



# Our purpose and direction summary 2011 to 2014



Welcome to the summary of *Our Purpose and Direction* – Forestry Commission Wales' corporate plan 2011-14. We have a 'rolling' corporate plan which we review each year: this is our 2011/12 update. We hope you find it interesting and useful.

## Our purpose

We are the Welsh Assembly Government's Department of Forestry, as well as being part of Forestry Commission GB. We work in the following ways:

- We develop forestry policy and advise the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) on forestry matters
- We manage the Assembly Government Woodland Estate (AGWE) - 38% of woodlands in Wales
- We currently administer grants for the new Glastir woodland creation scheme and continue to provide grant aid through *Better Woodlands for Wales* (BWW), which closed to new applicants at the end of 2010. We also have a regulatory role which includes issuing felling licences

We work across both the the AGWE and woodlands in other ownership. This is called the **Welsh National Forest** - and includes all trees and woodlands in Wales now and in the future.

Woodlands cover 14.3% of the land area of Wales.

There are two main types:

- Native woodland – often small woodlands on farmland
- Conifer woodland – mainly planted in the 20th century

A new survey, the National Forest Inventory, published March 2011, showed that there is an estimated 303,500 ha woodland in Wales, an increase on previous estimates.

In 2011/12 we will receive £21.4m funding from WAG. This funding and the income we generate, will help take forward this Corporate Plan. We have 378 staff working across Wales. Our National Office is located in the WAG offices in Aberystwyth.

We are committed to fairness and recognising Equality and Diversity – both for our own staff and the public we serve.



## Our direction

Our work is guided by *Woodlands for Wales*, WAG's 50 year strategy for woodlands and trees, which was revised and re-launched in March 2009. We also contribute to WAG's targets for renewable energy, where woodlands and trees have an important role, and play a part in other areas of WAG's work such as health and education.

There are nine areas of our work which we are focusing on in particular and we use them to monitor our performance.

These are increasing / improving:

- Woodland under sustainable management
- Woodland creation / woodland cover
- Woodland area managed without clearfelling
- Tree species diversity in non-native woodland
- Climate change mitigation
- Level of public involvement with woodland
- Level of woodland and timber related enterprises
- Native woodland extent
- Native woodland condition

Our ongoing work like harvesting and marketing timber and protecting sites for conservation, as well as providing advice and administering grant aid all contribute to these nine areas.

Last year, at the request of our Minister, we produced a study which outlined options for the current and future role of the AGWE. The Minister expressed a firm commitment that the AGWE would remain in public ownership, and also asked us to actively seek out commercial opportunities on the AGWE, which can provide additional social, economic and environmental public benefits.



Welsh woodlands and trees lie at the heart of our work

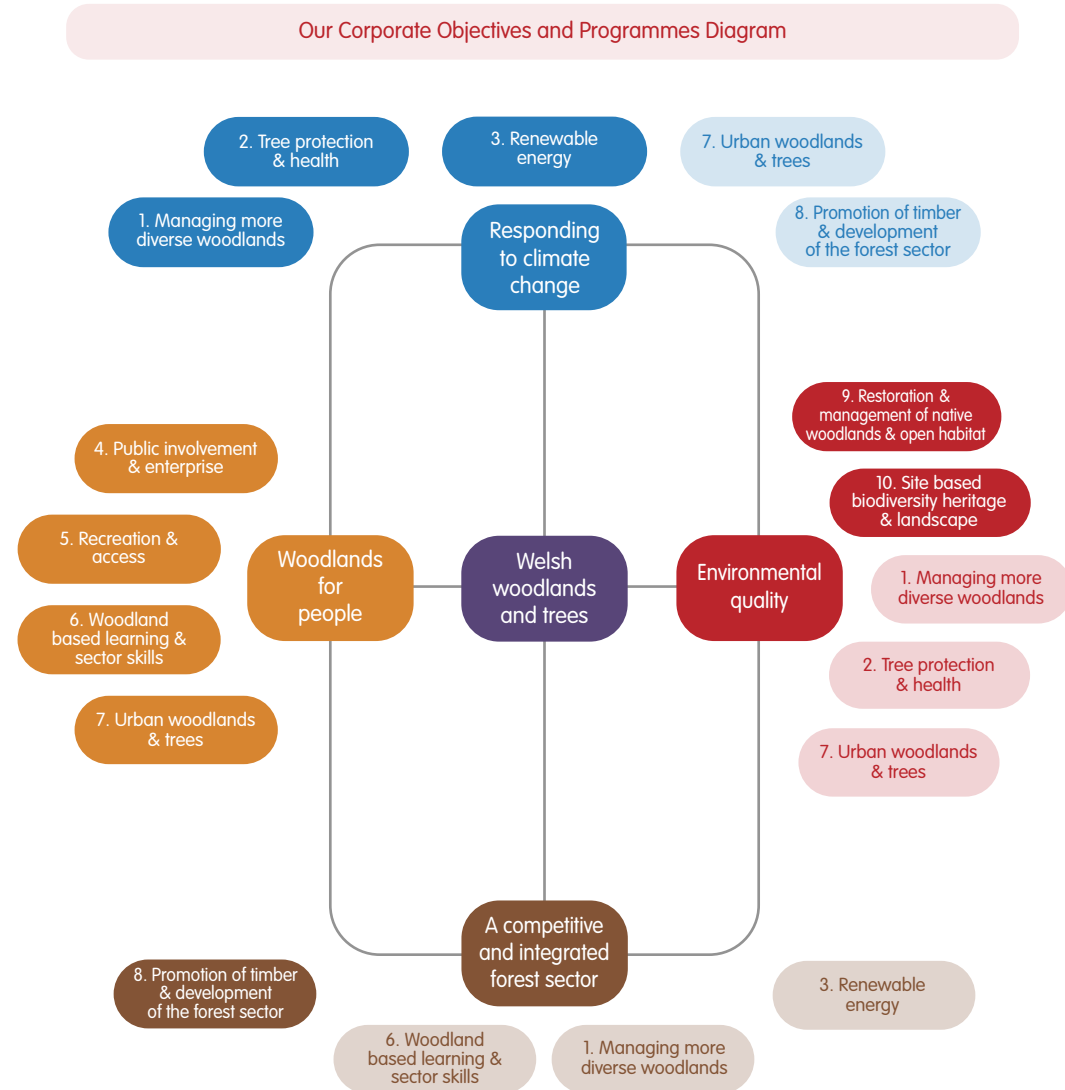
*Woodlands for Wales* has five themes: the first theme, 'Welsh woodlands and trees', lies at the heart of our work and of course is fundamental to everything we do. The remaining four themes are:

- Responding to climate change
- Woodlands for people
- A competitive and integrated forest sector
- Environmental quality

Almost everything we do contributes across several of these themes. So we have organised our work into 10 corporate programmes, which reflect the work areas of our staff. To show how our work 'on the ground' contributes to *Woodlands for Wales*, see the diagram on the right.

The Action Plan for *Woodlands for Wales* was published in March 2010. We take the lead or contribute to over 50 of the 83 actions set out in this action plan, and we have built these into our corporate plan.

The rest of this summary sets out our actions against our 10 corporate programmes, organised against each 'home' *Woodlands for Wales* theme, and explains more about our finances and how we monitor our work.



Each programme has a 'home' corporate objective (shown as a darker colour) but also contributes to other corporate objectives (shown in a lighter colour)

## Responding to climate change

As well as making sure that woodlands and trees are able to cope in a changing climate, they have an important role in reducing our carbon footprint.

Woodfuel is a low carbon energy source, as long as the wood is replaced by new planting. Wood used for construction as a substitute for materials like concrete or steel can lock up carbon for sometimes hundreds of years.

### Corporate Programme 1. Managing more diverse woodlands

Managing woodlands sustainably, increasing woodland diversity and creating more woodlands; this is our biggest programme.

For 2011/12: Expenditure £11.6m Income £10.3m

**Last year** we produced guidance on making our woodlands more diverse by increasing the range of different tree species we plant. BWW closed to new applicants and the new Glastir Woodland Creation grant scheme was launched.

#### This year we will:

- Maintain certification for the AGWE to confirm these woodlands are managed sustainably
- Market 770,000m<sup>3</sup> timber from the AGWE, gradually increasing, thinning and reducing clearfelling
- Make progress towards the Welsh Assembly Government's target to create 100,000 hectares of new woodland over the next 20 years through our management of the Glastir Woodland Creation Scheme

- Implement our operational guidance on tree species diversity when replanting the AGWE; through the Glastir Woodland Creation Scheme encourage greater tree species diversity in newly planted woodland
- Publish further guidance on increasing woodland diversity, focusing on moving away from clearfell and increasing genetic diversity
- Through our management of the BWW grant process and our involvement in the development of the Glastir woodland management scheme, support the sustainable management of woodlands in other ownership to the UK Forestry Standard
- Continue running Plant! – this WAG scheme involves planting a tree for all new babies and adopted children in Wales – in partnership with the Woodland Trust and others

### Corporate Programme 2. Tree protection and health

Protecting trees and woodlands from pests and diseases like *Phytophthora ramorum*, as well as invasive species like rhododendron and browsing animals like deer.

For 2011/12: Expenditure £2.9m Income £0.1m

**Last year** to manage the outbreak in of *Phytophthora ramorum*, a notifiable disease which has infected trees in Wales, we felled 800 hectares of larch on the AGWE in South Wales.

#### This year we will:

- Continue to take the lead role in the management of the *Phytophthora ramorum* outbreak in Wales
- Protect the AGWE from pests, diseases and browsing animals
- Work with the Wales Deer Initiative Partnership to implement WAG's *Wild Deer Management Strategy*, launched in February 2011, and complete its related action plan

- Fulfil our other responsibilities for plant health, investigating outbreaks of pests and diseases and ensuring control plans are in place

### Corporate Programme 3. Renewable energy

Woodfuel, community wind and hydropower schemes and the Wind Energy Programme, which contribute to the Welsh Assembly Government's renewable energy policies.

For 2011/12: Expenditure £4.2m Income £5.0m (Income from WEP covers costs; a further £0.3m windfarm income is returned to WAG. Other income is generated from the sale of biomass for example)

**Last year** we marketed approximately 100,000m<sup>3</sup> of woodfuel and biomass which included 16,000m<sup>3</sup> of non-forecastable materials such as brash.

#### This year we will:

- Begin forest operations to prepare sites for wind energy developments in S Wales (in Strategic Search Area:F) while minimising the impacts on our ability to manage the AGWE in accordance with *Woodlands for Wales*
- Make available to the market approximately 100,000m<sup>3</sup> of woodfuel and biomass products
- Begin to take forward hydropower, solar power and community based renewable energy projects on the AGWE
- Manage the Wood Energy Business Scheme 2 project to increase the use of wood as a renewable energy scheme
- Complete the installation of biofuel heating systems in 3 of our offices



Welsh woodlands and trees have an important role in reducing our carbon footprint

## Woodlands for people

Woodlands are for people – for communities to get involved in their local woodlands, to help develop and support local businesses, for learning and for recreation.

Whether that's a gentle stroll or an adrenaline fuelled mountain bike ride, being out and about in woodlands can have real health and well-being benefits. We want to be truly inclusive, so that everyone, particularly those who haven't visited woodlands before, can get involved and take advantage of what's on offer.

### Corporate Programme 4. Public involvement and enterprise

Community involvement – from having a say in how woodlands are developed to community management and ownership of a woodland – business development and job creation.



For 2011/12: Expenditure £1.7m Income £0.4m

**Last year** we completed the development of our Public Involvement and Social Enterprise Framework to promote and facilitate activities on the AGWE.

#### This year we will:

- Through the work of our Heads of the Valleys (HoV) Regeneration Area project officer take forward the delivery of the woodland plan for the area
- From our experience gained in the HoV begin work in the Western Valleys Regeneration Area to further develop a partnership approach to managing woodlands and trees as a tool for regeneration
- Support community woodland organisations and review the effectiveness of that support
- Promote and implement our Public Involvement and Social Enterprise Framework to enable more people to be involved in the woodlands we manage
- Work with the Glastir project team to ensure the inclusion of grant aid for public access opportunities in targeted woodlands outside the AGWE
- Develop our approach to help small and medium sized enterprises use woodlands in their businesses

### Corporate Programme 5. Recreation and access

Walking trails, some of the best mountain biking in the world, orienteering, rallying, horse riding, the peace and quiet of the countryside... woodlands in Wales are a wonderful playground for young and old alike.

For 2011/12: Expenditure £4.0m Income £1.0m

**Last year** we secured funding for FCW related-projects as part of the *Cycling Centres of Excellence*.

This includes new and improved facilities at Coedy Brenin Forest Park and new mountain bike trails in Afan Forest Park. We also reopened our newly refurbished Visitor Centre at Garwnant in the Brecon Beacons.

#### This year we will:

- Maintain recreation sites on the AGWE to a high standard
- Review our current and future recreation provision on the AGWE taking sustainable tourism into consideration
- Work with Forest Holidays to take forward new developments
- Promote recreation opportunities in an inclusive way, and encourage a wide range of people to visit and enjoy the benefits of woodlands
- Following the production of our off-road cycling activity plan in 2010/11, develop further plans to inform the provision of recreation and access opportunities on the AGWE. This will include plans for equine activity and play
- Develop partnerships to help promote the health and well-being benefits of using woodlands and trees for recreation

### Corporate Programme 6. Woodland based learning and sector skills

Learning in and about woodlands; Forest School, Forest Education Initiative (FEI); developing skills in the forest sector including apprenticeships and career pathways; volunteering.

For 2011/12: Expenditure £1.6m Income: £0.02m

**Last year** we provided woodland visits for over 16,000 children and supported 600 education professionals.

#### This year we will:

- Provide educational visits for children in woodlands in Wales and provide training for educational professionals, encouraging the use of woodlands in their work
- Continue to support FEI and its cluster groups
- Work with Lantra, WAG and others to develop an approach to skills development for the Forest Sector
- Run our annual Woodlands for Learning Conference, this year with a careers theme for teenagers
- Pilot our new framework for work experience placements on the AGWE
- Publish and disseminate our guidelines for volunteering and volunteers on the AGWE

### Corporate Programme 7. Urban woodlands and trees

Benefits of our trees in towns and cities – cooling, shade, improved drainage and opportunities for local people to get involved.

For 2011/12: Expenditure £0.3m

**Last year** we commissioned an Urban Tree Survey to establish a baseline for tree canopy cover in urban areas in Wales.

#### This year we will:

- Work with HoV partners to investigate and promote the opportunities for, and the benefits of, trees in town centre regeneration schemes and urban developments
- Build on our work undertaken in the Heads of the Valleys and Valleys Regional Park and extend our work into the Western Valleys Regeneration Area, further developing our approach to urban woodlands and trees
- Through partnerships seek to identify opportunities for funding of urban woodland projects



Timber is important both as a renewable resource and a valuable contribution to the Welsh economy

## A competitive and integrated forest sector

Timber is important both as a renewable resource and a valuable contribution to the Welsh economy.

The work across our programmes will help WAG achieve its objective of maintaining potential national wood production whilst diversifying the existing non-native woodlands in Wales.

Many of the other programmes and actions elsewhere in our plan also contribute to growing, managing and marketing timber – managing more diverse woodlands, renewable energy, public involvement and enterprise, woodland based learning and sector skills as well as restoration and management of native woodlands and open habitats.



### Corporate Programme 8. Promotion of timber and the development of the forest sector

Timber as a key renewable resource, development of sector skills, improving supply chains and processing of Welsh timber in Wales.

For 2011/12: Expenditure £1.0m

**Last year** we completed and published the revision of our Timber Marketing Strategy 2011–16.

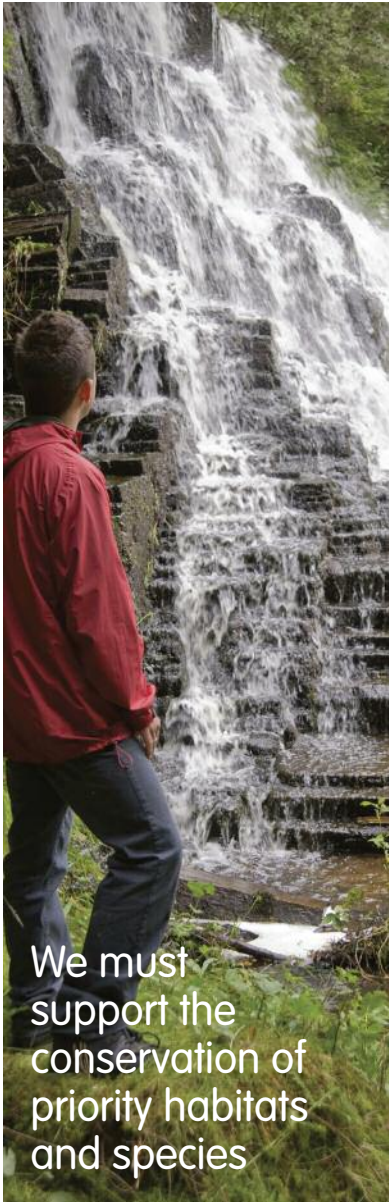
**This year we will:**

- Provide reliable timber volume forecasts for the AGWE and encourage the same from other woodland owners, to help businesses plan their work
- Support the continued development of a timber valuation tool and prepare a hierarchy of use to guide the industry



- Promote the value of timber from small woodlands on farms to encourage their management
- Subject to approval, progress the EU CONSTRUCT project - which looks at best practice for construction using timber in low and zero carbon buildings





We must support the conservation of priority habitats and species

## Environmental quality

Healthy woodlands resilient to climate change can provide a range of benefits for us – known as ecosystem services – from timber to recreation opportunities, biodiversity, storing carbon and protecting water and soil.

Carefully managing our native and ‘special’ woodlands those in Specially Protected Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), sites of archaeological importance and woodlands and trees in the wider landscape will help ensure that these irreplaceable assets are conserved and benefit Wales both now and in the future.

### Corporate Programme 9. Restoration and management of native woodlands and open habitats

Restoring Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS), managing native woodlands, restoring open habitats (where environmental benefits are greater if trees are removed rather than the site left wooded).

For 2011/12: Expenditure £5.4m Income £1.3m

**Last year** working with Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) we completed the project to update the Ancient Woodland Inventory for Wales.

**This year we will:**

- Progress the PAWS restoration prioritisation project for the AGWE
- In partnership with CCW, publish the updated Ancient Woodland Inventory for Wales and provide guidance on its use

- Work with the Woodland Ecosystem Group of the Wales Biodiversity Partnership to complete the project to identify priority areas for native woodland creation, expansion and management
- Develop guidance for the management of native woodlands in Wales
- Continue to improve our knowledge of the extent and condition of native woodland in Wales and fulfil our Biodiversity Action Plan reporting requirements
- Undertake a project to identify priorities for deep peat habitat restoration across Wales, working with CCW, Environment Agency Wales and WAG scientists

### Corporate Programme 10. Site based biodiversity, heritage and landscape

Management and conservation of priority species and habitats, management of designated sites, care for historic and cultural heritage related to woodlands and appropriate management of woodlands in the wider landscape.

For 2011/12: Expenditure £1.6m Income £0.04m

**Last year** we published improved guidance and developed programmes to support European Protected Species in woodlands.

**This year we will:**

- Continue with our ongoing implementation of WAG’s Biodiversity Framework
- Continue to positively manage biodiversity for protected and priority species on the AGWE and encourage the same approach for other woodlands
- Ensure all designated sites on the AGWE are well managed and have management plans in place. Encourage the same approach for other woodlands
- Continue to provide good landscape design on the AGWE
- Contribute to the management of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and historic landscapes as well as Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) and other sites of archaeological importance



## Our finances

This is our overall financial position for 2011/12

|  | Expenditure £M | Income £M |
|--|----------------|-----------|
| Corporate Programmes   | 34.3           | 18.2      |
| Capital  | 1.7            | 1.6       |
| Land Management Costs<br>(Other Assembly Woodland Obligations) | 6.1            | 0.9       |
| Funds from WAG   |                | 21.4      |
| Totals   | 42.1           | 42.1      |

Land Management Costs (Other Assembly woodland obligations) cover those activities which do not fit into one of our corporate programmes but which we are obliged to do as land managers – such as Forest District planning, fencing, clearance of fly tipping, property maintenance and work involving former coal tips.

## Measuring our performance

Our nine Performance Measures mirror the indicators in *Woodlands for Wales* and so will show directly how we are contributing to achieving the outcomes of this strategy.

All these measures are long term, but we can monitor progress through short (3 year) and medium (15 year) term targets.

These measures cover the areas of work we focused on at the beginning of this booklet – increasing/improving:

- Woodland area under sustainable woodland management
- Woodland creation
- Woodland area managed without clearfelling
- Tree species diversity in non-native woodland
- Climate change mitigation
- Level of public involvement with woodland
- Level of woodland and timber related enterprise
- Native woodland extent
- Native woodland condition



We also have a set of business measures, which look at how we manage and develop staff and the efficiency of our organisation.

These measures include:

- Staff satisfaction and diversity
- Investment in and uptake of targeted training and development
- Welsh speaking posts filled with appropriately skilled staff
- Accounts and non-baseline funding
- News releases used by the media
- Business sustainability – our ‘Greenerways’ measures – reductions in energy use, carbon emissions from staff mileage and waste and increased recycling

Although we have a ‘rolling’ corporate plan, our current three year targets for both performance and business measures run from April 2009 – March 2012. This year we will be setting targets for the next 3 year period 2012/13 – 2014/15.

Updates on progress towards these targets will be given in our Annual Report and Accounts.





More details of our work can be found in our full Corporate plan 'Our purpose and direction' available from our website at: [www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk)

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