Policy Position in support of Woodlands for Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government’s strategy for woodlands and trees

Heritage, Landscape and the Cultural Value of Welsh Woodlands and Trees
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- **glossary**
  - Glossary of Terms and Acronyms.
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Purpose and Audience

This Policy Position is one of a suite designed to provide further background and evidence for the outcomes sought in Woodlands for Wales and the actions required to achieve these outcomes (see Appendix 1 for full Policy Position list). Each Policy Position proposes an ‘Agenda for Action’ which collectively provide the implementation framework for the whole strategy. The 5-year Action Plan for Woodlands for Wales takes its lead from the combined ‘Agendas’ from each of the Policy Positions and sets out the short-term priorities for all the organisations responsible for helping to implement the strategy.

The primary purpose of these Policy Positions is therefore to support the implementation of the strategy through the relevant corporate processes of each organisation identified with a responsibility in the Action Plan. Forestry Commission Wales is already aligning its corporate programme development in this way and we hope that all the other lead and supporting organisations will act similarly.

Therefore the main intended audience for these Policy Positions are those responsible for policy development and policy implementation through corporate planning. However we hope that because of the way the Policy Positions are presented, they will be of wider relevance to those with an interest in the particular subject matter or Woodlands for Wales as a whole.

1: Introduction

1.1 Aims and objectives

In Woodlands for Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) made a commitment to support the use of trees and woodlands where they make a positive contribution to the special landscape character of Wales and to sites of heritage and cultural importance so that they deliver more benefit to the public.

The aims of this Policy Position are to achieve these commitments through:

- Supporting the development of programmes under the Environmental Quality theme of Woodlands for Wales; and
- Supporting the development of the Welsh Assembly Government’s programmes and those supporting programmes of the third sector, private sector and other public sector organisations relating to the protection, quality and management of the environment, culture, heritage and landscape of Wales and the contribution made by woodlands and trees.

The diagram in Appendix 1 shows where this Policy Position fits into the policy hierarchy from both WAG and Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) perspectives.
1.2 Equality and Diversity

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to developing an organisation in which fairness and equality of opportunity are central to our business. We will ensure that we treat all users of our woodland, our stakeholders and staff fairly, with dignity and respect, regardless of race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion and belief. We will assess the ability of potential users to access woodlands, activities and services and take appropriate steps to ensure that barriers are reduced or minimised. A summary of equality and diversity evidence in relation to this policy position on heritage, landscape and the cultural value of woodlands and trees in Wales is included at Appendix 2.

1.3 Policy drivers

1.3.1 Welsh Assembly Government Strategies

People, Places, Futures: The Wales Spatial Plan
The Spatial Plan recognises that Wales ‘benefits from high quality landscapes, a wealth of archaeological sites and historic monuments’. It states that ‘Preserving and enhancing this quality will be increasingly important to the long-term ability of Wales to be a place where people choose to live and work.’ The spatial plan sets out long-term local development priorities and which in turn feed into Local Development Plans and Regional Environment Plans. In local action plans there should be consideration of the special role of existing woodlands and trees including the potential contribution of new woodlands and trees in rural, peri-urban and urban localities.

Environment Strategy for Wales
The Environment Strategy sets a vision that ‘By 2026, we want to see our distinctive Welsh environment thriving and contributing to the economic and social wellbeing and health of all of the people of Wales.’ The framework includes specific outcomes for Wales’ distinctive landscapes, their historic components and public access to green space. It recognises that our interaction with the landscape has resonance for individuals and communities and seeks to preserve what is special and locally distinctive whilst retaining living landscapes which provide resources and economic activity.

The accompanying action plan (2008 - 2011) requires completion of the landscape characterisation process including the natural and historic environment. Characterisation studies help inform where the nature and character of existing woodland could be changed to enhance the landscape and where and what type of new woodland is appropriate. Access and interpretation of existing and new woodlands and trees (especially Ancient Woodland) have a role to play in meeting the social and environmental outcomes of the strategy.
Heritage, Landscape and the Cultural Value of Welsh Woodlands and Trees

Woodlands for Wales Strategy

Woodlands for Wales contains a number of direct commitments for woodlands and trees to make a positive contribution to the special landscape character of Wales and to sites of heritage and cultural importance, including:

- The appropriate creation and management of more woodland which enhances the distinctive character of the Welsh landscape
- Veteran trees are seen as a cultural resource linking people to place, environment and culture (past and present)
- Hedgerow trees are seen and protected as distinctive features within the landscape
- There is a rich cultural heritage associated with woodland and its management which contributes to the special character of the Welsh landscape
- There are archaeological features and historic landscapes where improvement should preferably be achieved through modifying management systems rather than permanent tree removal
- More people enjoy the life-long learning benefits of woodlands and their products

The Welsh Historic Environment Strategic Statement and Action Plan

The Strategic Statement on the Welsh Historic Environment and Action Plan sets our ambition for the historic environment to play an important part in plans for ‘regeneration, sustainability and education for Welsh citizenship’. The Statement provides an up-to-date account of the position of the Heritage Protection Review in Wales. The management of woodlands and trees supports the themes of the strategic statement by conserving and protecting the historic environment through sustainable forest management and the protection of our veteran trees and individual trees of cultural significance. Regeneration and sustainable development can be contributed to through appropriate new woodland creation and by maintaining and improving public access, appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of our woodlands and their place in history and ensuring that woodlands are enjoyable and stimulating places to visit. Training and education in woodland management skills and support for woodland based enterprises support the objectives of the Statement.

Woodlands for Learning and the Learning Country: an education strategy for Wales

Wales should be a learning country, where high quality, lifelong learning liberates talent, extends opportunities, empowers communities, provides better jobs and the skills that people need to prosper in today’s vibrant economy, helping to create a sustainable future. Woodlands and trees can support these objectives through direct delivery, facilitating and influencing and as settings for woodland learning where there is a wide spectrum of opportunities available connected to woodland heritage, archaeological sites within woodlands and the distinctiveness of our wooded landscapes.
1.3.2 The European Landscape Convention (ELC)

The ELC defines a ‘landscape’ as an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. The ELC is seen as a reflection of European identity and diversity where the landscape is our living natural and cultural heritage, be it ordinary or outstanding, urban or rural, on land or in water. The ELC obliges signatories to engage in understanding and managing dynamic landscapes everywhere, in ways that recognise their diversity and the complex interplay of cultural and natural forces that influence their perception. It requires that the public have more awareness, involvement and influence in plans and decision-making which affects the landscape.

1.3.3 Statutory and non-statutory heritage and landscape protection

There are some statutory and non-statutory measures which are bound in wider policy such as Planning Policy Wales (PPW) which gives an element of protection against inappropriate development to, for example, Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and the preservation of individual trees or groups of trees under Tree Protection Orders. The regulatory implementation of the Forestry Act provides some protection against inappropriate tree felling above certain thresholds, specify that trees be replanted following felling and, in some situations, not replanted.

**Figures 1 and 2** show the coverage of Wales’ special heritage and landscape protection measures such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs), Areas of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB) and National Parks. Such measures intend to protect woodlands and trees at a range of scales for a variety of reasons such as individual archaeological features within woodland, an individual tree within the wider landscape or clusters of woodlands and trees as they form an element of a defined special area. **Table 1** briefly describes the key landscape and **Table 2** heritage designations with details relating to the protection afforded to woodlands and trees.

![Photo: Dafydd Fryer](image-url)
Figure 1: Map showing locations of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest, Landscape of special Historic Interest, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Historic Parks and Gardens.
Figure 2: Map showing locations of AONB’s, Heritage Coasts, National Parks and Woodland cover from the National Forest Inventory (2006)
Maintaining the natural beauty of the Park and the integrity of individual landscapes within it involves making choices between land uses which will improve its quality and those which may have a detrimental effect. Woodlands and trees are a key land use within all three National Parks and there is consultation over woodland creation or removal. Successful development includes sensitive design and often the use of traditional materials in construction which enhances the landscape - including the use of wood.

AONB’s are protected by law. In landscape and planning terms, AONBs are equal in status to National Parks. Woodlands and trees are a key land use within all five AONB’s and there is consultation over woodland creation or removal.

This register confers no special protection, but its aim is to draw attention to the value of these landscapes when planning applications and developments are considered. Trees and woodlands within these landscapes are deemed important natural elements and as such are managed appropriately to conserve or enhance the visual aesthetics and cultural importance of the area. The importance of woodlands, specimen trees, hedgerows and avenues in historic parks and gardens as well as within non-designated areas are deemed a key element and should complement the planning and development process.

Heritage coasts are not themselves protected by law but, where they are within protected landscapes such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, they are managed as part of that designation. Outside these designations Local Authorities give them special consideration in planning decisions.

There is one Reserve in Wales - the Dyfi Biosphere Reserve. These Reserves must fulfil three basic functions: conservation - to preserve genetic resources, species, ecosystems and landscapes; development - to foster sustainable economic and human development; logistic - to support research, monitoring, education and information exchange related to local, national and global issues of conservation and development.

There is substantial woodland cover in the one Reserve in Wales and woodland creation or removal, woodland management, use of wood fibre and woodland settings for education should contribute to relevant objectives and plans.

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<td>Register of Historic Landscapes</td>
<td>This register confers no special protection, but its aim is to draw attention to the value of these landscapes when planning applications and developments are considered. Trees and woodlands within these landscapes are deemed important natural elements and as such are managed appropriately to conserve or enhance the visual aesthetics and cultural importance of the area. The importance of woodlands, specimen trees, hedgerows and avenues in historic parks and gardens as well as within non-designated areas are deemed a key element and should complement the planning and development process.</td>
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Various sites protected for nature conservation importance\textsuperscript{xiv}

There is a patchwork of sites across Wales protected for their special habitat, geology or wildlife importance. These areas will shape our landscape by protecting our more ‘natural’ landscapes.

Conservation Areas\textsuperscript{xv}

Within Planning Policy Wales Conservation Area status confers what it is about the character or appearance of an area that should be preserved or enhanced, and sets out how this objective is to be achieved. Development Plans integrate conservation area prescriptions with wider policies for an area.

### Table 1 - Landscape designations

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### Table 2 - Heritage designations

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<tr>
<td>National Monuments Record of Wales</td>
<td>The National Monuments Record of Wales (NMRW) holds the national collection of information about the historic environment of Wales from the earliest times to the present day. CARN\textsuperscript{xvi} is a national information resource for archaeology and architecture compiled by archaeological organisations across Wales, providing private and public woodland owners with data and imagery to use to inform current and future management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs)</td>
<td>The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 provides the legislative framework for the protection of ancient monuments and also embraces properties in the direct care of WAG. All SAMs within AGWE have a management plan to conserve (and enhance where possible) the integrity of the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register of Historic Parks and Gardens</td>
<td>The Register was compiled to aid and inform owners how to conserve and enhance historic parks and gardens in their care and is non-statutory. Trees and woodlands within these designations are deemed key elements and as such are managed appropriately to conserve or enhance the visual aesthetics and cultural importance of the sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Protection Orders (TPO)</td>
<td>A tree preservation order (TPO) is an order made by a Local Planning Authority (LPA) in respect of trees or a stand of trees\textsuperscript{xvii}. They aim to prohibit the cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage, or wilful destruction of trees without the LPA’s consent. The cutting of roots, although not expressly covered, is potentially damaging and so, in the Secretary of State’s view, requires the LPA’s consent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Schemes</td>
<td>For example Glastir (draft code) will afford protection to individual trees by encouraging the retention of all in-field trees and veteran trees in agricultural landscapes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3.4 Climate Change influences

Wooded landscapes and their heritage assets can provide unique insights into the long story of how we have adapted to our changing climate over the millennia. Today’s changing climate will have many impacts on the wooded landscape and the natural and built heritage of Wales. There will be direct impacts from rising sea levels and coastal erosion; more frequent storms and heavy rainfall episodes; flooding, landslips and erosion; changing seasonal patterns; drought and drying out of wetlands, wet woodlands and archaeological sites. There will also be indirect impacts from the adaptation and mitigation measures that society introduces to deal with the effects of change and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions such as renewable energy development, energy efficiency measures, flood and coastal defences.

Woodland adaptation measures will change the nature and character of many woodlands from tree species composition to the way our woodlands are managed. There are heightened threats to the wooded landscapes of Wales including the risk from windthrow and the incidence of tree mortality from pests and pathogens on a large scale.

1.4. In summary

• Woodlands and trees make a positive contribution to the special landscape character of Wales and are themselves sites of heritage and cultural importance attracting local people and visitors. They also contribute to the long-term ability of Wales to be a place where people choose to live and work

• Woodlands contain a wealth of archaeological features connected to the use and management of the woodland (past and present) or which are hidden within a subsequently planted landscape. Management of these woodlands should be appropriate to protect the features they contain

• Individual trees in rural, peri-urban or urban locations including those in hedgerows, street trees, in parks and gardens and our veteran trees are a valuable cultural resource linking people to place, environment and culture (past and present)

• Woodlands and trees provide an educational resource that can lead to an improved understanding of the heritage and landscapes of Wales through life-long learning opportunities

• Changing the tree species composition and diversifying the structure of our woodlands to adapt to climate change will alter elements of the landscape character of Wales including our native woodland habitats

• New woodland creation and the planting of individual trees or groups of trees should be integrated into wider land management in the rural, peri-urban and urban environment for a range of environmental and social benefits. They must be appropriate to the landscape, heritage and cultural values of the specific location
2: Background

2.1 Trees and woodlands in Wales

Woodland covers 14% of Wales and there are an estimated 15 million trees outside of woodlands such as hedgerow trees, street trees and those in parks, fields and gardens. Woodlands and trees have been a key element of the Welsh landscape since the last ice age, shaped through the history of environmental change and economic use. The nature and character of our woodlands and the individual trees of the Welsh landscape show us remnants of hunting forests, military clearances of our native woodlands and the management of monastic estates. Woodlands and trees are natural components of most of the areas included in the historic landscape register and in some landscapes, they are key historic features such as:

- Aberglaslyn - William Maddocks’ early forestry nursery and planting work
- East Fforest Fawr - former royal hunting forest
- Rhondda - some of the first large scale coniferous plantings to supply pit props
- The Ogwen Valley and Dinorwig near Bangor, which have large surviving tracts of the great landed estates (Penrhyn Castle, Vaenol Park) including all the plantings for game, timber and the desire for the picturesque in the nineteenth century gentry landscape

Our woodlands have been fantastically productive over the years with businesses based around tanbark, shiptimber, pitwood, fuelwood, charcoal, clearance for arable and pastoral agriculture and timber for use in construction, fencing and the paper industry. All of this activity shapes the wooded habitats and landscapes we see today and left behind evidence of its undertaking. By the mid eighteenth century exotic and ornamental tree plantings began. The first nurseries and commercial plantings of coniferous species started on some of the larger estates in Wales considered a ‘rare and unusual feature in the rural landscape’ at that time. Estate owners such as Thomas Johnes of the Hafod in mid-Wales were pioneers in introducing coniferous species such as European larch on a grand scale. These large landed estates were responsible for the creation of some of our well known wood pasture landscapes such as Dinefwr Park near Llandeilo. Modern forestry has arisen from this history of economic use and in particular the exploitation of our woodlands during the first and second world wars with large scale planting of single species coniferous blocks to reinvigorate our forest industries and create jobs.

People and communities enjoy woodlands in a range of ways - ranging from mountain biking, motor rallies, open-air theatre, and enterprise and training to quiet contemplation or simply walking the dog. These activities are welcome uses of wooded landscapes and need to be carefully managed to ensure the protection of the historic environment and the conservation of biodiversity.
2.2 Sustainable Forest Management and guidance for woodland heritage and landscape design

There are strong links to the Policy Position *Welsh woodland - their extent nature and character* where the need for change will mould the future nature and character of our wooded landscapes. The UK Forestry Standard® (UKFS) is the UK commitment to the principles of sustainable forest management as set out at the European and International level. The Standard includes criteria for woodlands to enhance the beauty and character of the countryside and contribute to the diversity and distinctiveness of rural and urban landscapes. Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland is recognised as a key woodland type for landscape and cultural heritage. Important heritage features must be protected and due account should be taken of cultural, historic or designed landscapes where landscape quality is to be enhanced and archaeological and historic features protected to strengthen rather than disrupt these landscapes.

Complementing the UKFS, the Forests and Archaeology Guidelines® (currently under revision) specify the environmental standards necessary to qualify for establishment and management grants under the Better Woodlands for Wales (BWW) grant scheme (this scheme will close to new applications at the end of 2010) setting out the requirements for archaeological conservation in the creation of new woodlands and in the management of existing woodlands. Tree removal and in many cases their retention, the management of woodland vegetation and minimising the risk of windthrow are all key factors in the favourable management of important archaeological features. The Guidelines provide a set of principles for the management of the AGWE e.g. Forest Design Planning Operational Guidance Booklet® 2007. Such guidance allows forest planners to option test certain assumptions and decisions relating to landscape design from internal views out from woodlands, into woodlands and the place of woodlands in large landscapes.

The UK Woodland Assurance Standard® (UKWAS) is an independent certification standard for verifying sustainable woodland management in the United Kingdom. UKWAS promotes multiple measures for the protection and enhancement of wooded landscapes, archaeology and the historic environment. All woodlands on the AGWE have long term management plans called Forest Design Plans (FDPs) which specify felling and thinning proposals and future species choice. All of the AGWE is independently audited and UKWAS certified. Most woodland creation and management in private ownership is carried out with grant support from the BWW scheme. The support includes an accredited planner to produce a long-term management plan providing an owner with the tools to enter the UKWAS scheme if they wish.
2.3 Trees, woodland, heritage and landscape on the map

Wales has a wealth of important individual trees with historic, cultural and environmental interest across rural, peri-urban and urban locations and a variety of settings from fields, parks, gardens, streets and within woodlands. The importance of ancient woodlands and veteran trees as a cultural heritage resource through linking people to a place, environment with culture and the present with the past should not be under-estimated. The majority of large trees or trees of historical or cultural interest have no formal protection and their location and condition are poorly recorded or not recorded at all. The Woodland Trust’s Ancient Tree Hunt has gone some way to putting individual trees of importance on the map. Some are recorded through TPO records within Local Planning Authorities. Although it is possible to make TPOs on any trees, in practice they are most commonly used in urban and peri-urban settings, for example gardens and parkland. The draft code for Glastir relating to veteran trees, hedgerow and in-field trees will afford protection for many previously un-designated features.

Accurate, up-to-date information about the size, distribution, composition and condition of our woodlands is essential for developing and monitoring policies and guidance for their sustainable management. The Forestry Commission carry out periodic national woodland surveys and the information gathered, along with information obtained from other sources, for example, aerial photographs, is compiled into the National Forest Inventory (previously known as the National Inventory of Woodland and Trees or NIWT). The inventory can be analysed alongside other datasets such as the Public Opinion of Forestry survey helping to define the value of woodlands to society.

The Welsh Heritage Assets Project surveyed all public woodlands and mapped their heritage and landscape features. The survey uncovered and mapped thousands of previously unknown archaeological sites which fed into the National Sites and Monuments Record. This project provided FCW with a mapping and management tool (DOLMEN) that has enabled consistent protection and management by objectives agreed with Cadw and the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts to protect and enhance the heritage resource of and within these woodlands. It continues to provide a mechanism for management advice and consultation. The BWW scheme requires consultation with organisations such as Cadw and the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts to ensure that advice for extant archaeology and the historic environment are built into the resulting plans.

Landscape characterisation of Wales (LANDMAP) is a GIS based resource where the present characteristics, qualities and influences on the landscape are recorded and evaluated into a nationally consistent data set. LANDMAP comprises five spatially related datasets known as the Geological Landscape, Landscape Habitats, Visual & Sensory, the Historic Landscape and the Cultural Landscape. LANDMAP information can be accessed to:

- Identify the landscape character of Wales and the contribution made from existing woodlands and trees to local distinctiveness
- Ensure that new woodlands work with, and enhance, local landscape diversity and distinctiveness
- Appraise the value and significance of areas classified for their wooded character in the visual, historic and cultural landscape layers
- Raise the importance of woodland related areas near to population centres
- Inform baseline landscape conditions and changing visual, heritage and cultural landscape values both dependant and independent to woodland change
Figure 3: Example LANDMAP Visual & Sensory at Level 3 illustrating how wooded landscapes are classified and recorded.
2.4 Research and development

Under the Forest Research Landscape Ecology Programme various tools have been developed to analyse the increase or removal of woodland cover for biodiversity and how this could provide additional opportunities to link with landscape character change for example:

- **VISULANDS** (Visualisation tools for public participation in managing landscape change) is a project to develop and apply visualisation tools to support public involvement in the assessment of landscape change. The creation or removal of woodland and the use of different silvicultural options could be assessed providing an opportunity to consider actual and predicted benefits in visual experience.

- **BEETLE** (Biological and Environmental Evaluation Tools for Landscape Ecology) although designed to analyse the increase of woodland cover for ecological gain (contributing to the connectivity of semi-natural habitats) it could also provide additional opportunities to link with other tools to consider where a change in woodland character or new woodland creation will significantly modify the landscape. In Wales the Woodland Habitat Network project will be one way to inform new woodland targeting.

- To help forest managers decide where to permanently remove woodland cover a pilot decision-support tool, Forest Land Use Change, is under-development in Wales using various drivers for tree removal such as the views of local people, landscape improvement and the restoration of semi-natural habitats.
2.5 Education, access and interpretation of our woodland heritage and landscapes

There are strong links to the Policy Positions Education, Learning & Skills, Community Involvement and Health & Well-being.

**Education and life-long learning**

The Forest Education Initiative\textsuperscript{xxxii} (FEI) is a partnership that aims to;

- Increase the use of woodlands and related industries for first hand learning by educators and others
- Increase opportunities for individuals and communities to learn about the importance of trees and forests for conservation of the environment, for the landscape, and for biodiversity
- Increase the opportunities for individuals and communities to improve their emotional and physical well being through a range of educational, training and learning experiences with wood, trees and woodlands

Supporting and providing opportunities to learn about our woodland heritage, ancient woodland, archaeology of the woodland and encouraging woodlands as settings for outdoor learning will help foster cultural identity with our trees and woodlands and a sense of environmental citizenship.

**Access and tourism**

Leisure landscapes: exploring the role of forestry in tourism\textsuperscript{xxxiii} (2007) research found that woodlands support the success of tourism enterprises as well as the social and environmental sustainability of the tourism sector. The quality and accessibility of our wooded landscapes is a significant draw. Heritage in and of the woodland may be the only reason for entering the forest, providing a target destination for the historical enthusiast or simply an ideal spot for spiritual contemplation or artistic inspiration. For others it may be a minor or incidental attraction to their forest visit.

**Interpretation and awareness**

Interpreting the woodlands of Wales. Creating a sense of place\textsuperscript{xxxiv} (2004, currently under review) encourages effective interpretation through creating a high-quality woodland visitor experience by:

- Helping visitors to enjoy themselves and appreciate our woodlands
- Making visitors feel they have connected with woodlands
- Showing them what is special
- Creating a feeling of ‘sense of place’
- Creating a sense of welcome
3: Agenda for Action

3.1 Protection and Conservation

All woodlands should be managed to the UKFS and Forest and Archaeology Guidelines\textsuperscript{xv} and we will encourage better integration between the objectives of woodland owners and that of landscape and historic environment policies. Protected sites, both historical and natural, are priorities for protection and enhancement of the cultural heritage of Wales. We will bring protected heritage sites under favourable management according to their Cadw management plan in our own woodlands and encourage others to do so. We will increase support for management actions which bring positive outcomes for historic and archaeological sites and important landscapes.

We will work with others to improve the protection available to Ancient Woodlands, veteran trees and other individual trees of cultural significance. They will be protected for their historic and cultural value as well as other environmental benefits through continued recording and mapping of features through the Ancient Woodland Inventory and increased awareness through training events.

We will continue to work with the Woodland Trust and others to map and monitor the condition of ancient and veteran trees in our own woodland and encourage others to do so and we will make this information available to the public.

Tree health and protection measures, of individual trees and those species used most widely in Welsh forestry, will be of increasing importance in our changing climate. Research, development and dissemination measures will be supported and targeted at pests and diseases posing the greatest risk and new issues dealt with under our rapid response plans. The risk posed to our wooded landscapes by events such as landslips and windthrow requires further consideration and risk management planning.

3.2 Woodland management

A positive contribution to the quality of our distinctive landscapes will be achieved through a number of strategies to increase the diversity of our woodlands including the:

- transformation of our single species plantations by the use of wider range of tree species and the use of mixtures at stand level
- use of non-clearfell systems where ever this is achievable
- restoration of our Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS); and
- conversion of our planted woodlands to a more natural state

Our Ancient Woodlands will be managed for their cultural importance as well as their ecological value. We will support the teaching of traditional woodland management skills and will continue to encourage and support the development of new woodland-based enterprises.

We will work with partners to determine the best framework for woodland management decision-making that contributes positively to locally distinctive landscapes. We will agree with FCW, CCW and others how best to use the LANDMAP characterisation maps to monitor and better understand the future design of woodlands and trees within the wider landscape, in important landscapes and their value for cultural and/or biodiversity benefits.
3.3 New woodland creation

Proposals for new woodland will take into account historic land use patterns, impact on existing local landscape character and, as far as is possible, the value local people attach to the land, its nature and character. New woodland may not be appropriate in some relatively treeless landscapes or areas with no tradition of forestry. New woodland can often provide an integrated solution to landscape ‘problems’ such as brownfield restoration and development or the reclamation of industrial sites. Trees and woodland should be planned within new developments to provide real opportunities for landscape improvement and associated benefits. A review of historic land use may identify areas where the restoration of a wooded landscape may contribute to and enhance the present land use. The expansion of our native and mixed woodland resource, through new woodland creation to meet a wide variety of outcomes such as flood risk management, will re-wood many of our lost riparian and wet woodlands.

3.4 Restoration of open habitats and landscapes

Permanent tree removal will only take place where objectives cannot be achieved through modifying management systems or woodland type.

3.5 Access, tourism, interpretation and education

Considerable economic gain can be achieved through the promotion of Wales’ woodland heritage, sites of importance and our varied wooded landscapes. A key measure is to support and manage appropriate levels of access on the AGWE and encourage others to do so. This can only be achieved with support from local people, Non-Governmental Organisations and interest groups. Of equal importance is to ensure that the landscape value of trees and woodlands is promoted as part of the tourism product for Wales and increase awareness of Wales’ cultural and historic importance through training events, supporting community involvement programmes and the use of woodlands as settings for education programmes.

The heritage and cultural aspects of woodland landscapes can present real opportunities and inspiration for social enterprise. We will encourage a culture of working with local communities and of recognising the economic benefits of locally-based enterprises. Where opportunities for local enterprise are identified on the AGWE, and can be accommodated within our other objectives, woodland, or access to those goods and services provided by woodland, may be made available to allow such development. We will focus on support for commercial and social enterprises that enable individuals and communities to work towards regenerating their local neighbourhoods, ensuring that these have positive effects on woodland ecosystems and the wider environment.

We will continue to develop the visitor experience on the AGWE and encourage others to do so. Through the Historic Environment Group we will aim to increase the contribution that the historic environment makes to the economy and education, and revitalise communities by improving interpretation and access at historic sites and ancient woodlands and in landscapes of high quality.
3.6 Working with others

By working with others we can achieve more and there are key challenges that we must undertake with others because they provide expertise, help us secure additional resources, give us new ideas and contribute sheer enthusiasm. There are many organisations which can help us improve the effectiveness of new woodland creation and woodland management plans and monitor the contribution they make to landscape character, heritage and cultural value.

We need to work with others to help interpret and promote Wales’ cultural and built heritage within woodlands, which will be inclusive and varied. This is especially important in the Strategic Regeneration Areas and initiatives such as Heads of the Valleys to create and maintain areas that attract people to live and work.

By working with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) we will improve the protection and consideration of trees and woodlands within Planning Policy Wales and the use of new woodlands and trees. By working with Local Planning Authorities and organisations such as the Woodland Trust we will increase the awareness of TPO’s and non-designated veteran trees through better recording and data sharing, enabling future joint conservation and interpretation programmes.

Together with Local Authorities, Cadw and the Wales Forest Business Partnership (WFBP) we will promote the utilisation (and planting) of native broadleaf species, such as oak, and good quality softwoods for supporting the restoration of historic and listed buildings using local materials. In partnership with WFBP and others we can explore ways to preserve traditional woodland management skills and to encourage and support the development of new woodland-based enterprises.

We will work with key partners to further develop fieldwork methodologies for use in the archaeological assessment process using remote sensing applications including LiDAR (an optical remote sensing technology) to determine extent and location. This is still in its infancy but is a valuable tool for large scale wooded sites.

The current use of Welsh timber used for restoration projects on buildings of historical or cultural significance is largely unknown and we will work with WFBP and Wood Knowledge Wales to improve understanding, promote use, plan and manage our woodlands for future sources of suitable, high quality timber for use in restoration projects and new construction.

4: Methods of Delivery

It is hoped that all organisations responsible for the delivery of government policy, in addition to Forestry Commission Wales, will develop a corporate response to collectively deliver this ‘Agenda for Action’. The main mechanisms for delivery will be by:

• Direct delivery on the Assembly Government Woodland Estate
• Deployment of grant funding via Better Woodlands for Wales to other woodland owners
• Supporting, influencing and enabling others to develop programmes from this ‘Agenda for Action’, particularly to secure appropriate use of new woodland creation as a legitimate public policy solution
• Identification of key partners, such as Cadw, the four Archaeological Trusts, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, CCW and WLGA, to help us secure additional funding streams to deliver and implement some of the wider aspirations of the agenda for action
5: Monitoring and Evaluation

5.1 Monitoring

The Woodlands for Wales Strategy is accompanied by an Action Plan, which is monitored annually.

5.2 Evaluation

Formal policy evaluation will take place every three years, to assess how effective it has been, and what lessons can be learnt for the future. The success of the Policy will be assessed in terms of its delivery of the outcomes listed in this document. The first evaluation is planned for April 2013. We anticipate that it will be conducted by FCW.

The evaluation will draw on a range of evidence. Useful to the evaluation will be information from the following Woodlands for Wales Indicators - Table 3 which will also, to some extent, have established an ex-ante baseline. In addition, monitoring work undertaken by other bodies will also be used.
### Table 3 - Woodlands for Wales Indicators relating to this policy position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID of indicator</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Reporting frequency</th>
<th>Desired Trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woodlands for Wales Indicator 23: Heritage and Landscape</td>
<td>Monitoring of the nature of woodland within historic landscapes, AONBs, National Parks, SSIs, conservation areas, registered historic parks and gardens, using assessments made during LANDMAP project as a baseline.</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
<td>Favourable management of woodlands within these zones to improve (or avoid disturbance to) landscape character, with a view to having these areas reassessed by LANDMAP assessors in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public opinion of the impact of forestry on the landscape in Wales</td>
<td>Biennial</td>
<td>Stable or increasing proportion of people reporting that woodlands make a positive contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Condition of Scheduled Ancient Monuments within woodlands</td>
<td>Every 5 years (Cadw undertakes monitoring of SAMs on a 5-year cycle)</td>
<td>Decreasing proportion where woodlands or forestry operations are deemed to be having a negative effect on SAM condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodlands for Wales Indicator 18: Woodland habitats and ancient trees</td>
<td>The area and condition of woodland on designated and ancient sites</td>
<td>Varying between annual (area of PAWS restoration) to every 5 years (condition of native woodland and condition of woodland on designated sites)</td>
<td>Improving condition of native and designated woodland, increasing area of restored PAWS, and stable numbers of ancient and important trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of ancient / important trees (identified through Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Hunt, and also using information from Local Authorities regarding TPOs)</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Loss of ancient/veteran/important/TPO trees is limited, and is balanced by recruitment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are a number of contextual indicators supporting this framework which have a home in other Woodlands for Wales Policy Positions including:

- Woodlands for Wales (WfW) Indicator 1: Woodlands and Trees (numbers of trees outside woodland and length of linear features such as hedgerows)
- WfW Indicator 2: Diversification of woodlands
- WfW Indicator 4: Management system (including area of woodland managed by clearfell)
- WfW Indicator 6: Urban woodland and trees (including area and accessibility of urban woodland and numbers of urban trees)
- WfW Indicator 8: Tree health (extent of disease and damage in Wales)
- WfW Indicator 9: Local benefits of woodlands (perception of public and local benefits)
- WfW Indicator 10: Community Involvement (numbers of people involved via consultation, volunteering, events, educational activities or community woodland groups)
- WfW Indicator 11: Recreation (numbers visiting woodlands and the activities they undertake whilst there)
- WfW Indicator 12: Accessibility (public accessibility to woodlands, including information on the quality of experience)
- WfW Indicator 13: Local enterprises (including the numbers of businesses based on traditional woodland crafts, and numbers of tourism enterprises using woodlands)
- WfW Indicator 14: Use of Welsh wood (including use of Welsh wood in e.g. construction or crafts)
- WfW Indicator 20: Connectivity of woodland habitats

**Further development of indicators**

Further work is required to develop indicators in the following areas.

- **Development of UK Forestry Standard monitoring:** All certified and grant-aided woodland in Wales is required to be managed to the UK Forestry Standard, which includes many criteria for the sustainable management of woodlands to protect and enhance their landscape and heritage value. Work is currently underway to improve the way the application of the UK Forestry Standard in grant-aided woodland in Wales is monitored in Wales

- **Historic Parks and Gardens:** Currently there is no formal indicator to monitor woodlands and trees within historic parks and gardens. A clear purpose to monitor and manage woodlands and trees in favourable condition through the development of management plans in partnership with landowner and Cadw would bring more woodland into sustainable management and provide long term objectives to meet both woodland and historic environment strategies

- **Unscheduled monuments:** Both public and private woodlands contain a vast array of non-designated historic features (visible and buried). The AGWE has a record of the majority of visible sites and monitors condition on an annual cycle where sites are deemed either of national significance, or are at risk to either the structure itself or the general public. Private woodland owners with unscheduled heritage features, are currently informed of such sites if a BWW grant is applied for. An indicator could be developed to monitor the proportion of such sites that are in favourable management
Appendix 2: Equality and Diversity Evidence

The outcomes of this policy will have positive benefits for the people of Wales including those included in the six diversity strands.

Positive benefits include the wider recognition of the value of woodlands and trees in their contribution to the special landscape character of Wales, its historic environment and cultural heritage and improved management of woodlands and trees taking account of these values.

The aims of this high-level policy position will be beneficial to all people in Wales including those in the six diversity strands and there is no evidence that there will be any specific negative impact on any of these groups.

Improving access to woodlands to experience heritage sites will be beneficial to the health and well-being of those who engage in these activities. Access for all abilities will need consideration when developing facilities.

Woodlands and trees in the landscape will provide attractive settings and features, which will also contribute to feelings of well-being.

However, specific projects which arise through the Woodlands for Wales Action Plan may require more focused EqIAs to consider any impacts and give opportunities to promote diversity. Local consultations may be appropriate in some instances.

This policy position has been developed to provide more detail, background and an agenda for action take forward strategic themes of the Woodlands for Wales strategy. A full equality impact assessment was undertaken during the preparation of Woodlands for Wales.
References


vii The European Landscape Convention (2008) http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/Conventions/Landscape/default_en.asp


x National Parks of Wales www.nationalparks.gov.uk

xi AONBs www.aonb.org.uk/


xiv For examples of sites protected for habitat, geology and wildlife importance see: http://www.ccw.gov.uk/landscape--wildlife/protecting-our-landscape/special-landscapes--sites.aspx


xvi http://www.rrahm.gov.uk/ENG/Search+Records/CARN/


xx For further information on The UK Forest Standard see: http://www.forestry.gov.uk/ukfs
Heritage, Landscape and the Cultural Value of Welsh Woodlands and Trees


xxii Forest Design Planning Operational Guidance Booklet. (2005) www.forestry.gov.uk/.../f319410706c45547802573a8003b0fa2!OpenDocument


xxiv Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Hunt http://www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk

xxv For information on the National Forest Inventory see: http://www.forestry.gov.uk/inventory

xxvi For examples of forest survey and statistics see: http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-7aqd6f


xxix Landscape Ecology Programme, Forest Research http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/HCOU-4U4JG3

xxx Visualisation tools for public participation in managing landscape change (VISULANDS) 2008 http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-6D4GW4

xxxii BEETLE http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/infd-69pla5#metrics

xxxiii Forest Education Initiative 2007 http://alpacorn.forestry.gov.uk:7777/pls/portal/url/ITEM/4B98FDCC0ECA2756E04012D30980E871


xxxv Forest and archaeology guidelines www.forestresearch.gov.uk/heritage
Further information

This is one of a series of Policy Positions providing additional detail and background to the overarching themes of the Woodlands for Wales strategy. Each also contains an agenda for action which set out methods for delivering strategic aims and objectives.

You can get this publication in large print and other forms (e.g. Braille, audio tape) by contacting Forestry Commission Wales at the phone number or email address below:

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