

Woodland Creation – Native Upland Birch

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Aim

The aim of this scheme is to encourage the creation of native upland birch woodland of the National Vegetation Classification W4: Downy birch with purple moor grass on shallow peaty soils (less than 50 centimetres peat depth).

Eligibility criteria

You must meet all eligibility criteria listed in the [Woodland Creation](#) page and:

- you must comply with the UK Forestry Standard
- the minimum planting width is 15 metres
- the minimum block size is 0.25 hectares in any one year
- your application must meet the species composition criteria in the table below

Composition of native upland birch woodland			
Item	Minimum (per cent)	Maximum (per cent)	Minimum stocking density on the planted area at year five (per hectare)
Native upland birch National Vegetation Classification W4 [1]	85	100	1,600 initial planting and 1,100 at establishment
Designed open ground [2]	0	15	n/a

[1] Please note that in order to comply with the UK Forestry Standard no more than 75 per cent is permitted for a single species. Up to 10 per cent native Scots pine, on sites within the pinewood zone, will be allowed for micro-site planting and up to 20 per cent of the native broadleaves can be native woody shrubs as recommended for this National Vegetation Classification woodland type in Forestry Commission Bulletin 112.

In recognition of the special significance of Scots pine in mainland Scotland out with the pinewood zone, up to five per cent of Scots pine, of a suitable Scottish provenance, may be incorporated, where careful site evaluation indicates that it would be appropriate and deliver silvicultural benefits.

[2] You must refer to the designed open ground guidance on the general [Woodland Creation](#) page to see how designed open ground will apply to your application. For example additional open ground, in excess of the specified percentage, may be permissible depending on the specifics of the site, but will not be eligible for grant support.

Please note that in order to achieve 100 per cent from the table above you will not be able to select all minimum or all of the maximum values.

Species selection

As an initial first step in determining whether or not the site is climatically suitable, you should view the Forestry Grant Scheme (2014–2020) Site Suitability folder on the [Forestry Commission Scotland Map Viewer](#) page.

You should also demonstrate that this National Vegetation Classification woodland type is appropriate to the site, which will be determined by existing vegetation indicator (refer to Forestry Commission Bulletin 112 – Creating New Native Woodland), as well as climatic conditions, soil moisture and soil nutrient regimes.

Any applications that are not shown as being climatically suitable will only be considered if you can clearly demonstrate that the site is suitable for the chosen species of trees, for example where there is localised shelter in an otherwise exposed location.

As per the eligibility criteria of the woodland creation general guidance the tree species must be 'suitable' or 'very suitable' to the site.

For all native broadleaves and native Scots pine planted within this option, you must provide a copy of the supplier's document when submitting an initial planting claim (see example document below). A template is also provided.



[Supplier's document – template \(PDF, Size: 25.3 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpaymentsandservices.org/media/resources/suppliers-document-template.pdf>



[Supplier's document – example \(PDF, Size: 36.5 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpaymentsandservices.org/media/resources/fcs-example-supplier-document_2.pdf

As well as entering the quantity of trees and the Master Certificate Number on the suppliers document, you should also include the region of provenance, demonstrating that the trees are suitable for the site (refer to Forestry Commission Scotland guidance on [Seed sources for planting native trees and shrubs in Scotland](#)).

See the Forestry Commission's [Marketing and Supplying Forest Reproductive Materials](#) for further information.



[Tree species codes \(PDF, Size: 88.0 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpaymentsandservices.org/media/resources/Species-Codes.pdf>

Scoring criteria

Threshold score = 10 points

Each option within your application must meet the threshold score to be considered for approval. In achieving the threshold score, your option must score against each criterion except for additional benefit. The scores will then be used as the basis for allocating funding on a competitive basis through the Forestry Grant Scheme clearing process.

Delivery of option benefits

1 POINT – for applications that meet the eligibility criteria but do not deliver any of the benefits below.

3 POINTS – for applications that provide one or more of the following in addition to meeting the eligibility requirements:

- applications that improve an existing afforested landscape by helping to resolve recognised design deficiencies (usually related to the design principles of relative scale and shape), or

support the aims of National Parks, National Scenic Areas and Local Landscape Areas (formerly known as AGLVs)

Or

- applications which can demonstrate their design follows the guidance in [Forestry Commission Scotland Bulletin 112](#) and increase the size and resilience of existing native woodlands with appropriate new planting to form a contiguous block of woodland

Or

- applications which will expand the size and resilience of existing native woodlands by forming key linkages within a habitat network

5 POINTS – for applications that meet one of the three point criteria above and one or more of the criteria below:

- applications which will expand the size and resilience of existing native woodlands by forming key linkages within a habitat. You must be within the 'Primary Zone' of a native woodland habitat network which is identified on the 'Native Woodland Habitat Network' map on the [Forestry Commission Scotland Map Viewer](#) (see Forestry Grant Scheme 2014–2020 Target Areas folder)

Or

- applications that clearly show in the woodland creation operational plan that you have included management for other biodiversity benefits, for example priority species or habitats, peatlands etc

Or

- applications within one of the priority areas identified in the FCS-SEPA opportunity mapping projects as likely to provide multiple benefits for natural flood management and water quality. Select the Forestry Grant Scheme 2014-2020 Target Areas folder on the [Forestry Commission Scotland Map Viewer](#) to confirm your application meets this requirement

Scale of delivery

1 POINT – applications between 0.25 hectares and 9.99 hectares.

3 POINTS – applications between 10 hectares and 19.99 hectares.

5 POINTS – applications above 20 hectares.

Delivering better quality

1 POINT – for applications that meet the minimum stocking density eligibility criteria for this option, which is:

- 1,600 stems/hectare at initial planting

3 POINTS – for applications that deliver more than the minimum stocking density eligibility criteria for this option, which is:

- to plant at least 10 per cent of this option at 3,000 stems/hectares. The area you are planting at 3,000 trees per hectare must be in a planned site location, identified on the species map, and the minimum stocking density of this area must remain at 3,000 trees per hectare until the trees are established at year 5

5 POINTS – for applications that are well in excess of the minimum stocking density eligibility criteria for this option, which is:

- to plant at least 20 per cent of this option at 3,000 stems/hectares. The area you are planting at 3,000 trees per hectare must be in a planned site location, identified on the species map, and the minimum stocking density of this area must remain at 3,000 trees per hectare until the trees are established at year 5

Delivery of good practice

1 POINT – for applications which meet the minimum relevant industry standards, but do not deliver any of the benefits detailed below.

3 POINTS – for applications that meet one of the criteria detailed below:

- applications which demonstrate that you have liaised with consultees, communities and neighbours, prior to the scheme being submitted and addressed, where possible, any points they may have raised

5 POINTS – for applications that meet one of the criteria detailed below:

- applications which clearly demonstrate that you have thoroughly assessed the site conditions and propose the most appropriate management techniques to minimise the impacts to the environment. This must be beyond what you might be compelled to do within the conditions of the contract or recognised as an industry standard practice

Or

- applications which are community owned, led, or supported and clearly demonstrate the delivery of significant benefits to the local community such as designed landscape

Value for money

Applications where the cost of ancillary eligible capital supporting works, for example fencing, gates, tree shelters, bracken control, are:

1 POINT – more than 30 per cent of the total capital cost for initial planting.

Example for 1 point

Core capital item:

Initial planting 25 hectares Native Downy Birch = £46,000

Ancillary capital items:

Deer Fence: 3,200 metres x £6.80 = £21,760

Deer Gate: 2 x £172 = £344

Ancillary costs as a percentage of total grant sought:

$£22,104 \div £46,000 = 48\%$

6 POINTS – less than 30 per cent of the total capital cost for initial planting.

10 POINTS – less than 10 per cent of the total capital cost for initial planting.

Supplementary point – additional benefit

1 POINT – will be awarded, as an additional point, where:

- applications are in an area identified as 'preferred' within the relevant Forestry and Woodland Strategy (or equivalent)

Recent changes

Section	Change	Previous text	New text
Eligibility criteria: Species selection	Supplier's document – template [PDF added] Supplier's document – example [PDF added]	For all native broadleaves and native Scots pine planted within this option, you must provide a copy of the supplier's document when submitting an initial planting claim (see Forestry Commission Scotland Technical Support for an example document).	For all native broadleaves and native Scots pine planted within this option, you must provide a copy of the supplier's document when submitting an initial planting claim (see example document below). A template is also provided.

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