

Potential sources of guidance for EIA opinions and consents for Glastir Woodland Creation schemes

Every Glastir Woodland Creation plan requires an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) opinion to assess whether consent is needed for the new planting proposal. If consent is required from Natural Resources Wales, an applicant must prepare an Environmental Statement.

This document provides guidance on information which could be used to support an EIA opinion especially on larger new planting sites with a range of constraints and sensitivities. It is not a definitive list, and in some cases surveys may be required to validate or confirm information, but it provides applicants with sources of publically available information to help with decision making.

The main source of digital guidance for an EIA opinion and statement for a GWC scheme is Lle Glastir Woodland Creation opportunities map <http://lle.gov.wales/apps/woodlandopportunities>

EIA category	UKFS Reference	What is the information	Where to find guidance	Information needed for EIA opinion
<p>Designations Assess if a new planting will impact on a designation (Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA))</p>	<p><u>Forests & Biodiversity:</u> Legal 1; Good Forest Practice 4; UKFS Guidelines 4,5; <u>Forests & Water:</u> Legal 12; <u>Forests & Climate Change:</u> UKFS Guidelines 5; <u>Forests & Soil:</u> UKFS Guidelines 24</p>	<p>SSSIs are the most important sites for Wales' natural heritage and include sites protected by European and International law (SACs, SPAs)</p>	<p>Information on designations including details of SSSI citations and guidance for owners and occupiers of SSSIs regarding consent to carry out operations within SSSIs:- https://naturalresources.wales/conservation-biodiversity-and-wildlife/find-protected-areas-of-land-and-seas/protected-areas-of-land-and-seas</p>	<p>Ensure consultation has taken place with the regional NRW conservation team if a new planting scheme is in a designated site.</p>
<p>Habitats Evidence that there will be no new planting on priority habitats</p>	<p><u>Forests & Biodiversity:</u> Legal 1; Good Forest Practice 4; UKFS Guidelines 4; <u>Forests & Historic Environment:</u> Good Forest Practice 2,4 <u>Forests & Water:</u> Legal 12</p>	<p>UK BAP priority habitats cover a wide range of semi-natural habitat types and are considered to be the most threatened and require conservation action under UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP).</p>	<p>Information on priority habitats http://jncc.defra.gov.uk Guidance on NRW sensitive habitats and photographic evidence https://naturalresources.wales/forestry/glastir-woodland-scheme Priority habitats are marked as NRW sensitive habitats on Lle GWC woodland opportunities map</p>	<p>Provide sufficient geo-tagged photographs to demonstrate that a new planting site is not a priority habitat Where there are priority habitats especially on larger, complex new planting sites, it is advisable to get a professional ecologist to undertake a survey</p>

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<p>Fauna (Priority species) Evidence that new planting does not impact on priority species and their habitats. Due attention should be given to any scheduled species as their disturbance and killing is prohibited by law.</p>	<p><u>Forests & Biodiversity: Legal 1</u>; Good Forest Practice 3,4; UKFS Guidelines 4; <u>Forests & Water Legal 12</u></p>	<p>Great crested newts (GCN) are a European Protected Species and destroying either individuals or their habitat is an offence</p>	<p>Guidance on GCN https://naturalresources.wales/forestry/glastir-woodland-scheme</p> <p>GCN records and 500m buffer are shown on Lle GWC woodland opportunities map</p>	<p>Consult with the NRW regional conservation team to ensure the new planting does not impact on a GCN habitat</p>
		<p>Pearl bordered fritillary is a priority species (NERC Act 2006/ Environment Act 2016). New planting on identified bracken sites would potentially destroy their numbers</p>	<p>Bracken sites identified by Butterfly Conservation which have been identified on Lle GWC woodland opportunities map are the known habitats.</p>	<p>No planting on bracken sites identified by Butterfly Conservation</p>
		<p>Golden Plover, Chough, Lapwing, and Curlew are all species of particular conservation concern for which woodland creation would be particularly damaging to their feeding and/or breeding habitat.</p>	<p>www.rspb.org.uk</p> <p>Priority bird records and 1km buffer on Lle GWC woodland opportunities map</p>	<p>If the new planting is within a priority bird area, consult with the RSPB to ensure the new planting will be not impact on a priority bird habitat. For larger sites, a breeding bird survey may be needed.</p>
		<p>Red squirrels and water voles are protected species under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981)</p>	<p>Guidance on red squirrels and water voles https://naturalresources.wales/forestry/glastir-woodland-scheme</p> <p>Red squirrel/water voles areas are shown on Lle Glastir Woodland Creation map</p>	<p>Evidence that guidance on red squirrels/water voles has been followed</p>

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<p>Soils Evidence there is no planting on sites with over 50cm deep peat</p>	<p><u>Forests & Biodiversity</u>: Legal 1; Good Forest Practice 4; UKFS Guidelines 4,5; <u>Forests & Water</u> Legal 12; <u>Forests & Climate Change</u> UKFS Guidelines 5; <u>Forests & Soil</u> 24</p>	<p>Lowland peatland survey of Wales phase 2 (2004); Assessment of deep peat – Forestry Commission Wales (2012)</p>	<p>Guidance on deep peat - www.naturalresources.wales/forestry/woodlands-and-the-environment/woodlands-and-peat</p>	<p>Sufficient geo-tagged photographs throughout new planting to show soil pits with less than 50cm deep peat</p> <p>Where there is deep peat throughout a new planting site, it is advisable to get an ecologist to undertake a survey to exclude these areas from the new planting.</p>
<p>Water Ensure new planting is in line with acid sensitive (AS) guidance and there is no planting within 7m of flood defences</p>	<p><u>Forests & Water</u>: Legal 10; Good Forest Practice 11; UKFS Guidelines 1,2,6</p>	<p>At risk & failing water catchments identified in Water Framework Directive</p>	<p>Acid sensitive catchment guidance www.naturalresources.wales/forestry/woodlands-and-the-environment/acid-sensitive-catchments</p>	<p>Ensure new planting follows AS guidance if a catchment is over 30% afforested in an “at risk” or “failing” catchment.</p> <p>If new planting is over threshold in a failing AS catchment, a Critical Load Analysis (CLA) is needed to show if the catchment is capable of buffering an increased acidification risk.</p> <p>Plant less than 10% alder within riparian buffer of an AS catchment.</p>
		<p>Ensure all year access to flood defences for maintenance</p>	<p>www.naturalresources.wales/our-evidence-and-reports/maps/flood-risk-map</p>	<p>No planting within 7m of flood defences (marked in purple on the flood map)</p>

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Archaeology Ensure that the new planting follows archaeological guidance	<u>Forests & Historic Environment</u> Legal 1; Good Forest Practice 4; UKFS Guidelines 10, 11, 20,27	Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) - Archaeological sites of national importance	Contact the CADW Regional Inspectors http://cadw.gov.wales	CADW consent is needed if the new planting site is within 100m buffer of SAM
		Registered historic Parks & Gardens which are national importance	http://cadw.gov.wales	Consult CADW Parks & Gardens officer the new planting site is within a Registered Parks & Gardens
		UNESCO World Heritage sites –designated because of outstanding universal value (UNESCO sites in Wales - castles of Edward 1, Blaenavon’s landscape and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct)	http://www.visitwales.com/things-to-do/attractions/castles-heritage/world-heritage-sites	Consult with the local planning authority within a UNESCO world heritage site
	<u>Forests & Historic Environment</u> Good Forest Practice 1-4; UKFS Guidelines 10; <u>Forests & Landscape</u> : Good Forest Practice 2; UKFS Guidelines 24	Historic Environment Features – all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction of places & people through time eg remains of buildings, industrial remains, earthworks Historic Landscapes – designations reflecting human interaction in a landscape	Archwilio (Welsh Archaeological Trusts searchable Historic Environment Record site) http://www.cofiadurcahcymru.org.uk/arch Welsh Archaeological Trusts Gwynedd (GAT) Dyfed (DAT) Clwyd-Powys (CPAT) Gwent Glamorgan (GGAT)	Consultation response from Welsh Archaeological Trusts. NRW team will independently assess that this consultation is in line with UKFS

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<p>Landscape Ensure that the new planting fits into the surrounding landscape</p>	<p><u>Forests & Landscape</u> Forest Practice 1-2; <u>Forests & Landscape</u> UKFS Guidelines: 3, 24</p>	<p>National Parks are extensive tracts which are protected by law for future generations because of their natural beauty and for the opportunities they offer for recreation. There are 3 National Parks in Wales – Snowdonia, Brecon Beacons, and Pembrokeshire Coast.</p> <p>Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) - areas of high scenic quality with statutory protection to conserve and enhance its natural beauty of its landscape. There are 5 AONBs in Wales – Anglesey, Gower, Llŷn, Clwydian Range, Wye Valley</p>	<p>UKFS Forests & Landscape guidance http://www.forestry.gov.uk/ukfs/landscape</p> <p>LANDMAP provides information on landscape characteristics https://naturalresources.wales/planning-and-development/landmap</p>	<p>Consult with National Parks and AONBs over 2Ha</p> <p>Ensure the new planting fits in with the surrounding landscape by following landscape guidance in UKFS Forests and Landscape especially with larger new planting schemes.</p>
		<p>RIGS (Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites) - Most important places for geology, geomorphology & soils outside SSSIs</p>	<p>www.geoconservationuk.org.uk</p>	<p>Consultation response from NRW geologist</p>

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<p>Access Ensure public rights of ways and bridleways are not obstructed and open access/commons guidance is followed.</p>	<p><u>Forests & People</u>: Legal 1,2</p>	<p>Most public rights of way and bridleways which are shown on Ordnance survey maps. The local authority will be a hold a “Definitive Map” if there is any uncertainty.</p>	<p>Comply with Public rights of way landowner responsibilities as set out in https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-rights-of-way-landowner-responsibilities</p> <p>Consult the local authority website for information relating to public rights of way where a new planting is located</p>	<p>Provide a statement that public rights of way & bridleways through a new planting area will not be obstructed</p> <p>Local Authority permission must be obtained before gates or stiles are installed across public rights of way footpaths or bridleways; the landowner must maintain these in a safe condition.</p>
		<p>Open access (Countryside & Rights of Way) land</p>	<p>Open access guidance https://naturalresources.wales/forestry/glastir-woodland-scheme</p>	<p>Evidence that responsible access will continue to be allowed on mapped access land unless there is a direction to restrict or exclude access</p>
		<p>Common land which is open to one or more graziers</p>	<p>Commons guidance https://naturalresources.wales/forestry/glastir-woodland-scheme</p>	<p>All common holders’ written consent for the new planting; Secretary of State consent for the fencing</p>

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<p>Community Ensure people who have a recognisable interest in a new planting site are involved in consultation</p>	<p><u>General Forestry Practice</u> Legal 6; <u>Forests & People</u>: Forest Practice 7; Forest Practice 1-4</p>	<p>As part of developing a new planting scheme, consideration should be given to involving a community which has a recognisable interest in the proposal or its outcome</p>	<p>UKFS Forests & People http://www.forestry.gov.uk/ukfs/people</p> <p>Undertaking an Environmental Impact Assessment in Forestry and Preparing an Environmental Impact Statement https://naturalresources.wales/forestry/tree-felling-and-other-regulations/environmental-impact-assessment-for-forestry-activity/eia-apply-for-our-consent</p>	<p>Where a new planting impacts on a community, evidence is needed of consultation with the community council and if required further community engagement</p>