

## **Landscape Toolkit**

A Landscape Toolkit has been developed from the methodology of the Landscape Capacity Study by the National Park Authority to facilitate use by woodland designers and agents. It is recommended that all woodland proposals should be developed using the Landscape Capacity Study as a reference and starting point.

The toolkit comprises a field survey proforma and can be used to assist with the assessment of proposals of any size. Its use is particularly recommended for any proposals for the sensitive areas in Map 4 and significant schemes in other locations. The National Park Authority can provide advice on its use.

### **Using the Landscape Toolkit**

Use of the Toolkit pro forma table and guidance notes would aid the design of a woodland creation scheme or management proposal using the step-by-step assessment approach numbered on the proforma and outlined in the notes. It may be necessary to refer to evolving external guidance such as SNH Special Landscape Qualities. The assessment should use clear narrative to illustrate or justify decisions.

The key views, distinctive landscape features and landmarks identified in the Landscape Capacity Study are considered to be of primary importance in assessing the landscape implications of woodland proposals in the National Park to ensure that landscape mitigation is considered and embedded for every proposal. In the assessment methodology, key areas of landscape character and places where qualities such as wildness, tranquillity or dark skies are experienced are to be protected and key views are noted.

### **Use of the Landscape Toolkit for areas outside the viewsheds used in the Landscape Capacity Study**

The Landscape Capacity Study did not include viewpoints in less accessible areas including footpaths, hill tracks, and remote areas off the beaten track. The toolkit proforma can be used to consider perceptual landscape qualities in woodland creation areas outside the scope of the Study landscape zones. Consultation should be made with Landscape Advisers to select relevant viewpoints and reference should be made to baseline studies and current SNH Guidance on Wild Land, Special Landscape Qualities, wildness mapping and dark skies projects.

#### **Considering perceptual landscape qualities: Key views, dark skies, wildness and tranquillity**

It is important that the impact on key viewpoints at locations where people may perceive and experience perceptual landscape qualities such as; car parks, viewpoints, laybys and destinations are considered in woodland design. Information on relevant locations can be provided by National Park access, recreation and landscape advisers as well as local astronomical societies and online resources.

Trees can influence how landscapes, including nightscapes and dark skies, are viewed and experienced as they may screen or form part of natural landscape settings or backdrops to historic buildings.

Similarly for wildness and tranquillity, good woodland design could add to the naturalness and remoteness, thereby enhancing the experience of wildlife, water and photography, whereas poor design could be a detractor.

## Landscape Toolkit Proforma

Baseline assessment			
1. Landscape zone:	<i>(insert ref)</i>	2. Sub-zone	<i>(insert ref)</i>
3. Viewpoint name/route:		4. National Grid Reference:	
5. Survey date and time:		6. Weather:	
7. Landscape character type:	<i>(in which viewpoint is located)</i>	8. Special Landscape Quality Area:	<i>(in which viewpoint is located)</i>
9. Wild Land Area:	<i>(in which viewpoint is located - yes/no)</i>	10. Core Wildness:	<i>(in which viewpoint is located - yes/no)</i>
11. Viewpoint context	<i>(Briefly describe the location and context of the viewpoint, including why people use the viewpoint, approximate numbers of visitors, and the landscape character types, Wild Land Area and Core Wildness visible from the viewpoint.)</i>		
12. Views and visibility	<i>(Describe view distance, elevation, width, depth, orientation and any prominent/notable features etc.)</i>		
13. Woodland	<i>(Describe types, pattern, location and extent of existing woodland and forestry visible from the viewpoint.)</i>		

<b>Impact assessment</b>		
<b>Special Landscape Qualities</b>	<b>Impacts of native woodland</b>	<b>Impacts of productive conifer</b>
<i>(List all Special Landscape Qualities evident at the viewpoint.)</i>	<i>(Describe main impacts, either positive or negative, of new native woodland planting against all relevant Special Landscape Qualities.)</i>	<i>(Describe main impacts, either positive or negative, of new productive conifer planting against all relevant Special Landscape Qualities.)</i>
<b>Key characteristics</b>	<b>Impacts of native woodland</b>	<b>Impacts of productive conifer</b>
<i>(List any other relevant physical, visual and perceptual key characteristics evident at</i>	<i>(Describe main impacts, either positive or negative, of new native woodland planting against all relevant key</i>	<i>(Describe main impacts, either positive or negative, of new productive conifer planting against all relevant key</i>

<i>viewpoint.)</i>	<i>characteristics.)</i>	<i>characteristics.)</i>
<b>Sensitivity</b>	<i>(Evaluate according to criteria on next page)</i>	<i>(Evaluate according to criteria on next page)</i>
<b>Capacity and guidelines</b>	<i>(Insert any notes on overall landscape capacity and management guidelines.)</i>	<i>(Insert any notes on overall landscape capacity and management guidelines.)</i>

In arriving at an overall judgement of sensitivity and capacity, the following definitions should be applied:

- **High capacity** (low sensitivity) - The landscape is generally able to accommodate the type of woodland/forestry without significant landscape change, or in many cases, it might enhance the landscape. In either case, it could potentially relate well to the character and qualities of the area.
- **Medium-high capacity** (low-medium sensitivity) - The landscape is able to accommodate the type of woodland/forestry in some situations without significant landscape change. Many aspects of woodland/forestry could potentially relate to the character and qualities of the area.

- **Medium capacity** (medium sensitivity) - The landscape is quite vulnerable but with some ability to accommodate the type of woodland/forestry in limited situations without significant landscape change and it could potentially relate to some aspects of character and qualities of the area.
- **Low-medium capacity** (medium-high sensitivity) - The landscape is vulnerable and the type of woodland/forestry can only be accommodated in very limited situations without significant landscape change. Woodland/forestry relates to only a few aspects of the landscape and some significant landscape impacts are likely to occur.
- **Low capacity** (high sensitivity) - The landscape is very vulnerable and is unable to accommodate any woodland/forestry without significant landscape change as a result of the loss of key characteristics and the introduction of uncharacteristic features. Woodland/forestry conflicts with the majority of the key aspects of landscape and widespread significant landscape impacts are very likely to arise.