Example: Using the Ayrshire & Arran FWS to write a CSGN Contribution Supporting Statement

In this example, the applicant wants to plant a mixed wood shelterbelt (4.47ha) in an area ‘preferred’ for woodland expansion within the Lowland Basin of Ayrshire. There are no major constraints and the soil is Class 4.2. The site and the application meets the criteria for the Small Farm Woodland Option and is in the CSGN Contribution Core area.

To apply for the CSGN Contribution, the applicant needs to explain how this woodland will support Mixed Woodland expansion; address key issues or themes and/or provide additional benefit as outlined in the Ayrshire & Arran Forestry & Woodland Strategy. The most relevant parts are:

The ‘Lowland Basin’ section of Chapter 8: Spatial Guidance provides the key information to refer to when considering what types and size of woodland would be appropriate at this site. It also highlights local issues and sensitivities which new woodland could either address or affect.

Lowland Basin map

Lowland Basin text from Ayrshire and Arran FWS
Chapter 3: Future Forests

This chapter provides a strategic overview of the potential for mixed woodland expansion in Ayrshire. The accompanying map (page 29) is largely indicative and doesn’t provide detailed spatial guidance but the applicant may be able to locate the application within one of the Opportunity Classes (i.e. Mixed Woodland). The ‘Potential for Expansion’ text box on page 30 of the FWS also identifies strategic issues and sensitivities which could relate to the application.
Chapter 3: Future Forests

Figure 3.7: Opportunities for New Mixed Woodland

Opportunities for New Mixed Woodland

- Supporting Agriculture on Prime Land
- Enhancing Policy Woodlands
- Supporting Resilience and Diversification
- Wider Range of Opportunities

Prime quality agricultural land (Land Capability Classes 2 and 3) are categorised as ‘sensitive’; therefore particularly careful siting and design will be required in these areas.

Note: This map is based on land use information from the Scottish Government’s Land Use Scotland database.
Chapter 3 Future Forests

Potential for expansion?

Although the previous Woodland Strategy was very successful in promoting woodland creation, stimulating the development of new farm woodlands proved difficult. Despite favourable rates delivered through the locational premium only 4.2ha of additional farm woodland was created between 2003 and 2008.

Farming practices and rural support will evolve significantly over the coming decades – and farm forestry needs to be positioned to support this change. Land capability and values are likely to increase as a result of climate change, potentially further reducing the economic case for farm forestry. However, highlighting the role of trees and woodland in meeting the challenge of adapting to climate change could help to boost uptake. Increasing planting in river corridors could help to mitigate the effects of floodwaters and also help to separate stock from watercourses, contributing to a reduction of diffuse pollution and impacts on river morphology. Again, understanding how woodlands relate to the decisions of different land managers will be critical in developing incentives, information and support to help achieve this kind of expansion.

In areas of better quality land under arable agriculture, protecting the integrity of the soil resource by preventing wind and water erosion should be the priority. Prime agricultural land (in Ayrshire, Class 2 and 3.1) is classified as ‘sensitive’ to new woodland for the purposes of this Strategy. This means that planting proposals in this area should incorporate the highest standards of planning and design.

Ayrshire’s largely pastoral agricultural economy has not resulted in the level of field boundary loss seen in comparable areas of Scotland. Although eroded in places, the 18th-19th century landscape structure created by hedges and field trees remains and can readily provide the framework for appropriate expansion.

Mixed woodlands are also frequently located in and around Ayrshire’s towns and villages, creating opportunities for new development to enhance existing and deliver new resources as part of well-designed landscaping schemes. In addition, there may be potential to enhance existing mixed woodlands found in parks and gardens, and to deliver expansion in under-used open spaces where this accords with community aspirations and relevant Open Space / Greenspace strategies and Local Development Plans.

The proposed planting could also help to deliver some of the wider social, environmental and economic priorities set out in the Strategy. It will also deliver some of the benefits noted in the section on Rural diversification in Chapter 5: Economic Development page 43-54.
Chapter 5: Economic Development

Rural diversification

Agriculture remains an important activity throughout much of Ayrshire, pastoral farming characterising much of the Ayrshire basin, with a distinctive pattern of fields, hedges and small farm woodlands.

Encouraging the positive management of these existing woodlands in order to increase their resilience, biodiversity and contribution to landscape character is a priority. Managed woodland can also create a source of woodfuel and timber for local use.

New farm woodlands, comprising copses, shelterbelts and field boundary trees could further expand these benefits, helping to diversify rural incomes, providing a source of low carbon woodfuel, contributing to habitat networks and sustainable flood management, absorbing carbon from the atmosphere and creating shelter and shade for animals and crops. In areas where farming activity is now marginal (e.g. along parts of the urban fringe or in areas affected by mineral working) new woodland can provide an alternative land use, with potential for local training and employment initiatives.

Woodlands can also provide a range of produce and products not related to timber or woodfuel. ‘Non-timber Forest Products’ (NTFP) comprise any product of biological origin – other than wood – derived from woodlands and trees, and can range from fungi, berries and game to sap, pharmaceuticals and decorative foliage. While the business development opportunities available within this sector may cater to particular niche markets, the diversity of produce delivered by woodlands creates real scope for diversification. However, it should be noted that the law concerning woodland produce is often complex, particularly where material is collected by parties other than the landowner. Deer and other game, as well as eco-tourism, are covered by separate legislation and policies, but landowners and prospective commercial users of NTFPs should consult the Scottish Government Policy on NTFP. This will help ensure they are aware of the legal position, and plan their activities within appropriate environmental limits.

Priorities

| ED21 | Encourage the positive management of existing farm woodlands to provide a range of local economic and environmental benefits |
| ED22 | Work with land managers to encourage the integration of woodland planting on farm enterprises with the aim of diversifying incomes and delivering a range of economic and environmental benefits |
| ED23 | Support the development of markets for, and promotion of, non-timber forest products |
| ED24 | Support the continuation and expansion of existing training initiatives linked to woodland creation and management |
The applicant should draw from all of these chapters, and include chapter headings, when completing the relevant section of the CSGN Contribution Supporting Statement e.g.:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting the Forestry &amp; Woodland Strategy (FWS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forestry &amp; Woodland Strategy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FWS Classification</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landscape Zone</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Refer to the Forestry & Woodland Strategy’s landscape zone guidance or the woodland type mapping which identifies opportunities for new woodland at your proposed location. Give details of the local priorities, aims or objectives for the type of woodland expansion which your planting will help to deliver.

If there are any local sensitivities which may be affected by your application or if it has the potential to deliver any other benefits or objectives (e.g. provide recreation or access; carbon sequestration) please give details.

Please title each paragraph or statement with the appropriate chapter headings or reference codes to allow us to cross-reference.

**Spatial Guidance: Lowland Basin**
This is an application for a small farm shelterbelt woodland in the Lowland Basin where potential expansion of this type has been identified by the FWS. It is at a scale which is in keeping with the FWS and will not affect prime quality agricultural land. This shelterbelt will make a contribution to the farm’s resilience to climate change and help with meet cross-compliance objectives.

**Future Forests: Mixed Woodland**
The shelterbelt will complement the neighbouring field boundary pattern and according to the Opportunities for New Mixed Woodland mapping, is within a ‘Wider Range of Opportunities’ area.

**Rural Diversification**
ED22: The new planting will help to diversify the farm income by providing a wood fuel resource and will deliver a range of environmental benefits by improving shelter for stock and absorbing carbon from the atmosphere.