farming and forestry) can be reduced. There have been questions about whether we have access to the information needed to allow sufficient understanding of future impacts on landscape development and natural heritage. This includes information on landscape sensitivity, on soils, archaeological sites, history, ecology and even on what alternatives there might be to afforestation.

Table 5. Landscape and cultural heritage. Stakeholders' assessment of intervention level needed

Statements in the tables are based on views presented in stakeholder interviews and were offered for discussion in the workshops.

Quick wins	Needs negotiation	Complex issue - needs policy development
Industrial forestry has major impact on landscapes especially at felling stage. People don't like seeing the aftermath and it can put-off visitors and tourists as well as locals. [1] More varied tree species would be better – a mix of colour and form. [2] Forest design with "bald-headed" hills is not always popular. [2] Forests and woodlands can provide excellent recreational areas, but people want to see varied landscapes and views. Monoculture is not popular and walking along high walled forest corridors is gloomy. [3]	Developers would rather avoid areas of recognised archaeological value because "managing" them takes time. [8] Larger scale forestry is driven by investors who are seek maximum returns. Meeting landscape and other standards is considered a cost, so the incentive is to do the minimum needed to get approval. [3, 9] Schemes are assessed adequately at the design phased but are not policed properly at implementation.[10]	Commercial scale woods Traditional land use has shaped the land and therefore has a cultural value which is being largely ignored. Borders Landscapes are well-loved but forestry schemes do not acknowledge this. [4]

Quick wins	Needs negotiation	Complex issue - needs policy development
(Farm scale woods) Traditional land use has shaped the land and therefore has a cultural value which is being largely ignored. Borders Landscapes are well-loved but forestry schemes do not acknowledge this. [4, 5] Forest design has improved but forest maintenance is often poor (e.g. plastic tubes, overgrown paths, care of native plantings).[6] A lack of physical studies on historic/archaeological sites before planting takes place means many potentially valuable sites have already been lost under timber plantations. Historic and cultural sites could be local attractions and therefore their loss has an economic impact as well as a cultural one.[7]		

Notes based on discussion at workshops:

[1] Seen as 'needs negotiation' in one workshop, 'quick win' in another. Better quality of design and management will improve this. Ground conditions are often a limiting factor to diversity (and resultant better design). Coupe sizes have decreased so felling of really large coupes is no longer such a problem – forest design nowadays is better so this is a diminishing problem. Comments included: "It is horrendous – the size of hillsides that are being felled up at the top of the Ettrick valley." Some suggested that it is the 1970s-planted forests that are being felled in very large coupe sizes (to avoid windblow).

[2] A number of the group disagreed with this statement – 'not having (some) bare hills would be even more unpopular'. Generally agreed that this could be resolved by good design. Design guidance suggests the right proportion of unforested (bare) parts of the hill to the forested lower slopes can achieve an acceptable visual balance and aims to mimic a 'natural' tree line. Hill tops may be left open to safeguard open habitats such as blanket bogs and heathland.

[3] Agreement across stakeholders. It was suggested that the current grant scheme does not assist/encourage well designed schemes by its structure or 'rules'. Participants challenged the idea that 'things have improved': Broadleaves are often crowded out by Sitka – this is typically the case with older schemes but even 15yrs old schemes are still suffering.

This topic also touched on deer control. Sitka is not palatable so is not browsed with result it is planted widely. More deer control is essential to facilitate other species. Venison is potentially a by-product of forestry management.

[4] Note different level of priority depending on scale of forestry development. Some disagreed, and pointed to Sir Walter Scott and his passion for tree planting (although he was not strictly comparable to modern cultures of investment forestry!). Good design should enhance Borders landscapes.

[5] This was a very productive focus of discussion. Points made during workshops (not necessarily consensual) included:

- The Ettrick valley is a prime example of a landscape with a cultural value (both of landscape and wider culture – written about extensively); that large-scale forestry has crept down from the Upper Ettrick more recently and the covering of the valley with blanket forestry is not welcome.
- When forestry is proposed there is too little recognition of the people who live there. If it wasn't planted with commercial forestry it could have other (cultural) uses.
- The Landscape Capacity Study suggests the scale of woodland should be much reduced and recommended predominantly broadleaves.
- <u>It was suggested that:</u> 'If the forestry/woodland were to be farm scale (i.e. up to 50ha), the cultural heritage (all facets) could be preserved. Small scale/farm scale woodlands are less of an issue, larger scale forestry not so easy to resolve".

Farm scale woodland is already planted within the Ettrick valley. Broadleaved woodland at a scale suited to the local landscape is not an issue whereas commercial forestry in certain locations is.

- Despite the regulations, cultural heritage and biodiversity is still being lost. Independent surveys should be commissioned to avoid partiality. It is not possible for the public to see all the information, surveys etc gathered as part of an application online – (this is contrary to openness in the public, and publicly funded, bodies). If the people (local) who know about the cultural heritage were able to work with the foresters, it could result in a much better scheme.
- Regulation and enforcement is another issue – the regulation encompassed in the UK Forestry Standard should prevent bad schemes, so if bad schemes are happening, regulation is not working.
- Management (after approval) is very poor. A specific example was named, a new scheme that from the locals' perspective has been badly handled in the execution, particularly as many sensitivities were identified during the consultation phase and accommodated in the design, but not implemented effectively - with habitats damaged and access routes blocked.

[6] It was agreed that forest design guidelines have improved but not all schemes are well-designed. Compliance, regulation, monitoring and maintenance are all needed. Comments included: some footpaths put in with public money have been blocked for several years; proper maintenance would sort this but this rarely happens; better regulation and enforcement would solve this problem; forestry companies are not encouraging access.

[7] Discussion of this topic led to a critique of the pre-consultation process. Local Authorities were not consulted on the instigation of 'pre-consultation' as part of Mackinnon report delivery plans, and have no resources allocated. Scottish Borders Council was strongly criticised – one developer complained that they'd had no feedback after 3 months and then concerns were raised after plans are finalised. From the SBC point of view, staff numbers in all organisations are reduced so finding time to respond to a non-statutory process that Council were not involved in setting up is a real issue. Peeblesshire Archaeological Society seen as a good source of information.
At another workshop: Better consultation with local community would help deal with this. Many cultural heritage sites have already been destroyed. Public availability/ viewing of key datasets would help (e.g. HES, LIDAR).
[Archaeology is one of the regional specific issues. It was noted that archaeology is very rich in Teviotdale.]

[8] Some disagreement - developers would avoid a known Cultural Heritage (CH) site. Knowing where CH sites are is important. There is potential for a lot of CH sites; even Rig and Furrow is a potential constraint.

New guidance on Rig and Furrow advises that where it [still] exists, deep ploughing has not previously been undertaken so there may be a need for greater archaeological search/survey – the area is more intact.

[9] From the investors' point of view, 'options' in grant scheme could be helpful; design should be more site specific and encourage species diversity away from Sitka to UK Forestry Standard. It was suggested that Brexit will simplify the grant scheme (as EU supports 50% of forestry grant). This issue is more complex. Better outcomes will need more dialogue and improved education and awareness.

[10] Discussion around whether existing guidelines are adequately monitored: yes at design stage but not at implementation; monitoring could be improved by increasing staff capacity/ numbers; not easy to fix as increase in staff is considered unlikely. A better informed public could also be involved in monitoring implementation.

3.3.4 Forestry and Timber Transport and Access

This theme was explored through interviews, and the Ettrickbridge workshop.

Theme summary: *Timber transport is an inevitable part of a growing forestry sector. However, there is widespread concern about timber transport and the impact it has on local people, infrastructure and businesses. Timber lorries may also have an impact on water quality (where they cross water courses). Much effort has gone into developing forest roads to reduce the need to use public roads, but there can still be problems when these same routes are used for recreation. The pilot areas are popular for walking, cycling and riding and there is potential to develop more business based on the access network. Could more routes be put in at the planting stage rather than at forest maturity?*

Table 6. Timber Transport and Access. Stakeholders' assessment of intervention level needed

Statements in the tables are based on views presented in stakeholder interviews and were offered for discussion in the workshops.

Quick wins	Needs negotiation	Complex issue - needs policy development
Timber transport is an inevitable part of a growing forestry sector. However, there is widespread concern about timber transport and the impact it has on local people, infrastructure and businesses. This should be carefully considered (with community input) at an early stage in the approval process. [1, 2] Much effort has gone into developing forest roads to reduce the need to use public roads, but there can be problems when these same routes are used for recreation. [1] The pilot areas are popular for walking, cycling and riding; there is potential to develop more business based on the access network. Construction of timber haulage roads could add to the network of trails if they were well-designed. [3] Corridors through monoculture conifers are not attractive. Creating appropriate routes at approval stage (rather than in 30 years) would generate immediate public benefit. [4] If more timber was processed locally, the need to move it would be reduced, saving carbon emissions, and local jobs would be created.[5] Forest roads can create barriers to fish movement/pollution [6]	Timber wagons regularly flout the rules about frequency and spacing on public roads. They need to be better policed. [7] Timber wagons on narrow rural roads are causing serious damage to verges and road surfaces. This is not conducive to an attractive, welcoming and safe countryside. [8] The network of timber roads could be designed more strategically. [9]	Our traditional bridges add much to local scenic quality but they are disappearing in favour of ugly functional structures that support timber movement. [10]

Notes based on discussion at workshops:

[1] Mixed views. It was suggested that the concerns of the forestry industry are to convince the local authority to allow new forestry. Plans will require better infrastructure before harvesting. Some felt there is an issue of unsocial behaviour (e.g. cases where cars were taken up forest roads and burned; damage to gates.) So forestry managers may need to control vehicular access with the use of gates and barriers but that better designs are needed. A case was cited where a forest manager had spent money on new gates trying to accommodate access but had installed a small 70cm gate for pedestrian access. The 70 cm gate is not wide enough to allow horses through. Better design would have allowed horse access.

It was suggested that firebreaks/ forest rides linking the top forest road to hill land can provide access onto the unplanted hilltops where people often want to go. Better attention to correct signage in relation to road closures would help. Signs are sometimes left up when no longer needed. Working together could avoid this if a suitable diversion was put in place and the road was only closed for a short time when necessary. This is especially important for long distance routes. Short walks are often what people are looking for, e.g. for a local dog walk/interest walk/fitness. Routes within easy access of dwellings or from a lay-by or other parking-area are most popular.

[2] Windfarm developers are establishing voluntary community benefit funds. Forestry companies could consider doing something similar as they also have a significant impact on local landscapes.

[3] Routes should be better planned at forest plan stage – general agreement in the group. Routes traditionally used by the public have limited protection and they are not identified in Environmental Impact Assessments except under "social impacts" and there is not a clear category in the Forest plan application. In the Forest plan application documents which are several pages long that there are only a couple of lines about complying with Outdoor access legislation.

[4] Roads put in before harvesting won't be used for 30 years and would be available for recreation.

[5] Consensus on the need to address this issue perhaps through new sawmills, possibly other opportunities. Disagreement with some that local people are employed and the planters, fencers, and other workers involved with woodland creation had come from a fairly short distance away – several suggested planters often came from abroad. Biomass facilities also suggested as local employment possibility - discussion and criticism of the carbon neutrality of transporting wood to Yorkshire for electricity generation.

[6] This was not seen to be an issue at all by the group members who all agreed that *there are good practice measures and regulation from SEPA* – no-one felt that this was a major concern. However the fact that it was raised by others during interviews suggests it possibly falls in the list of issues that need better monitoring.

[7] A7 is a trunk road and better for forest wagons. There is a voluntary code to have some separation between wagons. However there are various factors that can mean that they are bunched up in convoy. Sometimes new wagon drivers are in convoy for safety and to learn a route etc. They are given guidelines on number of loads per day and time restrictions to avoid school runs for example. These can be broken at times when the timber price increases for example. It was pointed out that most drivers follow the guidelines.

[8] Low loaders are an issue as they are wider vehicles and so can be an issue to verges, road surfaces and structures. Any damage to bridges can affect the local community and hence journey times. It was agreed that it was not only forestry that can cause such damage.

There was a question about how damage to roads can be reduced and who could / should pay. Central government payment to support central government priority to plant forest? Some success from forest companies contributing to forest access (payment for public road work) on public roads. Strategic Timber Transport Fund requires match funds so council still has to fund 50%. If this fund is used it would not be to repair but for widening or strengthening and future-proofing it. Local authorities have restricted funds for roads.

[9] It was suggested that combined access for forest and wind farms could help to join up timber transport routes and develop longer distance trails for public use.

[10] It was pointed out that some old bridges are still around. This was not thought to be a major issue.

3.3.5 Forestry and the Local Economy

This theme was explored through interviews, and the Ettrickbridge workshop.

Theme summary: *Among other factors, land-use decisions are fundamentally influenced by economics, which at present is driving a shift from farming to forestry. It is perceived that this has a knock-on effect on local business, on tourism, on farming, on the landscape and natural heritage etc. We are keen to hear ideas as to what could be done to redress the balance and how the economic benefits of forestry could be better kept in the locality rather than being exported.*

Table 7. The economics of woodland creation. Stakeholders' assessment of intervention level needed

Statements in the tables are based on views presented in stakeholder interviews and were offered for discussion in the workshops.

Quick wins	Needs negotiation	Complex issue - needs policy development
Getting a grant for a small farm scheme is as complex (and expensive) as getting one for a large commercial scheme. This is a serious disincentive for smaller schemes. [1] More diverse forestry and alternative silvicultural practices (e.g. continuous cover forestry) would reduce pressure on other land uses – allowing farming and tourism to share the landscape. [2]	More needs to be done to generate business opportunities for local people and more employment of local workers and local contractors [3] The current subsidy regime does not help the Community Empowerment ambitions of Scottish Government. [4] Is it appropriate to provide public subsidies for commercial forestry and private profit? [5]	Land-use decisions are fundamentally influenced by economics. At present this is driving a shift from farming to forestry and this in turn has a knock-on effect on local business, on tourism, on farming, on the landscape and natural heritage etc. Do we fully understand the costs and benefits? [6] Additional drivers: ground availability [7] climate change [8]

Notes based on discussion at workshops:

[1] It was felt that something could be done about this quite quickly, if grants were modified. One forest agent said they preferred to work with owner-occupiers rather than absentee owners, because there was more opportunity to be creative. The resulting woodlands would be more interesting than monoculture.

[2] Agreement about the need for a more diverse forestry. Some felt this was already being developed and it was emphasised that existing forests were being restructured and the next generation would be much better designed than the last. There were considered to be opportunities to create new forests on farmland – but that more support was needed to facilitate and incentivise this. There were certain areas where having more diverse woodland was important, for landscape, access or conservation reasons. Well-designed corridors of native woodland would allow easy and enjoyable access through the landscape. There might even be an opportunity for the community to help manage such areas. Some concern was expressed that there was often little management of native woodland within commercial schemes after planting – with tubes not removed, stakes not checked and survival rates often poor.

[3] Some pointed out that there already were local job opportunities in forestry – although these were often not popular with local people because it was hard, out-door work. A local contractor employed 25 workers – mostly from the Borders. It was unclear what local business could be developed. Producing nursery stock was highly specialised (although there might be some scope for broadleaved stock – although the demand was currently quite low). However others pointed out more positive options. Changes in the way commercial plantations could give communities some rights of use, e.g. scavenging for firewood, wood-lotting, employing someone locally to stalk and to maintain the forest, would generate some economic value. Alternatively a community fund similar to that created by windfarm developers could be required.

Scavenging licences have been discontinued (nationally) owing in part to liability issues. Local interest in this scavenging being made available again.

[4] The issue of community involvement in ownership or management of forestry did not get very far. There was concern that government support for community empowerment had not progressed in the Ettrick. It was agreed that actual management of forests was a specialist business, but that should not prevent a community from contracting specialists to do the work for them (as most landowners do).

[5] Whether public subsidy was appropriate for commercial forestry was unclear. It was argued that it was needed to get woodland established when no return was had until year 40, but it was also felt that such support really ought to generate more public benefit, including perhaps more facilitated consultation.

[6] This was agreed to be difficult – market forces are driving changes and little can be done locally to address this although there was some agreement that a change was needed. [the role of policy-led financial incentives in 'driving changes' was not discussed]

[7] One forester stated he did not particularly like Sitka plantations and would prefer to be involved in more diverse projects, but this was often the only option when the only available ground was poor. More diverse woodland would need better soils to grow on, but that was found in the valleys (where there was landscape sensitivity) or on farmland (where food production was the priority). However, some of these 'poor soils' will support healthy broadleaved woodland. [see also Forestry and Farming theme]

[8] Woodland creation and climate change. Some considered it obvious that trees were a good thing and argued that Sitka was the most effective mechanism for mopping-up carbon quickly. Others felt the situation was more complicated, with soil type and subsequent timber use being critical factors. Stakeholders from the forestry sector pointed out that a (high) proportion of timber went into construction (e.g. through BSW in Earlston) but were not clear what proportion is used in this way.

Two issues were agreed as being relatively quick-wins for local economics:

1. better community consultation at the scoping or approval stage. This would take more time (28 days is not enough) and might require more facilitation to help air the issues fully, but the results should be woodlands that deliver more for local people.
2. support for more woodland creation on farms. These would not be large-scale but they could help support marginal farms and would add diversity to the more sensitive landscapes of the valleys and lower slopes, where there are opportunities to grow a wider range of tree species. In time this could generate new businesses based on a greater variety of timber, help farm productivity (e.g. through shelter), slow water flows off the hills and deliver other ecosystem services such as autumn colours.

3.3.6 Forestry and Natural Capital and Ecosystem services

This topic was explored through interviews and at the workshop at Council Headquarters. It therefore followed the final workshop format.

Theme summary

Our understanding of the benefits we gain from well-considered land-use has improved in recent years. The land provides obvious benefits such as water, food and fibre. It also provides natural and cultural heritage, space to recreate, it can lock-up carbon and it inspires us and provides spiritual support. Together we can refer to this as natural capital. If we invest appropriately, this capital can be increased and society benefits more.

On the other hand, if we decrease this capital, we all lose-out with loss of wildlife, genetic diversity, increased flooding, increased climate change etc. Woodland creation has a range of impacts on natural capital.

Proposals discussed at Workshop 3 (Newton St Boswells): Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services

Proposals were preselected by the facilitation team, based on interviews and discussion at earlier workshops

1. Enhance habitat and species diversity through new woodlands.
2. Safeguard moorland bird habitats by identifying priority areas.
3. Develop opportunities for new woodland to contribute to natural flood management and fisheries management.
4. Enhance protection of plants, insects and other species, in addition to birds which currently have highest level of data
5. Support for wider range of woodland management systems including continuous cover, agroforestry, productive broadleaves, in order to deliver more habitat and species diversity.
6. Ensure that forestry enhances soil and biomass carbon storage.

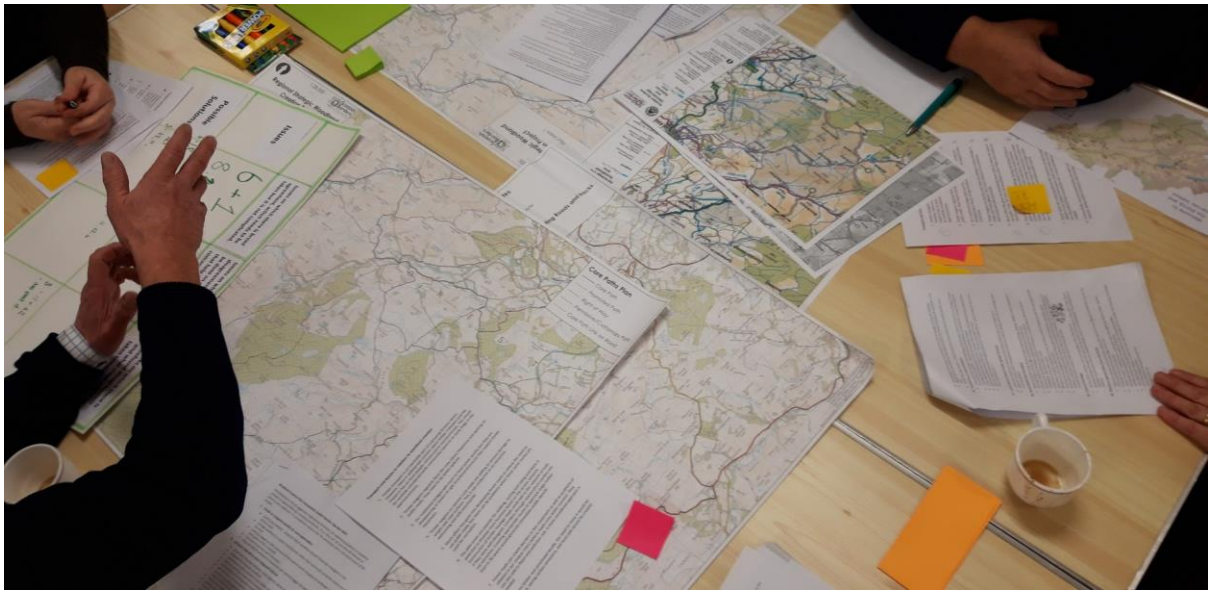


Table 8. Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services. Stakeholders' assessment of intervention level needed

Statements in the tables are based on views presented in stakeholder interviews and were offered for discussion in the workshops. Items in italics were not recorded under specific priorities by the relevant rapporteur, and priority has therefore been inferred.

Quick wins	Needs negotiation or time	Complex issue - needs policy development
1. Enhance habitat and species diversity through new woodlands		
• Improve (free) availability of data to ensure the applicant doesn't have to fund new species or habitat surveys. GIS platforms are being developed.	• Not much uptake of grants for productive broadleaves; needs more markets or realign grants • Nature of site is important, need more flexibility in scheme suiting site, choice of tree species • UKFS revisions should including options for open space including rides	
2. Safeguard moorland bird habitats by identifying priority areas.		
• Develop the work on waders (and woodland birds) being carried out by BTO Scotland for Scottish Forestry in relation to the pilot. Develop and utilise the updated black grouse information under the black grouse conservation strategy (Work being undertaken by the pilot) • The wind farm spatial framework approach could be adopted to guide location of new woodland to less sensitive sites. (Quick win- if developed further e.g. under a spatial element of Supplementary Planning Guidance)	• Consider the mapping platforms that could be used to put this information in the public domain e.g. SBC ArcGIS mapping platform, Scottish Forestry website or a mapping and data hub (needs negotiation and probably further resources) • Need to make decisions at regional and strategic level	

Quick wins	Needs negotiation or time	Complex issue - needs policy development
• Further research is underway by RSPB and others to determine the displacement distance from forest edge for species such as curlew (Work underway, but may not report in timeframe of the pilot)		
3. Natural Flood Management		
• Information sharing: pooling existing data and experience. It is recognised that data is incomplete but there is good experience to draw on. • Stricter enforcement of the regulations by the appropriate regulator, e.g. over ploughing and the crossing of water courses. • Giving a higher priority and prominence at a political level to NFM.	• Securing the resources to carry out further research on the scale of the main catchments. • Carrying out the research. • Strengthening the regulatory requirements and raising the standards for NFM in the UKFS. • *Much better data on the effectiveness of NFM in large catchments. SBC's plans to do a pilot NFM study of the Teviot catchment was welcomed.* • *Important to use the most appropriate methods of forest creation taking into account the need for NFM.* • *Regulations are voluntary not statutory. They need to be strengthened by building in outcomes from research.*	• Changing the cash incentives for landowners to encourage them to invest in natural flood management measures. • Recognition that NFM on its own is insufficient to protect vulnerable settlements against 1 in 200 yrs events. • Further research needed – big push for large scale studies • Change woodland creation incentives to favour NFM
4. Enhance protection of plants, insects and other species		
• Pulling together and sharing the data that is available. • Making that data freely and easily available at local area level • Education of forestry trainees in ecology	• Further research and recording especially in areas preferred for forestry. • Providing secure funding for the existing local recording centres.	• Changing the incentives for farmers to reward them for providing habitats that enable plants, insects and other species to flourish in a farmed landscape

Quick wins	Needs negotiation or time	Complex issue - needs policy development
• Better regulation of forestry plans and implementation to comply with the UK Forest Standards. • *Providing secure funding for the existing data collection centres (TWIC and SWSEIC)* • *Pulling together for every forestry application all the data which is currently available in each of the different agencies for that area.*	• *Building into educational and training curricula for regulators, land managers and foresters, knowledge and understanding of ecology and forestry* • *Incentivising land managers, especially upland farmers, to try out seasonal grazing in established woodland.* • *Establishing regional and local Land Use Partnerships to draw up and implement agreed land use plans.*	
5. Support for wider range of woodland management systems		
• Review the effectiveness of previous schemes (e.g. FWPS and Dedication schemes) and see if elements of these could be revived. [cross refer to Forestry and Farming theme]	• If we had good data, we could target alternative woodland management systems to where they were likely to be most appropriate and beneficial. It should be easy and linked to public support through incentives and policy. • Adjust incentives through grants to encourage a greater variety of management systems. Better soils are likely to be in more sensitive landscapes where smaller schemes will be more appropriate. Smaller schemes have higher costs (less VFM) but are likely to deliver greater public benefit. This may require more support and perhaps some grant payments upfront.	• Deer numbers are a real issue for anything other than Sitka Spruce. A concerted deer control programme is needed. • Explore the impact of forestry on land values which are currently too high to support other kinds of forestry. • Develop longer term approach to planting contracts through grants

Quick wins	Needs negotiation or time	Complex issue - needs policy development
6. Ensure that forestry enhances soil and biomass carbon storage		
• Improve detailed guidance on best practice (e.g. on cultivation methods). • Make good quality soil maps (and other datasets) easily accessible; promote their use.	• Seek to revise building standards (e.g. requiring more insulation) which would encourage use of the larger timber dimensions produced in the Borders.[3] If this demand increased, more timber would be used in buildings – and thus lock-up carbon for longer. • The potential of growing Birch as a crop was supported – but it required evidence of a market and interim support as it would take 20 years before a crop could be taken.	• Building standards have opportunity to demand / encourage more use of timber in building • "Move forestry downhill" [see also Forestry and Farming theme] i.e. establish new woodlands on the middle ground between the poor upland soils and the best agricultural ground in the valleys.

[3] because Scottish timber is more flexible, it has to be thicker to meet rigidity standards

Notes on proposals

1. Enhance habitat and species diversity through new woodlands

Desired outcome:

- More diversity of woodland types including a balance of commercial conifer, productive broadleaved and native woodland delivering economic, social and environmental benefits.
- Platforms for publicly accessible datasets to guide location and design of schemes to help target schemes and reduce need for further surveys by avoiding more sensitive areas
- Additional funding support for survey work where it is required
- Flexibility that allows for the selection of tree species most suited to the location and designs that can include e.g. more open space and mix of species.

Obstacles:

- Current grants not achieving a balance of woodlands particularly productive broadleaves where uptake is low.
- Lack of markets and incentives for commercial broadleaves
- UKFS and FGS requirement restrict selection of species for a scheme, more flexibility is required to tailor individual schemes to enable the choice of the right tree in the right place.
- UKFS requirements limit areas of open space which could be increased e.g. increasing ride size to benefit biodiversity
- Additional costs of having to commission further surveys e.g. bird and habitat

2. Safeguard moorland bird habitats by identifying priority areas

Desired outcome

- A strategic tool to help identify areas of sensitivity to safeguard moorland habitats for species such as curlew, for targeting public funds
- Overcoming concerns over robustness of the data: further site surveys may still be required.
- Forestry sector prefer more certainty at an early stage and strategic tools may help this.

Obstacles:

- Lack of up to date data and regional and site-specific data.
- What weight is to be given to such tools to inform decisions?
- The context is important, the sensitivity mapping will need to present the sensitivity of an area in a national, regional and local context and realistic conservation priorities be set e.g. for curlew and black grouse.

- The data is largely inaccessible (not in the public domain) and it would also require some guidance for interpretation.
- Further work is required to define the displacement distances from the forest edge for species like curlew. At present no clear and consistent guidance is available.

3. Natural Flood Management and Fisheries Management

Desired outcomes:

- Forestry regulators, land owners and foresters much better informed about NFM and its significance.
- Taking into account that NFM is not just tree planting, that it includes the protection of peat, the management of drainage and wetlands etc.
- Expanded knowledge and information. This will include better knowledge transfer (sharing and understanding) between all agencies and stakeholders.
- Voluntary standards/code of practice, not statutory requirements.
- Expand the knowledge of NFM across the community at large through community engagement.
- A need for incentives to do NFM and provide education on NFM.

Obstacles:

- Patchy compliance with existing regulations regarding drainage and flood limitation.
- The resources to collect the relevant NFM at a sufficiently high resolution to inform the detailed planning of new woodland.
- The readiness by agencies and stakeholders to share information. It was felt that this was more of an issue about staffing capacity and some technological issues rather than one of resistant attitudes.
- A continuing focus on hard engineering.
- The lack of a lead at a political level to give NFM a higher priority.
- A recognition that NFM will not be sufficient to cope with an extreme, 1 in 200 yrs, event. However it was stated that the same applies to hard engineered schemes as well.

4. Plants, Insects and Other Species

Desired Outcomes:

- More data to fill large gaps and data which is more precise and accurate.
- Data on classes of plants, insects etc. not on focusing on individual species.
- Forestry regulators, land owners and foresters much better informed about the ecology of each area in which they are planting.
- Creating a mosaic of commercial plantations, native woodlands, farmland, wetland, species rich grassland etc. providing habitats that enable plants, insects and other species to flourish in a forested and farmed landscape.

- Better protection for BAP habitats, especially heath and moorland which are often planted with trees.

Obstacles:

- The lack of information at a sufficiently detailed and accurate level to inform forestry planners and regulators
- High cost of EIAs.
- Perceived lack of importance given to the natural environment.
- Insufficient regulation and patchy compliance.
- The cost of accessing currently available data.

5. Support for wider range of woodland management systems

Desired outcome:

- More varied woodland management systems delivering more varied woodlands (although some felt there already was more variety than people were aware of). Previous Farm Woodland Premium Scheme was good at supporting farm-scale woods – the new scheme is too inflexible.

Obstacles:

- Management systems are constrained by the type of land that is being offered for afforestation. Woodland on better ground could be managed as CCF or for broadleaves which would not cope on poor soils (apart from birch?). However, better ground is more expensive.
- Current grant incentives appear to be promoting commercial conifer (and mostly Sitka spruce). The grant scheme incentivises inclusion of other coniferous species (min. 10%) and some broadleaves and open space. Without this, investment forestry would probably choose 100% Sitka spruce because other species are more vulnerable to deer damage and less-likely to be commercially valuable.
- Because land prices are high, it is argued maximum returns have to be generated to cover the high cost. Maximum returns in turn require maximum production and minimum additional costs (i.e. public benefits).
- There is also a perception that the main demand from the sawmills is for Sitka spruce – although this was challenged by some (and it was pointed out that saw mills can easily adapt if they know they will have to deal with different species in plenty of time – such as the rotation period of a tree?).
- Land owners are more likely to consider smaller scale, broadleaved woods as a long-term investment – they already own the land and therefore do not need to pay current land prices. But they have to be able to cope with the lack of income for 50+ years. Public subsidy could do this e.g. if it rewarded the biodiversity and access services delivered.

- Smaller schemes (farm scale) are more expensive to put together and putting “texture” into applications adds expense. Grant schemes need to reflect this.
- Grants are short term 5-10 years, which is short in forestry timescales. Inevitably this favours short-term species rather than long-term ones (such as broadleaves). It was felt that the old “dedication” schemes ought to be revisited to see if they could play a supportive role.

6. Ensure that forestry enhances soil and biomass carbon storage

Desired Outcome:

- Clarity and confidence about best practice in relation to carbon management (backed-up with appropriate regulation and grants support).

Obstacles:

- Lack of information. Although it is known what we should / probably shouldn’t be doing, there is still a lot of uncertainty.
- Ploughing was known to be poor practice, but it was much cheaper than mounding and the data on soil- carbon fluxes was still unclear. Was previously ploughed peat worth preserving – or was it better to plant with carbon absorbing trees? Guidance is improving but not at level of detail it needs to be. Good objective “life-cycle” data is needed to shape guidance and to counter areas of mis-information.
- One cycle of beech is equivalent to 3 cycles of Sitka spruce and wood is increasingly recycled into chip board – keeping carbon locked-up – although again the carbon costs of this (collection, cleaning and reprocessing etc) needed to be fully understood.
- Lower carbon (mineral) soils (that would not release carbon if planted) are “down the hill” – where land is more expensive, other costs are greater (fencing, provision for public access) and scale is harder to achieve.

3.3.7 Forestry and Innovation & Enterprise

This topic was explored through interviews and at the Council Headquarters workshop. It therefore followed the final workshop format.

Theme Summary

It is clear that there are opportunities to add value to the woodland resource that we are creating. Whether this is directly through more local timber processing, or indirectly through making better use of the woods for recreation, tourism, wild foods or as places to live. This workshop will explore all the identified opportunities along with any recommendations that arise from the pre-Christmas workshops. We are especially keen to feed ideas to the new Enterprise Agency.

Proposals discussed at Workshop 3 (Newton St Boswells): Innovation and Enterprise

Proposals were preselected by the facilitation team, based on interviews and discussion at earlier workshops

1. Consider opportunities to develop a community benefit mechanism analogous to the community windfarm benefit fund or Planning obligations
2. Support the development of local businesses based on forestry processing and products
3. Enhance diversity of woodland ownership and tenure (tenant farms, community ownership, woodlots, shared ownership, partnership; possibly restructuring land holdings)
4. Enable local bidding into government procurement processes (e.g. so that local businesses can benefit from Forestry and Land Scotland and Local Authority contracts)
5. Build a local forestry sector by training and supporting contractors
6. Develop a 'Borders Forest Gateway' or similar: visitor centre, Borders Forest Park, or Glentress 2

Table 9. Innovation and Enterprise. Stakeholders' assessment of intervention level needed

Statements in the tables are based on views presented in stakeholder interviews and were offered for discussion in the workshops.

Quick wins	Needs negotiation	Complex issue - needs policy development
1. Consider opportunities to develop a community benefit mechanism analogous to the community windfarm benefit fund or Planning obligations		
		• Explore how the uplift in land value as a result of forestry investment could be taxed to generate public benefit.
2. Support the development of local businesses based on forestry processing and products		
• Revisit work done as part of the Borders Woodland Strategy on timber for construction. Project report has not been taken forward. • Put relevant reports on SF website – as part of the story map for this project.	• Encourage SOSE to explore innovation in timber products perhaps through linking to innovation centres elsewhere. • Explore opportunity to grow a market for birch logs for firewood? • Influence Building standards and planning team to be more flexible in housing designs and reshape design guidance and Local Development Plan.	
3. Enhance diversity of woodland ownership and tenure		
• Encourage SF and SGRPID to make use of opportunity to restructure holdings when good quality agricultural land is proposed for afforestation. • Support communities that have viable proposals for taking a greater role in forest management.	• Encourage government to continue to offer support for such land acquisition and explore other options for communities to take a stake in a forest.	• Community asset transfer considered challenging

Quick wins	Needs negotiation	Complex issue - needs policy development
4. Enable local bidding into government procurement processes		
	• Different procurement for different scales of development. Needs negotiation at government level.	• Government driven process so needs high level consideration; good level of support for this including amongst larger players
5. Build a local forestry sector by training and supporting contractors		
• Raising young people's understanding and perception of the industry. Part Quick Win, part Needs Negotiation.	• Work with the education sector, schools and colleges, to get them to provide education and training in forestry and silviculture. • Funding required to deliver a coherent educational and training programme. This could include a simple short training course for planting. • Change Building Code to allow larger sized local timber to be used in construction as an alternative to more tightly grained stiffer continental timber. This would give local forest businesses an opportunity to develop small scale milling. • Much greater government support for training and pooling of resources by local contractors to facilitate training.	• Needs to be led by further education / government sector not individual private sector players
6. Develop a 'Borders Forest Gateway' or similar		
• Inclusion in future forestry plans of good access and attractive recreational routes through forested areas, both in new plantations and replanted forests in the area.	• Would need to be public funded. Not likely to be privately funded although the industry might contribute.	

Notes on proposals

NB This workshop was held towards the end of a busy day; many participants had left and time / energy was short. The number of responses is not indicative of the level of interest expressed through interviews and follow-up emails. More detail is available in Section 4 below.

1. **Consider opportunities to develop a community benefit mechanism analogous to the community windfarm benefit fund or Planning obligations**

Desired outcome

- Large scale commercial forestry has significant impacts on rural communities, but generates few (if any) local benefits. Wind farms recognise this and pay a voluntary community benefit fund. It is suggested that a similar arrangement would make forestry more acceptable.

Obstacles

- The return from forestry takes minimum of 30 to 40 years to be realised. How would funds be generated to support such schemes?
- Windfarm funds are voluntary; how would you get forestry companies to start that out of goodwill? Would it be applied retrospectively to forests already planted?
- Could use a mechanism akin to Planning Gain which is statutory. This is guided through national planning policy and can be "imposed" on a developer to compensate for the impacts of the development. There is currently nothing similar in forestry or SRDP, but it could be related to uplift in land value?
- It doesn't have to be a cash benefit (although at least some would be preferable). Other benefits could include improved access, provision of hutting sites, woodlots, access to firewood etc. It was stressed that income from the forest is only at maturity.

2. **Support the development of local businesses based on forestry processing and products**

Desired outcome

- We would like to see locally grown timber generating economic (and other) benefits with local companies adding value to timber through local processing at a range of scales. We also want to see a diverse rural economy, not one dominated by a single sector.

Obstacles

- The volume market is heavily centralised. Local timber currently goes into bulk markets processed some distance away. Standards are set (e.g. for board "stiffness") which can be a challenge for our timber. It would be better to develop bespoke local markets that local processing could support at a smaller scale than the mass market.

- Hardwood: low volume but there are markets. Further innovation is required to increase demand for local hardwood.
- Planners seem to expect houses in a development to look identical/be overly standardised which obviously reduces opportunities for variation in design and construction. If we encouraged more varied design – there would be more scope to use local timber.
- The slightly larger dimensions that locally grown timber has to be to meet regulations could be an advantage if building standards required thicker wall insulation – which would also reduce carbon emissions.
- If we want to maintain some viable farming, we need to secure the better-quality land from afforestation. It was suggested that a mechanism to do this exists under the Woodland Strategy (Technical Advice Note) but perhaps not used as often as it could be? (LA and SGRPID responsibility).
- Awareness of imports? Review was done some time ago but possibly opportunity to do more to support local businesses to generate new woodland and timber products
- Innovation centres (such as the Construction Scotland Innovation Centre https://www.cs-ic.org/ have looked at using timber in new ways. Is the Borders well linked to these centres?

3. Enhance diversity of woodland ownership and tenure (tenant farms, community ownership, woodlots, shared ownership, partnership; possibly restructuring land holdings)

Desired outcome.

- A more diverse range of woodlands managed in a variety of ways by a variety of stakeholders.

Obstacles

- Most land is controlled by a limited number of players. Land prices make it difficult to change the pattern of landownership.
- Tenancy regulations make woodland creation by tenants impractical.
- Transfer of forests to community control has been problematic (in the Borders at least).
- Other community involvement is minimal to date.

4. Local Bidding into Government Procurement Processes.

Desired Outcome

- Procurement for smaller scale local businesses as well as for the large companies

Obstacles

- The economies of scale help government procurement achieve its targets as well as saving forestry businesses money.

5. Build a local forestry sector by training and supporting local contractors

Desired Outcome

- Thriving local forestry businesses adding value to local timber and contributing to the local economy.
- Local communities valuing the forestry industry more highly through having a better understanding of it and playing a greater part in it.

Obstacles

- Ageing workforce
- Reluctance of young people to work in forestry, especially to do planting, the least skilled work.
- Reluctance of small businesses to take on apprentices as they are a significant cost and often leave the business on completing the apprenticeship.
- The imposition of the apprenticeship levy on businesses is not resulting in support for apprenticeships locally.
- The cost of training.
- Currently too short-term provision; funding needs to be more secure
- Deer control – plenty of interest but need skills

6. Develop a Borders Forest Gateway

Desired Outcome

- Idea generally welcomed. The model preferred round the table was the one along the lines of the display established in Newcastleton as part of its visitor information centre.
- Based in the principal community, either Hawick, Selkirk or Langholm.
- Recognise the 'forest' as a local resource – for leisure, tourism etc

Obstacles

- Lack of funding

3.3.8 Forestry and Policy and Regulation

This topic was explored through interviews and at the Council Headquarters workshop. It therefore followed the final workshop format.

Theme summary

To include discussion of current policy and regulatory processes; UKFS; level of land-use integration; monitoring and compliance checks; quality of applications; quality of consultation screening for biological data; clarity of guidance; need for a more detailed strategy? Grants, tax allowances and other incentives.

Proposals discussed at Workshop 3 (Council Headquarters): Policy and Regulation

Proposals were preselected by the facilitation team, based on interviews and discussion at earlier workshops

1. Improve the opportunities for community engagement:
   a. in commercial applications by improving the consultation process;
   b. in more innovative applications by planning collaboratively from the start.
2. Adjust grants and incentives to better support woodland options that provide more public benefit, e.g. broadleaves, taking into account the scale challenges of farm woodland.
3. Improve and consolidate processes for monitoring and compliance of plans and standards.
4. Consider what revisions of the UKFS are required to take account of climate emergency and habitat emergency.
5. Plan new woodland within the framework of the Land Use Strategy, and ensure that local stakeholders have input in the Regional Land Use Framework development process.
6. Simplify the application process for new woodland creation (taking into account the proposals to support natural capital] AND Improve the data on which woodland applications are based including accessible data for ecosystem services, biodiversity, landscape, archaeology and access.

Table 10. Policy and Regulation. Stakeholders' assessment of intervention level needed

Statements in the tables are based on views presented in stakeholder interviews and were offered for discussion in the workshops.

Quick wins	Needs negotiation	Complex issue - needs policy development
1. Improve the opportunities for community engagement: a. in commercial applications by improving the consultation process; b. in more innovative applications by planning collaboratively from the start		
• Alter the system so that Community Councils (and/or other Community body) are made aware of all forestry schemes that impact on them (role for Scottish Forestry?). This should include access to all relevant info and details – and it should be clear where the scheme is located! • The grant application form might usefully ask a developer to identify what public benefits the scheme would deliver.	• Good practice should be standardised (as professional standard). Requires some negotiation. • Some communities don't have a Community Council, or don't find it easy to engage. Facilitation is required to help explain how a community might be affected and/or benefit from a proposal. This might address wider land-use issues rather than just woodland, and allow cost of consultation and facilitation to be shared. • Increase access to information to allow applicants to easily identify where the significant issues are and pre-consult on these with relevant stakeholders.	
2. Adjust grants and incentives to better support woodland options that provide more public benefit, e.g. broadleaves, taking into account the scale challenges of farm woodland		
• Feed ideas into current grant review process • SF should insist that the pre-consultation process is adhered to, but make it easier for applicants to identify the key issues for	• Seek to revisit previous schemes that were more flexible and where grant rates better reflected actual costs.	

Quick wins	Needs negotiation	Complex issue - needs policy development
a particular site by providing access to appropriate datasets. There would then be evidence that an applicant had been through the process. In summary: identify benefits at pre-consultation, put them into the application then put money towards those.	• Develop a "woodlands in and around communities" scheme – a mini WIAT of benefit to more rural communities. • Seek to link grant schemes such as access grants and planting grants, and better integrate agricultural and forestry grants so they are consistent.	
3. Improve and consolidate processes for monitoring and compliance of plans and standards		
• Putting forestry applications and all associated correspondence on the SF web portal for all to read as happens with LA planning applications on the LA's portal. *(Unanimous agreement)* • Allowing some flexibility in forest plans where ground conditions indicate action different from the plan and explaining this in the correspondence on the web portal. • Better publicity about forest plans and the UKFS requirements.	• Make the maintenance of those parts of a forest plan that are added elements providing public benefits a longer contractual condition. This may require some inducements. • Better information and education of the public about modern forestry planning and regulation to change their perception and recognise the higher standards now required for all afforestation schemes, both for soft and for hardwoods.	
4. Consider what revisions of the UKFS are required to take account of climate emergency and habitat emergency		
	• Review the UK Forestry Standard for carbon sequestration, peatland, flood protection and resilience more generally and for biodiversity. • Further research and recording of biodiversity and soils especially in areas preferred for forestry.	• To address climate change and sustainability the UK will in the future need to be more prescriptive and create incentives to drive change in forestry as in other spheres.

Quick wins	Needs negotiation	Complex issue - needs policy development
	• Work with the lead agency in developing the Regional Land Use Strategy with the intention of this leading to regional land use plans. • SBC to undertake a study of natural flood management in the large catchment of the Teviot. **Under Negotiation.**	
5. Plan new woodland within the framework of the Land Use Strategy, and ensure that local stakeholders have input in the Regional Land Use Framework development process		
• Scottish Government has made a commitment to put in place RLUPs by 2021 and develop RLUFs by 2023. Woodland Creation pilots may help inform the development of the RLUFs (Quick win- depending upon negotiation with SLC/SG process). • Consider use of appropriate web-mapping services or data hub to make data and outputs publicly available.	• Agree priorities and trade-offs under RLUF process • Agree appropriate scale and ensure the Scottish Government provides sufficient resources to enable lead organisation to develop and administer the RLUFs	•
6. Simplify the application process for new woodland creation (taking into account the proposals to support natural capital] AND Improve the data on which woodland applications are based, including accessible data for ecosystem services, biodiversity, landscape, archaeology and access		
• Allocate resources to enable improved facilitation of community engagement and resource local authorities to provide pre-application feedback (Potential quick win but needs negotiation- to agree resource and funding requirements with relevant authorities)	• Investigate whether a more streamlined application process could be developed for schemes meeting certain criteria that could use forestry agents with earned recognition/ accreditation. This could be analogous to Species Protection licensing	• Develop web-mapping services and or a data hub to enable public access of relevant data and mapped outputs (needs negotiation- some data issues may be more complex to resolve)

Quick wins	Needs negotiation	Complex issue - needs policy development
• Land use priorities and a spatial frameworks may emerge under the RLUFS, providing more clarity on preferred areas for woodland creation. This woodland creation pilot may go some way to help identify preferred areas and priorities (potential quick win- depending on RLUF process). • For small scale applications, Scottish Forestry is developing a template, although this may be for applications under 5ha (forestry sector suggested this should go up to 20ha) (Potential Quick win- needs negotiation regarding size of small application, and what environmental assessments are still required)	e.g. Bat Low Impact Licence (needs negotiation).	

Notes on proposals

1. **Improve the opportunities for community engagement:**
    - **in commercial applications by improving the consultation process**
    - **in more innovative applications by planning collaboratively from the start**

Desired Outcome:

- Identify, as early in the development process as possible, how a forestry scheme could deliver local (and wider public) benefits. Minor tweaks at this early point have minimal cost implications and once incorporated, should smooth the later approval process.

Obstacles

- It was agreed that pre-consultation was the best time to talk to stakeholders, but too often this either didn't happen or it was not effective because people did not have time to respond, especially when the consultation was very general. Statutory respondents (who were often under significant pressure of work) tended to leave making a response until the application stage. It might be more effective if it was easier to concentrate on the critical issues at this stage (e.g. black grouse, access or archaeology) but this would need easy access to good quality data (better in SBC area than most other Local Authorities) so that these issues could be easily identified.
- In theory, the process should be to carry out pre-application consultation, record responses in an "issues log" and then address these in the application. It was suggested this approach was not always followed. If this was required as a condition of all grants, some subsequent "issues" might be avoided and more opportunities to deliver public benefit could be identified.
- Some agents/developers do lots of consultation, some little. Need to try to encourage more consistent approach.

2. **Adjust grants and incentives to better support woodland options that provide more public benefit**

Desired Outcome:

- Grants and incentives should encourage and guide developers into effective woodland creation schemes that deliver a range of public benefits. Need the process to require public benefit in return for public support. Aim should be for a mosaic of diverse woodland types.

Obstacles

- See points about pre-consultation above.
- Mismatch – forestry and agri-environment grant schemes are not integrated and some actually contradict each other (e.g. riparian woodland).

- Grant rates don't reflect full costs incurred. Small schemes are much more expensive – grant schemes are not addressing this.
- Previous schemes were simpler. Current scheme is very difficult to enter without using expertise – which is expensive.
- Sometimes there is a need to integrate a planting proposal with an access project – but the grants are separate. It would be good to be able to include capital items (such as gates/ signage) or make it possible for communities to apply or ask for these to be included.

3. Improve and consolidate processes for monitoring and compliance of plans and standards

Desired Outcomes

- Better compliance
- Variations in the application of the regulations to take account of local conditions.
- Better maintenance of added elements in the forest providing public benefit including public access, paths and viewpoints, also native woodland, water courses etc.
- Improved Public Access (IPA) should be incorporated into grant scheme. Facilitating access agreements is desirable.

Obstacles

- LA grants for public access are limited to maintaining core paths. Non-core paths and other added elements have to be maintained by other means.
- The forest owner's obligations for maintenance are for the first 5 years only beyond which they have no obligation to maintain any features.
- Providing improved access could incur significant liabilities on a forest management company.
- Most variations to a forest plan cost the management company money.
- Deviation from an approved forestry plan is difficult even if it makes sense on the ground.
- While contractual obligations on the forest management company are rigorous it is not so easy to impose conditions in the longer term on landowners.

4. Consider what revisions of the UKFS are required to take account of climate emergency and habitat emergency

Desired Outcomes

- Achieve high levels of carbon sequestration as climate change is now a driver in Scottish Government (SG) policy and needs to be clearly reflected in UKFS
- Better protection for peatland.

- Revising the standards and weighting related to flood management, biodiversity loss and resilience to the impact of climate change.
- Site specific sensitivity especially where the protection of a vulnerable site requires greater protection than the minimum standards of the UKFS.
- Greater clarity about the level of protection to be provided, e.g. what the allowance of important flushes should be in terms of terms of distance from planting.
- The development of Regional Land Use Plans, moving towards UK Land Management Standards

Obstacles

- The pressure for a rapid increase in planting.
- Lack of good site-specific data on NFM and biodiversity.
- The need to reach a consensus between forestry bodies in all 4 countries.
- UKFS does address biodiversity but is not at site specific level - there is no site guidance. This can mean that biodiversity is not adequately taken into account.

5. Plan new woodland within the framework of the Land Use Strategy, and ensure that local stakeholders have input in the Regional Land Use Framework development process

Desired outcome:

- Opportunities for woodland creation helps inform the development of the Regional Land Use Frameworks proposed by Scottish Government, to ensure the joined –up/ integration of land uses making effective use of public resources and the optimal use of land. This would help provide more certainty to the forestry sector.

Obstacles:

- To date there has been limited activity under the national land use strategy since the LUS pilot projects. Now signs of activity are emerging with a commitment to set up Regional Land Use Partnerships by 2021 and produce Regional Land Use Frameworks by 2023 but no clarity on what is happening (Scottish Land Commission is to investigate the requirements for RLUPs, but at the time of the workshop no-one in group had heard anything further).
- Apart from woodland strategies there has not been equivalent strategies for other land use sectors, although it was hoped that the national LUS would address this. The Scottish Borders LUS pilot provides a framework to build from.
- In order to set priorities, a whole range of trade –offs between different sectors and different environmental sensitivities will be required. This will be complex.
- Who should lead the RLUPs, what scale should the RLUFs be at and what resources will be available to develop the frameworks and employ sufficient numbers of staff to administer the process. Suggestion that the appropriate scale would be equivalent to

the area of Scottish Borders Council. SBC could lead the process, having a democratic mandate and community planning duties, however, it would require significant additional resources from Scottish Government to develop and minister the process. South Scotland would be a difficult scale to develop and manage the process. Resources may dictate that a smaller number of large regions are selected.
- The public availability of data and mapping outputs, and guidance for interpretation is currently an obstacle.

6. **Simplify the application process for new woodland creation (taking into account the proposals to support natural capital] AND**
   Improve the data on which woodland applications are based including accessible data for ecosystem services, biodiversity, landscape, archaeology and access

Desired outcome:

Clarity is provided on the types of woodland creation applications that are preferred in a given area, that are likely to be supported by Scottish Forestry. Small scale applications are dealt with in a proportionate way.

Obstacles:

- Early engagement with stakeholders including communities is vital but is difficult to achieve (this includes getting feedback from Local Authorities who do not have time and for whom this is not a statutory duty so hard to prioritise).
- Indicative Forestry Strategy (or woodland strategy) only goes so far in identifying suitable locations (preferred and potential), many applications still challenged. Lack of an integrated Regional Land Use Framework (as discussed above under 5), which might give more certainty as to what is "the right tree in the right place."
- Small applications have a significant cost burden for an applicant, in terms of agent's costs and any additional survey requirements.
- Lack of public accessibility to up to date environmental data and mapped outputs. May be data restrictions that apply.
- The current woodland model places restrictions on options and species mixes, more flexibility in choices is required.

3.4 Summary of stakeholders and themes

Table 13 summarises key points of difference between stakeholders, across the eight themes. For each stakeholder group listed down the left-hand side, their predominant opinions are summarised under the themes listed across the column headings.

Table 11. Key stakeholder comparisons for (a) themes 1-4

	Theme			
Stakeholder group	**Community involvement**	**Farming**	**Landscape and Cultural Heritage**	**Timber Transport and Access**
Local community	Consultation on new forestry proposals does not fit the community's timeframe; often feel excluded or poorly informed	Forestry as conducted in the past (including recent past) is a threat to farming community and culture	Native broadleaves are not managed properly within large commercial schemes, tubes left in place etc. Perceived lack of concern for historic sites by the authorities and the forestry industry.	Strong feeling that community had to deal with negative impacts of timber movement with no benefits to balance them. Concern that forestry was resulting in loss of some access to land.
Farmers / land owners	Generally, community concerns matched farming concerns	Some farmers felt that they don't know about forestry. Tenant farmers interested in forestry only if they can get a share of the returns. Cautious interest amongst some to consider joint planning of forestry.		
Local business			Hospitality and recreational businesses prioritise landscape.	
Forest industry	Doubts community ability to be involved in management or ownership.	Foresters generally took the view that farmers don't know about forestry.	Considers UKFS minimises negative impacts, and that criticisms of forestry apply to planting carried out under older standards.	
NGOs			History and archaeology are key component of Borders landscape but neglected and threatened.	
Government agencies			One agency felt that their advice on forestry plans is frequently ignored.	

Table 12. Key stakeholder comparisons for (a) themes 5-8

	Theme			
Stakeholder group	**Local Economy**	**Natural Capital and Ecosystem services**	**Innovation & Enterprise**	**Policy and Regulation**
Local community	Local economy is not benefitting from forestry, many see only costs.		Suggestion was made that Forest and Land Scotland could work with local communities to foster more community engagement.	General perception that community views are not given weight. Consultation process – not easy to comment on applications. Attempts to buy community forest had been problematic.
Farmers / land owners	Forestry does not provide local jobs and livelihoods to replace those lost by farm conversion.	There is interest in this – but it needs to be worthwhile financially	Some farmers feel they lack the skills to manage forestry.	Farmers feel current woodland grant schemes not aimed at them
Local business	Small businesses (often tourism-linked) vital for rural communities. Forestry not enhancing tourism, but could do so with better engagement and implementation.		Some local people interested in opportunities to engage in local forestry-based enterprises but species choice, start-up costs and lack of know-how are challenges.	
Forest industry	Some are confident that forestry is already contributing to the local economy.	Perception that adhering to UKFS should deliver this.	The economies of scale militate against local enterprise linked to forestry.	Stability of grant regimes and regulations needed to give confidence. Existing grants good.
NGOs		Forestry is not delivering but could if better planned, more diverse and maintained for much longer than current minimum of 5 years.		Concern that main driver currently favours commercial forestry at the expense of everything else. Broad support for the LUS
Government agencies		Concern that integrated approach to land use planning is losing out to forestry; and that current largely monoculture forests not resilient to climate change. Fire and disease risks are down-played.	Forest and Land Scotland could play a role in trialling and demonstrating new approaches e.g. commercial birch or aspen woodland.	Policy on ecosystem services and natural capital need to be more strongly applied. Broad support for LUS. Key role for Forest and Land Scotland to trial and demonstrate better ways of doing forestry.

4 Objective 3: Discuss and propose solutions

4.1 Overview of solutions

In this section we pull together all the material from interviews, workshops and reflection, and summarise twelve headline areas where change could address the main challenges. These are described in the project Terms of Reference as 'solutions'. Collectively they cover the majority of issues that were raised repeatedly in interviews and workshops, and around which there was most interest and stakeholder energy. As throughout this report, the intention is to represent the challenges and perceptions, from the point of view of the stakeholders who contributed. Table 13 summarises the ways in which these twelve 'solutions' relate to the eight 'themes' which formed the focus of workshops. Not surprisingly, the 'solutions' are cross-cutting.

Table 13. Summary of proposed solutions under the themes discussed at workshops

	Theme under which solution was discussed by stakeholders							
Solution	Comm-unity	Farm-ing	Land-scape	Timber trans-port	Local econ-omy	Natural capital	Enter-prise	Policy
Engagement in planning and design	x	x						
Regional land use planning	x	x	x	x		x		
Data management		x	x			x		
Integrated land use	x	x	x		x	x		
Create diverse woodland	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
Timber extraction	x			x				
Incentives and standards		x				x		x
Monitoring and follow-up	x		x			x		x
Socially fair benefits	x				x			x
Land tenure	x	x						x
Innovation and markets	x	x	x		x	x	x	
Education and communication	x	x					x	x

As reflected in Section 3, some possible ways forward are simple, while others are much more challenging. We have made a very summarised assessment of 'feasibility' of each solution, and actions required to start addressing them, based on the stakeholder contributions. While the headings that follow may be generic or repeated in similar studies in other regions, they were identified in this study specifically in relation to these two pilot areas. Stakeholders responded from personal local experience and illustrated their points with reference to land use and land use change within and neighbouring the proposed pilot areas.

Overall stakeholders want more predictable outcomes for their efforts, a chance to share in the benefits of local land use change[4], and a sense of living in a valued place and community.

The application process for new forestry schemes has been reviewed and streamlined at several points in the last decade, notably following the Mackinnon report. This stakeholder report does not repeat the recommendations made there, which have been translated into a delivery plan. As recognised there, forestry investors and managers need increased certainty of outcomes, but not at the expense of other stakeholders' values and livelihoods.

So woodland creation can be achieved through reduced opposition and stress among stakeholders, recognition of the (potential) contribution of woodland creation to multiple stakeholder objectives, integration of forestry with other areas of Scottish policy that prioritise more equitable benefits of land use and rural economy, and processes that value local knowledge and innovation.

With this in mind, the priorities are to:

1. Make the current system work more smoothly, from planning to implementation
2. Shift the focus to more integrated planning
3. Review incentives and standards to accommodate more diverse forestry
4. Work creatively with ownership structures, markets and product innovation, and forestry education.

4.2 Early and meaningful engagement in planning and design

What is the issue?

This issue is key to making the current system work to best effect for all stakeholders. The aim is to reduce stress, conflict, uncertainty and wasted time and money. Community members and community councillors described problems with understanding how the application process for a new forestry scheme works; had rarely engaged with the pre-application stage (which was only introduced in 2018) and pointed out that 28 days to respond does not fit with the bi-monthly cycle of Community Council meetings. They felt that in general they had not been involved in a meaningful way. "No one looks at the public register." There was also confusion about who counts as a 'local stakeholder'. The feeling was that meaningful involvement would require some sort of facilitation and it is accepted that resources are needed to generate significant interaction.

[4] https://www.gov.scot/publications/mackinnon-report/

While many local stakeholders feel side-lined in major land use change, most are not opposed to woodland creation in the broader sense. The study has identified local interest in creating woodland which is more diverse and suited to the landscape, rather than the current dominant model. Many stakeholders (with the exception of some in the commercial forestry sector) feel that applications are made on an opportunistic basis, centred on land ownership. There is a desire, but currently no mechanism, to involve communities (including farming families and local businesses) at an earlier stage in forestry applications. There is also an opportunity to involve them in landscape scale planning (see 4.6).

Proposed solutions which can be explored as part of the regional pilot framework

1. Scottish Forestry could build a local stakeholder list who would then be consulted on each application in due course
2. Opening discussions with stakeholders and the Community Council at pre-application stage would help to build trust, plan for local benefits and reduce negative medium and long-term impacts
3. Community members are keen to play a more active role but would need some support to allow them to fully engage in the process. It was suggested that employing local community facilitators would enable this dialogue to take place earlier, and in more depth and thus reduce subsequent (and expensive) problems or conflicts. Could the cost of this facilitation be covered by the private investor or as part of the grant system?
4. local forest design guidance to address particular local issues and priorities that might be quite specific and different from elsewhere

Proposed solutions which would require wider mechanisms

1. Ensure that applications are launched at a time which allows Community Council meetings to discuss and reflect on them.
2. Produce a standard, clear guide to the application process and the role of consultation in that process. This guide should be circulated with every application.
3. Forestry consent process to follow the same format and guidelines as the current Development planning process. People have the opportunity to comment and object at a local level
4. Applicants to take on a greater share of due diligence before submitting: preparing an issues-log to identify all the impacts of the woodland creation scheme on people and on environment

How is this specific to the pilot areas?

Community members, farmers and local businesses were speaking directly about their experiences in the pilot areas. Many had strong views about the kinds of woodland they would like to see more of; the suitability of woodland to the land, the landscape and the local community is specific to each area. They did not feel that consultation had become any more proactive or thorough since the changes introduced in 2018.

How feasible is it?

Pro-active efforts to ensure meaningful engagement of local people was considered a 'quick win' by workshop groups representing a mix of stakeholders. Guidance already exists[5] there is scope to apply it more effectively.

Earlier engagement, at the first stages of scoping and design, is a little more challenging because it could be seen as reducing profit for forest management companies and / or investors. However, there is no specific hurdle and a pilot could identify potential rewards in shorter lead time and increased application success.

4.3 Regional land use planning

What is the issue?

This study was framed within an identified need to move towards a framework to streamline woodland creation proposals. It is not surprising therefore that respondents had much to say on the subject. On the whole the forestry sector wants less delay, opposition and uncertainty that applications will be successful, while also expressing wariness that a focus on pilot areas would make applications in other areas more challenging. Most other stakeholders wanted to see forestry planned in a more integrated way, to move beyond opportunity-based whole farm sales and land use change; and to consider a wider range of woodland land uses within the context of overall land use.

This study shows a demand for a strategic rather than a reactive approach to new woodland creation, and a willingness to engage rather than an adversarial approach. There continue to be aims which will be difficult to reconcile: forestry wants to expand profitable forestry; some local residents want to cap the percentage of woodland cover in the landscape. Regional or landscape scale planning could reduce the friction but it will not be possible to make everyone happy.

Proposed solutions which can be explored as part of the regional pilot framework

1. Supplementary planning guidance (or equivalent) should be developed for the pilot areas to demonstrate opportunities for new woodlands in identified preferred areas. The Landscape Capacity Study commissioned by SF/SBC in 2019 goes some way to identifying areas within pilot areas, suited to woodland expansion and the types of woodland deemed appropriate.

[5] E.g. Scottish Government (2018). Guidance on Engaging Communities in Decisions Relating to Land. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/guidance-engaging-communities-decisions-relating-land/pages/2/

2. A woodland framework or Regional Land Use Framework should include: local access plan for recreational users to make maximum use of the opportunities created by forest access roads and any existing tracks. It could also consider how it might impact on other issues of local concern such as broadband, transport, housing, training, business support, etc.

Proposed solutions which would require wider mechanisms

1. Long term planning has to be used to envisage the whole land use picture across a region including leisure access, timber transport, tourism opportunities, etc., before significant woodland creation has occurred.
2. Links to other solutions include: input from local community required; good use of available and new data in accessible GIS layers.
3. Forestry should be planned within the forthcoming Regional Land Use Frameworks (RLUFs) to be developed by the proposed Regional Land Use Partnerships (RLUPs).

The pre-application process launched in 2018 has had some difficulties in implementation. Local Authorities such as Scottish Borders Council (SBC) were not consulted on the proposed changes to the process and are not resourced to be able to do what was recommended by Mackinnon. Their only statutory requirement is to comment on the formal application, but changes at the formal application stage (the only statutory stage) are expensive, causing delays to the process. The process needs to be resourced effectively e.g. through additional Government support to Local Authorities or introducing pre-application fees to help fund the process enabling staff to be allocated to it.

How is this specific to the pilot areas?

The scale of the planning approach requires further consideration. RLUFs are likely to be at a scale larger than the pilot areas.

How feasible is it?

The goal is shared; the mechanism remains to be sorted out. Strong support among NGOs and most agencies. Some nervousness among forestry companies. Strong support among local stakeholders, for landscape level planning rather than farm level. Investing public funds in two parallel processes (woodland framework, and RLUF) may be considered unattractive. Current friction will continue unless the mechanisms are both spatially and socially integrated.

4.4 Data management

What is the issue?

Gaps and out-of-date information. Information is known to exist but it is often not freely or easily accessible, especially to local people.
Some information is not yet available in GIS friendly format. This results in additional costs and frustration for forestry sector and it frustrates local communities / interest groups who would like to see more weight given to the cultural and archaeological landscapes and the biodiversity that they are familiar with, but which might not feature in published datasets.

Examples include:
- The cultural, historical and archaeological landscape is highly valued in the Borders. Many felt it had been ignored and irretrievably damaged by past commercial conifer schemes. Many also felt it had unfulfilled potential as a context for increasing tourist and recreational activity in the area. There is demand for better coverage, updated data, and wider stakeholder input.
- Interest in Natural Flood Management is undermined by lack of data on impacts.

Proposed solutions which can be explored as part of the regional pilot framework

1. Improve the availability of information on cultural landscape features, biodiversity, water management etc. Perhaps through a suitable data-hub supported by existing expertise (TWIC or SWSEIC).
2. Encourage local stakeholder input to and interpretation of these datasets
3. Ensure that relevant data is used in forest planning

Proposed solutions which would require wider mechanisms

1. Explore cost-sharing options for new data.

How is this specific to the pilot areas?

It is likely to be a widespread issue. The interest in historical and archaeological features, and a sense that these have been overlooked, is marked in the pilot areas (especially Teviothead). Pilot areas are also of some importance for black grouse and curlew.

How feasible is it?

The processes exist; and much data exists. It should therefore be a 'quick win' to implement and use these processes more effectively and to communicate them more convincingly.

4.5 More integrated land use

What is the issue?

Many shared a concern that much land use change takes place at the whole farm level.

This cuts across shared goals of more integrated land use, and more fairly distributed benefits from forestry. There is a general split between the views of private forestry companies, who tend to consider that farmers need to change their attitude to forestry, and farmers (along with the wider local community) who feel that the farming culture is threatened by the conversion of whole farms to forestry, particularly on an opportunistic basis as they come up for sale.

Some types of landownership already provide diverse uses of land integrated into a single model. A need was identified to see this type of land use diversity across mixed ownerships. Effective natural flood management also requires an approach to land management that covers more than one land-holding.

Proposed solutions which can be explored as part of the regional pilot framework

1. Adopt a Local Development Plan type approach that sets out preferred areas (equivalent to housing allocations etc.). The Landscape Capacity Study for Forestry has begun to do this.
2. Land-use planning could result in some better-quality farmland being left unplanted and re-packaged for future farm creation.

Proposed solutions which would require wider mechanisms

1. Redesigning farm boundaries to allow forestry to take place on the less good land.
2. Consider incentives that specifically reward collaborative approaches (between a number of farmers or between forestry companies and farmer(s)). Perhaps run as a pilot project?

How is this specific to the pilot areas?

Patterns and scale of landownership and land use vary across Scotland. The mix of tenancies and owner-occupied farms, and land owned by forestry investors, is particular to each pilot area and contributes to shaping stakeholders' attitudes to land use. Both pilot areas have a mix of large areas of estate-owned land, some tenancies and some owner-occupied farms.

How feasible is it?

These ideas were raised by many in interviews and workshops, so they were not unfamiliar, but landscape scale planning, cross-property land use zoning and collaboration between neighbouring landowners and tenants is uncharted territory. Most stakeholders saw these

as challenging ideas to put into practice, but there was interest in trying them out and recognition that something along these lines is needed if the current binary and concentration of benefits is to evolve.

4.6 More diverse woodland and habitats

What is the issue?

Forestry and woodland management that makes a positive contribution to the local economy needs to consist of a wider range of species and silvicultural systems than the prevailing model of investment forestry based largely on Sitka Spruce. The kinds of smaller woodlands which fit into a mixed landscape and land-use pattern, based on native and productive broadleaves, and mixed species, are currently falling through gaps in the support system. There is a need to encourage: smaller woodlands; diverse species and silvicultural systems; planting on better ground.

Currently forestry is often seen as a land use for the least attractive ground, which contributes to the binary between forestry and farming. There is a need to 'bring forestry down the hill' if more diverse types of woodland land use are to be developed, and contribute more local economic and social benefits. Furthermore, the cost-benefit ratio is high for small woodlands particularly native broadleaves which need protection from herbivores. Such woodlands are currently not financially attractive to farmers.

Evidence from across the UK shows a growing but still small and often overlooked sector, which supports local employment and identity through a range of woodland management options.

Native broadleaves are perceived as neglected within large commercial schemes, with tubes left in place and poor tree development. Nationally there is a scarcity of quality hardwood sawlogs; and reluctance to transport over long distances owing to costs.
The principle of 'right tree in the right place' is rational, however the determination of 'right' depends on which stakeholder is making the decision.

Proposed solutions which can be explored as part of the regional pilot framework

1. Explore opportunities for greater species diversity and range of woodland types within the pilot areas perhaps linked to a drive to increase climate-change resilience.

Proposed solutions which would require wider mechanisms

A number of ideas have been proposed. Many draw-on examples elsewhere and there is a need to support innovators. Suggestions include increases in:

1. productive hardwood forests;
2. agroforestry;
3. birch and aspen;
4. mixed species;

5. a wider range of species;
6. native species and ecosystems ('ecological restoration').

Stakeholders pointed out that there is a need to also control deer (heavily); develop plastic-free tree protection; and develop local infrastructure to process hardwood.

How is this specific to the pilot areas?

The scarcity of mature ancient semi-natural woodland, a woodland culture, and examples of small-scale woodland-based businesses is arguably particularly acute in the uplands of the Scottish Borders.

How feasible is it?

Mechanisms and expertise exist; currently political will and the power of investment finance works against the effort needed.

For example, although there is an agroforestry option in the current suite of Scottish Forestry Grant options, landowners would need significant encouragement, advice and potentially a wider range of agroforestry grant support.

Very feasible if explicitly encouraged e.g. through a challenge fund; and built in to an integrated land use planning system.

4.7 Timber transport

What is the issue?

Stakeholder concerns focused on criticism of the design of forest roads; and of the behaviours of some timber lorry drivers. The issue can be integrated into land use planning but is listed separately because it is a high-profile concern and because there are existing governance mechanisms to deal with it.

Proposed solutions which can be explored as part of the regional pilot framework

1. Collaborative planning of timber transport, related to regional pilot areas. Stakeholder involvement to ensure awareness, support and synergies from recreational access; wind farm access and possibly to keep timber transport off non-A roads.

Proposed solutions which would require wider mechanisms

1. Increased compliance, transparency and accountability of timber transport. This would need local input so as to avoid particularly busy times such as school start and finish times, unsocial hours etc. This needs to be elevated to a high priority
2. Infrastructure levy, so that new forestry schemes all pay into a share of timber transport development

3. Opportunity to integrate with proposed railway extension needs to be fully explored.

How is this specific to the pilot areas?

Significant negative experiences in both areas mean it is high priority.

How feasible is it?

The mechanisms for compliance and monitoring are in place and need to be followed.

4.8 Incentives and standards

What is the issue?

Current policy support to forestry has achieved recent success in hitting annual area targets. To achieve the range of woodland types and scales envisaged by many stakeholders in this study will require adjustment to financial incentives, conditions and services. Many farmers and NGOs reported that the current grant structure is not attractive for small (50ha and below) woodlands, nor for species that require protection from herbivores (principally roe deer in this region).

The UK Forestry Standard shapes woodland creation because grants and felling licences are awarded subject to UKFS compliance. Some felt that current forestry is being criticised unfairly against standards that have changed, and that the 2017 version of UKFS provides an adequate steer towards species and habitat diversity, and good practice. Others felt that more flexibility needs to be built in to a revised version.

A significant reason for farmers and some other landowners not converting some or all of their land to forestry is uncertainty about incentive schemes post-Brexit (and now post-Covid). Many farmers are waiting to see what is in a new Agricultural Bill, with results that some described as “akin to planning blight”.

Finally, policy implementation is supported through advisory services. Farmers in particular expressed a need for farm-friendly technical advice and support.

Proposed solutions which would require wider mechanisms

1. Review grants to consider including:
    a. Grants tailored to encourage smaller woodlands, diverse species and silviculture, and lower density montane and riparian woodland. It was suggested that a Locational Premium for a Borders Native Riparian Woodland would be really useful. A rate of £1000/ha would be attractive.
    b. Making some of the grant funding available 'up front' to do the surveying, engaging with local stakeholders and preparing the planting plan.
    c. Full grant for cost of fencing (but see point 3 on deer).

    d. Options for natural flood management (NFM) planting.
    e. Improve support for agroforestry and other trees distributed through the landscape.
    f. Annualised payments to fit with farming cashflow patterns.
    g. Payments for ecosystem services: carbon, biodiversity and ecosystem credits.
    h. Availability of grants to tenant farmers.
2. Engage with the development of future SRDP and the next revision of the UKFS to consider:
    a. increasing the minimum native woodland percentage in commercial schemes.
    b. Facility to plan woodland diversity over regional or landscape scale so that native woodland, diverse species, mixes and management systems can be grouped.
    c. Requirement that tree tubes should be biodegradable (but see point 3 on deer).
3. Greatly increased deer control (which would in turn reduce need for fencing / fencing grants / plastic tree tubes) following the recommendations of Deer Working Group.[6]

How is this specific to the pilot areas?

Previous grants were specific to the Borders and can be again. The small and established woodlands are particularly valued in the Borders landscape (see Landscape section below) and there was strong support for those to be increased. The contribution of very small remnants of older native woodland in the cleuchs is a feature of the Borders; these have acted as important reservoirs of biodiversity and seed sources for ecological restoration projects and should be protected and enlarged.

How feasible is it?

Review mechanisms exist and can easily be used. Political conviction will be required to ensure moves towards more socially and ecologically fair forestry.

4.9 Implementation, monitoring and follow-up

What is the issue?

Trust between stakeholders is undermined by beliefs that implementation of new forestry does not match the standards and details approved. From the local perspective, forestry needs to do more to be seen to conform with good practice (e.g. suitable ground preparation, care of broadleaves, public access). From the forestry perspective, communities and farmers need to adjust their criticisms to understand that standards have risen since many of the older conifer plantations were established.

[6] Pepper, S., et al. (2020). The Management of Wild Deer in Scotland: Report of the Deer Working Group. https://www.gov.scot/publications/management-wild-deer-scotland/

Proposed solutions which can be explored as part of the regional pilot framework

1. Involvement of local residents and stakeholders in design of both new planting and re-stocking to capture opportunities for better access and increase awareness of standards.
2. More regular and proactive communication with the public to publicise its work, standards and compliance.

Proposed solutions which would require wider mechanisms

1. Ensure that current practice follows guidelines scrupulously. Industry to self-monitor.
2. Scottish Government to recognise need for Scottish Forestry to increase monitoring and publishing of results.
3. There is a role for local colleges to consider potential skills and training requirements to increase local engagement in forestry and allied land-uses
4. Impartial organisation to act as a referee throughout the process and to ensure that all parties are satisfied.

How is this specific to the pilot areas?

It is likely to be a widespread issue but exacerbated in the pilot areas because of perceived rapid change of land use and proximity of forestry to farming land.

How feasible is it?

Easy to implement but some redirection of resources to support facilitation would be required.

4.10 Socially fair benefit distribution

What is the issue?

Stakeholders disagree on the value and distribution of benefits from woodland expansion and existing schemes, particularly commercial conifer, and have diverging views on the criteria for public expenditure on subsidies. High return on investment for commercial forestry is perceived to flow to individuals resident outwith the area. A common claim is that jobs are few, mostly temporary and provided to incoming workforces. The prevailing type of commercial forestry is considered an unattractive landscape for tourism and recreation, although some also found it conducive to relaxing recreation (with access provided, and being free from livestock). Those in the forestry sector disagreed with these assessments and point to improvements in forestry standards and practice. On balance however discontent with forestry expansion is related to inequitable distribution of benefits.

Proposed solutions which can be explored as part of the regional pilot framework

1. Borders College could help build up skills of local employees and contractors; consider ways of fitting with the farm labour cycle; training courses; hub with workshop spaces; apprenticeships and work experience so that forestry work can be done by more local people.
2. There is a role for SoSE and Business gateway to encourage and support new businesses based on cultural and ecosystem services such as nature-based tourism; facilitate learning from forest visitor centres, such as Grizedale in the Lake District; or recreational centres such as Glentress in Tweeddale.
3. Develop community heat and power systems based on a share of the wood produced from new planting.
4. SoSE could revisit previous studies looking particularly at imported hard wood products that could be made locally.

Proposed solutions which would require wider mechanisms

1. Develop a more generic form of community/ public fund (or benefit) related to forest value gain, comparable to that provided by windfarms (see Box 1). Within the regional pilot, it could be possible for a landowner and community to develop and pioneer a community benefit mechanism. This is likely to require third party facilitation.
2. Support for social enterprises to address the above.

How is this specific to the pilot areas?

Local residents in both pilot areas feel strongly about past and recent land use changes, and this is likely to be interpreted through past experience specific to the area. The majority of survey respondents had lived in the area for more than 25 years, for example.

How feasible is it?

These ideas attracted much attention and animated discussion. They were considered to be challenging not so much because of stakeholder dissent but because they require political will and leadership to develop or pilot workable models. The range of mechanisms proposed illustrate a high level of engagement with this solution. An example is illustrated in Box 2.

Given the voluntary nature of the windfarm models, this could be piloted in the Scottish Borders without recourse to national government.

Box 1. **More information on proposed forestry community benefit fund**

Community benefits schemes are a well-established, integral part of renewable energy developments, and often represent a positive relationship between renewable energy businesses and communities. They are *voluntary* arrangements offered by renewable energy businesses to communities located near developments, and are not a material consideration in a planning application.[7]

There are some parallels between commercial forestry and windfarms, and some important differences. Windfarm benefits are offered on a voluntary basis, but with strong encouragement from the Scottish Government to pay a minimum of £5000 / MW. Both industries are subject to policy on climate and related financial incentives, and the wind industry is currently adjusting to changes (reductions) in incentives offered by the UK Government. More 'flexible' arrangements are anticipated, for example by offering community development support rather than cash, although the arrangements are sufficiently worthwhile to wind energy companies that, for example, Crossdykes Windfarm under construction in Dumfries and Galloway is being built with no subsidy and is paying £7000/MW into the community benefit fund.

Cash flow in forestry presents some differences, with income from timber harvest only after 40 years. However, the forestry sector advertises very high returns on private finance, some of this based on grants paid early on, and some based on uplift in land value. All of these cashflows are subject to uncertainty in the current context of Brexit and Covid-19. Other approaches to benefit sharing are therefore also worth considering.

Proposals include:

- A mechanism similar to (statutory) Planning Gain (Section 75 agreements) could be linked to uplift in land value.
- Communities to access a percentage (say 5%) of forest profits.
- Percentage of land given to the local community to manage or access for firewood or other local uses.

Box 2. **Firewood business development**

Firewood suppliers can use all types of wood but always prefer hardwoods. They can use thinnings, branchwood and waste wood from sawmills. They are small, flexible, need low start-up investment and don't need highly trained staff. They can operate alongside other businesses (e.g. farms, sawmills) to overcome seasonality of labour needs.
Information source: Association of Scottish Hardwood Sawmillers

[7] https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-good-practice-principles-community-benefits-onshore-renewable-energy-developments/pages/2/

4.11 Land ownership and tenure

What is the issue?

The current land tenure structures are seen as contributing to the uneven distribution of benefits. Woodland creation benefits are currently largely accrued by the landowner (including forestry investors). Farmers are less able to benefit because they are managing for a range of other land uses. Tenant farmers are usually excluded from participating in afforestation schemes.

Proposed solutions which would require wider mechanisms

A range of ideas were discussed and the following list is not a fixed proposal but rather an illustration of the creative engagement with this challenge. Ideas included:

1. Collaboration between farmers could allow selling of land jointly across farm ownerships. This would require facilitation and well-designed financial and legal mechanisms
2. Co-operative ownership of woodlands by farmers or non-farmers; or a collaborative system by which groups of farmers can jointly manage forestry blocks while retaining individual ownership, to create a more regular income
3. Larger scale restructuring of land parcels and ownerships by a suitable agency to create viable farming and forestry units
4. Increased community ownership. eg. one farmer suggested combining the management or possibly the ownership of two adjacent sizeable farms to create a unit of around 1,000 ha, and splitting the land between woodland and livestock. Generally, community schemes tend to focus on existing woods rather than open ground.
5. Tenancies made more secure to encourage investment in the longer-term.
6. Increased public ownership including e.g. a government-owned scheme with shared benefits for the tenant.

How is this specific to the pilot areas?

Patterns and scale of landownership and land use vary across Scotland. The mix of tenancies and owner-occupied farms, and land owned by large estates and increasingly by forestry investors or communities, is particular to each pilot area and contributes to shaping stakeholders' attitudes to land use.

How feasible is it?

Participants saw these options as ranging from moderately to highly challenging, but there was a lot of interest in exploring alternatives to whole farm sale and land use change.

4.12 Innovation and markets

What is the issue?

A more diverse, resilient, socially and ecologically fair forest land use requires markets for products from a wider range of species. Managers of hardwood forests, and of non-standard conifer choices, complain of difficulties in selling their product.

Proposed solutions which can be explored as part of the regional pilot framework

1. A wide range of ideas was aired. Rather than specific details about specific products, the proposal is to support innovation in wood products, and link this directly back to both local business, and the types of woodland supported through public subsidy. For examples see Box 3.

Proposed solutions which would require wider mechanisms

1. Local timber processing in the Borders is likely to be best served by micro-businesses in three sectors: firewood log suppliers; small-scale sawmills; and joinery manufacturers/furniture makers/etc. All of these work best with hardwoods although there is also a role for some quality softwoods.

2. Support for business innovation in nature-based tourism; local forest products; tree-climbing business; redundant farm buildings converted for affordable housing and recreational accommodation; woodland walkways and aerial walkways; community cafes, equipment hire, etc.

3. Develop local processing in thermal boarding e.g Glulam. It was also suggested that a slight change to building standards would allow more use of Borders quality timber to be used in construction. Borders softwood tends to be less “stiff” and therefore has to be wider to meet the set standard. Wider timbers potentially make thicker and better insulated walls.

How is this specific to the pilot areas?

The mix of forests, scarcity of productive hardwoods, and scarcity of small local forestry businesses are features of the pilot areas (explored a few years ago during development of the Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy). Other areas of Scotland will have their own gaps.

How feasible is it?

This needs political will, and for the forestry sector to see these developments as aligned with their interests.

Box 3. **Examples of innovation meeting specific demands expressed during the study**

Birch: "In Western Europe, the main obstacle to birch development is the lack of information on the wood uses and, consequently, the lack of interest among forest managers and wood processing professionals, which have led to a poor quality of the resource and to insufficient demand for its wood. [There is a] need to (i) develop opportunities for industrial uses of birch wood, (ii) inform forest owners, managers, and industrial professionals about the potential value of birch, and (iii) define silvicultural guidelines" Dubois, H., et al. (2020). "Potential of Birch (*Betula pendula* Roth and *B. pubescens* Ehrh.) for Forestry and Forest-Based Industry Sector within the Changing Climatic and Socio-Economic Context of Western Europe." Forests **11**(3): 336.

Small scale sawmills: these generally require good hardwood and high quality softwood (Larch or Douglas Fir) logs. Experience suggests that there is a vast potential market from import substitution, which will increase as trading with Europe becomes more complicated. There are probably less than a dozen small-scale sawmills in the Borders, for reasons including: high start-up costs; lack of formal training for sawmilling, nor for valuing and buying logs, marketing and selling sawn timber and in operating small-scale kilns, anywhere in Scotland; lack of awareness among forest managers about small-scale sawmillers looking for high quality logs and among timber users (e.g. furniture makers) about the availability of high-quality sawn timber available from small-scale sawmills. [information from ASHS (Association of Scottish Hardwood Sawmillers)]

4.13 Education and communication

What is the issue?

There are several aspects to this issue: negative views of forestry, and the forest industry's belief that negative views are based on historic practice and therefore no longer justified; a lack of awareness of the benefits of the forestry industry; and a lack of understanding of farmers' knowledge and priorities. The Farming theme focused on the supposed cultural and professional split between forestry and farming; the role of land tenure; and the role of current and recent grant schemes. Many stakeholders felt that farmers were not so opposed to, or ignorant of, forestry as was often claimed, and that solutions should not focus simply on educating the farmers but rather on responding to the many real constraints that affect farmers' interest in forestry.

Proposed solutions which can be explored as part of the regional pilot framework

1. The forestry sector (e.g. through CONFOR) could usefully publicise its work, including its compliance with standards, to a wide range of audiences including local communities, schools, and careers fairs, thereby also highlighting opportunities for future employment.

2. Forest investors can be encouraged to support better choices, and change expectations of what good forestry looks like. Forestry has a key role to play in addressing climate change so appropriate forest development could be an ethical investment.

Proposed solutions which would require wider mechanisms

1. Forestry needs to be better provided for in college or university courses, promoted through careers advice, and covered in agriculture courses. The forestry content of such courses and degrees needs to be revised to actively promote more ecologically and socially friendly forestry. Integrated land use needs to be included in the curricula of forestry and farming courses and linked in both to the climate and biodiversity crises.

2. Application process could be modified to encourage more proactive engagement with community and local enterprise agencies to demonstrate willingness to contribute to a more community-oriented forestry.

3. Seek to have a national debate on how to maximise the public benefit of forestry. Promote good practice and examples of private investment delivering schemes that support local community and address climate change perhaps through an annual award scheme?

How is this specific to the pilot areas?

The issue is not limited to the area but polarisation of views has developed to a strong level in these pilot areas and needs diplomatic attention.

How feasible is it?

Very feasible.

5 Next steps: Contribution to a regional woodland creation framework for pilot areas

Within the two pilot areas, this project set out to consider the capacity for woodland creation in the context of overall land use. It sought to engage with local communities, landowners, farmers and land managers to explore the opportunities for them to benefit from appropriate woodland creation. It also sought to develop, with partners and wider stakeholders, solutions that realise benefits and minimise impacts associated with larger scale woodland creation.

We engaged with a wide range of people during the project and learned a lot about both the potential that woodland has for the pilot areas and issues that can arise. It is clear that there is capacity for more woodland in both pilot areas, but that this capacity depends on having 'the right tree in the right place'. Interpretation of 'right tree' and 'right place' is not just a technical issue, but also a social one. Trees and woods are key components of the landscape in which a wide range of stakeholders live and work, and which welcomes significant numbers of visitors. A 'well-wooded' landscape can benefit everyone but a poorly-planned monoculture benefits only a few and may harm a range of others.

The level of engagement in this consultation was higher than expected and elicited many positive and innovative proposals. We have distilled a range of ideas that can increase the benefits and reduce the negative impacts of woodland creation. Some of these are relatively simple and could be quite quickly applied – either on a local or wider scale. Other ideas are more ambitious and will require further work and negotiation if they are to be realised.

The results of this work will feed into a further phase of work to create a draft framework for woodland creation. The nature of this future framework has yet to be determined but will provide guidance on locating significant areas of new woodland whilst seeking to maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits that can accrue to the region. This may ultimately be included in new Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) as part of the Local Development Plan and Woodland Strategy. This is likely to include a spatial element to identify preferred locations for new woodland taking account of the main sensitivities and opportunities, and a set of key criteria that woodland scheme applicants must consider in locating and designing their proposal. In parallel with this study, Scottish Forestry commissioned a Landscape Capacity Study of the pilot areas and an assessment of black grouse and breeding waders in the pilot areas. Outputs from these studies were fed into the stakeholder engagement and will in turn contribute to the development of the spatial framework.

We are most grateful to the many people who shared their views and ideas with us during this project and we hope that we have adequately captured the essence of what we were told. It seems within the reach of decision-makers, to facilitate woodland creation in these pilot areas which is more widely beneficial and less controversial, and which stimulates an innovative local economy with wood-based and recreational businesses.

Appendix 1. Summary of 73 survey responses

Q1 Have you had any input into previous proposals for new woodland creation?
68% had none
24% had some experience and 8% a lot.

Q2 If you have, would you say that experience had been:
17% of those who had at least some experience had a positive or very positive experience
25% had negative or very negative experience with the rest being neither positive or negative.

Q3 How would you feel about the following possible future uses of land in your local area?
Options for more farming, green energy, native woodlands, nature reserves, recreation and diverse land use were all popular. Commercial forestry was the least popular with "more housing" and "no change" somewhere in the middle.

Q4 How important/unimportant do you feel the following features/factors should be in land use planning decisions and policies in your local area?
All the listed features were considered by most to be important or very important: recreation, air quality, scenic quality, water quality, flood prevention, carbon sequestration, cultural heritage, business opportunity, effect on size of local population, housing and connectivity, employment and skills, traditional way of life, wildlife and cumulative impacts. Features getting some "unimportant" votes were recreation, business opportunities, housing and cumulative impacts.

Q5 How do you feel about the idea of increasing woodlands and types of these in Scotland as a whole?
Generally, the prospect of single trees or small mixed or native woodlands was supported quite strongly whereas there was little support for larger scale commercial woodland.

Q6 How suitable do you consider your local area to be for the establishment of new woodlands? Please note: we consider the area within two miles of your home to be your local area.
72% felt their area was suitable or very suitable for new woodlands. 28% felt otherwise.

Q7 What impact do you feel a move towards more woodlands would have on your local area relative to the current landscape and land use?
Most felt that more woodland would be positive for employment, recreation, air quality, wildlife, water quality, carbon sequestration and access. Most felt that there would be a negative impact on housing, roads and business opportunities. Scenic quality, size of local population, broadband service and cultural heritage were fairly balanced between those who thought impacts would be positive and those who thought negative.

Q8 If larger scale productive forests were created, how important do you think it is to deliver the following additional benefits?
All the suggested benefits were popular. The most popular being improved roads, enhanced wildlife, scenic quality and more mixed woodlands. The features that received the most negative responses were community ownership of or share in woodlands, more access, recreation & tourism and more business opportunities for existing land owners, but these were relatively few.

Q9 Please tell us about any further opportunities or issues you would like to see addressed regarding large scale forest cover/afforestation if this were to take place in your local area.
A wide range of issues and opportunities were suggested:
Opportunities included make space for paragliding; improve access for riders, walkers and cyclists; support community biomass heating; do more for wildlife and especially for red squirrels and black grouse.
Issues included:
Trees being planted too close to homes; over generous grants and tax breaks; lack of effective planning control and regulation; loss of economic value from area; impact of forestry on public roads; the feeling that there was now too much blanket Sitka forestry; the impact on farm viability because of more foxes and crows in forests; use of insecticides in forestry; damage to cultural and archaeological sites; the loss of opportunity for young farmers; the increase in fire risk and the impact of forests on valuable habitats.

Q10 Demographic Questions. The following questions will allow us to understand whether our sample reflects the make-up of the wider population. Responses will not be used to identify individuals or to send information and requests.
Which age bracket do you belong to?

Under 18	0%
18-24	3%
25-34	3%
35-44	7%
45-54	27%
55-64	29%
64+	30%
Not specified	1%

Q11 What is your gender?
Male 53%. Female 42%. Not specified 5%.

Q12 What is your postcode?
Of those who gave a postcode (65); 41% were fromTD9 (Teviotdale) and 30% from TD7 (Ettrick Valley and Selkirk). The remaining 29% were mostly the areas adjacent to the above areas (DG11 and 13; TD1, TD8, TD5.

Q13 How long have you lived in the South of Scotland?
The big majority (65%) had lived in the area for more than 25 years. 12% had been in the area for less than 5 years.

Q14 Which one of these would you class yourself as? Please choose the most suitable.

- 22% of respondees were farmers.
- 12% landowners.
- 11% were business people
- 45% classed themselves as residents.
- 1% were visitors.
- 9% classed themselves as “other”.

Appendix 2. Interview Guide

Scottish Borders Strategic Woodland Creation Project. Stakeholder interviews

Notes on conducting this interview

1. **Thank** the person for making time. **Introduce** yourself, and the reason for the study (see box – not a text to be read out, but the gist of what needs to be said).

The Scottish Government has ambitious targets to increase woodland cover in Scotland from 18% to 21% by 2032. To achieve this will require the current 10,000ha p.a. planting target to increase to 15,000ha p.a. by 2024-25. One of the recommendations to help achieve this is to develop a more strategic approach to woodland creation in two pilot areas of the Borders: Upper Ale water- Mid Ettrick, and Hermitage Water-Upper Teviot. The Southern Uplands Partnership and Borders Forest Trust have been contracted by Scottish Borders Council to understand local views, and develop mutually agreeable ways forward on this. In November, once we have captured as many local opinions and views as we can, we propose to present our findings back to you and run further workshops to try to address the issues raised and the opportunities identified.

2. **Confidentiality**: explain that everything they say will be treated as confidential, that you need to take notes in order to make sure you include their views accurately, that any data or report published will not include their name against particular quotations unless they have given their permission. Ask if they are happy with that and / or have any questions.

3. The interview is a 'semi-structured' interview which means you have a **short list of topics** (the structured bit) and room to seek the interviewee's thoughts on these (the semi bit). Explore the six main topics, using the questions if you need them as entry points to stimulate conversation and interviewee's views. Don't read out the questions, but if you need to stimulate the discussion a bit use them as 'prompts' or reminders of issues that they might talk about.

4. Record as much as you can as '**notes and quotes'**, making it clear which are actual quotes. You can either use the structure below or make your notes separately. But please write your notes up so that they are organised under the following 6 main headings.

INTERVIEW
Date:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Stakeholder group:

---

1. Your experience

All stakeholders
Do you have personal experience of afforestation or new woodland creation (whether on your land or someone else's)?

[use as a way in to discuss views, experience]
[prompts: ask about **type of woodland** commercial conifer, shelterbelt, native wood, hedgerow/single trees; **opinions on pros and cons**]
Have you changed your previous views on afforestation or new woodland?

2. Impacts [of afforestation and the whole lifecycle of forestry]
Thinking about the possibility of increased woodland or forestry, what do you see as the positives or negatives in that?
Do these positives or negatives impact you personally, your business, or wider society?
How could that impact be reduced or increased?
[prompts: think about **different types of forest**, **size of plantation**, **location** ….]

3. What makes it difficult to create new woodland / forestry?
Thinking about increasing woodland or forestry, what makes it difficult to create new woodland?
Do those problems apply to all kinds of woodland / forestry?
What is getting in the way of that happening?

4. What would it take to make new woodland / forestry happen?
How could the problems mentioned above be overcome?
What support or other factors do you think are helpful in achieving that?
How would this differ for different kinds of forestry / woodland?
What gaps in support are there?
In particular what kind of woodland would you like to see and how could that be made to happen?

5. Opportunities [chance for innovative thinking]
Apart from the benefits which we've already discussed, do you see other opportunities that could be developed based on existing or increased forestry?
What would need to happen to realise these opportunities?
Do you have ideas about other ways that existing or new forestry could generate additional local benefits?
Would there be greater benefit for local communities from forestry if people had more appropriate skills? What skills would you say are currently missing?
Would there be greater benefit for local communities from forestry if people had had access to the benefits in a different way? E.g.?

6. Being strategic at landscape scale
How could land use planning help? (or not)?
What could thinking at landscape scale do to improve the results? (or not)?
How could a strategic framework help (or not)?

7. Take home messages
So, summing up, what would you like us to be sure to include in the report to SBC / SF / SG?

8. Finding other stakeholders
Are you aware of any others who would like to express their views?
Are you aware of any businesses that are currently adding value to timber or other woodland products within say 10 miles of you?
We would be interested in speaking with them so name and contacts would be welcome.