

# Woodland Creation Case Studies

## Helping local authorities respond to the climate emergency

How woodlands can support your net zero plans



### The challenge

Never has there been a more important time to plant trees and new forests to help tackle the climate emergency and provide a much-needed sanctuary for people and wildlife.

The UK government and local authorities share a common goal to deliver net zero. Over 300 local authorities have now declared a climate emergency<sup>1</sup> with the majority developing abatement, adaptation, and mitigation strategies.

Planting woodlands is only part of the overall solution, but we need to plant trees at scale<sup>2</sup>, and we need to plant them now. New local authority woodlands can also improve air quality, provide restorative green spaces to benefit health and well-being, increase wildlife habitats and connect vital wildlife corridors, and reduce flood risk and costs of water treatment.

The Forestry Commission is on hand to provide guidance and grant support to make woodland creation across local landscapes, towns, and cities a reality.



## Financial and practical support

Like other local authorities, you can follow our 10 step plan towards net zero.

When planting trees at scale there are two financial options available to you through Defra's Nature for Climate Fund:

- 1. Apply for generous grants.** Funding is available to prepare woodland creation plans, cover standard capital costs of tree planting, and provide annual maintenance payments – with additional contributions for delivering wider benefits to society, nature recovery, and the environment.
- 2. Lease land to the Forestry England Woodland Partnership.** You provide the land (minimum 50 ha) and Forestry England does the rest. Forestry England will design, register, plant and manage your site on a 60 or 120 year lease. In exchange you will receive a competitive annual rent. If you choose to enter the Forestry England Woodland Partnership, they will complete steps 6 to 10 for you.

## 10 key steps towards net zero

- 1. Climate emergency declared**
- 2. Calculate your GHG emissions** (various tools available to help including Local Partnerships' Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool)
- 3. Produce and implement abatement, adaptation, and mitigation strategies**
- 4. Commit to tree planting as a key part of your approach to tackling residual emissions**
- 5. Calculate area of new woodland required –** use the Woodland Carbon Code (WCC) calculation tool
- 6. Identify available and suitable land**
- 7. Register land with Woodland Carbon Code (WCC)**
- 8. Plant woodland and complete WCC validation**
- 9. Manage and monitor your new woodland**
- 10. Verify carbon units through independent checks every 10 years. Achieve your CO<sub>2</sub> goals**



## City of York Council: Buying land and leasing it for 120 years with the Forestry England Woodland Partnership

City of York Council purchased an 80 ha site on the outskirts of York to establish a new community woodland from 2022. Having committed to a wide range of emission reduction strategies, the council recognised that they will still need to offset their residual emissions to achieve net zero. After working in close partnership with local Forestry Commission staff and other bodies, the land will be leased to Forestry England for 120 years. During this time, it will be established and managed as a quality community woodland with the council claiming the Woodland Carbon Units. In return, Forestry England will provide the council with a negotiated annual rent.

***“York Community Woodland is such a flagship scheme for our city; demonstrating not only our commitment to change our behaviours but also to change our landscape to boost our local biodiversity, generate green jobs and increase carbon capture across the city”***

Cllr Paula Widdowson, Executive Member for Climate Change and Environment, City of York Council



*"We're on a mission to make Buckinghamshire cleaner and greener, to play our part at a local level to tackle climate change. Planting trees is a key part of that strategy – not only to help offset our carbon emissions but also bring a host of other benefits to our local landscape. Our Bucks Tree Mission brings together a wide range of tree planting initiatives, including planting a minimum of one tree for each resident in Buckinghamshire – over 543,000 trees."*

Jilly Jordan, Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment, Buckinghamshire Council

## Buckinghamshire Council: Planting on council land – supported by Forestry Commission grant aid

Working in partnership with the local Forestry Commission team, Buckinghamshire Council's aim is to plant at least 543,000 trees across its estate. This also involves planting new woods on their agricultural estate. Detailed woodland creation plans have been produced by external consultants for pilot sites, with over 3,400 trees and shrubs to be planted during the 2021/22 planting season. The council will take advantage of the generous planting grants available from the [England Woodland Creation Offer \(EWCO\)](#) and [Forestry England Woodland Partnership](#), and will register all eligible projects with the [Woodland Carbon Code](#). Recent non-market economic analysis on 18.5 ha of woodland on council land identified that the total public benefit in present value terms over 30 years is £354,602 including £196,223 in recreation access benefits, £118,058 in biodiversity benefits, £12,980 in landscape benefits and £27,339 in flood risk management benefits.



## Slough Borough Council: Trees planted and registered with the Woodland Carbon Code

Slough Borough Council was one of the first local authorities to register its new woodland with the [Woodland Carbon Code](#). This planting has now been validated independently and the council is able to accurately calculate the tonnes of carbon sequestered by the new woodland. The woodland planting makes an important contribution to Slough's Climate Change Strategy.

*"This exciting project has enabled us to create an entirely new area of woodland using native species, with huge benefits for the environment and residents"*

Cllr Satpal Palmer, Commissioner for Parks and Open Spaces, Slough Borough Council

*"Initiated in 2013, this 6 ha woodland is forecast to reach over 700 tonnes of sequestered carbon after 25 years and over 1,300 tonnes after 50 years"*

Source: Slough's Climate Change Strategy





## Grant information

### **Woodland Creation Planning Grant (WCPG):**

Enabling applicants to assess the suitability of land for woodland creation, and to design a UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) compliant woodland. A Forestry Commission Woodland Creation Officer can assist in the production of a plan.

### **England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO):**

Supports new woodland creation by covering standard capital costs up to £10,200/ha, providing annual maintenance costs of £350/ha for 10 years, with additional contributions available up to £8,000/ha when delivering wider benefits to society, nature recovery, and the environment.

**The Forestry England Woodland Partnership:** Creates new woodlands across England in partnership with you through a leasehold scheme. Offering commercial rent and providing a guaranteed rental income for 60 or 120 years, with Forestry England responsible for designing, planting, and managing your woodland.

Visit: [gov.uk/forestry/tree-planting-overview](https://gov.uk/forestry/tree-planting-overview) to learn more about grants available to you.

## Top tips

1. Read our guidance on '[Responding to the climate emergency with new trees and woodland](#)'
2. Calculate the area of new woodland needed to tackle your residual emissions. Visit: [woodlandcarboncode.org.uk](https://woodlandcarboncode.org.uk)
3. Talk to other authorities already on the 10 step journey towards achieving their net zero emissions
4. Think about larger blocks of woodland for easier management, greater woodland resilience, and better-connected habitats
5. It's all in the planning. It's important to plant the right tree in the right place to create quality woodland for future generations. For upfront support and advice, speak to a forest agent



## How we can help

Your local Forestry Commission Area team can support you with further advice on woodland creation and guidance on available grants. For local contact information visit: [gov.uk/government/organisations/forestry-commission/about/access-and-opening](https://gov.uk/government/organisations/forestry-commission/about/access-and-opening)

### Endnotes

- 1 Source: Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget – Committee on Climate Change – Dec 2020
- 2 Source: UK Gov Target – 30,000 Has planted / year by 2025

