

Why insist on local timber?

There are many reasons for choosing local timber. Local suppliers can be cheaper and provide specifications that fit the local vernacular. Less transport will reduce costs and benefit the local community and environment. Transport adds embodied energy so try to source local timber whenever possible.

One cubic metre of timber saves 2 tonnes of CO₂ (ECE/FAO). It takes roughly twelve times as much energy to make a steel girder that is functionally equivalent to a finished wood beam.

We import over 80% of our timber in the UK while local woodland is often overlooked. We have perfectly good timber here in the South East of England including oak, ash, chestnut and softwoods such as Larch and Douglas Fir which could be used for a variety of applications.

'Sustainable forest management is essential to ensure that British forests continue to provide the flow of environmental, social and recreational benefits, recently estimated at £1000 million per year.'

Timber sourced from local forests and woodlands can be a powerful stimulus for bringing neglected woodland back into management. The South East of England is the most wooded region in the country; we have an enormous and under utilised woodland / forestry resource and re-introduction of positive management stimulated by 'demand pull' from using local timber in construction and other industries would, in turn, bring a range of benefits, including:

- income generation for owners, contractors and suppliers
- employment and job creation
- improved forest and woodland quality in terms of both future productivity and enhanced asset values
- improved forest and woodland quality in terms of habitat value and biodiversity
- enhanced value for sporting and other amenity uses, including improved access (unmanaged woodlands are often impenetrable and inhospitable)
- wood is an environmentally sustainable construction material
- wood is renewable, drawn from trees whose growth and harvest is managed by forestry
- sustainable forest management is necessary for building a sustainable society