



Tree and Woodland Strategy

APPENDIX C: Mapping Methodology

Woodland Trust Woodland Access Standard Mapping Methodology

To identify how many properties have access to woodlands in line with the Woodland Trust's Woodland Access Standard we first identified woodlands of different sizes:

- Woodlands larger than 20 hectares (large)
- Woodlands between 2 hectares and 20 hectares (small)
- Woodlands smaller than 2 hectares (smaller)

We used the woodlands recorded on the 2021 National Forest Inventory, the Ancient Woodland Inventory, the Central Scotland Green Network Woodlands Network 2021 and the OS Greenspace Woodland layer to map these woodlands. These were then checked against the georeferenced aerial photography

The National Forest Inventory -divides woodland areas into compartments mainly related to the type and management of the woodland present. However this can divide what would generally be considered a larger wood. We have combined these to show the wood as a whole.

Woodlands smaller than 2 hectares are mapped where there may be potential for expansion.

Certain woodlands have been excluded:

- Landscaping strips to the A1, as these should not be accessed by the public for safety reasons
- Garden ground, as this is not accessible to the public
- Woodlands smaller than 2 hectares where there is no opportunity for expansion
- Golf course fairway woodland strips, as these have different access rights

We then tried to identify residential properties. We have used the 'addressable properties' GIS layer for this. Not all of these properties are homes, but this is the closest GIS layer the Council currently has to capture residences. Most entries, especially in the rural area, will be homes.

We have mapped properties within 500m of a woodland of over 2 hectares, and within 4km of a woodland over 20 hectares, as well as those which do not meet these standards.

The mapping is likely to over-estimate how many properties have access to woods as it only considers distance. It does not take into account physical barriers, such as the A1, which in practice limit or prevent access.

The mapping is intended as a first sweep of where to focus attention to improve access to woodland through woodland creation and expansion.

Spatial Guidance Section Mapping

Existing woodland

The mapping shows existing woodland.

Woodland is defined by Forest Research as any treed area of at least 0.5 hectares in area with a minimum width of 20m, and that has at least 20% tree canopy cover (or the potential to achieve this). These areas are recorded in the National Forest Inventory (NFI) and have been included in our mapping.

In addition, the Broadleaf and Yew habitat updated by the Woodland Network identified by the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) has been included.

Also included in our mapping are areas identified as woodland on the [OS Mastermap Greenspace Layer](#). This includes publicly accessible, as well as private, green spaces, sports facilities and natural environment features. It includes smaller areas of woodland not picked up by the other layers.

Urban

The mapping uses informal settlement boundaries defined by whether a use is rural or urban, drawn on an OS Mastermap base. This mapping has been produced only for the purposes of this Strategy; the 'settlement boundaries' (at the time of writing) have no other development planning policy purpose or status.

The nature of tree and woodland expansion in urban areas is generally different from rural areas and is more likely to involve single or small groups of trees. Detail of opportunities within urban areas is provided in the 'Urban Tree and Woodland Planting' mapping.

Sensitivity to Woodland Expansion Mapping Methodology

Unsuitable

The James Hutton Institute has classified land by how capable it is for successful tree growth. Some soils are not suitable for tree planting because trees will not grow well there. There are few parts of East Lothian which are unsuitable. These are identified as class 7 agricultural land and are generally land which is peat or potential peatland in the Lammermuirs. .

Trees will also not grow in the intertidal or foreshore area. These areas are not mapped as their unsuitability for tree planting is widely known. Our mapping extends as far as the high water mark.

Water Bodies

The unsuitability of waterbodies for tree growth is also widely known. These are mapped, using an OS base, as otherwise they would appear as 'Preferred' areas on the mapping which is misleading.

Sensitive

Some areas of land are best suited to purposes other than woodland. This includes land that is valued for cultural or natural heritage reasons where tree planting would damage the interest. Some of these areas, such as peat land and salt marsh, also have considerable value for greenhouse gas sequestration.

Recommendation from ['The Right Tree in the Right Place'](#) (Forestry Commission Scotland, 2010) is that:

“Sensitive areas will be those where a combination of sensitivities means there is limited scope to accommodate further woodland expansion. Limited woodland expansion is only likely to be possible within sensitive areas where it is of a scale and character which can be accommodated without significant negative impacts and/or where it would positively enhance the features of interest locally. In some areas cumulative impact may be a relevant consideration.”

We considered that requiring more than one constraint to describe an area as ‘sensitive’ is misleading. Some designations in our area are sufficiently incompatible with woodland that where the land is covered by them alone, it is unlikely that woodland creation would be possible, and these sites should not be shown as ‘Potential’. We do not want to encourage pressure for tree planting in areas where it should not occur, as this wastes effort all round.

There may be some very limited scope for small scale woodland expansion in a few of these areas, in particular those SSSIs designated for their woodland interest. However, these are likely to be under management agreement already, and even where they are not, further woodland creation would be tightly controlled as to type and location; they are not therefore suitable for general woodland expansion. The areas considered sensitive, for the reason of one designation alone, were:

- Special Protection Areas – the only SPA in East Lothian where trees would grow is Forth Islands, the Firth of Forth and Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex consisting of intertidal areas. SPAs are sensitive as maintenance of appropriate habitat is required for protection of their internationally recognised bird interest.
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Consent is needed from Historic Environment Scotland for any planting on these monuments. Planting is likely to cause damage to the monument and is unlikely to be possible in these areas.
- SSSIs. These sites were designated to represent the best of the UK’s biological and geological interest. As such, woodland planting is likely to conflict with the maintenance of other habitat or geological interest. The SSSIs designated wholly or partly for woodland interest have also been included as sensitive as proposals or management would require consent from NatureScot.
- Local Geodiversity Sites. These sites are generally not extensive and are in any case often areas trees would not grow, many having been chosen for the interest and visibility of their geology or geomorphology. They are considered sensitive due to their geological interest, which in some cases is nationally important, and which tree planting is likely to affect.
- CSGN Grassland, Bog Heath and Wetland Habitat. This data is available on Scottish Environment Web by adding layers CSGN IHN – Neutral. This is considered sensitive due to the biodiversity value of these habitats.
- East Lothian Priority Habitat – Non-woodland. This information is from a Phase 1 Habitat Survey carried out in 1997. Although this information is now old, it remains the best data on habitat that the Council holds. These areas were also considered sensitive due to their biodiversity interest,

Potential

[‘The Right Tree in the Right Place’](#) (Forestry Commission Scotland, 2010) recommendations for land which should be categorised as Potential is:

“Land ... which offers considerable potential to accommodate future expansion of a range of woodland types, but where at least one significant sensitivity exists. The extent to which specific proposals in potential areas will be permissible will depend on how well sensitivities can be addressed within the proposals. The design of schemes in such areas will require careful consideration.”

In our area, much of the land is covered by more than one constraint. This is difficult to avoid in East Lothian, a scenic area with large amounts of prime agricultural land and a long history of human habitation. We have therefore tried to follow the methodology in spirit rather than to the letter. If areas with more than one sensitivity were included as ‘Sensitive’ there would be little land shown as ‘Potential’. This would not be helpful in trying to guide woodland creation to the best places.

There is limited ‘Preferred’ land in East Lothian. It is inevitable that to achieve targets, woodland creation will have to take place on ‘Potential’ land. It is useful to distinguish between land where the main issue is complimenting agricultural production from those where the constraints may be less flexible. We have therefore mapped Farmland as a separate constraint to Designated constraints. Both constraints are considered to have potential which can be worked with, and this is equally the case where more than one constraint applies.

Potential - Designations

Areas which are mapped into ‘Potential - Designations’ are:

- Areas on Historic Environment Scotland’s Inventory of Battlefields. There are four battlefield sites within East Lothian Prestonpans, Pinkie and Dunbar 1 and 2. The landscape has changed considerably since the battles took place, especially at Pinkie and Prestonpans. Tree planting may in some cases improve the understanding of the battlefield, or in others be acceptable. However in parts it may significantly affect the ability to understand the battlefield landscape and be unacceptable.
- Areas on the Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes. These areas have historical, horticultural and artistic value. Tree planting is often an integral part of the design. There may be opportunities within these areas for restoration of woodland, or planting which accords with their design. However, planting should respect the features for which the areas were designated, and sometimes the addition of further trees may not be possible.
- Geological Conservation Review Sites (outwith SSSIs). The Geological Conservation Review was a substantial piece of work that identified a network of sites sufficient to recognise the whole of the UK’s main geological interest. The intention was that these sites be designated as SSSIs by NatureScot however this has not yet been completed. Although these sites do not have the formal protection that designation as SSSI would bring, it would be undesirable to harm their geological interest, which could occur through poorly designed tree planting schemes.

Potential - Farmland

Areas mapped as ‘Potential – Farmland (prime)’ are prime agricultural land in classes 1 – 3.1. Areas mapped as ‘Potential – Farmland (mixed)’ are agricultural land in classes 3.2 – 4.2. These mixed areas cannot grow such a wide range of crops but may become more productive with climate changes.

Preferred

[‘The Right Tree in the Right Place’](#) (Forestry Commission Scotland, 2010) guidance advises that Preferred land is that which offers the greatest scope to accommodate future expansion of a range of woodland types, and hence, to deliver on a very wide range of objectives. Within Preferred areas sensitivities are, in general, likely to be limited, and it should be possible to address any particular site-specific issues with well-designed proposals that meet the UK Forestry Standard and associated guidelines. Future woodland expansion is therefore likely to be focused on preferred areas. In East Lothian the Preferred Areas are limited.