

National Forest Changing Landscapes Scheme (CLS) Assessment Score

Scoring is based on the contribution a scheme makes to the National Forest Strategy (NFS). To arrive at an equitable but simple scoring system, derived in part from the former Tender Scheme and closely aligned to the NFS, the CLS assessment scoring system is divided into key sections from which a score is applied to each, depending on the content and merit of each scheme.

A value for money score assessment will also to be undertaken by dividing the area of the scheme into the total bid price to provide a £/Ha amount.

The scores are:

Reject = inappropriate or damaging to current landscape or habitats

0 - Poor = minor or no contribution

1 - Average = some contribution to this aspect of the strategy

2 - Good = strong contribution to this aspect of the strategy

3 - Exceptional = very strong contribution to this aspect of the strategy.

Scale of Forest Creation (x2 Weighting)

No scheme should score zero in this category.

1 - 1- 5 hectares

2 - 5-10 hectares

3 - Over 10 hectares

Landscape & Design (x2 Weighting)

Reject – Inappropriate location for the scheme when referring to the Forest Strategy.

0 – Poor design and relation to the landscape.

1 – Meets the Forest Strategy design guidelines; has limited visual landscape impact; has acceptable site design.

2 – Relates well to Landscape Character; demonstrates good landscape fit with adjoining landscape components; has moderate visual landscape impact; has good site design.

3 – Shows innovative site design; the design strategy reflects Landscape Character; achieves landscape connectivity; has high visual landscape impact appropriate to the site's setting.

Public and Other Access (x2 Weighting)

There is an expectation that access is provided with every scheme but there are instances when access does not have to be provided to parts or all of a site e.g. important conservation & habitat feature(s), reasonable privacy or security considerations, isolation and/or impracticability in terms of public access/connection to existing routes, or public safety next to roads, railways, waterways, hazardous industrial operations.

If access is not provided and is without sufficient justification, the scheme may be rejected.

0 – No access provided but clear justification as above.

1 – Permissive access on foot to at least 50% of site (or useful waymarked linear route provided through or around the edge of woodland).

2 – Permissive access to at least 75% of site, including links to existing footpaths and other accessible woodland.

3 – Permissive access to at least 75% of site but also including additional facilities for other users e.g. horse riders, cyclists and people with impaired mobility.

Community Involvement and Engagement

These events could include community tree planting, conservation volunteering activities, heritage or archaeology projects, healthy walking/Get Active projects, environmental education visits or other Forest related community engagement.

0 – No provision for community engagement.

1 – One or two community tree planting events in the development of the site.

2 – Community tree planting plus other community engagement events or activities in the development of the site.

3 – Programme of community engagement events/activities throughout the term of the contract delivering a range of community engagement opportunities (minimum of 5).

Signage & Interpretation

0 – None other than a totem sign, where provided by the NFC.

1 – Site information sign(s) conforming to the NFC signage guidance (*this will be a minimum requirement where there is permissive access*).

2 – Site information sign(s) and waymarking of any trails and facilities.

3 – Site information sign(s), waymarking of any trails and facilities, site interpretation of any special features, website or leaflet.

Nature Conservation (x2 Weighting)

Reject - Damages valuable county or nationally designated sites.

0 - Basic woodland design with no other specific provision for BAP habitats / species.

1 - The woodland includes areas designed to incorporate species and features that will make a contribution to nature conservation.

2 - At least 20% of the total area consists of new or restored (non-plantation woodland) BAP habitats that are to be managed for their wildlife interest.

3 - The scheme design considers the site's location and conditions to fully identify opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. The scheme includes at least 35% of appropriate non-woodland BAP habitats and species, and a management regime which clearly sets out how each of these habitats will be managed to increase its value for biodiversity.

Archaeology, Geology and Heritage

If, following the appropriate consultation with county council and other experts, it can be demonstrated that the site contains no features of archaeological, geological or other heritage interest, the scheme will automatically achieve a score of 1. Please note that the NFC retains the right to check that consultations have taken place with the correct people/bodies to confirm the absence of heritage interest.

Reject - Damage to existing features.

0 - Protection of existing features but no enhancement/interpretation.

1 - Features sympathetically incorporated into scheme and some interpretation.

2 - Design fully takes into account and complements the feature(s) on site.

3 - Scheme includes a full archaeology/heritage strategy. Applicant has liaised and consulted with relevant authorities to influence the design of the scheme and management of the feature(s).

Woodland Economy & Silviculture Practice

Issues to consider under silviculture practice include, for example; higher density planting, varying species selections, species provenance trials, deer rides for larger sites, research plots, and any other appropriate measures. It is expected that in order to be eligible, all schemes must meet the Forestry Commission England Woodland Grant Scheme standards.

0 - No contribution (e.g. *smaller general purpose amenity/conservation woodland*). Basic EWGS adhered to.

1 - Considers future economic use of woodland and includes harvesting and marketing measures in the design, displays some development of silviculture practice.

2 - Maximises economic potential of site and includes harvesting and marketing measures in the design, displays strong development of silviculture practice.

3 – Very strong contribution to the development of silviculture practice and displays innovative / novel approaches to maximise silviculture potential. Maximises economic potential of site and includes harvesting and marketing measures in the design. Includes a strategy for woodfuel, crafts, timber production, generation or expansion of forest business, with the creation of the equivalent of one new job in the sector.

Climate Change

Issues to consider for example include; species choice, provenance and origin, design, carbon sequestration, research potential, habitat creation, water and soil quality / protection, habitat de-fragmentation, sustainable transport links, education and communication and any other appropriate measures.

0 – No conflict with climate change issues.

1 – Considers climate change issues in design and management plan.

2 – Strong contribution to climate change issues. Could be cited by NFC as an example of woodland contributing to addressing climate change through a range of approaches.

3 – Very strong contribution to climate change issues together with intended dissemination to wider audiences through education and research.

Risks

No scheme should score zero in this category;

Reject – Fundamental risk to scheme

1 – Some risk. Confirmation required of land ownership, statutory permissions, landlords' consent or matched funds.

2 – No risks related to land ownership, statutory permissions, landlords' consent or matched funds, but no track record of woodland habitat creation.

3 – No risks attached to proposal in the above categories or in relation to track record of woodland habitat creation.