

Forestry:

# Delivering Green Growth



**Confor**

Promoting forestry and wood



**Q.** What industry can deliver economic growth, new jobs and low-carbon housing, reduce imports and help save the planet?



**A.** Forestry and wood.



# Forestry is delivering for the UK

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The forestry and wood sector is unique - economic growth and an improved environment go hand-in-hand.

Modern, multi-purpose forestry embraces economic and environmental needs. It delivers jobs and economic growth, while trees soak up carbon and wood products act as carbon stores - not to mention enhanced biodiversity and many social and recreational benefits.



## But it has **even greater potential**

A firm commitment by government to support the forestry sector could:

- » Secure over 7000 new jobs and support economic growth in fragile rural economies
- » Help realise the potential of trees as carbon sinks and wood products as carbon stores:
  - > increased planting could mean that by 2050, forestry alone could abate 10% of the UK's greenhouse gases annually
  - > increased use of wood in construction could save up to 30 million tonnes of carbon per year
- » Support greater biodiversity by bringing more woodland into active management
- » Displace even more imports - the growth in use of home-grown timber in our everyday lives is saving the UK over £1 billion per year already

# Three steps to delivering green growth

Recognising the long-term nature of forestry in its policy making, government needs to:

1

Plant more productive forests to give the sector confidence in long-term wood supply, securing jobs and investment

2

Stimulate markets for timber

3

Encourage active forest management to deliver the widest possible range of benefits

Government and the private sector need to explain to the public the modern, multi-purpose nature of forestry, its wider benefits and why we should use more wood.



# Plant more productive woodlands

1

The long-term nature of forestry means business planning is done in decades and a strategic, long-term approach is needed to create confidence and support ongoing investment.

The best way to breed confidence is to guarantee wood supply stretching well into the future.

A recent 50-year timber availability forecast by the Forestry Commission showed a healthy timber supply until the late 2030s – but then a sharp and potentially hugely damaging drop-off.

A Confor analysis suggests that this could lead to the loss of over 1000 jobs and a lost opportunity to capture over 55 million tonnes of carbon.

Just 13 per cent of the UK has forest cover, compared to the EU average of 37 per cent – a modest increase of 18,000 hectares a year, led by productive planting could deliver very significant economic and environmental benefits.

**Action point:**  
Find new ways to fund planting and prioritise productive species.

# Stimulate markets for wood

2

Wood is by far the best building material for the environment. We should all think 'Wood First'. The benefits of a timber house are clear...



A tonne of brick requires more than four times the energy to produce than a tonne of sawn softwood.

**4x** more energy



A tonne of concrete requires five times more energy to produce than a tonne of sawn softwood.

**5x** more energy



A tonne of steel requires 24 times more energy to produce than a tonne of sawn softwood.

**24x** more energy



Wood's thermal insulation properties are 5 times better than concrete, 10 times better than brick and 350 times better than steel.

The Government's response in January 2013 to the report by the Independent Panel on Forestry pledged to boost market demand for the wood industry supply chain and explore new market opportunities to drive new jobs, skills and growth.

This is being taken forward in several ways, including the Grown in Britain initiative. Aiming to deliver sustainable home-grown wood products that enrich our lives for a wide range of markets, including construction.

## Action point:

Deploy 'Wood First' policies in all public building projects (new build and refurbishment) and support the use of domestic timber, including backing Grown in Britain.

# Encourage active management of our forests

Around 50 per cent of England's forests are not actively managed and cannot deliver their economic, environmental and social potential. Woodland flora and fauna are significantly enhanced by woodland management.



Forestry: The virtuous circle

To unlock those benefits, a system of support and regulation targeted at securing long-term, active management is needed. This should include a grants system targeted at sustainable forestry, not short-term gain, and a reduction in unnecessary bureaucracy while maintaining the highest professional standards.

A coherent policy framework which encourages more active forest management, enhances productive planting and stimulates markets for wood can deliver a positive future – creating a virtuous cycle of economic and environmental benefit. Confor's report, 7000 Green Jobs and Low-Carbon Growth outlined the huge potential if we choose this way forward:

**Action point:**  
Support Confor's 7000 jobs report and deliver a virtuous cycle of economic and environmental benefit.





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Confor is the voice of the UK's forestry and wood-using sector. We aim to promote sustainable management of forests and successful wood-using businesses. Confor represents businesses all along the supply chain from nurseries and growers to wood-processing end-users.

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**Confor**, 59 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2JG  
Telephone: +44 (0) 131 240 1410

**[www.confor.org.uk](http://www.confor.org.uk)**

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