Sustainable Management of Forests – Public Access – Woods In and Around Towns

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Aim

This option aims to provide support for the sustainable management of urban woodlands for public access.

Urban woodlands are those located within one kilometre of settlements with a population of over 2000 people.

Support is provided to ensure the management of the woodland achieves the Woods In and Around Towns Management Standard.

Grant support

This is an annual grant to support the costs of the maintenance of urban public amenity areas in existing woodlands. It supports the ongoing activities of:

- carrying out annual tree and path safety inspections
- keeping access routes free of litter and tree debris
- keeping paths and signs and recreational facilities up to an acceptable standard

The rate is £100 per hectare per year for the first 10 hectares and then £10 per hectare per year for any additional areas. The grant will be paid annually for up to a maximum of five years.

You can apply for grant under the Woodland Improvement Grant – Woods In and Around Towns option to support related works that are considered capital items such as new paths, signage and woodland management activities like thinning and pruning.

Application eligibility criteria

Please check that you are eligible to apply for Forestry Grant Scheme funding before you begin your application.

Sustainable Management of Forests

Before applying for this option you must have an approved Woods In and Around Towns – Urban Woodland Management Plan that covers all the woodland areas to be included in your application.

The Woods In and Around Towns – Urban Woodland Management Plan is eligible for funding under the Woodland Improvement Grant – Planning – Woods In and Around Towns – Urban Woodland Management Plan grant.

We may be able to accept pre-existing management plans if these comply with the Woods In and Around Towns – Urban Woodland Management Plan requirements. If you have an existing plan that you think complies with all of these requirements, you must get our agreement and we must approve your plan before you can submit an application under this Sustainable Management of Forests option.

If your application under this option relates to a proposed woodland creation application you must still have an approved Urban Woodland Management Plan, produced using the Forestry Commission Scotland template. You should only complete those sections of the template that are relevant to a newly created woodland. This plan cannot be funded under the Woodland Improvement Grant – Planning – Woods in and Around Towns – Urban Woodland Management Plan Grant. You will only receive annual management grant payments once these areas have been planted.

Please see the Supporting information section 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.

At least half of the woodland must be within the Woods In and Around Towns area. Urban woodlands are those within one kilometre of a town with a population of 2000 or more people.

The minimum block size of each individual woodland that we will accept for Woods In and Around Towns funding is 0.5 hectares.

The Woods In and Around Towns area is defined by Forestry Commission Scotland and is available as a layer on the Forestry Commission Scotland map viewer. If you have any doubt about whether your woodland meets this criterion, contact your local Forestry Commission Scotland woodland officer.

With the exception of proposed new woodland sites, to be eligible for grant support the woodland must appear on the National Forest Inventory (with the exception of the National Forest Inventory categories of 'cloud' and 'uncertain'). The National Forest Inventory is available as a layer on the Forestry Commission Scotland map viewer.

There must be free and unhindered public access to all areas included within the application. Areas such as school grounds and golf courses are not eligible unless there is free and unhindered public access to all areas.

You must achieve the standards of management set out in the Woods In and Around Towns – Woodland Management Standard.

You must demonstrate that you are fully committed to delivering the outcomes identified in the approved Urban Woodland Management Plan. If your application only partly delivers against the plan's objectives, it is unlikely to be approved.

You must carry out and retain annual tree safety surveys and keep an annual monitoring form of time inputs for annual management works. This must include days spent litter picking and undertaking path, sign and furniture maintenance. Please retain the annual monitoring form and survey for checking by our woodland officers.

You must comply with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code over your entire property.

Supporting information

To help us assess your application you must provide us with supporting information.

[Sustainable Management of Forests – Public Access – Woods In and Around Towns supporting information template (MS Word, Size: 392.7 kB)](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/smf-pub-access-wiat-supp-info-template.doc)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/smf-pub-access-wiat-supp-info-template.doc

You must give the details as listed below using the template provided:

- provide information on the maintenance planned, including annual tree and path safety inspections, litter picking, and maintenance of paths, signs and recreational facilities
- provide a map that shows the perimeter of the Woods In and Around Towns woodland area and the location of facilities or infrastructure to which the application relates

General mapping guidance for the Forestry Grant Scheme

Scoring criteria

To make sure we achieve the best value for money and to ensure we meet the Forestry Grant Scheme's objectives, we will assess each application using scoring criteria. These criteria will be specific to this option.

We will set a minimum score that an application for any particular option must achieve to be considered for approval. We will make details available before the launch of the Forestry Grant Scheme.

Threshold score = 6 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 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 are completely within the 'WIAT Area'. Select the 'WIAT' dataset in the Forestry Grant Scheme 2014–2020 Eligibility/Scoring criteria folder on the Forestry Commission Scotland Map Viewer to confirm your application meets this requirement

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

- applications that are partly (but at least 50 per cent) within the 'WIAT Priority Area'

Delivering better quality

1 POINT – for applications were the concept is restricted to the construction of new (semi) permanent facilities such as paths or car parks.

3 POINTS – for applications were the concept is to construct facilities (as above), along with some intervention in the silvilcultural management of the woodland which would have shorter-term benefits. For example thinning, rhododendron clearance, cleaning or remedial tree safety works, or signage.

5 POINTS – for applications were the concept is to construct new facilities, along with significant long-term silvicultural change including felling/restock, or coppicing mature woodland.

Delivery of good practice

1 POINT – for applications which meet the minimum eligibility requirements and relevant industry standards.

3 POINTS – for applications which demonstrate that you have liaised with consultees, communities and neighbours and addressed, where possible, any points they may have raised.

5 POINTS – for applications which are community owned, led, or supported and clearly demonstrate the delivery of significant benefits to the local community.

Supplementary point – additional benefit

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

- the management of the site is identified as a specific action within the local authority woodland strategy, or equivalent local planning document

How to claim

You must claim this grant on your Single Application Form.

You must provide evidence that you have met the criteria set out in the Woods In and Around Towns – Woodland Management Standard before your claim will be paid.

Woods In and Around Towns – Woodland Management Standard (PDF, Size: 68.0 kB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/wiat-woodland-management-standard.pdf

We will pay grants for up to five years for each year that your contract is covered by an Urban Woodland Management Plan. If your Urban Woodland Management Plan expires during the five years of your contact you must ensure that it is renewed in time to be able to continue making annual claims. We cannot pay your claim for any claim year that is not covered by an Urban Woodland Management Plan.

You will be required to keep an annual monitoring form of the activities carried out. This will include days spent litter picking, and undertaking path, sign and furniture maintenance.

You must also undertake annual tree safety surveys.

The annual monitoring form template will be sent out with the contract and is available here. One form must be completed for each year of your contract. Please retain the annual monitoring form and survey for checking by our woodland officers.

Sustainable Management of Forests – Public Access – Woods In and Around Towns annual monitoring form (MS Word, Size: 545.3 kB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/smf-pub-access-wiat-annual-monitoring-form.doc

Technical guidance

- Woods In and Around Towns programme document
- UK Forestry Standard
- Forestry Commission Scotland map viewer
- Scottish Outdoor Access Code

Recent changes

Section	Change	Previous text	New text
Supporting information	Sustainable Management of Forests – Public Access – Woods In and Around Towns supporting information template [Word document added]		
Scoring criteria: Delivery of option benefits	Amendment to the folder name on the Forestry Commission Scotland Map Viewer.	• applications that are completely within the 'WIAT Area'. Select the 'WIAT' dataset in the Forestry Grant Scheme 2014–2020	• applications that are completely within the 'WIAT Area'. Select the 'WIAT' dataset in the Forestry Grant Scheme 2014–2020 Eligibility/

		Target Areas folder on the Forestry Commission Scotland Map Viewer to confirm your application meets this requirement	Scoring criteria folder on the Forestry Commission Scotland Map Viewer to confirm your application meets this requirement
How to claim	Woods In and Around Towns – Woodland Management Strategy [PDF added]		
	Amendment regarding the annual monitoring form.	The annual monitoring form template will be sent out with the contract and then annually.	The annual monitoring form template will be sent out with the contract and is available here. One form must be completed for each year of your contract.
	Sustainable Management of Forests – Public Access – Woods In and Around Towns annual monitoring form [Word document added]		

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