



National Forest Woodland Management Grant (WMG) Assessment Score 2019/20

Scoring is based on the contribution a scheme makes to the National Forest Strategy (NFS). To arrive at an equitable but simple scoring system, derived in part from the Changing Landscape Scheme (CLS) and closely aligned to the woodland management aims of the NFS, the WMG assessment scoring system is divided into key sections from which a score is applied to each, depending on the content and merit of each scheme. An indicative threshold score of 23 points is applied for proposals, however this is subject to change dependant on the range of applications received.

Each section receives a score weighting, in order to prioritise key outcomes for the National Forest.

The scores are:

- 0 - Poor = minor or no contribution
- 1 - Average = some contribution to this aspect of the strategy
- 2 - Good = strong contribution to this aspect of the strategy
- 3 - Exceptional = very strong contribution to this aspect of the strategy.

Woodland Management Plan (x2 weighting)

Reject – No woodland management plan in place or proposed for scheme

1 – Basic woodland management plan in place

2 – Woodland management plan approved by National Forest Company (NFC)

3 – Woodland management plan approved by the Forestry Commission

4* – Woodland management plan not required (e.g. training only) or plan is proposed for scheme and approved by National Forest Company (NFC).

*(*Priority scoring for schemes which meet specific National Forest strategy outcomes)*

Example scenarios:

Reject Woodland that has no current Woodland Management Plan and is not planning to develop one as part of the grant scheme – **Reject**, as a Woodland Management Plan is a requirement to be eligible for grant funding towards site management works.

1. Basic Woodland Management Plan in place, information will include; species present, age of woodland, risk management and future plans – **Score 1**
2. Woodland Management Plan approved by National Forest Company – **Score 2**
3. Woodland Management Plan approved by Forestry Commission – **Score 3**
4. No requirement for Woodland Management Plan if the scheme only covers training which is not specific to any site. Or, if a Woodland Management Plan is proposed as part of the grant and will be produced and approved during the grant period – **Score 4**

Tree Health & Resilience (x2 weighting)

0 – Scheme doesn't incorporate works for tree health or resilience

1 – Scheme will benefit tree health and woodland resilience (e.g. thinning or coppicing + pest control)

2 – Scheme addresses current tree health threat through active works and pest management (e.g. removal of infected Ash + pest control)

3 – Scheme proposes to combat current or future tree health issues and increase the overall resilience of the woodland (e.g. collaborative work with neighbour or membership of a local pest management group)

Public Access (x2 weighting)

Reject – Net reduction of access to the site

0 – No access provided

1 – Access provided to the site, but works do not seek to improve it

2 – Access provided to the site, with works seeking to improve it (e.g. ride edge thinning + fence and tree guard removal)

3 – Access provided to the site with works seeking to positively improve the visitor experience (e.g. Score 2 + new signage, way-marking of new routes)

Nature Conservation (x1 weighting)

Reject - Damages existing habitats or designated sites

0 – Scheme does not include works to improve biodiversity within the woodland

1 – Scheme includes works to improve biodiversity in one area of the woodland (e.g. pond restoration)

2 – Scheme includes works to improve biodiversity potential across the woodland (e.g. new bird and bat boxes)

3 – Scheme seeks to improve biodiversity potential across the woodland and create new habitats within the woodland or open areas (e.g. Score 2 + coppicing and scallop creation)

Silviculture (x1 weighting)

0 – No works to improve the timber quality in the woodland

1 – Works include some consideration towards improving the silvicultural quality of the woodland (e.g. pruning)

2 – Works to improve timber quality, particularly broadleaf trees across part of the woodland (e.g. pruning + halo thinning suppressed trees)

3 – Scheme incorporates a long-term plan to improve timber quality across the woodland, particularly looking at pruning, halo-thinning (where appropriate), line thinning suppressed tree margins and identification of final crop tree

Skills Training (x1 weighting)

0 – No skills training identified in the scheme

1 – Skills training identified which benefits one individual

2 – Skills training identified which benefits more than one individual

3 – Skills training which benefits a whole forestry/farm business to build knowledge and/or practical skills in order to diversify business or woodland into a new way of working

Risk (x1 weighting)

0 – Very high risk of the overall grant total being unclaimed – historic examples of large amounts of unclaimed grant

1 – High risk of the overall grant total being unclaimed – historic examples of significant amounts of unclaimed grant

2 – Medium risk of the overall grant total being unclaimed – large work programme that may result in unclaimed grant

3 – Low risk of the overall grant total being unclaimed – suitable work programme proposed and no history of significant amounts of unclaimed grant

Strategic Fit (x3 weighting)

0 – Proposed scheme will not benefit the woodland or owner

1 – Scheme seeks to address one or two priorities for the particular woodland, missing key elements to improve or protect the trees and woodland as a whole

2 – Scheme addresses several priorities for the woodland, but does not include a key element, appropriate for its age/stage of development and the advice received to date

3 – Scheme is fully fit for purpose for the woodland (at this point in time), no additional works would be appropriate, or further enhance the woodland

4* – Strategic scheme which achieves a high priority outcome for the NFC (including location, scale, exemplar project with wider learning benefits etc.)

*(*Priority scoring for schemes which meet specific National Forest strategy outcomes)*

Example scenarios:

0. Scheme proposes to remove ecologically valuable scrub layer of woodland and exposes the woodland to greater threat from pests and disease – **Score 0**
1. 20 year old woodland, owner has received advice and engagement through NFC and agent, but is only applying for a single operation (e.g. fence removal). Other works to consider are: ride edge thinning, coppicing, pruning and pest management – **Score 1**
2. 20 year old woodland which seeks to remove redundant fencing and carry out ride edge thinning and scalloping for access and biodiversity, but does not identify tree health as a priority, despite having grey squirrel damage and 20% Ash – **Score 2**
3. 15 year old woodland with no prior engagement, applying for a management plan only to identify future opportunities and works – **Score 3**
4. Scheme which is located on the National Forest Way, it proposes innovative works which enhances the woodland for locally rare or important wildlife or protects the woodland from major risks – **Score 4**