

# Woodland Improvement Grant – Planning – Deer Management Plan

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## Aim

This option provides grant aid to help owners or occupiers of forested land obtain and prepare the data they need to formulate a robust Deer Management Plan. The plan will help them control deer populations in order to secure the regeneration of broadleaved and/or diverse conifer species.

This grant is for the work required to carry out the population survey and baseline damage assessment at a landscape scale.

The aim of the Deer Management Plan must be to reduce deer densities to an agreed target. We would normally expect this to be in the range of five to 10 deer per square kilometre within three years, and then to maintain them at that level for a further two or more years.

The actual deer density and the target population will depend upon the quality of the habitat and carrying capacity of the woodland, and the level of damage being experienced.

**The Deer Management Plan must be based on an accurate, independent third-party assessment of deer densities.** The survey results will be used to develop a deer population model for the area in question, and hence a robust culling plan.

This survey method may not be appropriate for all situations and so it is important that you discuss the proposal with local Scottish Forestry staff as soon as you can.

## Grant support

The grant rate for assessing populations, undertaking a baseline damage assessment and subsequently preparing a Deer Management Plan is:

- £12 per hectare for the first 500 hectares
- £1 per hectare thereafter
- minimum £5,000
- maximum £15,000

Once your Deer Management Plan is approved you can apply for grant towards deer control through the [Sustainable Management of Forests – Species Conservation – Reducing Deer Impact](#) option.

## Application eligibility criteria

Check that you are eligible to apply for Forestry Grant Scheme funding before progressing.

### [Woodland Improvement Grant](#)

This option is also available to existing holders of deer management contracts under legacy schemes who either:

- wish to reapply for further annual grants
- want to work more collaboratively with their neighbours
- want to carry out a landscape-scale deer population assessment to improve their deer management planning
- have an existing legacy grant scheme for deer control but have not been able to reduce deer impacts to acceptable levels

All of the woodlands within the Deer Management Plan must have an approved Forest Plan for woodland areas of 100 hectares or more. For woodland areas less than 100 hectares you must have an approved Management Plan or Forest Plan.

### [Long-term Forest Plan technical guidance](#)

### [Management Plan](#)

Please see 'Supporting information' below for the information you need to supply us when applying for this option. You must use the appropriate standard template to give this information.

## Collaboration

Deer Management Plans will often need to be prepared at a landscape scale in collaboration with neighbours in order to be most effective. Involving a number of woodland properties will achieve the scale necessary to cover a significant proportion of the deer population in that area and so reduce the impact of immigration and emigration on the population. This could mean an area in the range of 500 to 10,000 hectares.

This approach will help to ensure that deer populations in the area can be reduced and then maintained at the level required. Exceptionally, smaller woodlands may be eligible, but a rationale must be put forward regarding the ability to reduce local deer populations.

Collaboration is particularly encouraged with neighbouring Forestry and Land Scotland (Forestry Land Scotland is not eligible for funding) or with NatureScot moorland management areas (deer control on moorland is funded through the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme).

As per the [Code of Practice on Deer Management](#), you should discuss your deer management proposals with your neighbours.

## Survey and cull targets

You must carry out the survey of the deer population across the entire area identified for deer management – the deer management unit – by using the methods described in [Estimating deer abundance in woodlands: the combination plot technique](#) (Forestry Commission Bulletin 128). We may allow a variation to this approach if this can show clear benefits.

You must carry out a baseline damage assessment survey using either the nearest neighbour method or habitat impact assessment method, depending on the type of woodland you are managing.

A Deer Management Plan template is available in the [How to Claim](#) section.

You must set annual cull targets for the area to ensure deer density will meet agreed targets. We would expect this to be in the range of 5 to 10 deer per square kilometre within three years of the plan being approved. The targets must be agreed and implemented by all participants, to deliver successful regeneration of broadleaved and diverse conifer species.

Survey methodologies are based on a number of sample plots located across a chosen area. Use a systematic sampling grid across the whole forest rather than a random sampling framework, and allow transects to cross habitat types rather than be forced to stay only in one habitat type (amendment to Forestry Commission Bulletin 128). The number of plots varies depending on the size of the area being surveyed. To gain an accurate picture of population density the number of plots in your survey must relate to the size of your forest area as per the table below. The survey must contain a minimum of 50 plots.

Minimum areas (hectares)	Maximum areas (hectares)	Plots required
9,001	10,000	150
8,001	9,000	140
7,001	8,000	130
6,001	7,000	120
5,001	6,000	110
4,001	5,000	100
3,001	4,000	90
2,001	3,000	80
1,001	2,000	70
501	1,000	60
401	500	50

Deer Management Plans must comply with the UK Forestry Standard.

## Other eligibility criteria

We will pay grant for open ground to a maximum of 20 per cent of the grant aidable area.

You can include larger areas of open ground / moorland in the plan if appropriate, but funding for culling on these areas will normally only be available under the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme item [Open-range Deer Management](#).

In exceptional circumstances, and by agreement with Scottish Forestry in advance, where the application aims to support landscape scale native woodland expansion by regeneration or planting without fencing (greater than 300ha of new native woodland, which can be across multiple ownerships), you can include the agreed estimated area of woodland expansion. ·

- An appropriate plan describing the landscape scale woodland expansion proposal in detail must be agreed with Scottish Forestry in advance of the FGS application.
- For eligible landscape scale restoration projects the application area (deer management unit) can include the wider landscape and open habitats / moorland, subject to the percentage woodland limits below.
- All woodland within the ownership(s) must be included and for landscape scale expansion projects the total woodland area, including expansion areas, must be a minimum of 25% of the deer management unit.
- Associated larger areas of open habitats / moorland can only be included in the plan if Scottish Forestry agree that the deer management over these areas is essential to the delivery of the woodland expansion. Where agreed with Scottish Forestry these areas can be included in your deer management unit.
- Deer management units should follow a suitable property boundary or landscape boundary whilst minimising the proportion of open habitat / moorland area within the application. ·
- Exceptionally, we will pay grant for such areas of open habitat / moorland to a maximum of 75 percent of the grant aidable area.

The Deer Management Plan must compliment any existing Long-term Forest Plans or Management Plans. If further diversification of woodlands results from the development of a Deer Management Plan and subsequent culling, this should be addressed through a Long-term Forest Plan amendment.

All Deer Management Plans must include a commitment to monitor the effectiveness of culling on an annual basis through damage assessments. Details of the annual monitoring process must be included in the Deer Management Plan.

## Supporting information

We need supporting information to help us assess your application. You must give the details as listed below using the template provided.



[Woodland Improvement Grant – Planning – Deer Management Plan supporting information template \(MS Word, Size: 2.0 MB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: [https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/0034---planning-dmp-supp-info-template\\_v4---SF.doc](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/0034---planning-dmp-supp-info-template_v4---SF.doc)

Applicants, or their representatives, and Scottish Forestry must meet at an early stage of the application process. This meeting will identify the best way to proceed with an application and should outline the risks and issues that need to be addressed in the application.

A Deer Management Plan template is available in the [How to claim](#) section.

### Land ownership

Please provide a list of the landowners and their contact details. Confirm which party will co-ordinate preparation and delivery of the Deer Management Plan (where there is more than one owner in the deer management unit).

Provide a signed letter of agreement between the majority of landowners within the defined deer management unit that they will fully engage with the process and will implement the cull level agreed in the Deer Management Plan (generally at least 95 per cent of the land in the deer management unit needs to be 'signed up').

### Deer management unit woodland details

You must provide information on the woodland area including:

- if there are any designations, Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS), or Ancient Semi-Natural Woodlands (ASNW) present and their condition
- a summary of the current species diversity
- the restructuring history and damage levels measured in the first two years following planting
- the planned restructuring over the next five years
- information on existing fencing

### Current deer management

You must provide information on the deer species present within the woodland and background information on the current deer management arrangements within the deer management unit as follows:

- deer controllers currently involved within the deer management unit and their qualifications / experience
- levels of cull taken for each deer species in the past 10 seasons, broken down by sex and age class
- deer controller contributions to the annual cull by per cent
- a brief explanation for the cull trend over the 10 year period of records supplied

### Methodology for assessment

You must provide a proposed methodology for deer population assessment based on dung counting. Unless a more accurate method can be proposed for the particular area in question, the method described in [Estimating deer abundance in woodlands: the combination plot technique](#) (Forestry Commission Bulletin 128) should form the basis of the assessment. Amendments to this guidance are listed below. Some variation might be allowed depending on circumstances.

Amendments to Forestry Commission Bulletin 128 include:

- use a systematic sampling grid across the whole forest rather than a random sampling framework
- allow transects to cross habitat types rather than, as before, be forced to stay only in one habitat type
- use a defecation rate of 16.5 groups per day (SE of +/-4) for all deer species

You must maintain records of your population assessment survey; these must include GPS plot locations and details. The plots must be clearly marked on the ground. Scottish Forestry must be notified within seven days of the survey completion, prior to the preparation of the Deer Management Plan, and we may request a copy of the survey for sample checking.

### **Quote for survey work**

You must provide a quote for carrying out the survey work and preparing the Deer Management Plan as confirmation of who will be used and their qualifications and experience. Please confirm the independence of the contractor(s) to be used in a written statement.

### **Map requirements**

You must provide a map that shows the perimeter of your proposed deer management area (the deer management unit) and a map showing the boundaries of each of the land ownerships involved in the application. Within the deer management area you must show the woodland area and species present.

Please include areas of ancient semi-natural woodland, Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites, and SSSI/SAC designated woodlands that are threatened by deer browsing.

### [General mapping guidance for the Forestry Grant Scheme](#)

## Scoring criteria

We have set agreed financial budgets for each of the options under the Forestry Grant Scheme.

To ensure that we make the most cost-effective use of funding available and to meet Scottish Government objectives, we will assess each application using scoring criteria.

The criteria will be written as appropriate to each Forestry Grant Scheme option; please refer to [Scoring criteria and clearing process](#) for details.

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 priorities**

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

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

- applications that form part of a collaborative approach within an active deer management group

Or

- applications that form part of a collaborative approach, or clearly demonstrate that it is seeking to control deer populations on a landscape scale

Or

- applications that aim to protect, expand or improve the condition of native woodlands or Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWs), which are threatened by deer browsing

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

- applications that seek to protect SSSI/SAC designated woodlands which are threatened by deer browsing. Your supporting information should clearly describe the activities proposed to reduce the deer pressure on the designated woodland feature

## Supplementary point – additional benefit

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

- applications are for diverse woodlands, where the total woodland area has no more than 60 per cent of a single species

## How to claim

You must use the following Deer Management Plan template to present the finds of the population assessment survey and the resulting population modelling and cull setting for each landowner within the Deer Management Unit.



[Deer Management Plan \(MS Word, Size: 1.3 MB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: [https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/0035---wig-deer-management-plan-population-assessment\\_v1---SF.doc](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/0035---wig-deer-management-plan-population-assessment_v1---SF.doc) Deer management plan

You can submit a capital claim once we have approved your completed plan.

You cannot make a claim for an area that exceeds that agreed in your contract. You must claim for the areas as detailed in your schedule of works. For example, you cannot make an interim claim for part of the area shown on a single line of your schedule of works.

You must claim your capital items on the Forestry Grant Scheme manual Standard Costs Capital Items Claim Form once you have satisfactorily completed the work.

Claim forms and guidance are available on the [Claims and payments](#) page.

## Technical guidance

- [UK Forestry Standard](#)
- [Estimating deer abundance in woodlands: the combination plot technique \(Forestry Commission Bulletin 128\)](#)

## Recent changes

Section	Change	Previous text	New text
<a href="#">Collaboration</a>	Additional guidance added.	-	As per the Code of Practice on Deer Management, you should discuss your deer management proposals with your neighbours.
<a href="#">Supporting information</a>	Woodland Improvement Grant – Planning – Deer Management Plan supporting information template [Word document updated]		
<a href="#">Other Eligibility Criteria</a>	reducing the eligibility threshold for including new woodland expansion areas in the calculation of the deer management unit from 1,000ha to 300ha of new native woodland		

## Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

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