

20th May 2011

SO WHAT ARE THESE “CONDITIONS”?

Purpose

1. To inform a discussion on what the final outputs of the Woodland Carbon Task Force (WCTF) might be

Recommendation.

2. That you come prepared to discuss the issues presented here in depth, to make brave proposals about what is needed based on the evidence so far, and to help the team draw conclusions.

Background.

3. The purpose of the WCTF is to put in the place the conditions for a step change in woodland creation based on private finance. Nine months into the programme, it is time we started setting our goals. We need to work out what those conditions are and then what we need to change about the current situation to create those conditions.
4. We have summarised the work so far in the form of narrative summaries of the main workstreams of the WCTF (Annex 1).

Dominic Driver
Forestry Commission England
10th May 2011

The Woodland Carbon Task Force: putting in place the conditions for a step change in the rate of woodland creation in England.

Project 1: Assurance of carbon standards.

Making sure that woodland creation really does combat climate change to the extent everyone thinks it does.

What do we need to change about the conditions at the moment?

We need to further improve confidence in measurements of how much carbon is stored by woodland creation and wood products and understanding of the important contribution of woodland creation to combating climate change. The complex way in which international standards for forest carbon projects do, or do not apply in the UK needs to be clarified.

What are we doing about it with this project?

A series of bits of work to develop standards and make reporting of carbon benefits easier.

Key output of the project	Date expected	Further information
Launch the Woodland Carbon Code, setting standards for woodland carbon projects.	June 2011	http://www.forestry.gov.uk/carboncode
Changes to the Greenhouse Gas Reporting mechanisms to make it easier for companies to report the carbon benefits of investment in English woodland creation.	June 2011	http://archive.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/ghg-woodland/
Launch Forestry and Climate Change Guidelines in the UK Forestry Standard	June 2011	

Mark Broadmeadow
Forestry Commission England
Alice Holt | Farnham | Surrey | GU10 4LF
Tel: 01483 326204, mark.broadmeadow@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

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Project 2: Finances for woodland creation.

Working with private investors to develop business models and other mechanisms to increase private income going into woodland creation.

What do we need to change about the conditions at the moment?

We need to provide landowners and managers with a financial incentive to create woodland. At present, this is mainly done via government grants. We need more private money going into woodland creation that complements these grants. There is potential for increased investment in the value of the benefits of woodland creation, particularly reducing carbon emissions but also water management, biodiversity and others.

What are we doing about it with this project?

Working with potential investors to develop and communicate new business models and instruments for private investment in woodland creation.

Key output of the project	Date expected	Further information
Review of current knowledge and mechanisms.	April 2011	Enviromarkets report attached.
Evaluation of potential models including market segmentation.	April 2011	
An investment appraisal for UK woodland creation	May 2011	
Outlines of new funding models and instruments for investment.	?	Flowing from findings above.
Develop and make available new instruments such as a Forest Carbon Guarantee scheme.	?	See John Tucker's presentation.

Pilot projects, workshops etc	Further information
Workshop to explore funding models for woodland creation	March 2011: summarised in stakeholder reference group update
Workshop organised by the Institute of Chartered Foresters on the impact of the tax system on woodland creation	March 2011: report attached

Pat Snowdon
Forestry Commission
231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh, EH12 7AT
pat.snowdon@forestry.gov.uk, 0131 330 0303

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Project 3: Policy that supports woodland creation

Establishing a broad consensus about the amount and type of woodland creation that is desirable and a map based tool to enable people to define this.

What do we need to change about the conditions at the moment?

There is wide spread agreement that more woodland creation is a good idea but we need to further develop the strength of this consensus and enable people to decide the kinds of woodland creation that they want in different local circumstances. We need to set a national direction of travel that will result in "the right tree, in the right place, for the right reasons".

What are we doing about it with this project?

Key output of the project	Date expected	Further information
A policy position statement on woodland creation	Summer 2012	Subject to the Independent Panel on Forestry.
A map-based tool to enable informed debate about where and how much woodland creation is best.	September 2011	
Evidence based targets for the contribution of woodland to reducing carbon emissions.	Summer 2012	Subject to the Independent Panel on Forestry

Pilot projects, workshops etc	Further information
Workshop on the map based tool for woodland creation at Woodland Initiatives Network Conference	March 2011
North West Woodland Creation Manifesto	Gaining consensus on the nature and location of an ambitious new woodland creation programme. Then enabling business, land managers, and civil society to deliver it http://headstretcher.blogspot.com/2010/02/forestry-manifesto-for-englands.html .
North Northamptonshire Carbon Sink Forestry	The River Nene Regional Park, a local community interest company promoting green infrastructure is looking at how the planning system can promote and fund woodland creation, http://www.riverneneregionalpark.org/default.asp?PageID=14 .

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Forestry Commission England
Alice Holt | Farnham | Surrey | GU10 4LF
Tel: 01483 326204, mark.broadmeadow@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

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Project 4: Making woodfuel and local timber happen.

Supporting the developing woodfuel and local timber markets so that they improve the economics of woodland creation and bring more woodland into sustainable management.

What do we need to change about the conditions at the moment?

We need to provide landowners and managers with ways of getting an earlier and bigger financial return on the initial investment in woodland creation. At the moment, generally speaking, the return does not happen for 30 or more years, when the first significant volumes of timber can be harvested. Also, for some types of otherwise very valuable woodland, the conventional financial returns are low or non-existent. We need to enable landowners and managers to harness the potential of local timber production to provide a market for woodfuel and woodland products that will improve the finances of woodland creation and bring more woodland into sustainable management.

What are we doing about it with this project?

Supporting the development of local timber markets by coordinating actions to stimulate security of supply and demand for woodfuel and give landowners and managers the tools they need to take opportunities arising from these new markets. Via the Woodland Carbon Task Force we are taking on the key catalytic actions. There is more work on woodfuel in the Woodfuel Implementation Plan [[link](#)].

Key output of the project	Date expected	Further information
Simple guide to woodland management for woodfuel and timber.	September 2011	
Examples of secure woodfuel and local timber supply contracts from private woodlands.	March 2012	
Model bankable heat supply contracts for woodfuel businesses.	December 2011	

Pilot projects, workshops etc.	Further information
South West Ward Forester project	Devon County Council and Forestry Commission helping clusters of woodland owners cooperate on woodfuel supply, www.wardforester.co.uk .
North Kent Woodfuel Pathfinder	Stimulating local markets and supply chains for woodfuel and timber, enabling woodland owners to bring their own woods into management, integrate woodland into wider land-based businesses, and stimulate more interest in woodland creation, summarised in stakeholder reference group report.

Steve Fowkes

Forestry Commission England
620 Bristol Business Park | Bristol | BS16 1EJ
0117 372 1080 | steve.fowkes@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

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Project 5: Unlocking land-use change

None of this will have any impact unless land-owners and managers decide to create woodland on the land they control.

What do we need to change about the conditions at the moment?

We need to make woodland creation an additional choice for landowners and managers for how they manage their land.

There are 1,130,000ha of woodland in England, 9% cover. Increasing this to, say, 12% woodland cover by 2060 would mean 375,000ha of additional woodland. This amounts to 5% of the low grade agricultural land that is free of planting constraints. We need to know more about how much land is potentially available as landowners and managers make their choices.

What are we doing about it with this project?

Working out how what triggers landowners and managers to make choices to change land-use to woodland creation, how much land could become available due to these choices and where and how to target our efforts to unlock land-use change.

Key output of the project	Date expected	Further information
Evaluation of needs from landowner perspective, market segmentation from an owner perspective.	?	
Analysis of land use policies of current land holding institutions.	August 2011	
Analysis of how much land becomes available for land-use change, the circumstances, and where.	August 2011	

Pilot projects, workshops etc.	Further information
South West landowners and managers perspectives workshops	Getting landowners and managers together to assess whether what we are doing enables them to take choices to create woodland, workshops to start in Sept. 2011.
Exmoor National Park Low Carbon Landscape	Supporting a partnership to take forward a community benefit approach to low carbon living, where woodlands play a central role, see http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/index/living_in/sustainability/carbon-neutral-exmoor.htm
Neroche	The Blackdown Hills Trust on the border between Devon and Somerset is running a series of projects working with the Forestry Commission's Neroche Scheme: encouraging woodland creation, improving woodfuel supply from existing woodlands and integrating it into the local economy, and gauging the value of trees and shrubs for storing carbon, http://www.nerochescheme.org/ .

Jonathan Spencer

Forestry Commission England
620 Bristol Business Park | Bristol | BS16 1EJ
01483 326225 | jonathan.spencer@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

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Project 6: Succession

Making sure that the conditions stay in place without requiring lots of intervention by government resulting in a long-term increase in the rate of woodland creation.

What do we need to change about the conditions at the moment?

Compared to current conditions we need:

- An increase in the extent to which private investment rather than government grants incentivise woodland creation.
- More woods that are created and managed as parts of financially viable land-based businesses.
- A reduction in the regulatory burden without allowing unacceptable risks of environmental damage.
- To link the private finance up to the land for woodland creation, we need to focus on making it easier for people with land for woodland creation and people with money for woodland creation to get together: "market transparency".
- Government grants and motivations other than financial will still have a role.

What are we doing about it with this project?

Bringing together the findings from the other five Woodland Carbon Task Force projects in order to decide the final outputs. We are also evaluating the impact of the programme and communicating our work.

Key outputs of the project	Date expected	Further information
Evaluation plan	June 2011	See corporate plan once published.
Communications activity	Continuous	
Document setting out what we need to do to enable business, landowners, civil society, and communities to achieve a step-change in the rate of woodland creation, an "enabling framework"	September 2011	In production
Final products from the programme: by March 2014.	March 2014	Not yet decided.

Examples of it working	Further information
Woodland Trust and Defence Infrastructure Organisation Partnership	Woodland creation by the Woodland Trust on Defence Infrastructure Organisation estate land using carbon finance, see http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/plant-trees/partnerships/Pages/defence-estates.aspx .

Comment [DD1]: Check description is OK with the Trust.

Dominic Driver
 Forestry Commission England
 620 Bristol Business Park | Bristol | BS16 1EJ
 0117 906 6003 | dominic.driver@forestry.gsi.gov.uk