



English Woodland Grant Scheme

Operations Note 23a (Supplementary)

Date: 25 August 2011

Processing of Felling Licence Applications and replanting or New Planting Involving Larch Species

Purpose This Operations Note explains the process for handling applications for felling of larch during the summer months and new planting or restocking schemes where larch may form an element of the planting mix. It replaces Operation Note 23 which identified the process for handling felling applications during the winter months, as well as planting requirements. Operations Note 23 will be reviewed at the end of October 2011, and a revised version issued in time for the coming winter period.

Planting and replanting proposals are relevant to the **whole of England**, based on the latest [zone map](#). This was revised in July 2011.

Background *Phytophthora ramorum* (*P. ramorum*) is a fungus-like pathogen of plants that is causing extensive damage and mortality to trees and other plants in parts of the United Kingdom. It has also been found in a number of European countries (but mostly on plants and shrubs, particularly rhododendron, viburnum and camellia) and has caused significant damage and mortality to many trees and other plants in parts of the USA.

However, few trees in the UK were affected until 2009, when *P. ramorum* was first found to be infecting and killing large numbers of Japanese larch trees in South West England. Then in 2010 it was found on Japanese larches in Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

This sudden change in the pathogen's behaviour marked the first time in the world that *P. ramorum* had infected and sporulated (reproduced) on large numbers of a commercially important conifer tree species.

A support package has been put together with colleagues from [Defra](#) and [Fera](#). This includes the licensing of sawmills who will accept timber from infected stands, allowing the owner to recover some income return on their costs. This has been done

on the basis of scientific advice establishing that there is minimal risk of disease spread from transporting and processing logs from infected trees – as long as bio security measures have been followed. A principle of this approach is that co-products (bark in particular) from infected material must be processed in a way that prevents the infection from entering the horticultural trade through use of bark based composts.

Felling of larch during the summer months

Owners of larch woodlands in all zones may wish to continue applying for licences during the summer months and prior to any infection having been identified in a stand. Woodland Officers will assess each application in the usual manner and issue a felling licence where appropriate. In the event that a Woodland Officer suspects or has confirmed *Phytophthora ramorum* infection in the woodland subject to the application, they will request that a Statutory Plant Health Notice is issued instead of a felling licence. The Notice will require the trees to be felled within an agreed period, and will restrict markets to licensed premises only. Owners will be eligible to apply for the funding support available to those affected by *Phytophthora*. For more information go to <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pramorurum>.

Enhanced replanting rates

To support owners who have been affected by *Phytophthora* infection and who have been issued with a Statutory Plant Health Notice, we have increased the Woodland Regeneration Grants available by adding a supplement of £1500 per hectare. We have also taken the opportunity to simplify the overall grant rates in order to deliver revised policy and provide more flexibility to owners.

These interim rates will be reviewed again following the report of the Bishop of Liverpool’s [Independent Panel on Forestry](#).

New Grant Rates

Restock species	Ancient woodland site	Non-ancient woodland site	Supplement for <i>Phytophthora</i> infected sites
Native woodland	1750	1000	1500
Non-native woodland	0	500	

For further information on these rates go to the [Woodland Regeneration Grant](#) homepage

For further information on the management of restocking sites (ground preparation, species choice etc.) see [Operations Note](#)

Planting and replanting of larch Great Britain has been divided up into three “risk zones” which are based on a combination of climatic zones and current larch distribution. The policy for each risk zone will be as follows:

Zone 1

New schemes

With immediate effect, we will not approve or fund any larch species as part of any restocking or planting proposal, due to the high risk of infection / re-infection occurring in the future and acting as a reservoir for further spread of the disease.

Existing schemes

We will actively encourage owners or their agents to change species from larch to a suitable alternative for all replanting and new planting schemes. In order to allow managers and nurseries to adjust to this change, we will continue to fund larch planting up to and including the 2012/13 planting season. Beyond 2012/13, we will no longer fund any larch planting. Any cases where planting may have already been identified beyond this season should be amended to a suitable alternative. In all cases (up to the 2012/13 season) where the owner decides to continue with planting of larch, they will not be permitted to invoke the *force majeure* condition in the event of Phytophthora infection, and we will reclaim grant where appropriate.

Zone 2

New schemes

We will actively encourage owners or their agent to change species from larch to a suitable alternative for all replanting and new planting schemes. However if they insist, we will continue to fund larch planting for the current (2011/12) season **only**. We will review this position prior to the 2012/13 season and base any future decision on the situation relating to any further spread of Phytophthora. Where an owner decides to continue with planting of larch, they will not be permitted to invoke the *force majeure* condition in the event of Phytophthora infection, and we will reclaim grant where appropriate.

Existing schemes

We will continue to fund any larch planting where this has been identified. In the event of future amendments we will manage these in line with the guidance available at that time. If owners wish to amend any proposals to **new planting only** beyond the 2011/12 season, we will refuse to do so at this time and until the situation is reviewed prior to the 2012/13 season.

Zone 3

All schemes

Continue as “business as usual”.

Versions Version 1.0 issued 25 August 2011