

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

Overview

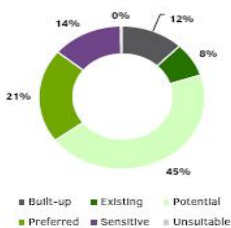
The Lowland Basin lies at the heart of Ayrshire, comprising gently rolling relatively sparsely-wooded pastoral landscapes punctuated by a number of substantial river valleys where the woodland resource is concentrated. The area includes the region's larger settlements, including Kilmarnock, Irvine, Ayr and Troon, together with many villages.

Existing woodland resource

This zone has the lowest level of woodland cover in the region proportional to its size – with just 7% of its land area wooded (c.6,736ha). This resource is largely broadleaved, comprising a combination of farm, policy and riparian woodlands, containing a significant proportion of native woodland types.



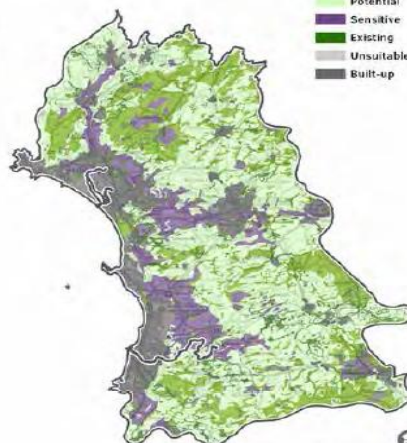
Zone location & breakdown of zone land categories



Lowland Basin

Land Categorisation

- Preferred
- Potential
- Sensitive
- Existing
- Unsuitable
- Built-up



Not to Scale
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Lowland Basin text from Ayrshire and Arran FWS

Key issues

Local issues for woodland and forestry include:

Increasing the contribution that woodland and forests make to the agricultural economy

Maintaining distinctive character of this area, using new planting and woodland management to improve the setting of towns and villages

Enhancing and expanding existing larger native woodland assets that can act as 'core' areas for key species to improve resilience to change and restore ecosystem functions

Reversing habitat fragmentation by developing networks of habitat from existing core areas of woodland

Contributing to climate change adaptation, particularly in terms of sustainable flood management, urban climate regulation and slope stability

Contributing to recreation opportunities particularly in and around settlements and along river valleys and the coast

Contributing to local economic development, creating environments that support investment in areas such as Irvine Bay

Local sensitivities

The zone hosts a number of lowland raised bogs that are particularly sensitive to woodland expansion. Where these assets have already been subject to inappropriate afforestation, and there is a realistic prospect of restoring key elements of ecosystem function, they should be prioritised for restoration to contribute to biodiversity, sustainable water management and carbon sequestration objectives.

This zone contains a large number of historic gardens and designed landscapes. These assets make a substantial contribution to the character and structure of the zone's landscape, most notably in the Ayr valley.

This zone also contains the majority of Ayrshire's prime quality agricultural land. Broadly, larger-scale woodland expansion would be inappropriate in such locations – but new trees, shelter belts and appropriate farm woodlands may make a substantial contribution to agriculture's resilience to climate change and help with meeting cross-compliance objectives, e.g. reducing diffuse pollution from livestock.

Priorities for woodland management

Removal of woodland from raised bogs that have significant potential for restoration

Positive and proactive management of woodland and trees in designed landscapes; succession planning and adapting to the effects of climate change through appropriate species and provenance choices

Bringing neglected farm and policy woodlands into positive management

Maintaining and restoring landscape structure by managing and planting field boundary trees and shelterbelts

Management and enhancement of strategically important larger native woodlands, particularly in the Ayr valley, to boost resilience and improve habitat values

Improving the management and use of woodlands in and around the region's main settlements

Potential for expansion

Almost 46% of the zone is identified as having some capacity for woodland expansion (19,123ha 'preferred'; 40,572ha 'potential'). Within this area, there is significant flexibility to accommodate a range of woodland types, contributing to a wide range of objectives.

Expansion could comprise:

New mixed woodlands, including farm woodlands, shelterbelts and expansion / restoration of policy woodlands

Significant native woodland expansion in riparian corridors to improve connectivity with key habitat resources, and to provide the focus for wider development of woodland habitat networks

Energy woodlands, such as short-rotation forestry or coppice, on vacant, derelict or under-used land, where this does not conflict with wider objectives

New softwood and mixed woodlands in transitional landscapes between lowlands and more sensitive uplands

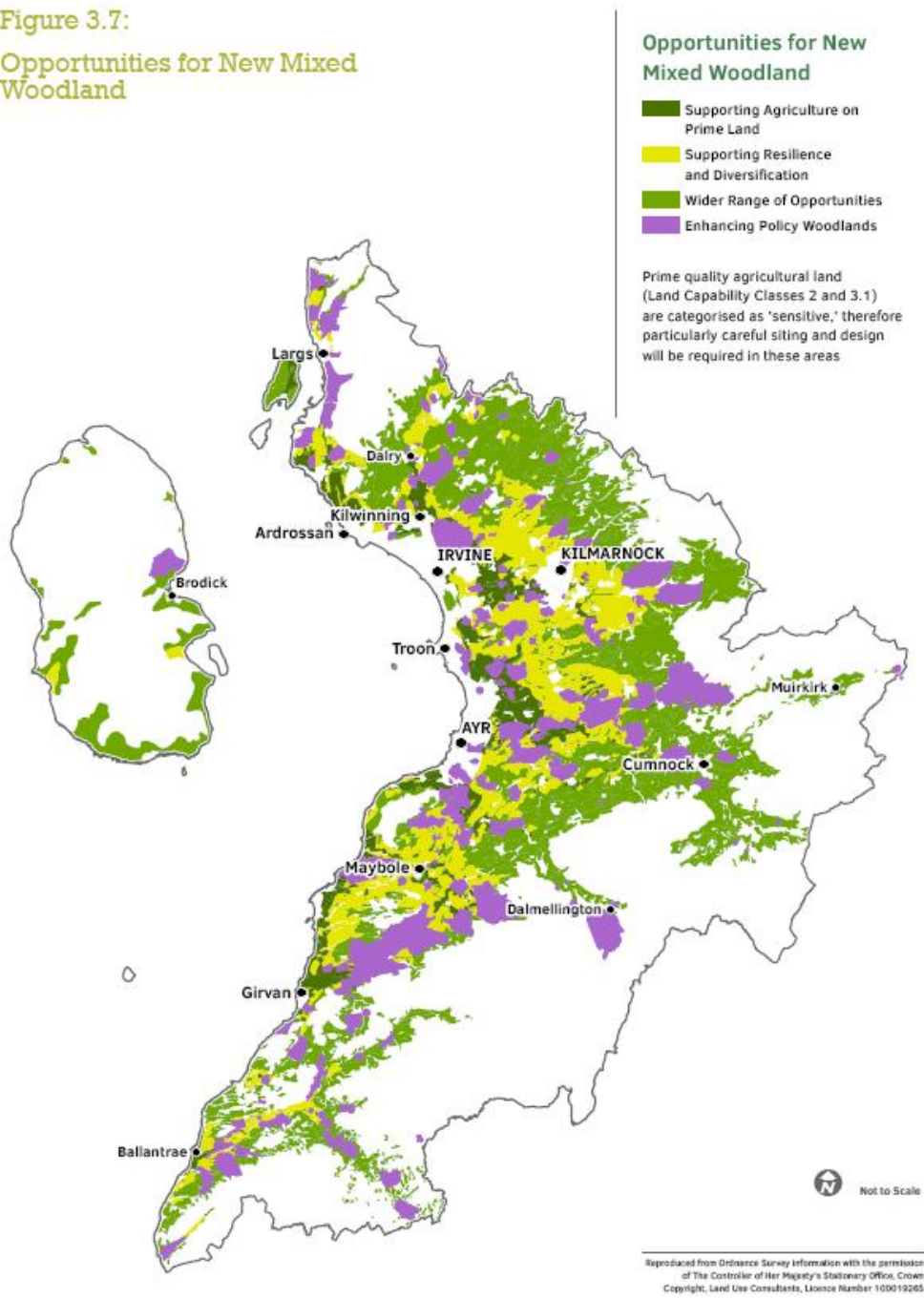
Opportunities for 'greening' urban fringe locations, particularly where there are concentrations of vacant and derelict land, helping to build the green network and create resources for recreation close to communities

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



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 42ha 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 morphology¹¹. 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.

¹¹Four major Ayrshire rivers (Ayr, Doon, Irvine and Garnock) and the coastline, are identified as 'priority catchments' for diffuse pollution in the Scotland River Basin Management Plan.

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.:

Supporting the Forestry & Woodland Strategy (FWS)	
Forestry & Woodland Strategy	Ayrshire & Arran FWS 2014
FWS Classification	Preferred
Landscape Zone	Lowland Basin
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Please title each paragraph or statement with the appropriate chapter headings or reference codes to allow us to cross-reference.</p>	
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	