

Project Proposal

Business Reference Number:	341542	FGS Case Number: (if known)	
Application name:	DOD FARM WOODLAND CREATION		

Introduction

The Woodland Creation Operational Plan allows you to show that you have carefully considered all of the relevant impacts and effects that the work you are proposing might have on the environment, and where appropriate the measures you intend to take to mitigate any adverse effects.

The Operational Plan, including the issues log at Annex 2, can be used to record any pre-application work completed ahead of submitting your woodland creation application (e.g. discussions with stakeholders, site assessment results, etc.).

The Woodland Officer will take account of the details you have given in this Plan when they assess your application and it will also help them to decide on a score for your application.

General Details

You must complete this Woodland Creation Operational Plan and submit it with your Forestry Grant Scheme Woodland Creation application.

The amount of supporting information you give will depend on the scale, location and nature of your application. You should give sufficient detail so that we can properly assess the work you propose. Your local Scottish Forestry (SF) [Conservancy office](#) will be able to provide you with further advice about this.

Please note that the Woodland Officer who will assess your application may request further information or clarification about the details you give in this Operational Plan, especially those that may have an environmental impact on the site.

When you have completed your Woodland Creation Operational Plan, save the document to your computer and then upload to your on-line application.

Business Details

What type of entity is the business that is applying for grant?

To assist us monitor who is benefitting from our grant schemes, we would ask that you select one of the following business types that best describes your business entity:

- Farm Business – Owner
- Farm Business – Tenant
- Crofter – including Crofting/Grazing Committees
- Forestry Business
- Investor – including Private/Trusts/Pension Funds
- Mixed Rural Estate
- Small-scale Forestry Owner (your woodland ownership is less than 20ha)
- Conservation Company/Charity/NGO/Carbon Investor
- Developer
- Temporary Owner

Please select your most appropriate Business Type from the dropdown list:
Investor - inc. Private/Trusts/Pension Funds

General Assessment

The information in your Operational Plan should be based on a thorough assessment of the site. Please complete the following:

Describe the management objectives for the site.

The primary objective is:-

- **To produce timber in the medium and long term through the establishment of productive coniferous and broadleaved woodlands.**

Secondary objectives are:-

- **Mitigation for climate change through woodland expansion on a medium scale.**
- **The protection and enhancement of biodiversity values, through the expansion of the forest habitat networks, the retention and management of areas of conservation value as open ground, and the creation of native woodland.**
- **The diversification of the landscape through the creation of a sensitively designed woodland reflecting the local topography, and addressing identified landscape issues.**
- **The protection of features of archaeological interest.**

Provide a description of the planting site.

Context

The woodland creation proposal for Dod Farm is being developed on behalf of the owner, who wishes to convert their land holding into woodland.

The woodland creation proposal will be progressed through the Scottish Rural Development Programme. As part of the process a range of specific surveys have been completed and consultation with the local community and other stakeholders has been undertaken. The information gathered during the survey and assessment exercise has been used to inform the detailed designed proposals.

In addition to the Operations Plan, the Issues Log, and Appendix 1, the following documents are included in the application.

Maps

Map 1	Location, Context and Viewpoints	1:20,000 scale
Map 2a	General Constraints and Opportunities	1:7,500 scale
Map 2b	Ecological Constraints	1:7,500 scale
Map 2c	Soils	1:7,500 scale
Map 3	Landscape Analysis	1:7,500 scale
Map 4	Concepts	1:7,500 scale
Map 5	Woodland Design	1:7,500 scale
Map 6	Fencing and Access	1:7,500 scale
Map 7	Options and Protection	1:7,500 scale

Appendices

Appendix 1	Ecological Assessment (inc. habitats, birds and protected species) (Max and Sian Carstairs Ecology)
Appendix 2	Archaeology Survey (Calluna Archaeology)
Appendix 3a	Private Water Supply Assessment (EnviroCentre)
Appendix 3b	Private Water Supply Assessment - Addendum (EnviroCentre)
Appendix 4	Drinking Water Protected Areas - Impact Assessment (MHLS)
Appendix 5	Deer Management Plan (MHLS)
Appendix 6	Mapmaker Prospect Landscape Analysis (MHLS)

Appendix 7

Agricultural Impact Assessment (MHLS)

Location

Dod Farm is located roughly 8 km south of Hawick, and about 4 km south of the A7 road on the fringes between Teviotdale and the southern ranges of the Cheviots, in the Scottish Borders. The farm lies on hilly ground on either side of the Dod Burn, which drains into the River Teviot. The farm is accessed via a short track that joins the D24 road. Dod Farmhouse lies at the northern end of the farm, and it is in separate ownership. Priesthaugh Forest, a large scale productive woodland, lies to the south, while Priesthaugh farm lies on the site's western boundary.

(see Map 1 – Location, Context and Viewpoints)

Extent

The property extends to 123.81 ha, and takes in most of the land associated with Dod Farm (which extended to 129 ha). Dod Farm was sold on the open market in 2022, with the farmhouse, steading and a small area of land being sold to a separate party.

The table below provides a breakdown of the intended land uses.

Land Use	Notes	Area (ha)	% of Total
Planting	grant aided	73.57	59.4%
Open Ground	grant aided	8.17	6.6%
Existing Woodland		11.7	9.4%
Enrichment Planting	non grant-aided	1.6	1.3%
Grazing - conservation	within enclosure	5.52	4.5%
Grazing - informal	outwith enclosure	9.27	7.5%
Open Ground	excess/other land	13.98	11.3%
Application Area	Total Area	123.81	59.4%

Topography

As noted above, the farm lies on the southern edge of Teviotdale, on the northern edges of the Cheviot Hills. While the land to the north, towards the River Teviot, is characterised by small but rugged hills, the area around Dod farm is dominated by much larger, domed hills, dissected by incised valleys. The highest hill in the locality is Greatmoor Hill, at 599 m above ordnance datum (aod), but summits around 350-450 m are more common.

Dod Farm itself lies within one of the incised valleys, which cuts southwards into the higher hills. The farm extends westwards to a boundary on a strong ridge feature, oriented north-south. The ridges (and the site's) highpoint is in the south-west corner of the farm, at Muckle Knowe (396 m aod), with the ridges northern end (Gray Coat, 379 m aod) being very prominent in the local landscape. The ridges eastern and northern slopes within the site (which cover ~70% of the site) are steep but fairly uniform, sloping down to the Dod Burn. Gradients around 30% are the norm.

The slopes gradients lessen in places by the watercourse, and there are small pockets of flat ground.

The site includes land on the east side of the Dod Burn, which comprise of some of the lower slopes of the Pike, which is a hill lying 1 km from the site, and rising to 463 m aod. Slopes on this side of the watercourse are relatively gentle, but steepen notably in the south, with gradients of 40% being recorded. The highest ground on the eastern side is around 340 m aod, while the sites lowest point, where the Dod Burn exists the site, is around 230 m aod.

Soils

A survey of the soils present on Dod Farm was undertaken; together with a targeted survey to ascertain the presence and extent of deep peat soils.

Brown earth soils – these predominate on the lower, steep slopes on either side of the Dod Burn. The soils are free-draining, and exhibit high levels of earthworm activity. They generally have a relatively high stone content but are reasonably deep in most places, but less so on the eastern side of the site, despite the presence of rocky outcrops in places. In some places, the brown earths could be described as being upland in character.

Gleys – these are encountered in the lower lying parts of the site, by the Dod Burn, and on parts of the eastern side of the site. In the north, the soils appear to be imperfectly drained, but further upstream, and on higher ground, drainage is impeded.

Peaty Gleys – Peaty gleys are present on the ridge line towards the south of the site, are characterised by having have 10-30 cm depth of organic material above a stiff mottled clay.

Podzols – Podzols are present around the higher ground on Gray Coat, and they are generally free-draining

Peaty Podzols – small pockets of peaty podzols are resented, where an organic upper layer indicates that drainage is generally poor

Alluvium – these are encountered on the small areas of flat ground by the Dod Burn. They are deep and appear to be very fertile.

Deep Peat – Three small pockets of deep peat were recorded; two were set within larger areas of peaty soils in the saddle between Gray Coat and Muckle Knowe, while the third is located in a small depression on the eastern boundary. It is possible that there are further very small pockets of deep peat on the gently sloping ground in the east, but these were not picked up in the 50 m grid survey, and the general location is not being considered for planting due to biodiversity interests.

Drainage

The entire site drains into the Dod Burn. The Burn, which is fast-flowing and between 2-4 m in width, is fed by a number of mapped tributaries, none of which are greater than 1 m in width. The only two of these which are named (Barry Sike and Pyatknowe Sike) are on the eastern slopes, and drain very little of the site itself. The large majority of the site is free draining, but there are few locations where drainage is impeded.

The Dod Burn rises in Priestthaugh Forest to the south, and continues northwards for another 2 km before joining the Allan Water, which flows for a further 4 km before joining the Teviot at Newmill.

The water quality of the Dod Burn is not classified by SEPA, but the entire length of the Allan Water is classed as being in 'moderate' condition, with the Teviot itself being 'good'.

The Allan Water forms part of the River Tweed Special Area of Conservation, with the feature being classified due to its population of Atlantic salmon, among other things. There are no significant areas at risk of flooding along the Dod Burn, but the lower reaches of the Allan Water, and the Teviot around Hawick, have a high flood risk level (SEPA).

The site lies within the Dodburn Drinking Water Protected Area (DWPA), which supplies the Acreknowe Reservoir. This reservoir acts as a contingency feed for the Robertson Water Treatment Works (WTW). While the Dodburn DWPA catchment covers 499 ha, the Robertson WTW DWPA as a whole extends to 4,270 ha. Scottish Water have stated (in their scoping response) that the Robertson WTW is in deficit, but this statement is not backed up by any publicly available data sources.

Ecological Interest

Designations

There are no known designations on or near to the site, but the site drains into the Allan Water 1 km north of the site. The Allan Water forms part of the River Tweed Special Area of Conservation, with the presence of salmon and otters being among the qualifying interests.

Scar Plantation, part of which is within the site, is listed as being of 'Long Established, Plantation Origin'. The other existing woodlands on the farm also appear on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey Map, but are most likely too small to be recorded as LEPO.

Habitats and Plant Species

In the light of known interest in the locality, and as much of the land is semi-improved or unimproved, a habitat survey was commissioned, and was undertaken by Max and Sian Carstairs Ecological Consultants. A copy of their report is contained as Appendix 1.

The table below summaries the habitat types recorded, gives an indication of their scale and coverage, and provides information on their NVC type where relevant.

Habitat Types Recorded

Broad Habitat Types	NVC Types	Area	% of site
Broadleaved plantation	non NVC	10.8	8.7%
Conifer plantation	non NVC	2.0	1.6%
Improved/semi-improved grass	inc. MG9, MG6, non NVC	57.9	46.7%
Bracken	U20	4.0	3.3%
Unimproved grass	U4	10.7	8.7%
Marshy grassland	M23a dominated	15.2	12.3%
Mire - modified	M20, M25	22.0	17.8%
Mire	M17	1.4	1.1%
		124.0	100%

Almost half of the site supports improved and semi-improved grasslands, while woodland

constitute almost 10% of the site. Other significant habitats present include modified mire habitats and marshy grassland. Many of the habitats occur in mosaics, notably mires and marshy grasslands, and while bracken exists in discrete areas, it is also present in mosaics with mires and marshy grassland (where soil conditions are drier).

The Report identified seven habitat types present as being of interest; the first five of these habitat types (following the listing in the table below) are mapped in the Ecological Report as being of 'High Sensitivity' whilst the sixth habitat's presence is targeted noted (being too small to map). The seventh habitat's value is dependant on deep peat underlying it, and it has been mapped as being of 'intermediate sensitivity'.

The table below outlines these habitats:-

Habitat	Notes
1. M23a mire, in mosaic with M25 and M10	Large areas of this habitat mosaic are located by Scar Plantation and on the gently sloping ground south of Barry Sike
2. M23a, with M37 mire	Species rich marshy grasslands with flushes are found in two small flat areas in the centre of the site
3. M23a with U20	The upper stretches of the Dod Burn are flanked by species rich marshy grassland with pockets of bracken
4. M17/M20 blanket bog	Small pockets of bog occur on the high ground, mainly lying on deep peat.
5. Ancient, Semi-Natural Woodland	The vestiges of Scar and Pyat Sike Planation's, which contain mature broadleaved trees (inc. exotics) and younger ash/alder dominated woodland of both natural and planted origins
6. CG10 Calcareous grasslands	Small areas were recorded by target notes (being too small to map), notably on the eastern flank of Gray Coat
7. M25 mire	This habitat would be of value if it occurs on deep peat; small pockets occur in the south of the site.

Groundwater Dependand Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTE) were recorded on site, with habitats deemed to be highly or moderately dependent including the following:-

- CG10
- M23a
- M25
- M37

The highly dependent ecosystems generally overlap with habitats identified as being of high (or potentially high) value, as noted in the table above.

A number of features of habitat value deemed to be of interest were target noted rather than mapped (due to their small scale). These include:-

- TN1 – Carex flacca flush
- TN2 – Carex flacca flush
- TN4 – Base enriched grassland
- TN5 – Species rich MG5c
- TN6 – CG10 grassland
- TN7 – CG10 grassland
- TN8 – M25c

Additionally, 2 further area (within M23a habitat) were flagged up for the presence of broadleaved cotton grass and fragrant (and other) orchids. These locations, as well as the target note locations (FOI 1 and 2), are shown on Map 2a.

Woodlands

There are a number of woodlands located around the Dod Burn and its lower slopes, with a collective area of 12.96 ha. These are detailed in the table below.

Note the names used are as per the OS map with the exception of Pele Wood, which is unnamed on the OS maps. Further, all existing woodlands are shown in some form or other on the 1st ed. OS map, with Woodland no. 1 appearing as the geographically separated Scar Plantation and Garden Plantation, with open ground in between. This open ground has been planted up, but the planting has largely failed.

No./ Area (ha)	Name	Status	Grant	Description
1 5.84	Scar /Pyat Sike/Garden Planation	LEPO/ 1 st ed OS	SFGS 2005	Comprises of the remains of two policy type woods (inc. very tall firs and large beech trees), supplemented by mature, semi-natural native riparian woodland, and pole stage broadleaved planting. Planting in open ground between Scar/Pyat Sike and Garden Plantations has largely failed due to stock grazing (1.34 ha). Woodland extends northwards outwith site, for an additional 3.07 ha. Riparian sections support woodland ground flora.
2 2.41	Brae Plantation	1 st ed OS	FGS 1 1989	Over-mature remnant trees on margins, with core comprising of pole stage broadleaves (oak, beech, ash, sycamore), which have grown well
3 1.16	Heather Wood	1 st ed OS	-	Mature beech wood on shallow soils above the Dod Burn, with an open glade. Little ground flora, and open to stock.
4 1.84	Pele Wood	1 st ed OS	SFGS 2005	Remnant policy woodland, with a few mature trees supplemented by broadleaved planting (at pole stage). Fenced, with extensive bracken cover in significant gaps.

5 0.34	Crow Wood	1 st ed OS	-	Remnant mature trees (S. pine, beech, birch), open to stock.
6 1.37	Young Wood	1 st ed OS	-	Mature planation, primarily larch with sycamore, open canopy with some windblow, and no regeneration Historically extended further upslope.

The Ecological Report shows most of Scar Plantation/Garden Plantation as being of high ecological value. While the remaining woods have limited semi-natural elements as yet, they generally contain mature/over mature broadleaved trees of biodiversity value.

Birds

As the main site comprises of largely semi-improved and unimproved land, with a woodland component it has the potential to provide habitat to a range of birds, including waders, raptors, and black grouse. In recognition of this, a breeding birds survey was undertaken by Max and Sian Carstairs Ecological Consultants. This entailed 3 visits as well as watches for black grouse and raptor activity.

Skylark, a red-listed species, were recorded, with roughly 15 pairs on site, and 5 more in the buffer zone. The site supported roughly 38 pairs of meadow pipit, an amber-listed species, with 8 territories in the buffer. A single pair of oystercatcher were recorded 200 m north of the site, and a pair of curlew (red-listed) were recorded 330 m to the north.

No black grouse were recorded, and there are no records of leks in the wider locality.

Buzzards and kestrel were recorded hunting, but not breeding, on site.

Survey data resulting from a windfarm proposal indicated the presence of a single pair of breeding curlew on site in 2019, but none in 2020. A few flights by goshawk and merlin were also recorded. Dod Fram was included in the Black grouse survey for the windfarm, but no activity was recorded.

Mammals/Protected Species

A Protected Species Survey was undertaken in conjunction with the Ecological Survey (see Appendix 1 for the Report). The only record is of signs of badger activity. Further signs of badger activity were noted during the site survey, and the report of a badger sett contained in the Archaeology Report was checked out, but no sign of a sett was made in the suggested location.

It is thought that otters are very likely to use the Dod Burn corridor for foraging, and the presence of over-mature trees are likely to provide roost sites for bats.

Rabbits were noted in the lower part of the site, and hares are likely to be present.

Roe deer are recorded on site, and the wider countryside holds populations of Sika and Red deer.

Red squirrels are established in Craik Forest, the western edge of which is less than 10 km to the west.

Historical and Cultural Interests

The area around Dod Farm has a rich cultural heritage, and there are numerous scheduled and recorded features within and near to the site. In the light of this known interest, and as large parts of the land is unimproved, an Archaeological Survey was undertaken by Calluna Archaeology in 2024. The survey detailed the 16 recorded features within the farm, as well as describing 33 other sites noted during the survey. These features are briefly described below, along with a note of their Scheduled Monument and Canmore numbers where relevant. A full copy of the archaeology Survey is contained in Appendix 2.

Site no.	Canmore ID (SAM)	Description/interpretation
1	354615 and 344523	Road (medieval) – 'Thieves Road'
2	54024 (SM3391)	Cairn (period unassigned)
3	54043	Cord rig (prehistoric)
4	344533	Pele house (medieval), two structures
5	54101 (SM3459)	Settlement (prehistoric)
6	54096	Cord rig (prehistoric) – within SAM
7	54093	Flint arrowhead findspot
8	344506	Drove road (period unassigned)
9	54090 (SM3432)	Gray Coat Pele house (16 th century)
10	344535	Sheepfold (post-medieval)
11	54095	Cord rig (prehistoric)
12	344527	Linear earthwork - Catrail
13	54094	Enclosure (period unassigned)
14	344532	Stock Enclosure (post-medieval)
15	344534	Stock enclosure (post-medieval)
16	-	Modern building
17	-	Drain
18	-	Terraces (fields/buildings?)
19	-	Modern track
20	-	Rectilinear enclosure
21	-	Natural hollow/quarry/corn drying kiln?
22	-	Linear quarry
23	-	Bank & drain
24	-	Shieling hut & annex
25	-	T-shaped sheep shelter
26	-	Catrail
27	-	Linear bank
28	-	Curving earth bank
29	-	Covered drain
30	-	Longhouse?
31	-	Structure
32	-	Earth bank & ditch
33	-	Rig & furrow
34	-	Linear bank
35	-	Linear bank
36	-	Earth bank

37	-	Drain
38	-	D-shaped enclosure
39	-	Drain & bank
40	-	Flints on track
41	-	Vicinity of footbridge over Barry Sike
42	-	Drystone wall at N end of Garden Plantation
43	-	Bank at S end of Garden Plantation
44	-	Heather Wood enclosing bank
45	-	Rig and furrow
46	-	Quarry (with badger hole)
47	-	Track & bank (modern?)
48	-	Quarry/kiln
49	SBC No 174.	Priesthaugh Designed Landscape

In the main, interest relate to prehistoric settlement and defensive structures and medieval settlements and agricultural activities.

There are three scheduled features within the site, with another scheduled feature immediately adjacent, and other numerous others nearby (these external Scheduled Monuments are not covered by the Archaeology Report. The table below sets out a brief description of the SAM's and notes their location relevant to the site.

Scheduled Mon. Ref.	Description	Location
Within Site		
SM3459	Gray Coat Settlement, prehistoric domestic and defensive structure	On northern tip of Gray Coat, straddling boundary
SM3491	Gray Coat earthworks, cairn	Upper north face of Gray Coat
SM3432	Gray Coat Pele House	On west facing slopes below ridge
Abutting site		
SM3356	Homestead/Enclosure, with cord rig below	Upper north face of Gray Coat, bordering site
Outwith Site		
SM3461	Earthwork (probably medieval)	On valley floor, 300 m west of site
SM3353	Earthworks (probably prehistoric)	Valley floor, 600 m west of site
SM3355	The Dod Settlement (Iron Age)	Valley floor, 400 m north of site
SM2169	Fort and settlement (Iron Age)	Summit of Burgh Hill, 800 m north west
SM2148	Gray Hill earthwork (probable settlement)	Slopes of Gray Hill, 1800 m to north-west

SM3460	Dodburn Hill, prehistoric settlement	Summit of Dodburn Hill, 1,800 m to north
SM2296	Penchrise fort (probable Iron Age)	Summit of Penchrise Pen, 1,400 m north-east of site
SM3428	Pen Sike settlement	On south facing slopes of Penchrise Pen, 1,200 north-east of site
SM2294	White Hill Fort, prehistoric settlement and fort	On southern tip of White Hill ridge, 300 m to north-east of site
SM79	Pyat Knowe enclosure, settlement	On knowe above Pyat Sike, 300 m to east of site
SM4935/SM 3457	Catrail linear earthworks (prehistoric fortification)	Two stretches of the Catrail, crossing the Pike and White Hill, within 100 m of site boundary.

Priesthaugh Designed Landscape

While Dod Farm is not listed as an Inventory or Non-Inventory Designed Landscape, it is contained on the Scottish Borders Council's Schedule of Designed Landscapes. This Schedule comprises of 184 such sites, with each site being described, along with identification of notable features and a statement of significance.

The description notes that the landscape contains '*unfenced small woodland blocks of uncertain origin*'. The fact that the woods are named '*suggest purposeful and personal attention of owner and some design intent*' although '*other planting in locality shows similar pattern of planting, on an equivalent scale, simply to provide shelter for sheep*'. The notable characteristics simply states '*named small tree blocks in remote upland glen of uncertain origin*', while its significance is given as '*Local, some*'.

The location of relevant features within and close to the site are shown on Map 2, and the location of relevant scheduled monuments in the wider area are shown on Map 1.

Landscape Interests

Designations

There are no known regional or local landscape designations affecting Dod Farm

Description

Dod Farm lies in an area of marked topography, characterised by a series of steeped-sided, domed hills, dissected by small valleys. The dominance of pastoral agriculture, with the presence of coniferous forests to the south creates a fairly open, medium-scale landscape with limited contrast.

Dod Farm occupies both side of one of the smaller valleys that cut into the hills, with western site boundary running along Gray Coat Ridge; this pronounced ridge separated Dod Burn valley from a larger valley containing the Allan Water. The end of the ridge is visually prominent from one of the view roads that penetrate into the hills, with the ownership boundary being evident

through different land cover types.

The presence of a series of small broadleaved woodlands within the Dod Burn valley separates it from most of the surrounding valleys, which are largely treeless. These woods are attractive features, and they create a sense of enclosure and intimacy that is lacking elsewhere. The northern edge of Priestthaugh Forest frames the southern edge of the site, forming a visual detractor.

The locality is also characterised by the presence of numerous hillforts and settlements, including one on Gray Coats summit, indicating a long history of human influence in the area. The landscape remains essentially rural, with the aforementioned road, and scattering of farms and cottages being the only clear sign of human activity.

A Landscape Analysis, including lines of force, is included on Map 3.

Visibility

For the most part, the main body of Dod Farm is of very low visibility, being completely contained within a steep sided valley, open only to the north. Further, there are very few visual receptors in the area, even to the north. There are no houses with direct or intimate views onto the site, although the D 24 road does allow for views up the Dod Burn valley, and onto the ridge line occupied by Gray Coat and Muckle Knowe.

That said, parts of the site are of visual sensitivity, including:-

Gray Coat- the site occupies the eastern half of this hill overlooking the D 24, and the ownership boundary runs straight up the hillside. Its importance is heightened by the presence of a hill fort.

Western Ridge – this runs between Muckle Knowe and Gray Coat- while the site itself is not visible from the north west, this ridgeline is, and trees planted on or near the boundary will become visible in time, although the higher hills to the south-east will continue to form the skyline

Boundary with Priestthaugh Forest – While the current edge of the forest is very linear and visually uniform, only the trees on the summit of Muckle Knowe, and the lower edge on Peelhope Brae have any real visual sensitivity

A viewpoint analysis was undertaken, with the results summarised in the table below, and shown on Map 1.

Viewpoint Analysis

No. and Location	Visibility
North - Distant	Travelling southwards on the eastern leg of the C 24 road the site first becomes visible about 5 km to the north. The view is characterised by large, grass covered hills with rounded summits. Priestthaugh Forest is visible on the skyline above Gray Coat, and the woods on the sites western slopes (shown in green) are the only broadleaved woodlands visible in the landscape, although small-scale, linear coniferous woods break up the foreground.
North - Intimate	Clear views onto the northern end of Gray Coat, and up the Dod Burn valley towards the northern edge of Priestthaugh Forest, become available from the road roughly 500 m north of the site. Existing broadleaved woodlands within the site provide a degree of diversity and enclosure that is lacking elsewhere

	in the locality, with the landscape being dominated by large steep-sided hills with rounded summits, and uniform landcover.
North-West-Middle Distant	Gray Coat is visible from the western leg of the C 24 from 2.5 km distant, with its visibility diminishing towards the site. The rigid north-western and north eastern margins of Priesthaugh Forest sit on the far skyline (occasionally overtopped by higher open hills to the south-east), while the smooth-sided ridge between Gray Coat and Meikle Knowe dominates the middle distance. The site itself is not visible, but its western boundary sits on the ridgeline.
Other Locations – west, south, and east	Visibility from the west, south, and east is largely prevented by the presence of higher ground, while there are very few visual receptors in these locations. That said, the western boundary sits on the ridgeline visible from a few houses to the west of the site
Other Locations – north and north west	While the higher parts of the site are visible from a large area to the north and north west, there are few visual receptors, with no houses having clear and intimate views of the site, and all such views are distant.

In addition to the external visibility of the sites, the summit of Gray Coat, and its hill fort, offers panoramic views over the surrounding countryside, including onto similar hill forts and other related archaeological features. Intimate views along the Dod Burn valley within the site are available from the recognised paths within the site, but user levels appear to be very low.

Guidance

NatureScot places Dod Farm within Landscape Character Type (LCT) 93 – Southern Uplands with Scattered Forests, with the land to the south being in LCT 96 – Southern Uplands with Forest, while LCT 101 – Rocky Upland Fringe lies to the north (around the River Teviot). While these LCT assessment provide a clear picture of the landscape types present, they do not provide anything by way of management guidance.

In terms of the 'Borders landscape assessment (ASH,1998), Dod Farm lies within the 'Southern Uplands Type – with scattered forest.

The area around Dod Farm exhibits all of the identified key characteristics of the Landscape Type, which are noted below.

- Large scale rolling landform with higher dome or cone shaped summits
- Areas of peatland and heather moorland
- Mosaic of grassland, bracken and rushes on lower ground
- Locally prominent scattered large coniferous plantations

Relevant positive and negative attributes noted in the Landscape Assessment include:-

Positive

- Distinctive smooth rolling landform creates strong identity
- Degree of remoteness, 'wildland' quality and grandeur of scale unique within region
- Significant areas of semi-natural vegetation
- Drystone dykes and sheep stells

Negative

- *Relative absence of screening features*
- *High visual sensitivity*
- *Relatively low diversity of landscape elements and features*
- *Localised visual intrusion e.g. forest edges, pylons*

The 'Borders landscape assessment' does not set out LCA specific management guidelines for trees and woodlands. The relevant 'key landscape issues' for the 'Southern Uplands Type-with Scattered Forest' landscape type are:-

- *Potential threat of visual intrusion into core wild land areas from forest expansion*
- *Potential threats to vulnerable areas of semi-natural vegetation*
- *Decline of existing broadleaf woodland fragments*

Land Use

Dod Farm historically operated as a small-scale cattle and sheep-rearing farm. At the time of its sale it supported around 270 ewes.

While most of the farm was in rough pasture, improved grass paddocks were located near to the steading and by the Dod Burn, and hay or silage was produced. Around 10.3 % of the land is wooded, including both historic woodlands and newly created mixed and broadleaved woodlands. That said, the new woods are largely on the footprint of the historic woodlands

The entire farm is categorised as being Land Capability for Agriculture 5.3 (land capable of supporting improved grass, but deteriorates quickly). Note that only the 'national scale' data is available for the area.

In terms of Land Capability for Forestry, nearly all of the land is classed as F5 - land with limited flexibility for the growth of tree crops, while a small area on Muckle Knowe is classed as LCF 6

The locality around Dod Farm is essentially rural, with a low population. Pastoral agriculture is the predominant land use, notably to the immediate west and to a large swathe of ground to the north and north-east.

Productive forestry is the major land use to the south and south-west, with the bordering Priesthaugh Forest marking the eastern extent of the very extensive Wauchope Forest. Woodland cover to the north is limited in the main to small-scale shelterbelts and riparian woodlands, although there has been sizeable woodland creation project undertaken at Acreknowe, some 3.5 km to the north-east.

While there are no windfarms in the vicinity of the site just now, the land to the south and south-west is subject to a planning application for a large-scale windfarm (Teviot Windfarm). The current proposals include for turbine erection on Priesthaugh Forest, very near to the boundary with Dod Farm.

Recreation

There are recognised paths within and adjoining the site; the two within the site are both recorded as rights of way and are shown in the Council's Core Path Plan.

Route UPTe/BR99 (known as 'Thieves Road') runs southwards from the D 24 public road, past Dod farmhouse and follows a route on the mid slopes of the western side of the Dod Burn valley before crossing into Priesthaugh Forest, heading towards Hermitage. The route is

surfaced for its northern stretch (having been used for farm management purpose) but the path becomes less discernible south of Gray Coat Pele House. Anecdotally the route is rarely walked, but it does offer the potential to take a circular walk by connecting to UPTE/BR100, which follows the Priesthaugh Burn back to the D 24.

Route UPTE/BR10 splits off the UPTE/BR99 just to the south of Dod farmhouse, and follows a rough track down to the Dod Burn. After crossing a ford in the burn north of its confluence with Barry Sike, the route then ascends the saddle between Pencrise Hill and Maiden Paps before connecting to a promoted path (UPTE/85P) just within Priesthaugh Forest. While the stretch between Dod Farmhouse and the burn is evident on the ground (albeit on a different line than that shown on the SBC map), there is no discernible track on the east side of the burn. The presence of a structured gap in the dyke just to the north of the sites north-eastern corner suggests the historic route runs on the north side of the boundary dyke, and outwith the site. Again anecdotally, there is no use made of this route.

The Strava heat map covering the site shows no sign of any use being made of the site.

Services

The land to the north of the site boundary is crossed by Scottish Water pipes and by an electrical power supply line, but neither impact the site itself. The access track serving the property crosses a large water pipe. As noted above, the site lies within a Drinking Water Protected Area.

Dod Burn Farm historically obtained its water supply from a spring located close the northern boundary. While the farm has recently been connected to the mains water supply, due to the poor flow of this service, the owners wish to maintain their private water supply. There are no other private water supplies fed from the site.

In the light of the PWS serving Dod Farmhouse, EnviroCentre were commissioned to investigate the private water supply, and to assess the potential impact of the woodland creation proposals.

The extent of the private water catchment is shown on Map 2 – Constraints.

Provide details of discussions with neighbours, local communities and consultees. For Community Councils and neighbours please evidence who was contacted, date and method of contact used (e.g. meeting, leaflet drop, letter etc.) Where reasonable, you may just identify street names (e.g. larger urban areas).

Neighbour and Community Consultation

The site is located within what is essentially a rural landscape, and the population level in the surrounding area is very low.

As part of the design process, a copy of the concept design map (Map 4), together with some explanatory information was delivered (by post) to sixteen addresses, including all neighbouring landowners and nearby residents. Similar information was sent to Upper Teviotdale and Borthwick

Community Council. In addition, ongoing liaison has been maintained with the owners of Dod Farmhouse.

The responses and resulting actions and amendments are set out in the attached Issues Log.

Other Stakeholder Consultation

Initial consultation was also undertaken with a range of organisations, including:-

- Scottish Borders Council - inc. Planning, Archaeology, Access, Landscape and Biodiversity staff
- Scottish Borders Council - Roads Dept. and Timber Transport Officer
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- NatureScot
- Scottish Water
- Rural Payments and Inspections Division
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Eskdale and Liddesdale Deer Management Group

Liaison was maintained with Scottish Forestry staff (including a site visit).

You must carry out a site-based assessment of soil and vegetation to match species choice with the particular site. Refer to [\(ESC-DSS\)](#) during this process.

List the site surveys undertaken to inform tree species selection. For example: soil survey, soil depth survey, vegetation survey.

Informative surveys undertaken include:

- **Walkover Constraints and Site Survey** – to obtain information of general vegetation patterns, site topography, archaeology, woodlands in the locality, boundaries, etc.
- **Habitat Survey** (Max and Sian Carstairs Ecology)
- **Protected Species Survey** (Max and Sian Carstairs Ecology)
- **Breeding Birds Survey** (Max and Sian Carstairs Ecology)
- **Archaeological Survey** (Calluna Archaeology)
- **Walkover Soils Survey** – see 'Description' section and Map 2c for further details.
- **Landscape Analysis** - see 'Description' section and Maps 1 and 3 for further details.
- **Private Water Supply Assessment** (EnviroCentre)

Please indicate the climatic suitability of the site for the tree species you have chosen.

Use the [Scottish Forestry Map Viewer](#) - see the 'FGS Climatic Site Suitability' data.

An Ecological Site Classification (ESC) analysis was run for seven locations, covering typical and more extreme site conditions in terms of soil type, moisture, and exposure. These locations are shown on Map 2c. The ESC data defaults appeared to match site conditions in terms of SMR and SNR in most situations, but minor changes were made in a few instances to reflect the actual site conditions. In addition, local shelter was included in two locations to reflect high levels of topographic and silvicultural shelter.

ESC – Species Suitability

No	ESC 1		ESC 2		ESC 3		ESC 4	
NGR	NT 473040		NT 472048		NT 473053		NT 475053	
Location	Meikle Cairn summit		Saddle on ridge		Below Grey Coat		Lower northern edge	
Soil type	Podzol		Peaty podzol		Upland brown earth		Brown earth	
Vegetation	heath		wet heath		acid grass		imp. grass	
SMR	fresh		fresh		fresh		fresh	
SNR	poor		poor		poor		medium	
Drainage	no		no		no		no	
Fertiliser	no		no		no		yes	
DAMS Score	15		18		14		13 to 11	
Species	Suitability	Y. class	Suitability	Y. class	Suitability	Y. class	Suitability	Y. class
Scots pine	v. suitable	10	suitable	7	v. suitable	11	v. suitable	13
N. spruce	suitable	14	marginal	8	suitable	15	v. suitable	21
Sitka spruce	suitable	17	suitable	15	suitable	16	v. suitable	23
Douglas fir	suitable	10	unsuitable	3	suitable	10	suitable	13
P. silver fir	v. suitable	20	suitable	15	v. suitable	20	suitable	21
W. r. cedar	suitable	12	marginal	5	suitable	12	v. suitable	17
Downy birch	suitable	6	suitable	4	suitable	5	suitable	6
Silver birch	suitable	6	marginal	3	suitable	7	v. suitable	9
Sycamore	suitable	5	suitable	5	suitable	5	v. suitable	5
Beech	suitable	6	marginal	3	suitable	6	v. suitable	8
Sessile oak	suitable	4	marginal	2	suitable	4	suitable	8
Aspen	suitable	7	suitable	6	suitable	6	v. suitable	6
C. alder	suitable	5	marginal	4	suitable	5	suitable	11
Wild cherry	suitable	4	unsuitable	0	suitable	4	suitable	6

No	ESC 5		ESC 6		ESC 7	
NGR	NT 476046		NT 479043		NT 482048	
Location	Central valley		Lower valley slope		northeastern edge	
Soil type	gley		shallow brown earth		gley	
Vegetation	imp. grass		acid grass		marshy grass	
SMR	fresh		fresh to slightly dry		very moist	

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SNR	poor to medium		poor		poor	
Drainage	no		no		yes	
Fertiliser	no		yes		yes	
DAMS Score	11 to 9		12		14	
Species	Suitability	Y. class	Suitability	Y. class	Suitability	Y. class
Scots pine	v. suitable	14	v. suitable	13	v. suitable	10
N. spruce	v. suitable	23	suitable	17	suitable	15
Sitka spruce	v. suitable	24	suitable	18	v. suitable	21
Douglas fir	v. suitable	17	v. suitable	17	marginal	6
P. silver fir	v. suitable	23	suitable	17	v. suitable	20
W. r. cedar	v. suitable	21	suitable	14	suitable	12
Downy birch	v. suitable	6	marginal	4	v. suitable	8
Silver birch	v. suitable	10	v. suitable	9	suitable	7
Sycamore	v. suitable	9	v. suitable	8	v. suitable	8
Beech	v. suitable	9	v. suitable	9	suitable	5
Sessile oak	v. suitable	6	v. suitable	6	suitable	4
Aspen	v. suitable	16	suitable	8	v. suitable	10
C. alder	suitable	5	unsuitable	0	suitable	6
Wild cherry	suitable	8	suitable	5	suitable	6

In summary much of the site is suitable for a wide range of productive coniferous and broadleaved species, notably on the lower ground. Species choice is restricted to a smaller number of coniferous species in the more exposed locations. These findings are supported by on-site evidence in terms of the growth of trees both within, and next to the site.

ESC- NVC Type Suitability

No	ESC 1	ESC 2	ESC 3	ESC 4
NGR	NT 473054	NT 477052	NT 782047	NT 478042
Location	mid slopes	by Dod Burn	eastern slopes	southern valley
Soil type	brown earth	brown earth	gley	gley
Vegetation	acid grass	semi imp. grass	marshy grass	marshy grass
SMR	fresh	moist	very moist	moist
SNR	poor	poor	poor	poor
DAMS Score	14	11	16	12
NVC Type				
W3 Sallow/bottle sedge	unsuitable	unsuitable	suitable	unsuitable
W4 Birch/purple moor grass	unsuitable	suitable	v. suitable	suitable
W7 Alder-ash/yellow pimpernel	marginal	marginal	unsuitable	marginal
W9 Upland mixed broadleaves/dogs mercury	unsuitable	unsuitable	unsuitable	unsuitable

W11 Upland mixed broadleaves/bluebell	suitable	suitable	suitable	suitable
W17 Upland oak-birch/blaeberry	suitable	suitable	marginal	suitable
W18 Scots pine/heather	suitable	suitable	suitable	suitable

The results indicate the NVC suitability is very much linked to the varied site conditions. The presence of NVC W7 woodland within Scar Planation suggests that the site is also suitable for this NVC type.

Woodland Strategy: Describe how your proposal fits with the Local Authority woodland strategy.

The Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy (2005) sets a target of increasing woodland cover to 25% by 2050, as a means of delivering a range of economic, ecological, landscape and cultural benefits. Underpinning this is a set of supporting values pertaining to sustainability, quality, integration, and community involvement (amongst other aspects).

The Strategy identifies five themes. The proposal at Dod Farm will contribute towards four of these themes, as detailed in the table below.

Strategic Themes , Actions, and Compliance

Objectives	Key Actions	Compliance
Theme 1 - Contributing to the sustainable development of the Scottish Borders Economy		
Address issues associated with the Regional Timber Transport infrastructure	Encourage further implementation, improvement and review of the 'Preferred Routes Agreement'	The site has direct access onto an 'consultation route', and this has a short link to the A 7 trunk road.
Theme 2 - Expanding and diversifying the Scottish Borders Woodland Resource		
To encourage the expansion of high quality woodland of appropriate scale, character, and purpose to achieve the optimum balance of land uses	Encourage woodland expansion that is appropriate to location that delivers the SBWS, meets UKFS and FC Guidelines, and has regard to SBLBAP	The woodland design complies with FCS guidelines and the UKFS, and will assist in delivering aspects of the LBAP (largely through native woodland creation)
	Target funding that will encourage planting of multi-benefit native and riparian woodlands in preferred and potential locations	The proposals include native woodland planting. Largely along the Dod Burn and its tributaries, amount to 15% of the total planting, with additional broadleaved planting elsewhere

		on site. This will extend the native woodland habitat network 2 km upstream from Dod Burn Fliter Cottage to Priesthaugh Forest.
	<i>Seek opportunities to reducing global carbon emissions</i>	The proposals are on a medium scale, and will delivery commensurate amounts of carbon capture. No deep peat will be planted, and the site is readily accessible in terms of timber haulage.
<i>To deliver the targets set out in the Scottish Forestry Strategy</i>	<i>Encourage woodland expansion to attain target of 25% cover by 2050</i>	The proposals will deliver roughly 82 ha of new woodland, which will assist in meeting the Strategy's targets.
Theme 3 - Protecting and enhancing the Scottish Borders Landscape, Biodiversity, and Cultural Heritage		
<i>To promote the role of trees, woodlands, and forests in protecting and enhancing the Regions Natural and Designed Landscape</i>	<i>Promote the restoration of native and other woodland as a means of enhancing the landscape</i>	Almost 10 ha of native broadleaved woodland will be created focused along the Dod Burn and by adjacent existing broadleaved woodlands, which will be safeguarded from stock grazing.
	<i>Support proposals for well-designed new planting that meet FC forest design principles and take opportunities to improve the attractiveness of the landscape with particular emphasis on improving forest edges</i>	The design will soften the appearance of the abrupt woodland edges visible on the northern edges of Priesthaugh Forest. The proposal will result in more cohesive woodland shape, by integrating the numerous small woods within the site.
<i>To promote the role of trees, woodlands, and forests in protecting and enhancing the Regions Archaeological and Cultural Heritage</i>	<i>Ensure that cultural heritage sites are safeguarded through compliance with FCS Guidelines</i>	The design has been informed by an archaeological survey and assessment In addition the design ensures that intervisibility between the hill fort of Gray Coat and similar features in the locality will be maintained.
<i>To protect and enhance the biodiversity value of the Scottish Borders woodland resource</i>	<i>Maximise opportunities for native/riparian woodland</i>	Almost 10 ha of native broadleaved woodland will be created, focused on riparian zones and adjoining existing broadleaved woodland. Biodiversity interest along some of the watercourses inhibits the

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		amount of riparian woodland planting that can be achieved.
	<i>Create strategic links between otherwise fragmented native woodlands</i>	Native woodland planting will expand on existing woodlands, with are largely broadleaved, but not native, in character, as well as establishing the building blocks for further native woodland expansion along the Dod Burn.
	<i>Ensure that there is an effective collaborative mechanism in place for the management of deer, squirrels, and other herbivores</i>	The new woodland will be effectively kept and the owner will co-operate with neighbouring owners and tenants in vermin control A deer management plan has been produced.
	<i>Encourage sensitive woodland expansion, ensuring consideration the requirements of non-woodland priority habitats and species</i>	The woodland design has been informed by an Ecological Survey and Assessment, and identified habitats of interest will be retained and protected.
<i>To promote the role of trees, woodlands, and forest in the management, protection, and enhancement of the Region's water resources</i>	<i>Ensure that the woodland expansion does not jeopardise water quality or the inherent characteristics of water courses</i>	The Forest and Water guidelines will be strictly adhered to; and riparian areas will be buffered. No ploughing will be undertaken.
	<i>With partners, identify where woodland expansion could have a positive impact on water quality and flood plain management</i>	In the medium-long term, the woodland will lead to a reduction in water yield of roughly 2.4 % from the site, while peak flow rates will be reduced. Both of these impacts will assist in reducing flooding in the high risk zones downstream (which includes parts of Hawick).
Theme 4 – The role of trees, woodlands, and forests in contributing to the quality of life in Scottish Borders		
<i>To improve opportunities for public access to woodlands for recreation, health and well-being</i>	<i>Proactively increase provision of public access to woodlands, linking to the core paths network particularly in proximity to towns and settlements</i>	The removal of agricultural activities will make recreational access easier than it has been historically. All existing routes will be retained within an open ground corridor, which all user self-closing gates being installed to facilitate access, including a link through to Priesthaugh. In addition access through the site

		as a whole, and notably to Gray Coat Hill Fort and Pele House will be accommodated through rides and open ground provision.
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The Strategy identifies four woodland expansion categories, and identifies whether areas are 'preferred', 'potential', 'sensitive' or unsuitable for each of the four categories. The Table below lists the potentially relevant categories Dod Farm, and gives their classification.

Category	Classification	Notes
Lowland/Upland Fringe Woodlands	All Potential	This category can apply to woods up to 100 ha in size
Upland/Upland Fringe Forests and woodlands	All Potential	This category is thought to be the most relevant one to the site, given timber production is the primary objective
Native and Riparian Woodlands	Nearly all Preferred	Mainly relevant to riparian zones and around existing woodland within the site

The Strategy is supported by a Technical Advice Note (2012) which was produced to provide guidance to allow for integrated and sensitive proposals which consider economic and community impacts as well as environmental ones.

The guidance provided for Upland/Upland Fringe woodlands is set out below (as this is the most relevant woodland category for Dod Farm), under 'issues' and 'benefits', together with details of how the design addresses the relevant issues and delivers the anticipated benefits.

Issues	Addressed by
<i>Scale and mass of large scale planting makes good design / adherence to UK Forestry Standard guidelines imperative. Re-structuring of mid-20th century planting schemes is required to achieve compliance with modern standards.</i>	The design fully complies with FCS guidance and UKFS, and the medium scale of the woodland is thought to be appropriate to that of the surrounding landscape. The planting will assist in addressing design issues on the margins of Priesthaugh Forest.
<i>Ground cultivation - minimise ground disturbance to that which is essential for effective establishment of trees, reflecting good silvicultural and current best practice and appropriate relevant guidelines. Aim to maintain or improve water runoff characteristics and carbon storage and increase long term tree stability, and minimise visual impact.</i>	The cultivation and drainage proposals comply with FC 'Cultivation of Soils for Forestry (Bulletin 119)' and the SF Practice Note 'Cultivation guidance for upland productive woodland creation sites. No ploughing or linear cultivation will be undertaken, and buffers will be maintained around watercourses, deep peat and ecologically sensitive areas.
<i>Consider effects on local employment and the wider local economy from the change of land use. Identify opportunities to</i>	No direct adverse impacts are anticipated in terms of agricultural employment, as the farm ceased operating a few years ago. The proposals

<i>create / safeguard local jobs / opportunities to use local workforce and develop local skills in forestry work.</i>	will result in a small increase in employment in the forestry sector.
<i>Consider potential to secure or develop other uses, such as recreational uses, that will contribute to the local economy.</i>	The site's isolated location, within a sparsely populated locality, suggests that there are limited opportunities for recreational uses, but public access will be available, including along established routes, with the absence of agricultural stock making access easier.
<i>Identify proposed timber extraction route for new planting schemes and any expected works required to provide the necessary transport infrastructure.</i>	The site is accessed directly off an 'consultation' timber haulage route. A Timber Haulage Management Plan will be produced, following local liaison, prior to any timber being moved, and no additional works should be required. The presence of a Scheduled Monument close to the road just north of the farm has been noted, and will be addressed in the Plan.
<i>Maximise opportunities for species diversity to reduce extent of monoculture and widen the timber resource base so that local processors may benefit e.g. by producing timber for local construction.</i>	While much of the site is not suitable for productive broadleaves, a range of diverse coniferous species are included in the design. In more sheltered areas productive broadleaves will be planted, and these should be capable of both producing firewood, and in the longer term, quality timber.
<i>Where there are large areas of unplanted open ground, the design should seek to make these available for other productive uses to assist an integrated approach to land use.</i>	Two fields, near to the farm steading, have been identified as being of floristic interest, and they will be retained in agricultural use, and will be grazed in a manner designed to retain their existing interest While there is significant open ground elsewhere, including areas of floristic interest, it is not feasible for these areas to be economically grazed due to their location and limited scale.
<i>Developing integrated land use solutions for agriculture and forestry in marginal hill farming areas in order to maximise employment generated by both farming and forestry.</i>	In recent years it proved impossible to manage the farm profitably, due to its limited size, poor infrastructure, and lack of investment. Given this, the large majority of the farm will be included within the application area, but as noted above, some land will be 'conservation' grazed.
<i>Ensure that the community has been engaged with the development of the proposal so that any local issues are identified.</i>	Neighbours and residents in the general locality of the scheme have been consulted, as has the local Community Council.
<i>Maintaining integrated habitat networks protecting both priority open habitats (e.g. blanket bog, upland heath) and wooded networks (e.g. native woodland)</i>	The Ecological Survey has identified areas of conservation value, and these will be protected in the main. Following input from NatureScot, low density native broadleaved planting will be

<i>fragments) and the species depending on these habitats.</i>	targeted onto less diverse riparian margins, including pockets of bracken, The proposals will create an enhanced forest habitat network by expanding native woodland and open ground along the Dod Burn, and by connecting with the existing native woodlands on site.
Benefits	Delivered by
<i>Production of timber and fuel resources that will contribute to the rural economy</i>	Around 60 ha of productive woodland will be created, leading to direct and indirect employment benefits.
<i>Enhancement of the landscape - where well designed</i>	While most of the site is of limited external visibility, it is recognised that the ridge line and northern face of Gray Coat are visually sensitive, and that there are key views out from the prehistoric fort on the hills summit. A landscape analysis has been undertaken, along with a visual impact assessment (with perspectives produced) in order to address these sensitivities.
<i>Provide locations for rural recreation (e.g. walking, cycling)</i>	Existing recognised routes will be maintained within an open ground corridor, all-ser access gates will be fitted where these routes enter and exit Dod Farm, and access to the hill fort on Grey Coat will be facilitated, with unfettered access being available throughout the site.
<i>Potential benefits, where well designed, to catchment run-off and flood alleviation through moderation of peak and low water flows, increased percolation to ground water and reduction of sediment load and control of pollutants.</i>	While there will be a very minor increase in peak flow rates initially, as the woodland establishes, water yield is forecast to drop slightly. The creation of wide riparian buffer around the Dod Burn will moderate peak flows, and reduce sedimentation and flow of pollutants associated with agricultural activity.
<i>Creation of new habitats for wildlife and priority species (e.g. red squirrel)</i>	The creation of 10 ha of native woodland will be of ecological benefit, particularly as these new woodlands are focused along the main burn running through the site, and as they link to existing broadleaved woodlands. Red squirrels are known to be present in Priesthaugh Forest, and sightings have been made in the countryside to the north of Dod Farm, and they will benefit from the wide range of coniferous species proposed for the site.
<i>Contribution to national carbon reduction and woodland expansion targets</i>	The planting is on a medium scale, and will assist commensurately in attaining national carbon reduction targets

The Technical Advice Note records that Dod Farm is located within the 'Central Southern Uplands' Landscape Region. It sets out a number of priority issues which require to be addressed; relevant issues are noted below, along with how the design has addressed them.

Compliance with Regional Landscape Guidance

Priority Issues	Compliance
Pressures for new planting on marginal farmland with associated concerns of reduction in economic activity and population loss associated with the former land use.	A brief Agricultural Impact Assessment is included in the application; no loss of agricultural employment is forecast, and no loss of population will occur, while there will be an increase in employment in the forestry sector.
Need to ensure best practice in forest design to avoid adverse effects on landscape and consequent impacts on tourism.	The site is not visually prominent from main tourist routes and visitor attractions, and it should not impact on tourists' experiences. The design adheres to FCS and LA Guidance.
Strains on road network as first rotation timber harvests from existing forests are extracted.	Given the range of growing conditions, and of species mixes used, the first phase of felling will likely be staggered over a 15-30 year period. Internal felling couple structures have been built into the design, and timber production will be on a small to medium scale. A timber haulage management plan will be produced prior to any timber being extracted.
Reversing habitat fragmentation of native woodland remnants.	The forest habitat network will be extended along the Dod Burn, with links created to the numerous small-scale existing woods on the valley slopes.
High peat content of some soils needs to be conserved with implied restrictions on woodland expansion and management.	The soils survey identified very little deep peat; areas recorded as such are retained as open ground, and buffered. The extent of peaty gley and peaty podzol soils present is limited, and only limited amounts of soil disturbance will occur.

The Technical Design Note also lists a number of priority issues which require to be addressed; relevant issues are noted below, along with how the design has addressed them.

Delivery of Woodland Expansion Priorities

Priorities for Woodland Expansion	Delivery
<i>Potential for new native woodland expansion to contribute to integrated habitat networks linking existing woodlands along river valleys and tributaries and in those areas identified as beneficial in Solway-Tweed River Basin Management Plan and Flood Risk Management plans. There is also potential</i>	While the Dod Burn is not included within SEPA's river quality classification, the Teviot Water is rated as being in 'good' ecological condition, and the Allan Water as being in 'moderate' condition. The creation of native woodlands along riparian zones within the site, in tandem with protection of ecologically valued wetland habitats will assist in maintaining and potentially improving conditions

<i>for new native woodlands as part of larger scale ecological restoration schemes in some areas</i>	Significant areas downstream of the site are shown as being of medium and high flooding risk. The creation of riparian buffers will, in time improve water quality, while the woodlands will reduce overall water yields, and reduce peak flows, to a limited extent
<i>Potential for new coniferous forest subject to retaining a reasonable balance of open ground habitats and forest and avoiding significant fragmentation of existing open habitats. Such woodlands should be focused towards: improving the landscape fit of existing adjacent plantations; improving connectivity of woodland habitats; creating more effective linkages between existing productive woodlands to facilitate more effective timber transport routes.</i>	In terms of the site itself, roughly 30% of the land will be retained as open ground, while pastoral agriculture will remain the dominant land use, notably to the north of Dod Farm. The visual impact of the proposal on the landscape will be limited due to the fact that it will form an extension of Priesthaugh Forest, and as most of the site is obscured from public view. As noted elsewhere, the proposal will enhance habitat network links as well as softening the appearance of some hard edges on Priesthaugh Forest.
<i>Where larger scale planting is proposed, the associated loss of hill farming land, particularly in bye land, timber transport pressures, community and economic impacts have been expressed as concerns in some areas e.g. Ettrick Valley. New, large scale woodland proposals that involve loss of farming activity should demonstrate that the issues identified in Part 1 have been considered. Focus should be on well-balanced integrated proposals to meet economic and social as well as environmental objectives.</i>	The proposal has arisen following the sale of the farm on the open market. The large majority of the land will be within the woodland creation application area, but a small area of land will be 'conservation' grazed. A brief Agricultural Impact Assessment is appended to the application; no direct loss of agricultural employment is forecast, while there will be a small increase in the forestry sector. No loss of LCA 4 or better land will occur. The woodlands will deliver a range of economic, social, and environmental benefits

In areas where wildfire is a risk to the woodland describe how you will address the risks and how this has been considered in the woodland design. Refer to [Building wildfire resilience into forest management planning](#) for information.

The site appears to be located with wildfire risk zone 3, and remains in this zone for 2070-2100.

The primary fire risk relates to the likelihood of grass fires during the establishment period. However, the site is remote from any settlements, and recreational use of the site is likely to be limited

The fire risk will be countered by effective weed control, and the use of rides in the design to break up the woodland.

Signage will be erected warning of the risk of fires, and liaison will be maintained with the managers of Priesthaugh Forest and the owners of Dod Farmhouse.

If applying for the productive conifer options please use the Timber Transport Forum – [Agreed Routes Map](#) and confirm the sites timber route classification i.e. agreed, consultation, severely restricted, excluded or no classification.

The site has a short and direct access onto the D 24 road, which forms a looped circuit south of the A 7 trunk road. The D 24 is shown as a ' Consultation Route' in the Scottish Borders 'Timber Haulage Map.

All management access, and future timber movements will use the eastern leg of the D 24 to access the A 7.

There are short stretches of surfaced tracks within the site which will be suitable for establishment works.

Consultation will be undertaken with SBC Roads Dept. and local residents prior to timber haulage being undertaken, and a Timber Haulage Management Plan will be produced in advance of any haulage. It has been noted that the D 24 passes very close to a Scheduled Monument just north of Dod Farm, and the need to fully protect this feature will be taken into account when the Plan is produced.

If applying for the Native Woodland options please use the 'Native Woodland Habitat Network' map in the 'FGS Target and Eligibility' folder on the [Scottish Forestry Map Viewer](#) and describe the habitat network zones your application is within i.e. primary, secondary or out with the habitat network.

The entire site is within the 'Native Woodlands Habitat Network, with the areas around the existing woods being in the primary zone, and with the balance being in the secondary zone.

The riparian corridor of the Dod Burn from the farm steading northwards to the Allan Water is within the 'Target Woodlands for Riparian Benefits'.

Sensitive Areas & Potential Impacts

Sensitive Areas:

- National Nature Reserve or Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- National Park
- World Heritage Site
- Scheduled Ancient Monument
- National Scenic Area
- Natura sites – Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Special Area of Conservation (SPA)
- Land on which there is a Nature Conservation Order
- Deep peat soil

Potential Impacts:

- Population & Human Health
- Biodiversity
- Land, Soil, Water, Air, Climate
- Material Assets, Cultural Heritage, Landscape

List any **Sensitive Areas** and any **Potential Significant Impacts** relating to your site, including appropriate mitigation (**refer to Annex 1**). Detail any surveys completed to inform this assessment.

*For complex cases the Issues Log (**Annex 2**) can be used to record this instead.*

(Scotland's Environment Web Land Information Search

<https://www.environment.gov.scot/maps/land-information-search/> is a useful resource which may help you identify some of the constraints within your site).

Refer to Annex 1 and Annex 2 (Issues Log).

Please ensure that any maps or survey reports that have been produced to support your application are uploaded to the online application system.

Management Operations

All Applications

Having assessed the site please provide information about how you are going to establish the new woodland.

Ground Preparation: Describe the method that you will use, including dimensions. Where you propose multiple ground preparation techniques then you must identify these on a map.

Cultivation and Vegetation Control

All ground preparation will follow Scottish Forestry guidance, including *Cultivation of Soils for Forestry* (FC Bulletin 119), the Scottish Forestry Practice Note *Cultivation guidance for upland productive woodland creation sites*, and the UKFS *Forests and Water* guidelines. The selected methods are intended to support successful establishment while minimising visual, soil, hydrological, ecological and archaeological impacts.

Site factors considered

- A range of soil types is present, mainly brown earths and gleys, with alluvium, peaty gleys and podzols also occurring.
- Parts of the site have previously been cultivated for agricultural use.
- Only very small pockets of deep peat are present, with limited areas of notably organic soil.
- Soil nutrient status is generally reasonable, although fertility is lower in some areas, particularly on podzolic soils.
- A significant proportion of the site lies on steep ground, with smaller areas of level land beside the Dod Burn.
- Most of the site supports improved or semi-improved grassland, but some areas contain tussocky vegetation, dense bracken or rushes.
- The site contains the catchment and intake for a domestic private water supply and lies wholly within a Drinking Water Protected Area.
- The Dod Burn and a number of smaller watercourses cross the site. The Dod Burn joins the Allan Water, within the River Tweed SAC, approximately 2 km downstream.
- Areas downstream are at high risk of flooding.
- The site includes numerous archaeological features, including banks and earthworks, as well as areas of biodiversity interest, wetlands and GWDTEs.
- Existing small woodlands, isolated trees and visually sensitive northern frontage have been taken into account.

Ground preparation methods

- Internal redundant agricultural fences may be removed before cultivation begins.
- Most planting areas will be prepared by mounding, generally using a continuous moulder without a tine.
- Individual mounding and scarification may be undertaken using a tracked excavator, or manually where required, particularly within riparian zones and on steeper slopes.
- Individual mounds may be inverted on drier ground or raised on wetter ground.
- Only manual cultivation will be undertaken within the private water catchment.
- Screefing will be used instead of mounding on the steepest ground and where shallow soils are encountered.

- A buffer of at least 20 m will be maintained along the Dod Burn, with a 10 m buffer around smaller watercourses.
- Within riparian buffer zones, only hinge or inverted mounding will be used, and planting will be limited to broadleaved trees and shrubs.
- Bracken control will include 13.31 ha of grant-aided clearance in larger stands within the conifer option area, together with non grant-aided clearance of smaller, scattered or isolated stands.
- Bracken control will generally use glyphosate-based herbicide applied by weed-wiper, targeting bracken only.
- No chemicals will be stored or used, and no refuelling will take place, within or above the private water catchment.
- Existing boundary and internal trees will be retained in the short term, with planting set back 2 m from the canopy of mature and semi-mature trees.

Water protection measures

- All works will comply with the *Forests and Water* guidelines, Forestry and Water Scotland *Know the Rules* guidance, *Protecting Scottish Water sources and assets during forestry activities*, and *Managing forest operations to protect the water environment*.
- Close liaison will be maintained with Scottish Water during preparatory, implementation and maintenance works.
- No herbicides, fertilisers or chemicals will be stored within 50 m of any watercourse.
- No herbicides, fertilisers or chemicals will be used within 10 m of any watercourse.
- No refuelling will take place within 50 m of any watercourse. Refuelling elsewhere will follow approved methods and agreed pollution-prevention precautions.
- All vehicles will carry spill kits.

Protected species

Badgers are known to be present, although no setts have been identified within the site. The site will be re-surveyed before works begin, and a badger sett disturbance licence will be obtained if required.

- Any sett will be protected, with no planting within 5 m of entrances.
- No machinery will be used within 20 m of active sett entrances, increasing to 30 m during the breeding season.
- Contractors will be briefed on the action to take if signs of badger setts are encountered during works.

Toolbox talks

All contractors will receive pre-start toolbox talks covering:

- measures required to prevent impacts on the Drinking Water Protected Area;
- the presence of ecological and archaeological interests;
- the private water supply; and
- procedures to follow if suspected archaeological finds are discovered.

Site waste

All waste generated will be removed from site. Materials that cannot be recycled will be disposed of at an authorised facility.

Archaeology

Buffer zones around archaeological features will be marked out before works commence, using a qualified archaeologist where required. Upstanding features to be avoided will be identified on maps. No cultivation will take place within 5 m of embankments or other upstanding archaeological features.

Drainage: Identify any existing drains/watercourses and provide information relating to new drains.

The 'site description' section provides details on drains and watercourses present within the site, as well as the wider catchment areas.

The planting generally lies on free-draining ground, although there are small areas of impeded drainage. There are very few functioning drains on site, although the track ascending the western flanks has a catch drain

Minor drainage works may be undertaken in some of the productive woodland creation areas to assist in tree establishment, and drains may also be installed to improve the conditions of tracks to aid public access and maintenance works.

All drainage works will comply with the 'Forests and Water' guidelines (5th Edition), specifically:

- Existing drains may be cleaned out as required to restore their functionality, and to ensure compliance with current requirements
- New drains will not exceed 2 degrees angle of slope
- New drains will terminate well short of any watercourses
- Drain ends will be channelled upslope at their termini
- Silt traps will be constructed to prevent sediments reaching watercourses
- Silt traps will be cleaned out to maintain their functionality
- The drainage system will be constructed to avoid having any detrimental impact on areas of deep peat, sensitive habitats, and features of archaeological interest
- No drainage will be undertaken within 10 m of any watercourses, deep peat, and ecologically sensitive areas
- If drains cross established informal path routes, culverts will be installed to maintain access
- Drainage works will be completed in tandem with other ground preparation works.

For implementation purposes, vehicular access to the ground on the eastern side of the Dod Burn will utilize the ford (Grid Ref. NT 4772/0478), with a log bridge installed and utilized following SEPA and Scottish Forestry Guidance. The specifications noted in 'Drain and Watercourse Crossings' within the 'Protecting the Environment during Mechanised Harvesting Operations (FC Technical Note, 2005)' will be followed, and the log bridge will be removed following the completion of implementation works. In the longer term, a permanent solution involving the use of culverts will be installed.

Protection: Describe how the site will be protected. For example: fencing, tree guards/shelters and pest management.

Append a deer management plan if required. You should refer to the [Deer Management Best Practice Guide](#) and the [Joint Agency statement on deer fencing](#). You may be asked to submit a checklist from the Joint Agency guidance (May 2010).

Protection Options

A number of general and site-specific issues have been taken into account when deriving the protection proposals. These are set out below, together with a note of how each issue will be addressed.

Protection Issues	Approaches
Proposals include for a significant broadleaved element to the planting, as well as a diverse coniferous element, in a locality likely to be subject to high deer pressure	Accepted that tree protection rather than deer culling is the best means of successfully establishing vulnerable species in this location.
Requirement to undertake protection in a (grant) cost-effective manner	Various options for protection were examined, including using stock fencing and tree shelters, enclosing the site within a single deer fence, and options examining a combination of deer fences in some places, and tree shelters in others. The cheapest option grant terms is to enclose the site within deer fence
Agricultural grazing will continue on adjoining land to the north, west, and north-east, and that conservation grazing is proposed for fields within the site	Boundaries with agricultural land will require to be stock-proof.
The site includes mature and pole-stage riparian woodland in the north-east, as well as numerous other woods within the core of the site	Enclosing the riparian woodland, in combination with the conservation grazing land, is more cost effective (in grant terms) than excluding it, while enclosing the whole site in a deer fence will allow the existing woodlands to regenerate
Two fields in the north of the site will be retained in agricultural use	As above, it is more cost effective to enclose these fields within the all-encompassing deer fence than to exclude them
March fences are universally in poor condition	Erect new fences if existing fences not capable of excluding stock for 10 years
There are roe deer, rabbits, hares, and voles present on site, and in the surrounding countryside.	Protect vulnerable trees with deer fencing as a first preference, using shelters on broadleaves as a last resort. Protect vulnerable conifers with deer fences if feasible. Protect broadleaves with vole guards (if not in tree shelters) Fix rabbit netting to new fences Recognise that a compensatory cull and continued deer control will be required.
Concern over the extensive use of plastic tree shelters and vole guards.	Limit use of tree shelters where feasible (by use of deer fences and/or deer control where cost-effective /feasible).

	Use biodegradable shelters and guards if feasible.
The site is subject to low-key recreational use, and contains features of archaeological significance although this route is currently set within a fenced off woodland.	Fit all-user access gates where recognised paths enter and exit the site. Fit all-user gates to provide easy access to the hill fort on Grey Coat. Frequent checks will be made to maintain the gates and fences in working order, and deer control will be undertaken.
There are archaeological features which straddle, or a close to the march boundary on Grey Coat.	A large area encompassing the hill fort and nearby cairn will be excluded from the fenced enclosure. This will respect the integrity of the monuments, and will prevent encroachment onto the immediate setting of the features.
The western boundary runs along a visually prominent ridge line	By undertaking the fence alignment to address the archaeological concerns noted above, the issue of having a deer fence in a visually sensitive location has been addressed.
Requirement for fence marking	As there are no known leks in the locality, fence marking will not be used; this will avoid the creation of landscape and sustainability implications arising from the use of fence markers.

Following consideration of the above, the protection proposals include for enclosing all of the planting and existing woodlands, as well as the conservation grazing areas, within a deer/stock/rabbit fenced enclosure. The summit and upper slopes of Grey Coat will be omitted from the enclosed area. The fence may be set back from existing dykes and trees to facilitate construction and improve the fence's lifespan.

Broadleaves within the deer fenced area will be protected with vole guards with consideration given to the use of biodegradable guards and shelters

All-user self-closing gates will be fitted at all recognised entry points to the site, and management gates will be fitted where vehicular access is anticipated.

The Deer Fence (high cost) capital item has been selected as:-

- The costs of deer fencing have risen significantly in recent years
- Parts of the site are awkward to fence, with poor access and rough terrain
- Due to the convoluted lines followed, a large number of strainers and turners will be required.
- Some clearance of tree and shrub growth will be required

Stiles, slip gates, and water gates will be fitted where required.

Internal stock fencing will be erected and maintained to facilitate conservation grazing (at the owners cost).

On completion of the fencing works, and regularly thereafter, the line will be inspected for badger activity, and badger gates will be fitted if and where required. No grant aid is being sought for this.

Protection and access issues will be monitored, and consideration will be given to the installation additional gates etc if required.

Details of fencing and gates are shown in the table below.

Option	Nodes	Deer Fence (m)	Rabbit Fence (m)	Deer Gate (no)	S. Closing Gate (no)
CON	A-B	965	965	A2, A4	A1, A3, A5
BL	B-C	520	520		
CON	C-D	1,480	1,480	C2, C4	C1, C3
CON	D-E	615	615		
CON	E-A	1,270	1,270	E2	E1
Totals		4,850	4,850	5	6

All broadleaved trees within the deer fenced enclosure will be protected by vole guards. The table below set out their requirements by option and mix.

Consideration will be given to the use of biodegradable vole guards.

Planting; please provide the following:

- Species to be planted and percentage of each. (Please use the components area table to record hectares planted).
- Describe the nursery stock and planting method to be used.
- Confirm if you will be planting vegetatively propagated Sitka spruce.
- For native woodland creation specify the [Seed Source Zone](#).

Planting Specifications

- Broadleaved stock will generally be transplanted or undercut stock, 45-60 cm tall
- Coniferous stock will generally be 2-3-year-old transplanted or undercut stock, 30-45 cm tall
- Cell grown stock may be used for selected species
- Native broadleaved plants will be grown from seed collected from a suitable provenance (109, 108, 1071) where feasible. In the event of some provenances not being available for plants used in the Native Broadleaves option, agreement will be obtained from Scottish Forestry on suitable substitute provenances.
- Trees and shrubs will be planted using a 'T' or 'L' shaped notch
- Variable spacing will be used where appropriate, notably in the native woodland mix. Lower stocking densities will be used in pockets of shallow soils, and very wet ground. Higher stocking densities will be used where conditions are better, to ensure that the overall contact stocking densities are attained

A) Sitka spruce 48.64 ha (all "Conifer" option)

Sitka spruce 100%

- o This mix will form the productive core of the woodland
- o All trees will be planted at, or above, an average of 2 m x 2 m spacing to achieve 2,500 stems per ha at year 5

A1) Sitka spruce/Aspen 1.36 ha (all "Conifer" option)

Sitka spruce 50%
Aspen 50%

- o This mix will be planted in a couple of locally visually sensitive locations
- o Species will be planted in small single species groups (25 -50 plants)
- o All trees will be planted at, or above, an average of 2 m x 2 m spacing to achieve 2,500 stems per ha at year 5

B1) Douglas fir 4.74 ha (all "Conifer" option)

Douglas fir 100% Single species stand

- o This mix will be planted on sheltered, free draining soils above the Dod Burn
- o All trees will be planted at, or above, an average of 2 m x 2 m spacing to achieve 2,500 stems per ha at year 5

B2) Western Red Cedar 1.45 ha (all "Conifer" option)

Western red cedar 45%
Norway spruce 45%
Gean 5% Single species groups on visible edges
Silver birch 5% Single species groups on visible edges

- o This mix will be planted on sheltered, low lying ground by the Dod Burn
- o The N. spruce will be planted in alternate lines with the cedar, with a view to establishing the latter as the final crop

- o All trees will be planted at, or above, an average of 2 m x 2 m spacing to achieve 2,500 stems per ha at year 5

B3) Grand fir 1.69 ha (all “Conifer” option)

Grand fir	45%	
Norway spruce	45%	
Gean	5%	Single species groups on visible edges
Silver birch	5%	Single species groups on visible edges

- o This mix will be planted on sheltered, low lying ground by the Dod Burn
- o The N. spruce will be planted in alternate lines with the fir, with a view to establishing the latter as the final crop
- o All trees will be planted at, or above, an average of 2 m x 2 m spacing to achieve 2,500 stems per ha at year 5

C) Scots pine 2.44 ha (all “Conifer” option)

Scots pine	85%	
Silver birch	7.5%	In intimate mix with pine on boundaries with broadleaved planting, visible margins and within the PWS catchment
Aspen	7.5%	As per the birch

- o This mix will be planted on prominent northern slopes of Grey Coat, on free draining ground
- o Trees will be planted at, or above, an average of 2 m x 2 m spacing to achieve 2,500 stems per ha at year 5.

D1) Oak/Birch 1.16 ha (all “Broadleaves” option)

Sessile oak	50%	in mixture with birch
Silver birch	50%	in mixture with oak

- o This mix will be planted in a prominent, but relatively sheltered location at the northern end of the site
- o Species will be planted in single species double rows with a view to thinning out the birch to favour oak
- o Trees will be planted at an average of 2 m x 1.6 m spacing or closer to achieve 3,100 stems per ha at year 5

D2) Sycamore 2.22 ha (all “Broadleaves” option)

Sycamore	75 %	in single species stand
Norway maple	10%	on margins
Aspen	10%	on riparian margin
Sweet chestnut	2.5%	on margins
Gean	2.5%	on margins

- o This mix will be planted on fertile soils in a sheltered location
- o Trees will be planted at, or above, an average of 2 m x 2 m spacing to achieve 2,500 stems per ha at year 5.

E1) Native broadleaves 7.12 ha (all 'Conifer' option) (based on NVC W7/W11)

Sessile oak	20%	deeper soils, sheltered locations
Downy birch	20%	drier soils, including in mixture with oak
Alder	30%	damper soils
Aspen	10%	small groups throughout
Rowan	5%	on margins
Gean	5%	on margins
Grey willow	5%	wetter ground
Bay willow	5%	wetter ground

- This mix will be planted in relatively sheltered conditions, largely on upland brown earths and gleys
- Species will be planted in small single or two species groups; an indication on planting location is given above
- Trees will be planted at an average of 3 m x 3 m spacing or closer to achieve at least 1,100 stems per ha at year 5
- Variable spacing will be used, with a lower stocking density being used in very wet or rough areas and higher than average stocking densities used where soil conditions are relatively good
- Planting at lower densities (500 stems per ha) will be undertaken within the riparian buffer zones, with planting densities increased elsewhere (up to 2,500 stems per ha) to achieve the overall density required (1,100 per ha)

E2) Native broadleaves 2.75 ha (2.35 ha 'Conifer' option, 0.4 ha 'Broadleaves option') (based on NVC W17)

Silver birch	50%	throughout, drier soils
Downy birch	20%	throughout, damper soils
Sessile oak	10%	sheltered locations
Rowan	10%	throughout
Hawthorn	10%	margins

- This mix will be planted in relatively exposed conditions, largely on upland brown earths and podzols
- Species will be planted in small single or two species groups; an indication on planting location is given above
- Variable spacing will be used, with a lower stocking density being used in very wet or rough areas and higher than average stocking densities used where soil conditions are relatively good
- Trees will be planted at an average of 3 m x 3 m spacing or closer to achieve at least 1,100 stems per ha at year 5.

Enrichment Planting

A small area of SFGS-supported plating by the Dod Burn has largely failed (Woodland 1c, 1.34 ha). Enrichment planting will be undertaken, using the same composition as mix E1 above, and following the same implementation and maintenance specifications to achieve an overall density of 1,100 plants per ha at year 5, . No grant support is sought for this work.

Open Ground 36.94 ha (8.17 ha grant aided, 28.77 ha 'other land')

Open ground will be maintained for the following purposes

- to soften the woodlands appearance in the landscape (notably on the slopes of Grey Coat and the western ridgeline
- to protect existing ecological interest
- to protect the fabric and setting of archaeological features
- to facilitate management and recreation access
- to facilitate deer control
- to protect and buffer small areas of deep peat

In the main the open ground will be allowed to develop naturally, with the following exceptions:-

- the large areas of valued habitat in the north of the site will be retained in agricultural use and grazed to sustained existing floristic diversity
- the open Land on Grey Coat will be outwith the deer fenced enclosure and will be open to grazing by deer and most likely by agricultural stock from the neighbouring farm and most likely. This will reduce the visual impact of the linear ownership boundary and will prevent the growth of dense vegetation in the scheduled monument areas.
- Any emerging tree or scrub growth in the clearing around the Pele House will be removed

Other Land

Other land comprises of:-

- deep peat – 1.3 ha
- existing woodland – 11.7 ha
- enrichment planting – 1.6 ha
- excess open ground – 12.68 ha
- conservation grazing – 5.52
- informal grazing – 9.27 ha

Maintenance: Describe the maintenance regime for the site (e.g. monitoring, weeding, beat-up, etc.).

All works will comply with the measures set out in the 'Preparation' section

- All fences and gates will be monitored regularly for signs of intrusion and maintained in a stock/deer proof condition
- All plants and guards will be maintained in a windfirm position
- All trees will be maintained in a substantially weed free condition until they are established - this will be achieved by the applications of systemic and residual herbicide and by hand weeding as necessary
- No herbicides will be used with 10m of any watercourses
- Plants will be monitored for signs of disease, nutrient deficiency, and damage, and appropriate action taken as necessary
- Replacement planting will be undertaken to ensure that the required stocking densities are maintained until year 5
- The regrowth of bracken will be controlled
- Vole guards will be removed when the trees are fully established, and taken to an authorised waste disposal site
- Drains and culverts will be maintained in a functioning condition, with silt traps cleaned out as necessary
- The site will be routinely monitored to ensure that the specifications are being achieved, and in order that any unforeseen problems can be identified and dealt with, at an early stage.

Fertilisation: Where applicable, describe the proposed fertiliser regime e.g. application rate, timing, etc.

All works will comply with the measures set out in the 'Preparation' section

While ESC analysis suggests that most soils have reasonable fertility, some areas in the south, and on higher ground, are of low fertility. Given this consideration will be given to the application of fertilizer to Sitka spruce and other conifers in these less fertile locations.

To avoid any potential for nutrient enrichment of the watercourses and the DWPA, fertilizer will be applied in the form of slow-release plugs inserted into the planting hole at time of planting.

Thereafter, the post-planting application of a granular slow release NPK fertilizer may be considered following an assessment of early growth, and soil and/or foliar analysis. This will permit the fertilizer composition and application rates to be determined, but in any event the minimum amount needed to be effective will be used, and the Forests and Water Guidelines will be adhered to.

No granular fertilizer will be used within 20 m of any mapped watercourse.

Other: Please include any other silvicultural detail here.

As noted above, the area of largely failed planting by the Dod Burn will be the subject of enrichment planting.

In the short term, all existing trees and woods will be retained, and remaining tree shelters will be removed to an authorised tip. Redundant fences may be removed and similarly disposed of.

A woodland management plan will be produced to guide the longer-term management of the various woodlands, and it is anticipated that future works may involve selective thinning.

Also as noted above, the large areas of valued habitat in the north of the site will be retained in agricultural use and grazed to sustained existing floristic diversity. An ecologist will provide grazing specifications and will monitor the vegetation and advise on any changes to the grazing regime.

Small Woodlands Loan Scheme (woodlands up to 50 hectares only)

Please read this section if you are interested in receiving a loan based on the capital items in your FGS contract. To confirm your interest in receiving a Loan, you must sign the declaration at the foot of this section.

The Small Woodlands Loan Scheme (SWLS) is designed to assist landowners in implementing woodland creation projects by releasing early capital. The following thresholds apply:

- The maximum Woodland Creation proposal size, approved in your FGS contract, eligible for loan support is 50 hectares and we will pay you a Loan of 50% of the value of the capital items in your FGS contract (not including CSGN supplement values where this is present), rounded up to the nearest £100, up to a maximum value of £40,000 per FGS application.
- To be eligible for a Loan payment, the maximum Woodland Creation proposal grant value, approved in your FGS contract, must be no greater than £250,000.

The loan is recovered by deducting the value from your FGS capital claim.

If both your FGS and Loan applications are successful you will be provided with a loan offer that will detail the value of the loan and set out the terms of the loan. You will be required to sign and return the loan agreement with your FGS contract to accept the loan offer. By signing here you are expressing an interest in receiving a loan however funding is not guaranteed. Funding will be committed at FGS contract approval and is dependent on available budget at that time.

If you wish to be considered for a loan, please first read the SWLS guidance on our [website](#) and then sign the following declaration:

- I/we are applying for a Small Woodlands Loan on the capital items contained in the FGS application associated with this Operational Plan
- I/we confirm that our woodland creation proposal is less than 50 hectares
- I/we confirm that we have no Small Woodlands Loan Scheme agreements active at this time
- I/we confirm that should I/we be successful in obtaining a Loan, then I/we will only make one claim for our FGS capital works which, in accordance with FGS terms and conditions, will be once all the capital works, as laid out in the FGS contract's schedule of works, have been completed.
- I/we understand that by signing this declaration, I/we am/are only stating that I/we am/are interested in receiving a loan and, as such, meet all the eligibility criteria required as laid out in our guidance and our Loans terms and conditions.
- I/we understand that by signing this declaration, I/we acknowledge that my/our success in receiving a loan is subject to the funds available in any given year and should there be no dedicated funding available for the SWLS, I/we will continue with the FGS application and will fund the capital works of that application under the terms and conditions of the FGS.
- I/we have the necessary consents/permissions to sign this loan application declaration as evidenced on the administrative system, RP&S, to which this Operation Plan and associated FGS application relates.

Woodland Creation Operational Plan

- I/we have read, understand and hereby acknowledge that Scottish Ministers may use any of my personal data contained in or relating to this loan application in accordance with the terms of [Scottish Forestry's privacy notice](#) and the [Rural Payments and Services Privacy Policy](#).
- I/we, on behalf of the business applying for both a FGS application and a Small Woodland Loan, hereby sign this declaration:

Signed:		
Print:		
Date:		
Would the project have gone ahead without a loan? Please delete as appropriate. (this will not affect your application for loan)	YES / NO	

Please do not sign this declaration if you do not wish to apply for the SWLS, but please continue to complete the other sections as these are required for your FGS application. Currently all correspondence relating to the SWLS will be via email. Please ensure the email address held in RP&S is correct prior to submitting your application.

Ends section on SWLS

Annex 1

Assessment of Potential Impact

Please use the following guidance to assist with describing any potential significant impacts and any mitigation which is proposed:

- **Population & Human Health:** Detail any discussions which you have had with neighbours, local communities or other stakeholders and explain how this has influenced your proposal. Explain what public access is currently undertaken on the site and what provisions you plan to make to continue or improve this in adherence with the [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#).
- **Cultural Heritage:** Indicate what survey work has been undertaken and describe how archaeology will be protected.
- **Soil:** Provide an accurate assessment of the soil on site and describe how you will manage the quality of the soil including any effects from erosion and compaction.
- **Water:** Detail the nature of the likely impacts on water bodies or water supplies from your activities and how you will mitigate these impacts.
- **Air:** Detail the nature of the likely impacts on air quality or the impacts on light provision.
- **Biodiversity:** Detail the nature and extent of high value habitats such as those listed on the [Scottish Biodiversity List](#) and describe how you will protect these habitats. Detail the nature of the likely impacts on wildlife from your activities and how you will mitigate these impacts. Refer to [European Protected Species](#) for guidance.
- **Landscape:** Provide details of how the impact on the landscape has been assessed and how the application has been designed to minimise any impact.
- **Climate:** Provide details on the vulnerability of the project to climate change and how this impact was mitigated.
- **Land:** Does your application have an impact or an effect on prime agricultural land (defined as land use classes 1, 2 and 3.1), or the local land use balance with agriculture? Detail the nature of the likely impacts on agriculture from your activities and how you will mitigate these impacts and integrate with forestry.
You should refer to the [Guidance About Woodland Creation on Agricultural Land](#), located in the further information and technical guidance section of the [FGS woodland creation](#) web page.
- **Material Assets:** Identify and describe all built and natural assets that are relevant to the site and which could be adversely impacted by the proposal e.g. utilities, minerals. Describe any mitigation proposed for these features.

Annex 2 Issues Log

Issue (include date and raised by)	Applicant's Comments	FCS Comments	Agreed Mitigation	Status (Open, Closed)	Significance of Impact (High, Medium, Low)
<i>e.g. Archaeology – Scheduled Monument at NS123456. HES, 23/10/16.</i>	<i>e.g. Scheme design includes OG to buffer Scheduled Monument as per UKFS. John Smith, 25/10/16</i>	<i>e.g. Applicant has taken on board HES feedback and designed the scheme in accordance with best practise. Susan Jones, 27/10/17.</i>	<i>e.g. 20 metre OG buffer around SAM.</i>	<i>e.g. Closed</i>	<i>e.g. Low</i>
Population & Human Health					
Cultural Heritage					
Soil					
Biodiversity					
Landscape					
Material Assets					
Water					
Air					
Climate					
Land					