

English Woodland Grant Scheme

Version 1/June 2005
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East of England Woodland Creation Grant Scoring Guide 2005/06

General

This guide is for applicants applying for Woodland Creation Grant (WCG) in the East of England only (i.e. the counties of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk plus the Unitary Authorities of Luton, Peterborough, Southend and Thurrock). Other English regions will be using a different scoring system.

Note that that WCG is not available in the London boroughs, with the exception of those areas lying within the Thames Chase Community Forest area.

This guide applies only for the application window of 18th July to 30th September 2005. We encourage applicants to contact us with any comments so we can improve the form and the guidance in the future. The contact address is below.

From the outset, the intention of the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) is to be responsive to the different priorities emerging from the development of Regional Forestry Frameworks. The East of England region published its framework as “Woodland for Life, the Regional Woodland Strategy” in November 2003. Copies can be obtained from the address below. The Strategy includes a detailed Action Plan that identifies priorities for trees and woodlands in providing public benefits. The Woodland Creation Grant offers us the first opportunity in the East of England to fashion elements of the EWGS to respond to those Action Plan priorities.

The East of England WCG scoring form has been set out to reflect the 6 themes of the Regional Woodland Strategy. It allocates points according to the degree to which the proposed woodland would provide the public benefits that the Forestry Commission wishes to purchase with the grant.

Using this guide

Each line on the East of England Woodland Creation Grant Scoring Form (EWGS 7a) is numbered and those numbers refer back to this guidance.

Each individual block of proposed woodland must be scored separately unless it has been agreed with your Forestry Commission Woodland Officer that several blocks can be grouped for scoring purposes. This can only happen by prior agreement and only where each block would be providing the same public benefits.

Contact address

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Email: east.fce@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

1. Quality of Life

1.1 Public access

To score three points, the application must meet the specific criteria for the public access Additional Contribution. See Woodland Creation Grant Guide (EWGS 7) page 4.

1.2 Green exercise

To score one point, the woodland must cater for some form of physical and/or mental exercise beyond public access on foot. This provision must be available to all members of the public in a non-exclusive manner. Such exercise might include:

- Cycling
- Horse riding
- Orienteering
- Fitness trails

Applicants must provide details of any facilities proposed along with information such as the expected usage, access, advertising and other relevant logistical details. You must also consider Health and Safety requirements and risk assessment. For further information on green exercise see:

www.forestry.gov.uk/activewoods (“Active Woods”)

www.btcv.org/greengym (“Green Gym”)

1.3 Improvement of the visual landscape

To score one point, the application must **demonstrate** the restoration of a documented Historic Landscape or demonstrate a visual improvement that meets an identified need expressed within one of the following appropriate landscape assessments...

- Landscape Character Assessments provided by local authority
- Landscape Strategies
- Restoration plans for historic parks and garden and designed landscapes
- Plans for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)
- Community Forest Plans
- Historic Landscape Characterisation

We will expect applicants to show how their proposals will contribute to the historic landscape or visual needs expressed in the assessment. For further information on Landscape see:

www.ccnetwork.org.uk (countryside character – click on “national database”)

www.english-heritage.org.uk (Historic Landscape Character; historic parks and gardens)

www.countryside.gov.uk (landscape character assessments)

You can also try local authority websites or contact your local authority “countryside” or “environment” team, details of which can be found in phone books.

1.4 Community engagement

To score two points, the woodland must be designed and managed by a local community. Often such community involvement will be linked to public access (see 1.1).

Applicants should use the Forestry Commission’s “Involving people in Forestry” toolbox to support the engagement. This is available from www.forestry.gov.uk/toolbox

Applicants must tell us which communities will be involved in the design, creation, management and use of the woodland. We also need to know how and when the involvement will take place and how it will be monitored. For further guidance on community engagement see:

www.greenlighttrust.org (support to communities)

www.nufu.org.uk (download guidance on communities in Urban Woodland)

www.marstonvale.org, www.thameschase.org.uk, www.HertsDirect.org/wccf
(Community Forests)
<http://initiatives.smallwoods.org.uk> (for the Anglian Woodland Project).
www.woodland-trust.org.uk (Woodland Trust)

2. Spatial planning

2.1 Expanding communities

To score two points under this category, the woodland must demonstrate the provision of public benefit to new or expanding communities. Public access (see 1.1) is not a requirement, but if it is not a feature of the new woodland then other public benefits must be identified that contribute to improving the quality of the development and (peri-) urban life.

The draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England forecasts that 478,000 additional homes will be built in the region by 2021. Trees and woodland frame and create greenspace in and around the built environment and their contribution towards creating places where people want to live and work is strongly recognised.

Applicants must tell us which new or expanding community will benefit and how the proposed woodland will contribute. The contribution may include some or all of the following points:

- Minimise visual intrusion of development
- Links to recreational opportunities
- Integration to businesses
- Opportunities for exercise
- Community engagement
- Wildlife/ biodiversity improvements
- Use within Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs)

For further details on the expanding communities in the East of England see:

www.eera.gov.uk (“the East of England Plan”)

2.2 Community Forests

To score one point, at least 50% of the proposed woodland must lie within the boundary of a Community Forest.

The East of England has three Community Forests:

- Forest of Marston Vale – South of Bedford
- Thames Chase Community Forest – South Essex
- Watling Chase Community Forest – Hertfordshire

Applicants can check Community Forest boundaries by using the Land Information Search at www.forestry.gov.uk/planting (and click on “Land Information Search”)

For further information on Community Forests see:

www.marstonvale.org
www.thameschase.org.uk
www.HertsDirect.org/wccf
www.communityforest.org.uk (the National partnership)

2.3 Social Regeneration Priority Areas

To score two points, at least 50% of the proposed woodland must lie within the boundary of a “Social Regeneration Priority Area”. Applicants can check SRPA boundaries by using the Land Information Search at www.forestry.gov.uk/planting (and click on “Land Information Search”)

Social Regeneration Priority Areas reflect both deprived communities and health inequalities.

*The **Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD2000)** ranks the 8,414 wards of England based on income; employment; health, deprivation and disability; education, skills and training; housing and geographical access to services.*

*The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister used the contributing Indices of Deprivation 2000 and earlier measures to designate 88 local authorities as **Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Areas** which benefit particularly from Neighbourhood Renewal Unit programmes and policies.*

The 20% most deprived wards have been combined with the Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, with a 4km “buffer” to produce maps of “Social Regeneration Priority Areas”.

For further information on Social Regeneration Priority Areas see:

www.eastofenglandobservatory.org.uk (Index of Multiple Deprivation)
www.neighbourhood.gov.uk (Neighbourhood Renewal)

2.4 Previously Developed or Operational Land

To score one point under this category, the proposed woodland creation must take place on land that is either:

- **Previously Developed Land (PDL)** i.e. previously developed and damaged land where no restoration has yet taken place. This should also include poorly restored land where there is consensus amongst relevant local partners that further work is still required to bring it up to a satisfactory standard. A full definition of the Planning Policy Guidance 3 definition of PDL is at the note below.

or

- **Operational Land (OL)** i.e. land that is being, or has been, restored as a direct consequence of mineral extraction and/or landfill operations where provision for restoration to woodland **has** been made through development control procedures.

We will expect applicants to provide details/evidence of previous land usage.

Woodland establishment can be an important means of regenerating urban and industrial wasteland, and it is considered one of the most cost-effective and technically successful ‘soft’ end-uses. There are circumstances where other habitats may be more appropriate.

“Previously developed land is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings), and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition covers the curtilage of the development. Previously-developed land may occur in both built-up and rural settings. The definition includes defence buildings and land used for mineral extraction and waste disposal where provision for restoration has not been made through development control procedures. The definition excludes land and buildings that are currently in use for agricultural or forestry purposes, and land in built-up areas which has not been developed previously (e.g. parks, recreation grounds, and allotments -even though these areas may contain certain urban features such as paths, pavilions and other buildings). Also excluded is land that was previously developed but where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape in the process of time (to the extent that it can reasonably be considered as part of the natural surroundings), and where there is a clear reason that could outweigh the re-use of the site - such as its contribution to nature conservation - or it has subsequently been put to an amenity use and cannot be regarded as requiring redevelopment.”

(Planning Policy Guidance Note 3, ODPM 2000)

3. Economic Development

3.1 Tourism To score one point, the proposed woodland must contribute to a tourism facility.

Applicants must tell us the details of any facilities proposed, the expected usage, access, advertising and other relevant logistical details.

Public access to the proposed woodland is not a requirement. The contribution to a tourism facility may often be in addition to public access on foot, but this point is not dependent on it. Golf courses may be eligible to score a point under this category, but only if additional tourist usage can be demonstrated. If the applicant does not own, or is not responsible for, the tourism facility cited, then we will expect to see clear details of the tourism facility provider's involvement in the proposals.

Tourism is a major economic driver in the region. Woodlands form an integral part of many tourism attractions. The Forestry Commission is developing with partners a "Commercial Recreation Toolkit" to help woodland owners seeking new ways to make money from their land and woods.

For further information on woodland tourism see:

www.eastspace.net/wrt (Commercial Recreation Toolkit).

3.2 High yield broadleaved species

To score one point under this category, more than 70% of the proposed woodland must be planted with poplar or cricket bat willow.

We will expect applicants to consider, and provide details of silvicultural systems, spacing, protection, woodland design and clonal choice (for poplar).

For further information on high yield broadleaved species see:

www.forestresearch.gov.uk (Forest Research Agency)

www.poplartree.co.uk (Poplar)

www.cricketbatwillow.com (Cricket bat willow)

3.3 High quality timber

To score one point under this category, the applicant must demonstrate a long-term commitment to the production of quality timber.

Applicants must consider, and provide details of silvicultural systems, (close i.e. a minimum of 2250/ha) spacing, protection and the use of the improved tree strains. A proven track record of producing quality timber would clearly be an advantage.

The proposed planting species can be broadleaved (other than poplar or Cricket Bat willow) or conifer, including high quality coppice crops (not Short Rotation Coppice energy crops).

For further information on high quality timber see;

www.forestresearch.gov.uk

www.woodlandheritage.org.uk

www.northmoortrust.co.uk

www.bihip.com (British & Irish Hardwoods Improvement Programme)

www.iwsc.org.uk (Institute of wood science)

4. Renewable energy

Support for energy and biomass crops does not come from the EWGS.

Grants for planting of ‘short rotation coppice’ (willows and poplar) and miscanthus (Elephant grass) are available through the ‘Energy Crop Scheme’. For further details see www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/energy or phone 01223 533517.

5. Education and Learning

5.1 Forest School

To score two points, the proposed woodland must contribute to a specific and accredited Forest School.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate the involvement of a qualified Forest School leader in the design, creation, management and use of the woodland. Details should be provided on how and when the woodland will be used as a Forest School.

Forest Schools provide a permanent, natural but safe setting in which children (and adults) have freedom to roam and to experience the natural world through practical activity. Sessions are organised and run by qualified Forest School leaders. Forest Schools East, a centre of excellence for Forest Schools in the East of England has been set up to demonstrate best practice and to “train the trainers”.

For further information on Forest Schools see:

www.forest-schools-east.org

5.2 Play or educational facilities

To score one point, the proposed woodland must cater for some form of play or educational experience. This might include:

- Children’s play facilities
- Adventure play area
- Information boards (over and above threshold boards)
- Talking posts
- Marked or guided trails
- Organised events
- Sports facilities

Applicants must provide details of facilities or learning experiences to be provided, expected usage, access, advertising and other relevant logistical details, and to take account of Health and Safety requirements and risk assessment.

The provision of play or education facilities may be in addition to providing public access or supporting a Forest School but neither is a requirement for this point.

6. Natural Environment

New semi-natural woodland should ideally be established by natural seeding and colonisation. If planting is necessary, the design of the new woodland should follow the good practice set out in the Forestry Commission publication “Creating new native woodlands” Bulletin 112 (Gordon S Patterson, 1994) or any subsequent relevant guidance. Where cultural heritage issues are important, it is likely that Bulletin 112 may be applied more flexibly. The new woodland must be close to an existing semi-natural woodland (normally within 30m, but up to 100m if the intervening land use is dominated by semi-natural habitat).

You can order the publications mentioned via www.forestry.gov.uk/publications or from Forestry Commission Publications, PO Box 25, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, LS23 7EW. Telephone: 0870 121 4180, Fax: 0870 121 4181, Email: forestry@twoten.press.net

6.1 Expansion of semi-natural woodland

To score four points, the proposed woodland must use site native broadleaves in accordance with Forestry Commission “Guidance for the management of ancient and native woodlands”. The work should be planned and undertaken in accordance with the good practice specified under ‘Natural Environment’ above.

We will expect applicants to consider, and provide details of silvicultural systems, spacing and planting design, the use of natural regeneration or direct seeding, provenance of planting stock, protection/ control of problem species, soil, the possible implications of climate change, and the size and design of the woodland.

6.2 Wet Woodland

To score five points, over 80% of the proposed woodland must be created on land subject to seasonal flooding and/or with a high water table. The species used should be appropriate to National Vegetation Classification W1 to W7. The work should be planned and undertaken in accordance with the good practice specified under ‘Natural Environment’ above.

We will expect applicants to consider, and provide details of spacing and planting design, the use of natural regeneration, protection/control of problem species and possible change in hydrology. Land suitable for wet woodland may have existing or potential conservation interest for other habitats and species, so this should be taken into account.

Wet woodland scores more points than other native woodlands because it is a Habitat Action Plan priority for the region and the wet nature usually precludes other uses (e.g. it is unlikely to be suitable for public access).

For further information see: “The management of semi-natural woodlands: 8. Wet Woodlands” (Forestry Commission Practice Guide, 2003).

6.3 Semi-natural woodland cluster areas

To score one point, the proposed woodland must be created in accordance to 6.1 or 6.2 above and at least 50% must lie within the boundary of a semi-natural woodland cluster area.

A project to identify clusters of ancient woodland was undertaken by the Wildlife Trusts in the region, to give a focus for effort and resources so that visible results can be achieved. 19 clusters have been identified, which have a high density of ancient woodland and so offer good opportunities for expansion and linkage. The clusters are:

Applicants can check semi-natural woodland boundaries by using the Land Information Search at www.forestry.gov.uk/planting (and click on “Land Information Search”)

For further information of ancient woodland clusters see:
www.woodlandforlife.net/wfl-woodbank

Name of cluster	County	Grid ref (centre point of 8km radius circle)
South Norfolk	Norfolk	TM 295 963
Waveney	Suffolk	TM 455 832
Suffolk Coastal	Suffolk	TM 329 611
South Suffolk	Suffolk	TM 121 410
Bury East	Suffolk	TL 949 602
Bury West	Suffolk	TL 791 600
Haverhill	Cambs/Suffolk	TL 642 530
Gamlingay	Cambs/Beds	TL 274 522
Grafham	Cambs/Beds	TL 137 675
West Peterborough	Cambs/Peterborough	TF 125 027
Wittering	Cambs/Peterborough	TL 037 985
North Beds	Bedfordshire	TL 024 640
Leighton Buzzard	Bedfordshire	SP 957 316
Stevenage	Hertfordshire	TL 157 239
Welwyn	Hertfordshire	TL 266 160
Three Rivers	Hertfordshire	TQ 069 979
Saffron Walden	Essex	TL 576 382
Tendring	Essex	TM 091 216
Rayleigh	Essex	TQ 826 911

6.4 Biodiversity Action Plan species

To score two points, the proposed woodland must demonstrably benefit a named national, regional or local Biodiversity Action Plan species. The application must provide a specific woodland design or additional specific action (such as linkage or extension of existing woodland habitat) that is essential for the action plan for the species.

We will expect applicants to consider, and provide details of, silvicultural systems, spacing and planting design, and the use of natural regeneration, use of woody shrubs, protection and the use of open space. Applicants should seek expert advice in delivering action for species with a limited existing range or special habitat requirements. There should be evidence of the existence of the species within the dispersal range of the species, and/or the likelihood of that species colonising the area of new woodland.

Woodland species native to the region, for which woodland creation will be of benefit includes (but not limited to):

Species	Appropriate woodland creation
Heath fritillary butterfly Waved carpet moth Argent and sable moth	Extend and link lowland mixed deciduous woodland woodlands to build 200+ ha working circle of coppice areas linked by wide network of open rides and/or scrub.
Lime bark beetle	Extend semi-natural small-leaved lime woods, with local provenance small-leaved lime.
Dormouse	Extend and link small ancient woodlands, and ancient/large hedgerows with native woodland. Use a high proportion of woody shrubs and fruit and nut bearing species.
Bull finch Linnet Turtle Dove Spotted fly catcher	Include 15m+ wide thicket shrub edges in new native woodland planting.
Lesser spotted woodpecker Marsh tit	Increase native woodland area to 30%+ land cover in target areas through new extensions and linkages and through the restoration of PAWS.

For further information of Biodiversity Action Plans see
www.ukbap.org.uk (UK BAPs)
www.eastspace.net/biodiversity (regional targets)

This document is for information only and does not constitute an agreement of any form nor does it confer any rights. It is intended as a guide to help applicants decide whether the grant is applicable to them and whether the main requirements of any grant agreement can be met. The information is subject to change. Full and current details of the grant scheme and the requirements of any EWGS grant contract that may be made between the applicant(s) and the Forestry Commission arising from an application to the grant scheme can be found at www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs