



NFYFC AGRI's Response Considerations to Defra's England Tree Strategy Consultation

Introduction

The National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (NFYFC) represents a diverse group of people who share an interest in a vibrant and sustainable countryside. YFC members also play an active part in future food production, farming and land management. Future career opportunities within the food, farming and allied industries are of great importance and significance.

Views of regional YFC members have been discussed and shared with industry experts and are shared within this response. These include practical suggestions as well as constructive criticism for a future strategy, based on consideration for food production aligning to government environmental ambitions and the need for carbon sequestration considerations.

The NFYFC Agriculture and Rural Issues (AGRI) steering group, made up of regional representatives within England and Wales, are responding on behalf of the YFC members they represent with the understanding that this consultation is for England only. The group's AGRI Ambition document highlights aims for a vibrant rural future.

The suggestions made, and questions asked and answered, should provide a next generation overview of optimum conditions for future farmers, future land managers as well as food production and positive environmental stewardship.

There are many ways of incorporating hedges and trees for environmental good and carbon capture, but these should be balanced with current and future food production and land management considerations as well as career opportunities and appropriate skills and training.

Background

As current and future farmers, food producers and land managers, the next generation will be responsible for working with new policies and producing food and helping to deliver environmental aims. We therefore respectfully share our views and hope that this consultation response will be read in conjunction with the Defra ELM policy discussion paper response. (NFYFC is also currently running a climate change/achieving net zero video challenge in association with the NFU and supported by Defra to share practical examples of achieving net zero aims. The entries to this challenge may be of interest regarding some of the aims within this and other Defra consultations.)

Aim of the English Tree Strategy

The consultation¹ has stated that there is a desire for an increase that forestry can make to the economy as we recover from the impacts of Covid-19 and has the following four pillars:

¹ Defra's England Tree Strategy:

https://consult.defra.gov.uk/forestry/england-tree-strategy/supporting_documents/englandtreestrategyconsultationdocument.pdf

- **Expanding and connecting - trees and woodland**
- **Protecting and Improving - trees and woodland**
- **Engaging - people with trees and woodland**
- **Supporting - the economy**

Defra's consultation will inform a new England Tree Strategy for publication later in 2020, setting out a forestry policy through to 2050 and replacing the Government 2013 Forestry Policy statement. The strategy will focus on expanding, protecting and improving our woodlands, and how trees and woodlands can connect people to nature, support the economy, combat climate change and recover biodiversity.

The [£640m Nature for Climate Fund](#) (*to plant more than 40 million trees and restore 35,000 hectares of peatland in England*) announced in the March 2020 budget provides significant funding for tree planting and will be spent on the basis of paying public money for public goods. The strategy will set out how elements of this Fund will be used to best effect.²

We note that the Rt Hon Lord Zac Goldsmith states in his foreword that anyone signing up to a grant agreement now will not be unfairly disadvantaged when ELM is introduced as well as grant agreement as part of the Countryside Stewardship and future support introduced by the Nature for Climate Fund.

Within the introduction, it is stated that trees are key for: tackling climate change, pest and disease risks; contributing to the government's Nature Recovery Network. Trees will be established in a way that minimises excessive plastic use, in line with the 25 Year Environment Plan ambition to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste.

A next generation perspective

² Defra's England Tree Strategy:

https://consult.defra.gov.uk/forestry/england-tree-strategy/supporting_documents/englandtreestrategyconsultationdocument.pdf

**2 National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (England and Wales)
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To set the scene from a next generation perspective, Government has ambitious and laudable measures to mitigate carbon emissions and enhance the environment, but there are limited tree planting opportunities in England and we note the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust's research³ that planting trees does not always increase carbon removal from the atmosphere over time.

It is understood that significant modifications have been made within the new Woodland Carbon Guarantee Fund to improve take up and tree planting since a previous scheme launched in the 1980s. We agree with other organisations that currently unmanaged woodland could be brought into management but that businesses planting on farm should be voluntary. There must also be financial viability for any change of use or realistic incorporation into businesses that can accommodate tree planting as part of a rewarded future land management plan. Financial viability includes consideration for subsidised growing and use of domestic trees when exported products are cheaper and perhaps more accessible. Therefore, appropriate financial incentives are needed in conjunction with tax initiatives. Hedgerow planting and appropriate use of land as well as small-scale planting and agroforestry measures are likely and of interest. Uptake of tree-planting on appropriate land and acquiring landlords' permissions are key for consideration. Considerations include:

- A feasible and fair farming future that helps young farmers enhance the environment whilst ensuring quality food production from suitable land.
- A strategy that delivers clear and relevant environmental and carbon sequestration capture aims and objectives. There is a particular need for better understanding of how carbon credits will work; other materials in addition to wool that might be used in tandem for alternative production of tree guards; measures to return land from wood to food production and the unintended consequences of increase of access.
- An encouraging and enabling system that works with farmers and land managers on a local basis to achieve and innovate, whilst producing and maintaining or creating optimum, but realistic, conditions for nature and carbon sequestration.
- All agree that quality and appropriate pastureland should not be taken out of food production and that consideration for farmers should be equal or above that given to environmental NGOs regarding future policy.
- A next generation farmer, new entrant or contractor will encourage active farmers being the recipient of payment for environmental work delivered. To maintain farming business viability (as well as acknowledging and applying conditions for an enhanced

³ Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust: planting trees does not always increase carbon removal from the atmosphere over time.

https://www.gwct.org.uk/wildlife/research/upland-biodiversity/planting-trees-carbon-removal-from-the-atmosphere/?utm_source=All+Contacts&utm_campaign=734a29fa4e-Non-Mem-NL-180820&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d843c5cb6-734a29fa4e-27504983&mc_cid=734a29fa4e&mc_eid=4668e7bdf4

Original paper: Friggins, N.L., Hester, A.J., Mitchell, R.J., Parker, T.C., Subke, J.A. & Wookey, P.A. (2020). Tree planting in organic soils does not result in net carbon sequestration on decadal timescales. *Global Change Biology*, 1–11.

3 National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (England and Wales)
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environment), future measures should be adequately and justly rewarded which in turn will encourage increased environmental enhancement.

- More detail regarding carbon capture, carbon footprint (measurements and remuneration) and opportunities for the beef and sheep sectors.
- Farming to provide future food security and complementary environmental and sustainable production systems.

Scale - a consideration regarding viability. For example, a 50-acre woodland is financially viable compared with a 5-acre shelter belt. As stated, the scheme is set to provide "landowners a guaranteed income for up to 35 years." There are obvious concerns for next generation and young farmers who will not be landowners and dependent on rented land for livestock businesses (a classic entrant route to farming) which may be removed.

Access – a recommendation to avoid planting trees on land used for quality food production or pasture. Planting trees in the correct places includes rough land and hedgerows. This is a more viable option for next generation farmers and land managers.

There is concern that investors will buy land and plant trees for obvious long-term business planning and commercial gain which would have the following outcomes:

- Help to achieve government carbon sequestration targets
- Remove quality land from food-production
- Restrict new entrant/next generation farming opportunities (renting ground/farming)
- Provide alternative new entrant/next generation opportunities for environmental land management plans/conservation and forestry work
- Require additional training, skills and advice for next generation land managers
- Pest management: practical control ie culling and regular control of unwanted species
- Innovation regarding replacement plastic tree shields (opportunity for innovation grants in future Defra Productivity Scheme to create a new biodegradable product, possibly wool or other by-product.)
- The [Woodland Carbon Guarantee Fund](#)⁴ is available to encourage tree planting for carbon sequestration and offers support to plant large-scale productive woodland under the Woodland Carbon Fund (WCF). As the the third Woodland Carbon Guarantee auction is now open for applications - farmers and land managers in England are offered a guaranteed income for tree planting after the third auction of Woodland Carbon Guarantee was announced on 21 August but there is still a need for additional information, especially for future and next generation land managers.

Barriers and opportunities

(Current barriers to tenant farmers: historically, landlords have the rights to trees on tenanted land.)

⁴ Defra's [Woodland Carbon Guarantee Fund](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/woodland-carbon-fund): <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/woodland-carbon-fund>

4 National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (England and Wales)
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The obvious barrier for next generation/new entrant farmers is current tenancy law/agreements. Future opportunities could include: addressing tenancy agreements; change to permanency to allow rotational forestry and income, which could be overcome by grants during the initial investment/planting 15-year phase (with staggered installments) and then future income from timber.

- An assumption is that any perceived problems with double-funding (receipt of money via other schemes, for example ELMs,) will be overcome by private sector funding unlocking state funding.
- The issue of ethics of carbon trading has been raised but the counter argument is to consider a farmer selling carbon to the supply chain rather than worrying about the ethics of off-setting for those who use carbon.
- Reverse auction seems to be a scheme for larger businesses and not for the smaller farmer – a possible unintended consequence of 'a race to the bottom'.
- Is there an entry-level for the scheme?
- Barriers to tenant farmers as trees are obviously a long-term option: historically landlord benefits from trees.
- The same for scale: not possible to achieve scale if there is no land or a limited time period, for example a short farm business tenancy (FBT). This could potentially be addressed by developing a new classification for woodland that is short rotation and can easily be reverted back to agricultural use.
- **The Woodland Carbon Guarantee Fund – how to make money from trees:** sufficient, available and expert advice should be offered to ensure that the fund (Woodland Carbon Guarantee Fund) is properly understood regarding business planning, but also for correct choice of tree species. A long-term approach would be necessary with careful planning and budgeting to ensure viability for an existing or future business with resilience and risk mitigation a key component for those without forestry experience.
- Grants - a suitable range and simple system relevant for all levels of tree planting and production. The provision for viable cash-flow is particularly essential for next generation and new entrant farmers. Viability of options and additional information, education and advisory services will be needed, particularly regarding an increase in extreme weather conditions, disease awareness and subsequent control. Communication, marketing and eligibility considerations are necessary for awareness and uptake of green finance. There are many questions still under discussion regarding a future ELM scheme and these include the inclusion of tree planting, integration of Countryside Stewardship and other existing environmental schemes.
- Training and skills – whilst young farmers maintain the need for food production and food security, suitable alternative skills and training will be needed for forestry and tree management which should, if not done so already, be integrated into current course work. Recognition of the synergy between farming, land management and future



environmental work is paramount. A tree strategy should not be created in isolation, hence a repeated request to take into account current land management and food production. Supporting upskilling and CPD could be accommodated by grants and/or future ELM scheme considerations. All businesses plans will need to demonstrate financial viability and environmental objectives will need to be part of that viability.

- National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are defined as “a designated exceptional landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are precious enough to be safeguarded in the national interest. AONBs are protected and enhanced for nature, people, business and culture.” The public enjoys exceptional landscape and land managers and extensive livestock systems help to maintain this. Concerns have been raised regarding increased access or changed land use conditions that may prove detrimental to the existing landscape, flora and fauna and create unintended consequences in addition to carbon capture.

A question within the consultation has also been asked regarding ownership of SSSIs and bringing this into woodland management: the same arguments apply for suitability and intended viable outcomes.

Community and urban tree planting

- NFYFC has already created and completed a Protect Your Future campaign to support the Government’s Year of Green Action by supporting the #IWill4Nature campaign in association with the Woodland Trust. This involved encouraging Young Farmers’ Clubs (YFCs) to take part in tree planting in the community. All YFCs and counties were encouraged to apply to the Woodland Trust for a pack of sapling trees to plant in their local communities.

10,000 trees were planted during the 2019 campaign by YFC members planting trees in rural locations; on community care farms, along riverbeds and in schools. Such schemes should be encouraged, continued and supported.

Innovative schemes: applying for funding in future productivity schemes

Suggestions include projects such as measurement tools and activity for capturing carbon sequestration; use of wool or other by-products for future tree guards; predator control ie grey squirrel and deer.

Alan Spedding’s article regarding wool sustainability in RuSource⁵ highlights a summary of relevant research: “As the wool market continues to decline, particularly for hill breeds with coarse wool, alternative uses need to be explored. The use of wool in compost or mulch is a fairly novel concept, with only a couple of commercial producers of wool and bracken compost. Nevertheless, wool (soiled wool in particular) provides an excellent slow-release source of nitrogen in addition to a variety of other trace

⁵ Alan Spedding, RuSource: Alternatives for Wool 29 July 2020:
<file:///C:/Users/SarahPalmer.AzureAD/Downloads/3445%20Alternatives%20for%20wool.pdf>

6 National Federation of Young Farmers’ Clubs (England and Wales)
Strategy

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elements as it biodegrades. Wool offers further benefits in terms of soil temperature regulation, moisture retention, soil structure and is an effective weed and pest control. Wool presents a sustainable, renewable and an all-round environmentally friendly alternative to peat, which is so often used in composts. Other applications for wool include in thermal and noise insulation, especially relevant in light of increased interest in sustainable and environmentally friendly eco-houses, constructed primarily from renewable and green materials."

Therefore, exploration of wool for future tree guard production as well as other renewable and nutrient resources is recommended.

Education

Support for information shared on websites such as [Countryside Classroom](#). NFYFC's example is [Future Farming](#) which helps year 9 pupils understand career options in the food and farming sector. Support is recommended for development and delivery of forestry and climate change mitigation options for future careers,

Collaboration and co-operation

This could be a generational issue and perhaps the younger generation is more amenable to collaboration. It was considered that younger farmers would adapt better to change but concerns regarding larger farms collaborating (bearing in mind the competitive nature of farming). There is agreement that collaboration and co-operation would be beneficial for future strategic work.

Additional information, case studies and workshops are needed for the necessary knowledge and skills for future agroforestry adaptation as well as any necessary forestry skills. For example:

[Q&A: Should you consider agroforestry on your farm?](#) (plus agroforestry)

[How an arable farmer benefitted from planting trees](#)

Observations

Discussion has taken account of all regions within England with the following observations regarding geography and sectors. For Upland farmers, there seems little opportunity to benefit from tree-planting. There would have to be considerable consideration for change of business planning and any tree planting must work for a business perspective. Considerations include lanes for sheep, strip-grazing and smaller fields accommodating additional tree-planting.

There needs to be:

- a clear appreciation of agricultural and tenancy law regarding the plight of tenants and landlords. Current and future farming agreements and plans will need to be considered for new strategy aims.
- Understand that there can be productive farming with mini wildlife corridors within the fields as well as trees which is a visual feature. The downside of a visual feature is the attraction for greater public access and the lack of understanding or respect for the environment by access.

- Specialist skills: most farmers will have a basic knowledge and skill-set (regarding trees), but this policy requires additional skills, knowledge and training. Future policy is influencing next generation ambitions regarding farming as this is now becoming 'land management'. However, next generation opinion reiterates the requirement for food production whilst enhancing and improving the environment.
- More research and information on agroforestry and carbon trading to integrate with intensive agriculture. (A case study example is [George Sly](#) – an example of organic farming - cropping alleys of trees, species sympathetic. Case studies for traditional and IFM farms would be welcome.)
- Protection from deer browsing.
- An offset carbon imbalance; input of cover strips and incorporation of livestock.

Concerns

There is a noted lack of consideration for intensive dairy farming and a repeated warning regarding the assumption that woods/wooded areas are available for access and therefore there is potential threat of damage to fauna and flora. Increased awareness and possibly a change in legislation to highlight personal responsibility for those who access land (with livestock) as this is currently weighted too heavily against the landowner or farmer.

Further clarity would be appreciated regarding exact purpose and outcome intended for planting so many trees. There is concern that this is not the most efficient way of capturing carbon and is more of a manifesto pledge coming to fruition than a science-led proposal. There would need to be forestry and woodland management training for current and future land managers. Next generation farmers highlight that there is perhaps an unrealistic expectation of continued acquisition of additional skills. All policy changes have an impact on future business-planning for practical and financial viability.

The obvious suggestion is to subsidise English wood but there is continued recommendation not to take productive land out of food production. There are possibilities for farming integration with agro-forestry, but this does present implications for existing businesses, equipment and trained staff. This in turn leads to difficult considerations for next generation farmers regarding suitability and viability for woodland and trees within their current business plans. Agroforestry could work in large scale arable systems with a few tweaks. However, such plans must ensure that land used is suitable to accommodate equipment and intensive farmers need proof of the strategy concept which has only been provided for organic farmers to date.

Agro-forestry can work for a 5-year FBT but there would need to be tree removal. Potatoes, sugar beet or high value vegetable crops are not considered conducive to the integration of trees. Whilst recognising that there are opportunities for forestry, a valid question is the capacity for trees in this country and a market. A return on investment of £1000/hectare would not be sufficient over a long timescale and there would be cash flow issues. Minimum needed would be £2000/hectare. It will be necessary to have a mechanism to enable a market to establish and



flourish and for viable remuneration. Carbon benefits should be linked with domestic use benefits and incentives considered for use of carbon neutral materials for building and planning approval.

Within the Woodland Carbon Guarantee Fund scheme, costs are covered for planting, but income and cash flow are the main considerations for next generation. It is important for money to be attributed to the active farmer and of course the question regarding tenants who have an FBT for ten years when the income is tied up in a 15-year plan. The suggestion is not cost-effective from trees alone, but there could be money obtained by selling carbon credits. However, damage caused to the environment during harvesting of wood must be a considerable consideration, especially as we have been experiencing extreme wet weather conditions. Suitable forestry machinery and operating this machinery may not be appropriate or accessible for certain land and stump removal will also be detrimental to soil and organic matter. It is imperative that there is balance between the importance of food production as well as suitability of land, and the realistic balance between achieving net zero aims.

Certain species of trees in this country grow too fast and we will be competing with other countries, so preferable to produce slower-growing trees. Using trees for building is currently too expensive and perhaps inefficient carbon capture and as it is always cheaper to source dried timber from America. Questions have been raised regarding the realistic use and number of trees planned for planting. This leads to the tension of cheap supply, carbon footprint and offsetting carbon.

Biosecurity and pest control are topics for expert advice and practical solutions such as culling and prevention. Innovative biodegradable replacement tree guards could also incorporate nutritional additives or preventative pest control. Perhaps better to protect higher value wood from lower value wood.

Regarding planning, future claw-back agreements on land that is put into a tree-planting scheme is a consideration that would be welcomed, help with uptake as well as any tax incentive. Clarification is also required for long-term permanency of keeping land as woodland and relevant funding arrangements. Agroforestry and short-rotation coppice should not be included within permanency.

There has been agreement amongst the AGRI group that forestry is not a familiar (or trained for) discipline as agriculture is. There is of course a shared interest and consideration for environmental benefit within current and future land management, but this must make viable business practice for investment and sustainability. There is also recognition that some collaborative practice regarding planting in hedgerows where suitable to encourage wildlife corridors would be beneficial.

Grants

9 National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (England and Wales) Strategy

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50b-AGRI-20 Tree



Young farmers are - and will be - aware of grants available now and in the future and that their businesses would benefit from uptake. However, often limiting factors are as follows:

- limited time/finance
- workload: with additional jobs needed to support establishing and building up of a business, this often does not allow time or confidence (financially) to apply
- appropriate advice
- lack of capital
- more established farmers using the system for the sake of the system rather than actual need.

Suggestions for alternative systems to accommodate young farmers include:

- financial requirement for a capital grant could be broken down to an initial 50% and then a 50% payment later. An initial payment is too great a financial risk for young farmers
- purchase first and then pay on a pro-rata basis
- proportionate and relevant offer of equipment/material
- time to complete capital grant work – the timescale must be realistic and not too short. Take into account the timescale for approval and then sufficient time to complete the project. Viable time periods are needed
- incentives to reduce an unlevel playing field
- consideration for tenant farmers finding money for a capital grant. If the landlord helps with the process it will then be seen as a landlord's improvement. Therefore, a new system for collaboration and co-operation is welcomed. This also applies to future business agreements regarding tenant farmers/contractors. The issue then rises for a streamlined system of parity, application and payment.

Grants for advice have been considered and requested by young farmers as well as workshops – 'bring along your laptop and learn'. If Defra helps to educate farmers, they will reap a two-fold return. Defra has already acknowledged that local knowledge is in the hands of farmers and should be referred to. There is also always a need for flexibility as farming is a business, but training and education would help with future uptake of schemes. There must be a serious incentive and recognition of benefits.

Restricting issues for young farmers

- Lack of experience, land and available money for investment
- Financial business incentives need to be realistic and viable for future environmental work. A successful approach will help to promote scheme take-up and prepare for farming policy changes
- There is an obvious tension between food production, environment and food security.
- Green finance: would conditions be different/favourable for next generation as finance has always been a limiting factor for younger farmers. More information needed regarding green finance availability.

Responses highlighted for consultation questions

10 National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (England and Wales) Strategy

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6. Which actions would address the financial barriers that prevent the creation of new woodland? (select all that apply)

- a) Consolidating the current range of woodland creation grants into one
- b) Increasing the payment rates for incentives for woodland creation
- c) Widening the eligibility criteria for applicants to our woodland creation grants so more applicants can apply
- d) Widening the eligibility criteria for the type of woodlands and tree planting that can be funded e) Providing a clear explanation and guarantees of how trees planted between now and 2024 will be considered under Environmental land management Scheme
- f) A quicker approval process for grant agreements
- g) Support if trees fail to establish due to no fault of the owner (for example, due to tree health or severe weather)
- h) Introducing mechanisms that provide an annual cash flow in the woodlands' early years
- i) Introducing mechanisms to realise a secure long-term cash flow for ecosystem services
- j) Introducing measures to stimulate more private investment (e.g. green finance) in woodland creation
- k) Developing new approaches to partnerships between landowners and woodland investors or managers which enable the landowner to derive an ongoing annual income from the land
- l) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words Implications of land use change, tax disincentives and link financial reward to carbon storage in trees via an actual or shadow carbon price

7. Which actions would be most effective in addressing the financial barriers that prevent the creation of new woodland? (select a up to three options)

- a) Consolidating the current range of woodland creation grants into one (but still important)
- b) Increasing the payment rates for incentives for woodland creation
- c) Widening the eligibility criteria for applicants to our woodland creation grants so more applicants can apply
- d) Widening the eligibility criteria for the type of woodlands and tree planting that can be funded e) Providing a clear explanation and guarantees of how trees planted between now and 2024 will be considered under Environmental land management Scheme
- f) A quicker approval process for grant agreements
- g) Support if trees fail to establish due to no fault of the owner (for example, due to tree health or severe weather) -(but still important)
- h) Introducing mechanisms that provide an annual cash flow in the woodlands' early years
- i) Introducing mechanisms to realise a secure long-term cash flow for ecosystem services j) Introducing measures to stimulate more private investment (e.g. green finance) in woodland creation
- k) Developing new approaches to partnerships between landowners and woodland investors or managers which enable the landowner to derive an ongoing annual income from the land
- l) Other (if added, your own entry to question 6) Implications of land usechange, tax disincentives and link financial reward to carbon storage in trees via an actual or shadow carbon price

8. Woodlands provide a range of ecosystem services that provide benefits to businesses and society. How could government better encourage private investment in establishing trees and woodland creation? (Maximum 150 word response)

Private and government investment for planting/woodland creation and maintenance. Support for a carbon market and flood risk management. Need for financial viability.

9. Which actions would address the non-financial barriers to the creation of new woodland? (select all that apply)

- a) Consolidating the current range of woodland creation grants into one
- b) Providing access to better information on the income streams well managed woodland can provide

**11 National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (England and Wales)
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- c) Providing land managers with better access to expert advice on woodland creation and forestry knowledge and skills
- d) Providing the investment community with access to expert advice on woodland creation and forestry knowledge and skills
- e) Outreach to present the benefits of trees and forestry to land managers
- f) Outreach to present the benefits of trees and forestry to the investment community
- g) Outreach to present the benefits of trees and forestry to local communities
- h) Changing policy so it does not treat afforestation as a permanent land use change
- i) Increasing availability and access to contractors to plant and maintain the trees
- j) Increasing availability of desired bio secure planting material
- k) Educate and enthuse a new generation to expand the forestry industry
- l) Developing new approaches to partnerships between land owners and woodland investors or managers which enable the landowner to retain ownership of the land
- m) Developing a supply of diverse and locally-appropriate seed and planting material by supporting community tree nurseries and other small nurseries that provide UK sourced and grown trees.
- n) Providing best practice guidance on how best to achieve tree cover through natural establishment (e.g. most suitable locations, ground preparation, fencing requirements and decisions on management over time).
- o) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

10. Which actions would be most effective in addressing the nonfinancial barriers to the creation of new woodland? (select up to three options)

- a) Consolidating the current range of woodland creation grants into one
- b) Providing access to better information on the income streams well managed woodland can provide
- c) Providing land managers with better access to expert advice on woodland creation and forestry knowledge and skills
- d) Providing the investment community with access to expert advice on woodland creation and forestry knowledge and skills
- e) Outreach to present the benefits of trees and forestry to land managers
- f) Outreach to present the benefits of trees and forestry to the investment community
- g) Outreach to present the benefits of trees and forestry to local communities
- h) Changing policy so it does not treat afforestation as a permanent land use change
- i) Increasing availability and access to contractors to plant and maintain the trees
- j) Increasing availability of desired bio secure planting material
- k) Educate and enthuse a new generation to expand the forestry industry
- l) Developing new approaches to partnerships between land owners and woodland investors or managers which enable the landowner to retain ownership of the land
- m) Developing a supply of diverse and locally-appropriate seed and planting material by supporting community tree nurseries and other small nurseries that provide UK sourced and grown trees.
- n) Providing best practice guidance on how best to achieve tree cover through natural establishment (e.g. most suitable locations, ground preparation, fencing requirements and decisions on management over time)
- o) Other (if added, your own entry to question 9)

11. Which actions would address the regulatory barriers that prevent the creation of new woodland? (select all that apply)

- a) Providing access to better guidance on how to meet the UK Forestry Standard
- b) Local partners agreeing and setting priorities for woodland creation and other habitat restoration across landscapes



c) Empowering the Forestry Commission to make decisions that reflect the national obligation to meet net zero emissions by 2050 and achieve the investment in natural capital set out in our 25 Year Environment Plan

d) Implementing a joint approach to land management across central government and its agencies including those responsible for protected landscapes

e) Providing a clear explanation and guarantees of how trees planted between now and 2024 will be considered under Environmental Land Management Scheme

f) Reduce the time and costs associated with Environmental Impact Assessment for afforestation.

g) Other -please specify in no more than 25 words

12. Which actions would be most effective in addressing the regulatory barriers that prevent the creation of new woodland? (select up to three options)

a) Providing access to better guidance on how to meet the UK Forestry Standard

b) Local partners agreeing and setting priorities for woodland creation and other habitat restoration across landscapes

c) Empowering the Forestry Commission to make decisions that reflect the national obligation to meet net zero emissions by 2050 and achieve the investment in natural capital set out in our 25 Year Environment Plan

d) Implementing a joint approach to land management across central government and its agencies including those responsible for protected landscapes 16

e) Providing a clear explanation and guarantees of how trees planted between now and 2024 will be considered under Environmental Land Management Scheme

f) Reduce the time and costs associated with Environmental Impact Assessment for afforestation.

g) Other (if added, your own entry to question 11)

13. How can we most effectively support the natural establishment of trees and woodland in the landscape? (Maximum 100 words) Correct trees in the correct place, viable remuneration for land managers and remove the permanency issue associated with establishing woodland.

14. Are there any other actions - beyond the options you have already selected or submitted - that would help land owners and managers to transform the level of woodland creation and increase the number of non-woodland trees in England? (Maximum 150 words) Permanency, carbon market, financial support for non-woodland trees (hedgerow trees)

15. Which of the following actions would be most effective in helping expand woodland creation in locations which deliver water, flood risk benefits and nature recovery? (select up to three options)

a) Widening the eligibility criteria for woodland creation grants so more applicants can apply and more forms of woodland are eligible

b) Widening the eligibility criteria for woodland creation grants so more sizes of woodland are eligible

c) Increasing grant payments for tree planting along water courses, steep sided slopes and difficult sites

d) Quicker approval process for grant agreements

e) Providing a clear explanation and guarantees of how trees planted between now and 2024 will be considered under Environmental Land Management Scheme

f) Implementing a joint approach to land management across government, including authorities responsible for protected landscapes

g) Providing better access to advice and guidance on woodland creation, forestry expertise and training

h) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words.

16. What role could the nation's National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) play in increasing woodland cover? (Maximum 150 word response) Correct tree in the correct place, voluntary agreement, financial incentive for single trees on farm.



17. Which actions would be most effective to increase protection for trees and woodland from unsustainable management? (select up to three options)

- a) Introducing measures to support compliance with the UK Forestry Standard
- b) More effective information sharing between government departments and their delivery bodies to inform decisions impacting on woodland, including to prevent woodland loss
- c) Introducing clearer processes for licencing tree felling, with felling licences that can be suspended, withdrawn or superseded
- d) Greater penalties for non-compliance with the requirements of the Forestry Act
- e) Powers to set wider felling licence conditions, for example to enable enforcement of compliance with the UK Forestry Standard
- f) A clearer policy presumption that all trees felled without a licence will be replaced (except in exceptional circumstances)
- g) Refining the process of making Tree Preservation Orders, and clarifying the criteria to improve consistency in application of the policy across local authorities
- h) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words **Incentive for sustainable management.**

18. Which actions would best help the planning system support better protection and enhancement of the ancient and wider woodland environment and trees? (select up to two options)

- a) Providing support to fully complete revision of the Ancient Woodland Inventory (to include ancient woodlands under two hectares in area)
- b) Commissioning research into effective size and use of buffer zones around woodland for different impacts
- c) Providing better monitoring and recording of decisions on planning applications affecting ancient woodland
- d) Sharing best practice guidance and training to support implementation of National Planning Policy Framework policy on ancient woodland with local authority planners
- e) Encouraging more woodland to be brought into management where impacted by development
- f) More effective information sharing between agencies and local planning authorities to inform decision making impacting on woodland including to prevent woodland loss
- g) Refining the process of making Tree Preservation Orders, and clarifying the criteria to improve consistency in application of the policy across local authorities.
- h) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

19. What actions would be most effective in reducing the use of plastics in forestry? (select one option)

- a) Providing support to land managers for deer control and fencing
- b) Supporting further testing and trial of non-plastic alternatives such as tree guards
- c) Introducing stronger control on the recovery and disposal of plastics in grant agreements and public sector contracts for woodland creation and management
- d) Promoting the use of non-plastic tree guards (wool or other by products)
- e) Other (please specify in no more than 25 words)

20. Which actions would overcome financial barriers to woodland management? (select all that apply)

- a) Providing better information on timber prices, grant schemes and market opportunities for wood and non-wood products
- b) Providing grant support for a wider range of management activities
- c) Providing grant support for the restoration of Plantations on Ancient Woodlands Sites (PAWS)
- d) Providing support for woodland infrastructure such as roading
- e) Providing grants or loans for equipment, for example, harvesters



- f) Support to increase the productivity/supply chains for woodland products
- g) Support for land owner collaboration in woodland management
- h) Government requiring more domestic timber through procurement policies
- i) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

21. Which actions would be most effective at overcoming the financial barriers to woodland management? (select up to three options)

- a) Providing better information on timber prices, grant schemes and market opportunities for wood and non-wood products
- b) Providing grant support for a wider range of management activities (Also important for next generation)
- c) Providing grant support for the restoration of Plantations on Ancient Woodlands Sites (PAWS)
- d) Providing support for woodland infrastructure such as roading
- e) Providing grants or loans for equipment, for example, harvesters (also important, but with possible unintended consequences for next generation farmers)
- f) Support to increase the productivity/supply chains for woodland products
- g) Support for land owner collaboration in woodland management
- h) Government requiring more domestic timber through procurement policies
- i) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

22. Which actions would address the non-financial barriers to woodland management? (select all that apply)

- a) Providing user friendly woodland management services aimed at 'non forester' woodland owners (explanation needed of 'non forester')
- b) Ensuring public recognition of woodlands that are managed sustainably (for example, like Green Flag awards¹⁴)
- c) Providing better communication of the benefits and need for woodland management with land managers and investors
- d) Providing better information on timber prices, grant schemes and market opportunities for wood and non-wood products
- e) Training to increase the forestry skills capacity in agricultural workers
- f) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

23. Which actions would be most effective at overcoming the nonfinancial barriers to woodland management? (select a maximum of three options)

- a) Providing user friendly woodland management services aimed at 'non forester' woodland owners (explanation needed of 'non forester')
- *b) Ensuring public recognition of woodlands that are managed sustainably (for example like Green Flag awards)
- c) Providing better communication of the benefits and need for woodland management with land managers and investors
- d) Providing better information on timber prices, grant schemes and market opportunities for wood and non-wood products
- e) Training to increase the forestry skills capacity in agricultural workers
- f) Other (if added, your own entry to question 21)

24. Which actions would overcome the regulatory barriers to woodland management? (select all that apply)



- a) Streamlining delivery of current regulations (for example, self-service felling licences for tree felling proposals that would not reduce woodland cover)
- b) Placing responsibility for complying with woodland regulation on the woodland manager rather than the woodland owner
- c) Placing a legal obligation on all landowners to manage their woodland
- d) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

25. Which actions would be most effective at overcoming the regulatory barriers to woodland management? (select one option)

- a) Streamlining delivery of current regulations (for example, self-service felling licences for tree felling proposals that would not reduce woodland cover)
- b) Placing responsibility for complying with woodland regulation on the woodland manager rather than the woodland owner
- c) Placing a legal obligation on all landowners to manage their woodland
- d) Other (if added, your own entry to question 23)

26. If you own and/or manage woodland(s) that is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) what actions would help you most to bring that woodland(s) into management? (Maximum 100 word response) Offer to extend outside the stewardship schemes and to be a simple process with viable financial return.

27. Which of the following actions would be most effective in improving plant biosecurity across England's trees and woodlands? (pick up to two options)

- a) Increasing the number of nurseries that meet the 'Plant healthy' management standard
- b) Providing better best practice guidance and information about biosecurity
- c) Introducing conditions which require suppliers to meet the "Plant Healthy" management standard for those public sector contracts and government grants that relate to tree planting and restocking
- d) Amending planning policy to encourage local planning authorities to source trees from suppliers who meet the 'Plant healthy' management standard
- e) Sharing the Forestry England's experience and case studies (active communication)
- f) Managing the impact of invasive non-native plants which provide a pathway for disease through targeted action, ongoing management and monitoring, and wider education
- g) Developing a supply of diverse and locally-appropriate seed and planting material by supporting community tree nurseries and other small nurseries that provide UK sourced and grown trees
- h) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

28. Which of the following actions are or would be most appropriate for England's trees and woodlands to contribute to climate change mitigation and helping to achieve net zero? (pick up to three options)

- a) Bringing woods into management to enhance their future resilience to climate change and secure greenhouse gas emissions reduction in other sectors through wood replacing 'carbon intensive' materials (acknowledging that this will lead to a short to medium reduction on carbon stored in the woodland)
- b) Planting UKFS-compliant productive forests to provide a strong carbon sink over the coming decades and then a source of sustainable timber to meet the needs of future generations
- c) Planting predominantly native woodland to act as a long-term store of carbon
- d) Establishing 'energy forest' plantations (short rotation coppice and short rotation forestry) to satisfy future biomass demand for bioenergy with carbon capture and storage
- e) Encouraging agroforestry to increase the amount of carbon stored on productive farmland (within the right farming system)



f) Strengthening the protection of all woodland to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation 26

29. Which of these actions would be most effective in reducing damage to trees and woodlands caused by deer? (select up to two options)

- a) Develop a national policy on sustainable deer management and control measures
- b) Facilitate landscape scale control by land managers**
- c) Deer control as a requirement of grant or felling agreements
- d) Incentives for the management of deer
- e) Supporting a range of approaches to tree protection, including fencing and other alternatives to plastic tree guards**
- f) Better advice and guidance on the value of and options to control damage by deer
- g) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

30. Which of these actions would be most effective in reducing the damage to trees and woodlands caused by grey squirrels? (select up to two options)

- a) Making grey squirrel control a requirement of grant or felling agreements
- b) Providing incentives for the management of grey squirrel**
- c) Researching contraception to prevent breeding
- d) Reintroducing animals to help control squirrels, such as pine martens and goshawks
- e) Providing better advice and guidance on grey squirrel control**
- f) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

37. Which of the following do you most value about trees and woodland? (select up to two options)

- a) Places to exercise and relax and engage with nature
- b) Places for nature
- c) A source of sustainable products and employment**
- d) A resource that provides water management
- e) A resource that cleans the air
- f) A resource that stores carbon**
- g) As a feature within towns and cities
- h) As part of urban green space i) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

38. Which of these actions would best address the funding challenge for the planting and on-going maintenance of trees in urban areas? (select up to two options)

- a) Making central funding available to supplement private finance for establishing trees in existing developments.**
- b) Using planning levers to require developers to plant trees relating to new development on streets and other public spaces
- c) Using planning levers to raise funds for on-going maintenance
- d) Ensuring the value of tree's longer term benefits are captured to access financing**
- e) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

39. What could the England Tree Strategy do to encourage the use of timber in construction? (select up to two options)

- a) Improving, encouraging or incentivising the growth of necessary skills such as those in green construction, design or forestry
- b) Promoting and incentivising Grown in Britain Certification

- c) Encouraging planning requirements to incorporate sustainable materials
- d) Amending public procurement standards to support Grown in Britain certified forest products, incorporate sustainable materials and signal long-term demand**
- e) Increasing the availability of knowledge and stimulate an understanding of sustainable building practices
- f) Supporting new innovations in developing timber building materials such as cross laminated timber**
- g) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words**

40. How could policy about the permanency of woodlands better support tree establishment for agro forestry or energy crops? (select one option)

- a) Changing policy so it does not treat afforestation as a permanent land use change**
- b) Adjusting policy so energy forestry crops (short rotation coppice and short rotation forestry) are not permanent land use change
- c) Retaining the current position whereby afforestation is generally a permanent land use change
- d) Not sure

41. Which actions would best increase the uptake of energy forestry? (select up to two options)

- a) Providing financial support for the capital costs of energy forestry**
- b) Clarifying the taxation of energy forestry (as either agriculture or forestry)
- c) Clarifying the regulatory position for energy forestry (for example, can I change land use in the future)
- d) Providing support to develop a secure supply chain (such as forward contracts for feedstock)**
- e) Providing better advice and guidance on energy forestry**
- f) Increasing skills capacity in energy forestry
- g) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words**

42. Which actions would best increase the planting of more trees on farms? (select up to two options)

- a) Clarifying the regulation of agroforestry as either agriculture or forestry**
- b) Clarifying the implications for the land holding's tax status of planting more trees**
- c) Providing better advice and guidance on woodland creation and management
- d) Providing incentives for a wider range of tree planting on farms
- e) Funding for the advice and the design of schemes for trees on farms and agroforestry
- f) Providing better advice and guidance on how woodland creation and management can contribute to farm business models**
- g) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words**

43. Which actions would best increase agroforestry, woodland creation and management on tenanted farmland? (select up to two options)

- a) Providing industry led guidance, best practice and case studies of how tenants and landlords can work together to deliver benefits for both parties from diversification into tree planting and agroforestry on tenanted land**
- b) Providing eligibility criteria for tree establishment grant agreements to discourage the proactive resumption of tenanted farmland
- c) Reviewing how tenancy agreements approach the responsibility for and rights to trees**
- d) Confirming the property rights to long-term carbon benefits
- e) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words**

44. What are the most urgent shortages in the workforce capacity needed to increase woodland creation, maintenance and management? (select up to two options)

- a) Professional forester



- b) Supervisor for forest works
- c) Machine operator, for example, tractor/harvester/forwarder drivers
- d) Hand cutter / chainsaw operator
- e) Tree planter
- f) Tree nursery workers g) Forestry educators
- h) Land agents, surveyors and architects with specialist forest knowledge
- i) All of the above j) Other – **Training and courses for farmers and young people/apprenticeships**

45. Which actions would best strengthen productivity in forestry supply chains? (select up to three options)

- a) **Providing grant support for wider range of management options**
- b) Providing support for woodland infrastructure such as roading
- c) Providing grant or loans for equipment (for example, harvesters)
- d) Providing support for productivity/supply chains for woodland products
- e) **Providing better information on market prices and opportunities**
- f) **Training to increase the skills capacity in agricultural workers**
- g) Facilitating collaborative working between woodland owners
- h) **Developing options for private investment for ecosystem services that drive woodland management**
- i) Other - please specify in no more than 25 words

We appreciate the opportunity to understand the aims of the English Tree Strategy for carbon sequestration and capture and also the opportunity to engage with policy makers regarding practical, business and skills considerations for a future generation. We consider that the planting of trees is only part of a multi-faceted process to help with climate change mitigation. There are many questions, considerations, opportunities and concerns to pursue further.

NFYFC AGRI
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