Considering Relevant Information to Include in your Woodland Management Plan when Applying for the Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier Grant

Purpose

This document should be used as a prompting aid to ensure that your Woodland Management Plan (WMP) is complete in sufficient detail by linking to your impending Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier (CS HT) application. Please don't rely on this aid to cover all aspects of CS HT.

Why early consideration?

You **must** submit a draft WMP to the Forestry Commission (FC) before you can apply for Woodland Support under CS HT and your WMP **must** support and validate your application, see section 4.7 of the WMP Manual.

Please keep in mind that a WMP will last for 10 years, and your CS HT agreement 5 years – to help keep your CS HT agreement practical and achievable consider the woodland management priorities (threats/objectives) over this 5-year period. If your WMP doesn't accurately reflect the current woodland management objectives/fully address current issues affecting the woodland/isn't compliant within UKFS standards, please read Annex 5 amending WMP to support CS applications of the HT manual.

To link your WMP with your impending CS HT application, have you:

☐ used our suggested tool Woodland Wildlife Kit (optional) to help plan the benefits to species in your applications

☐ researched how CS HT scoring works, and identified which objective you wish to score under, linking clearly to your WMP, we recommend watching this video before and after you have received a CS HT application pack

Click here for examples of linking CS HT scoring objectives with your WMP

- if intending to score your CS HT application under priority species, included any relevant species presence layers in your WMP map/s, in the WMP template you have outlined the relevant specie/s within your objectives in section 2.2, and provided evidence by including the species presence in section 4.2

- if intending to score your CS HT application under Water, you have outlined the relevant objective/s in section 2.2, in WMP template you have identified the evidence of the features in section 4.2, and included any water bodies/structures within in WMP map/s

- if intending to score your CS HT application under PAWS, you have mapped ancient woodland presence in your WMP map/s in the WMP template you have outlined the relevant objective/s in section 2.2 and provided evidence of this woodland type in section 4.3

- if intending to score your CS HT application under Water, you have outlined the relevant objective/s in section 2.2, in WMP template you have identified the evidence of the features in section 4.2, and included any water bodies/structures within in WMP map/s

- if intending to score your CS HT application under priority species, included any relevant species presence layers in your WMP map/s, in the WMP template you have outlined the relevant specie/s within your objectives in section 2.2, and provided evidence by including the species presence in section 4.2

☐ included **all** Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Scheduled Monuments (SM), in your WMP that are on your land holding (section 4.2 of WMP template and included in WMP Map)

Click here on why include all SSSIs/SMs in your WMP

SSSI and SM management must be considered in the WMP which is a pre-requisite for a HT application. Therefore, it's important to include all SSSI's and SM's, including those outside the woodlands or don't require management so no intended CS HT options or capital items. This will help you to determine which type of CS HT application to apply for (woodland only, agricultural, or mixed). Natural England identifies and manages the conservation and restoration of SSSIs, and Historic England manages scheduled monuments and therefore are the point of contact for consultation/consent. In the application processing of CS HT, it would be identified when an application has not included all features in their application - this could lead to a rejection of the application or change in type, if the features are found in agricultural land, then a woodland only application must become a mixed application (woodland and agricultural agreement) unless this historic feature is being managed in another CS agreement. By including this information in your WMP, it can be discussed earlier and therefore speeds up the processing time of your CS HT application

☐ met the WMP requirement/s for each option/supplement/capital item you intend to include in your CS HT application. We recommend using the CS Grant Finder tool to locate the CS capital items (capital items relevant to woodland CS HT are listed within annex 5 of the HT Manual), to research in advance the requirements for each item.
Click here for examples of aligning HT grants with your WMP

- if intending to apply for the woodland improvement option, WD2. You have met requirements needed to support this option, which includes providing sufficient information in section 6 of your WMP template e.g., explained use of thinning, copping etc, to operation detail to reach the objective of increasing biodiversity

- if applying for capital items, stand alone or within WD2, you have identified the feature/issue/threat for example:
  - Rhododendron control (SB6) requires your WMP to record the presence of Rhododendron and identify rhododendron as a threat to the woodland, see section 5 of your WMP template
  - if applying for Veteran Tree Surgery (BE6), you have identified large notable trees within your WMP parcels
  - if intending to manage bodies/features of water, you have identified them in your WMP template and map/s, detailed how you intend to manage them in section 6 and checked if approval is needed from the Environmental Agency or by Local Flood Authority (e.g. RP32, RP33)
  - if intending to apply for pond creation/restoration (WN5/WN6) you are aware you will need to submit an assessment form with your CS HT application to Historic England
  - if intending to manage deer e.g. FG9, FG10, FY1 (there are more in grant finder using 'deer' as search item) you have identified their presence in 5.3 in your WMP template and detailed how you intend to manage their presence in section 6.
- if applying for any historic environment capital items and multi-year options, you have explained why you need the capital items in your WMP, and you intend to make your local woodland officer aware of any possible inclusion of HE1, HE3, HS1, HS4, HS6 and HS8 as these items will require agreed specifications with the FC, see Annex 5 of the CS HT manual – please be aware if your CS HT application overlaps with a Register Park or Garden you will need a Park Management Plan (if the land doesn't already have one) to be considered for CS HT, which is why declaring this to a woodland officer at your earliest opportunity is always recommended

- if applying for the Deer control and management (WS1) supplement, in your WMP template the issue of deer populations has been identified and brief details of how you intend to address it within section 5.3, and detailed your plan of operations in section 6

- if applying for the PAWS (WS2) supplement, you have this as a management objective in section 2.2 of the WMP and Ancient woodland have been identified in section 4.2. This also would be mapped as a part of your WMP, to read our policy on ancient and native woodland please click here

- if applying for the Squirrel control and management supplement (WS3), in your WMP template the issue of squirrel populations has been identified and brief details of how you intend to address is included in section 5.4, and detailed your plan of operations in section 6

- if applying for Woodland infrastructure (FY2), you identified and mapped proposed locations for new infrastructure with you WMP. And had approval from NE (consultation for SSSIs) or HE (consultation for SMs) for any historic features on your land parcels which should be included in your WMP map and WMP template

Final submission checklist, you have checked if:

☐ your CS HT proposals are covered by the WMP management objectives, see section 2.2 of the WMP template

☐ you have included any SSSI's and SM's in section 4.2 of the WMP template

☐ your WMP supports all the requirements under the Woodland Improvement Option (WD2) and any other capital item or supplements you intend to apply for

☐ completed the WMP plan of operations (incorporating all information required to apply for the WMP)

☐ attached clear map/s which shows the full area of the woodland with marked parcel references and SBI, see section 4.4.3 of the WMP grant manual (please note – Google maps aren't accepted)

☐ your land and business details are up to date and correct on your Rural Payments account

☐ you are acting as an agent or wish to arrange someone else to act on your behalf, you have updated this information on permissions in Rural Payments

☐ you have attached any continuation sheets you've used in your application.

Note:

Any relevant Consents (tree felling, EIA, HE, planning) need to be in place before your CS HT application can be made into a live agreement.