

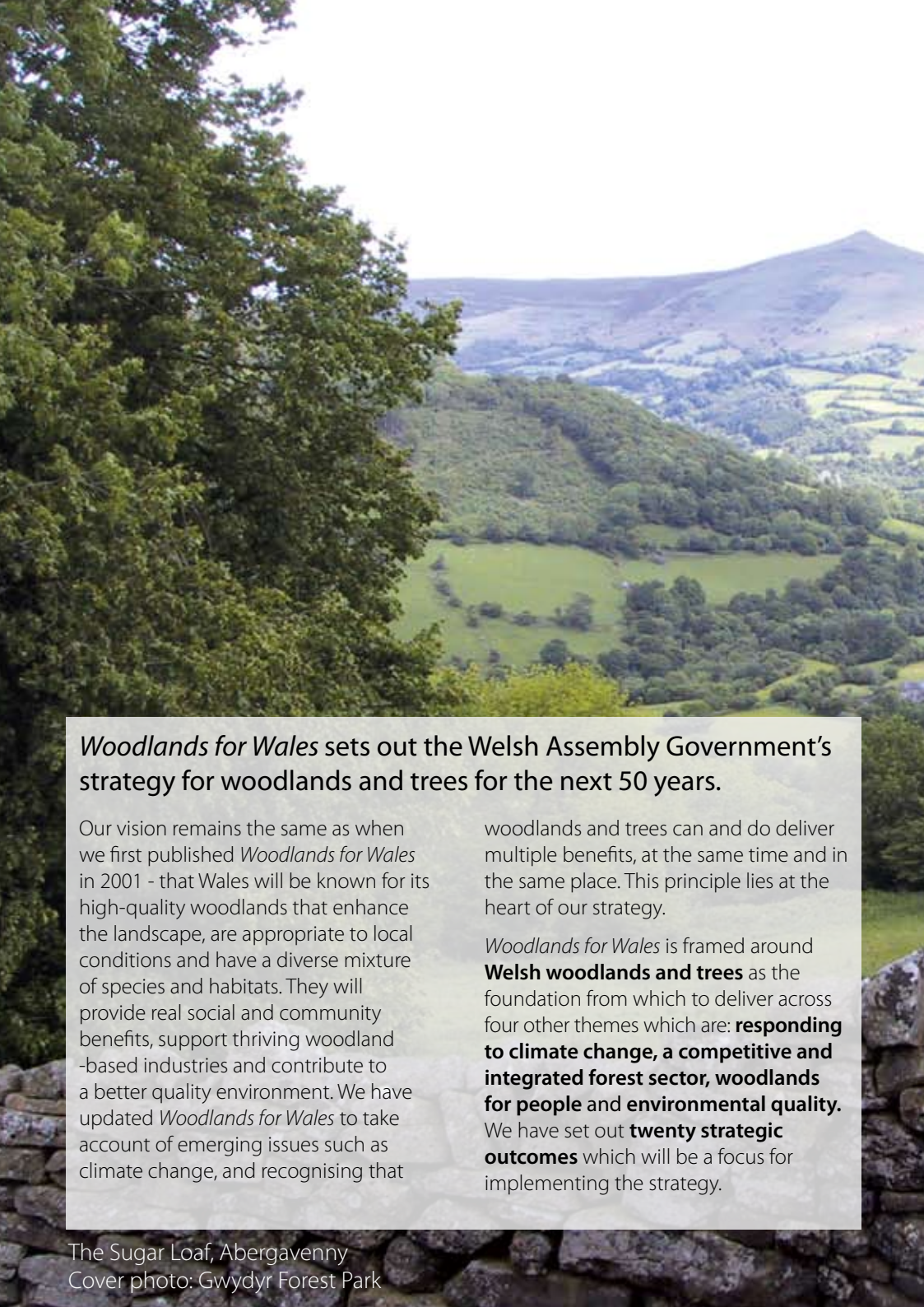


Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

# Woodlands for Wales



The Welsh Assembly Government's Strategy for Woodlands and Trees



## *Woodlands for Wales* sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy for woodlands and trees for the next 50 years.

Our vision remains the same as when we first published *Woodlands for Wales* in 2001 - that Wales will be known for its high-quality woodlands that enhance the landscape, are appropriate to local conditions and have a diverse mixture of species and habitats. They will provide real social and community benefits, support thriving woodland-based industries and contribute to a better quality environment. We have updated *Woodlands for Wales* to take account of emerging issues such as climate change, and recognising that

woodlands and trees can and do deliver multiple benefits, at the same time and in the same place. This principle lies at the heart of our strategy.

*Woodlands for Wales* is framed around **Welsh woodlands and trees** as the foundation from which to deliver across four other themes which are: **responding to climate change, a competitive and integrated forest sector, woodlands for people and environmental quality.** We have set out **twenty strategic outcomes** which will be a focus for implementing the strategy.

# Welsh woodlands and trees

Only 14% of the land of Wales is covered by woodland, much less than in most European countries. The Welsh Assembly Government owns two-thirds of the conifer plantations but very little of the native woodland or ancient semi-natural woodland, much of which is no longer actively managed. There are another 15 million trees in Wales outside woodland. It is important we aim to have the right trees in the right places to deliver across the other themes of the strategy. The strategic outcomes for **Welsh woodlands and trees** are:

**More woodlands and trees are managed sustainably** to the UK Forestry Standard, and more of the usable timber grown in Wales is harvested, with greater value added to it during processing. Farmers are encouraged and supported to manage their native and ancient woodlands for biodiversity, timber and woodfuel.

**Woodland ecosystems are healthy and resilient**, as a result of a major effort to diversify single age, single species, twentieth century plantations.

**Woodlands are better adapted to deliver a full range of benefits** including timber, fuel, water quality and management, climate regulation, biodiversity, landscape improvement and access. Decisions about woodland creation and management take full account of all ecosystem costs and benefits, not just the potential for timber production. Clearfelling is replaced by alternative management systems where these make a better contribution to ecosystem services.

**Woodland cover in Wales increases**, making it possible to deliver the strategy outcomes while maintaining the overall production potential from Welsh woodlands. Priority is given to creating new native and mixed woodlands delivering multiple benefits, and there is a strong presumption against permanent removal of woodland.

**The management of woodland and trees is more closely related to that of other land uses**, especially farming.

**Urban woodlands and trees deliver a full range of benefits**, through better management of existing trees, and creative planting of new trees in development projects and during the restoration of industrial land.



Cooling towers

# Responding to Climate Change

If we can manage woodlands and trees to help them to be resilient to climate change, they can help us to reduce net carbon emissions in two different ways. In a process known as sequestration, carbon is stored in the timber, branches and leaves, and accumulates in soils where the trees grow. Wood removed from the woodland can be used as a carbon neutral energy source – wood fuel – or as a raw material for construction and manufacturing.

Used as a substitute for materials like concrete and steel, which take large amounts of energy to produce, wood can potentially lock up its carbon for hundreds of years, as beams, furniture or frames for buildings.

This theme is cross-cutting and it must be noted that many of the outcomes of the other themes relate to responding to climate change.

The specific strategic outcome for **responding to climate change** is:

**Welsh woodlands contribute to reducing the carbon footprint of Wales**, through balancing the objectives of this strategy with the yield of usable woodland products, while helping to sequester carbon and protect the carbon storage capacity of woodland biomass and soils.





Family on way-marked woodland walk

# Woodlands for people

We want to make sure that the woodlands of Wales, especially those we own, are managed in a way that supports local communities, including the most disadvantaged and minority or hard to reach groups.

The strategic outcomes for **woodlands for people** are:

**More communities benefit from woodlands and trees**, as a result of closer involvement in decision making and management of woodlands at a community level.

**More people enjoy the life-long learning benefits of woodlands and their products**, using woodland as a setting for learning and play throughout their lives, and gain a better understanding of the wider role of woodlands and trees.

**More people live healthier lives as a result of their use and enjoyment of woodlands**, which are safe, accessible and welcoming places.

**More people benefit from woodland related enterprises**, operating businesses, developing skills and creating jobs associated with woodland and timber.





Extracting oak thinnings

# A competitive and integrated forest sector

We recognise the vital role of Welsh timber in financing woodland management and supporting the growth of Welsh forest industries, especially in rural areas. Wales already has a track record of developing new uses for wood and adopting new technologies. The strategic outcomes for a **competitive and integrated forest sector** are:

**More Welsh grown timber is used in Wales**, with all parts of forest sector rising to the challenge of implementing the changes needed to deliver this strategy, while keeping a clear focus on the needs of future markets.

**The forest sector is better integrated and more competitive, supporting the Welsh economy**, and has enterprises using home-grown timber flourishing at many different scales.

The private sector informs the debate about choice of tree species for woodland diversification, and provides leadership and direction for a much better integrated supply chain, from owners and growers to end users.

**Increased use of timber as a key renewable resource**, with a much better 'pull' for wood and timber products from Wales, and increased local procurement of timber materials and processing services.

**A thriving, skilled workforce in the forestry sector**, employing more people with the right skills, offering robust and reliable career paths and providing more opportunities for local people to be involved with woodlands.





Wetland area, Pembrey Forest Nature Reserve near Llanelli

## Environmental quality

Improving the condition and management of woodlands is the key to healthy and resilient woodland ecosystems, capable of delivering the high quality goods and services we need. Irreplaceable ancient woodlands and other species-rich habitats have a vital role in providing ecosystem services. The strategic outcomes for **environmental quality** are:

**Woodland management achieves high standards of environmental stewardship** by using the most appropriate management techniques to achieve site-specific objectives, and fosters a culture of sharing successes and learning from problems.

**Woodlands and trees of special conservation value are in favourable management**, including sites of international, national and local ecological importance. More is known about the Ancient Woodland and veteran trees of Wales, and these and other individual trees are better managed for their biodiversity, landscape, heritage and cultural value. Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites in our ownership are gradually restored to a more natural state, and other owners are encouraged to do the same.

**Woodland biodiversity is supported and native woodland is in favourable management**, meeting biodiversity targets through better support for the management of priority native woodland habitats and species, and by strengthening the woodland network. Where there is a clear benefit to ecosystem services, existing non-native woodlands are restored to priority open habitats.

**Woodlands and trees make a positive contribution to the special landscape character of Wales and to sites of heritage and cultural importance**, with the integrity of historic and wooded landscapes and archaeological sites protected, and more use made of Welsh wood products in the restoration of historic buildings.

**New and existing trees and woodland contribute to water and soil management**, with a more strategic and integrated approach to land use decisions and land management actions throughout Wales, in both rural and urban areas.

# Delivering *Woodlands for Wales*

Achieving the outcomes of this strategy will require innovative and bold thinking and sustained, concentrated and co-operative effort from our many delivery partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors. With their help we will be developing a fully inclusive and equitable Action Plan, backed up by policy position statements, a review of the role of our own woodland estate, and research and technical development work. The Better *Woodlands for Wales* grant scheme will be focused on delivering the outcomes of this strategy, together with support for farmers, businesses, the environment, communities and Leader funded by the Wales Rural Development Plan. We shall use a suite of indicators to monitor and assess progress across the whole breadth of *Woodlands for Wales*.

This leaflet is intended as an introduction to *Woodlands for Wales*, the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy for trees and woodlands.

You can obtain a full copy of the document by contacting Forestry Commission Wales at the phone number or e.mail address below.

An electronic version can be downloaded from the Forestry Commission Wales website at:

[www.forestry.gov.uk/website/fchomepages.nsf/hp/Wales](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/fchomepages.nsf/hp/Wales)

This leaflet and the full *Woodlands for Wales* is also available in large print and other forms (e.g. Braille) – contact Forestry Commission Wales as below.

## Forestry Commission Wales

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(Calls to 0845 numbers are charged at a 'Lo-call' rate, this will be the same irrespective of where you are calling from).

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