



Forestry England

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# **Barlow Wood A new woodland in Barlow, Gateshead**

## **Consultation report and our response to key issues raised**

June 2026



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# 1. Executive summary

Between 9 March and 29 March 2026 we held a consultation on proposals for the designs of a new woodland, called Barlow Wood, on land we recently purchased at South Farm, near Gateshead.

This report focuses on the feedback we received to the consultation and our response to the key issues raised.

We received 53 responses to the consultation. Whilst we received many broadly supportive comments, some highlighted concerns, and others raised questions and made suggestions.

After carefully considering the responses, further design work, and in response to consultation feedback, we have updated our proposed designs for the new woodland to include the following change:

- To improve connectivity into Barlow Wood, we have included a new pedestrian entrance at the south-west corner of the site, on the corner of Ashtree Lane and Barlow Crescent.
- To support the local nature recovery strategy, we have added 2 new ‘scrapes’ (a shallow, naturally wet feature) in areas of the site prone to waterlogging or where we understand ponds to have been located in the past. One is in the north-east corner of the site and the other to the west of the site.

We will shortly be applying to the Forestry Commission for regulatory review ahead of planting the new woodland.

This report outlines our approach to the consultation, a summary of the key issues and questions raised, and our response.

## 2. About the consultation

### 2.1 Introduction

Forestry England is creating a new 47 hectare woodland on land we have purchased at Barlow in Gateshead. The new woodland, which we will call Barlow Wood, has been bought by Forestry England to create a thriving woodland which will be planted with mixed conifer and broadleaf trees, specially selected to be resilient to future climate conditions.

The new woodland will be open to the public for people to explore and enjoy, whilst also being a valuable place for wildlife and producing sustainable timber for a greener economy.

The consultation invited views from the public and stakeholders on our proposals for the planting and design of the new woodland. Feedback will help shape and inform our final designs which will be submitted to the Forestry Commission for regulatory review ahead of planting the new woodland.

### 2.2 Objectives of the new woodland

Our objectives for the new woodland are :

**Future forest resources and resilience:** plant a mix of trees for a lasting supply of sustainable timber

**Thriving habitats for wildlife:** increase connectivity between woodlands in the landscape, creating a mosaic of habitats including areas of low density planting to enhance biodiversity

**Public access for health and wellbeing:**  
Create low-key public recreation opportunities with new green space for people to walk in the woodland

**Benefits for the wider landscape:** capture carbon, supporting net zero emissions targets

### 2.3 Consultation purpose

The aims of the consultation were to:

- Provide the public and our stakeholders with sufficient information about our proposals to allow them to give informed responses and suggestions.
- Understand the reasons for any issues or concerns about our proposals.

- Identify any issues we might not already be aware of.
- Provide adequate time for people to respond.
- Consider all responses carefully ahead of making any changes to our proposals.

## 2.4 Early engagement

Between, 19 November and 10 December 2025, we sent letters to 136 addresses close to the boundary of the proposed new woodland on land we have purchased at South Farm. The letters included a map showing the boundary of the new woodland and invited people to share their thoughts, through an online survey, on what should be considered as we develop the designs for the new woodland.

We also sent emails, with a copy of the letter, advising local elected representatives, about the local engagement that was taking place within the areas they represent. These included:

- The Mayor's office, North East Combined Authority.
- MP for Blaydon and Consett constituency.
- Metropolitan ward councillors for Winlaton and High Spennear Ward.
- North East Community Forest.

We received 28 responses, including 11 responses from residents of Barlow Road and 4 from Barlow Crescent.

## 2.5 Feedback to early engagement

Feedback to our early engagement included general positive comments as well as questions and concerns which focused on the following themes:

### 1. Bridleway and horse and bike trails

Provide routes for horse riders/change the status of public right of way to bridleway/encourage horses and cyclists; include gates and stiles to prevent horse riders and bikes from using footpaths.

### 2. Community engagement

Interest in tree planting/volunteering and suggestions to provide a building or facilities for community activities.

### 3. Other

Concerns about the impact of the new woodland on agricultural land; concerns about an increase in anti-social behaviour.

### 4. Dogs and the new woodland (2)

Suggestions that the new woodland should allow dogs and include dog bins and fence the woodland to prevent dogs running onto the busy Ashtree Lane.

#### **5. Footpaths and accessibility**

Concerns that the woodland will mean more people and more footpaths ; Suggestions for the inclusion of a new footpath along Garesfield Lane; include good walking trails and signposted circular routes of varied lengths; maintain current foot paths, with particular mention of the footpath between Barlow Road and Ashtree Lane.

#### **6. Traffic, parking and access**

Concern about heavy plant and how this will access the new woodland and concern that local roads are too narrow and cars will park on verges if parking is not included. Suggestions to include a car park/away from properties.

Suggestions to include secure hedged (preferred) or fenced boundaries with a few access kissing gates, cycle gates, styles or chicanes to stop the use of dirt bikes and quads in the area.

#### **7. Tree planting**

Manage the density of planting and carefully manage the woodland in the first 5 years; site is exposed to strong winds. Consider climate change; include fruit trees; native and evergreen species; keep existing trees and hedgerows.

#### **8. Views**

Concerns about the impact on views across the far hillside, from Barlow Road and Barlow Crescent and the proximity of the woodland to property boundaries and the potential shading of garden produce. Suggestions to preserve some of the views from the woodland across the Derwent and Tyne Valley/include viewing points.

#### **9. Wildlife**

Consider wildlife in the design and create diverse habitats for birds, insects, wildlife and raptors; Specific requests to facilitate wildlife corridors and to keep the woodland for wildlife - do not include a playground.

#### **10. Woodland design**

Include ponds and wetlands; prioritise lower height species/wetland within the northern most field of South Farm and focus taller growing trees further down the hill.

**Appendix A** Sets out how our designs have been shaped by this feedback and addresses some of the key issues raised. Feedback to this early engagement, together with further design and survey work, helped to shape the design proposals we presented for public consultation.

## 2.6 Who we consulted - public consultation

Our consultation was open to anyone who lived or worked in the local area or had an interest in our proposals.

- We focused our publicity on people living in the local area, as well as stakeholders (officer and elected local ward members) from Gateshead Council; wildlife interest groups such as Durham Wildlife Trust, the Butterfly Conservation, Bat Conservation and the North East Community Woodland.
- We also told the statutory stakeholders we consult with when creating a new woodland, including Natural England; Historic England, and, due to the presence of former mine entrances, the National Coal Authority.

The list of stakeholders we contacted is included in **Appendix F**.

## 2.7 Dates and duration

The consultation for the new woodland was open for four weeks from 9 March to 29 March 2026.

## 2.8 What we asked

The consultation survey included one open question inviting written feedback or questions about our proposed plans for the new woodland at Barlow Wood.

We also asked respondents to give their name and email address and, where applicable, supply details of the organisation on whose behalf they were responding.

The survey we published on the website, is included in **Appendix C**.

## 2.9 Methods of responding

Respondents to the consultation were invited to give their views by:

- Completing the questionnaire included on our website at: [New woodland - Barlow - Forestry Commission - Citizen Space](#)
- Giving comments by email to [Woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk](mailto:Woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk)
- Leaving comments at the public consultation drop in event on 23 March from 4pm - 7pm at the Winlaton Centre, Winlaton, Blaydon.
- Feedback received at the drop in event is summarised separately in section 3.6 of this report.

## 2.10 Consultation materials and publicity

### 2.10.1 Consultation materials

The consultation materials published on our website and available to view in person at our consultation drop in event included:

- An overview of the new woodland creation programme and tree planting objectives.
- A site appraisal - with photographs and maps to give context.
- An overview of the surveys undertaken, our objectives and principles, that have informed our design proposals for the new woodland.
- An overview of planting types included in the proposals.
- Visuals of how the new woodland might look soon after planting and, in the future.
- Information on how to respond to the consultation.

### 2.10.2 Consultation activity

We publicised the consultation in the following ways:

- **Media release:** distributed to local news outlets.
- **Dedicated web page:** on the Forestry England website at: <https://www.forestryengland.uk/barlow-wood>
- **Citizen space consultation portal:** [New woodland - Barlow - Forestry Commission - Citizen Space](#)
- **Emails:** to local residents.
- **Letters/emails:** to stakeholders.
- **Posters and leaflets:** a poster publicising the consultation and drop in event was put up in several locations near the site. Posters were also shared with the local parish councils for inclusion on their noticeboards/websites and leaflets were posted through letterboxes to promote the consultation.
- **Consultation drop in event:** Our drop in event held at the Winlaton Centre on 23 March 2026 displayed the information already published on the website on large posters around the venue and Forestry England staff were on hand to talk about the proposals, answer questions or queries, and listen to any concerns from those attending.

Attendees were also encouraged to leave immediate feedback on the comments board and to respond to the consultation formally via the online

survey, by email, or by completing a hard copy of the consultation questionnaire. We also asked attendees to leave their contact details if they would like to be kept updated about the proposals.

### 2.10.3 Analysis of consultation responses

Responses received to the consultation were analysed by assigning (or coding) the points made by each respondent to one or more codes within a code frame. Codes were organised by theme and separated into questions, comments or suggestions, and concerns/negative comments.

Each code reflects a point raised by 1 or more individuals in a variety of ways. From this it was possible to count how many times the same or similar points had been raised by respondents.

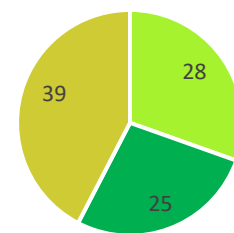
## 3. Consultation feedback

### 3.1 Consultation response overview

We received 53 individual responses for Barlow Wood during the consultation period. Of these 45 were from local residents, and 9 were from stakeholder organisations. Whilst some responses contained broadly positive supportive comments for the new woodland, some raised concerns and others asked questions or raised comments that were neutral in sentiment.

A full list of stakeholder organisations contacted is available to view in Appendix F. The organisations that responded were:

- Gateshead Council
  - Transport team
  - Public Rights of Way
  - Land Contamination
  - Natural Environment
  - Heritage
- Historic England
- The Coal Authority
- Tyne and Wear Archaeology
- Natural England

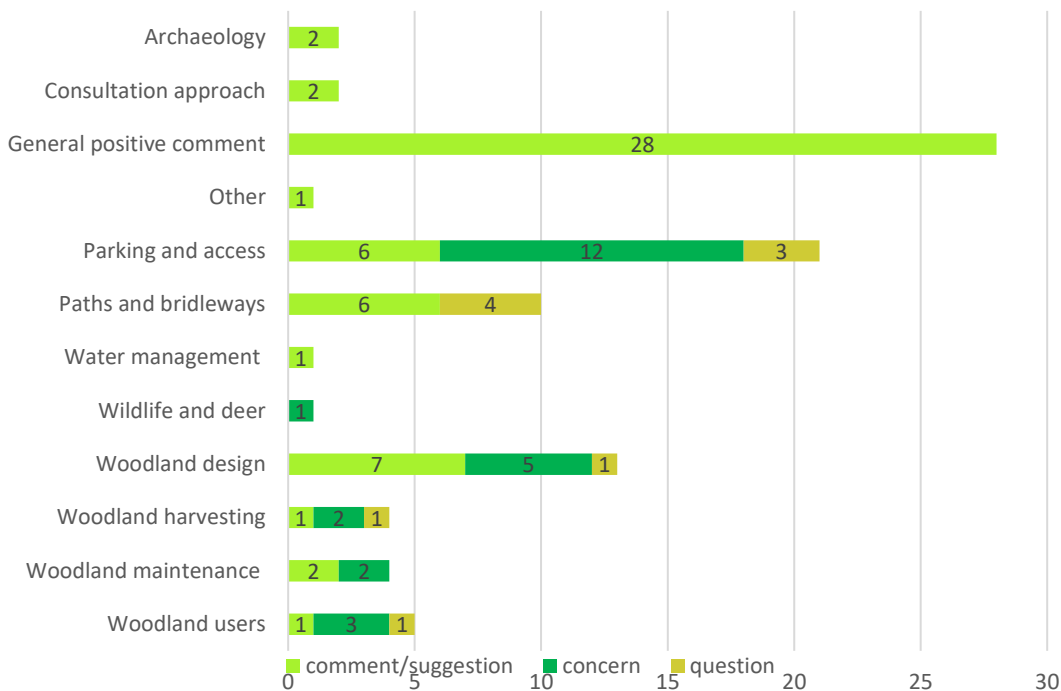


■ Supportive ■ Concerns ■ Neutral

### 3.2 Consultation response by theme

The responses were categorised into themes and sub-categorised into concern,

question, or comment/suggestion:



### 3.3 Supportive comments

We received 28 general overarching positive/supportive comments. These included: “the addition of trees in the area” “this is fantastic” “Great proposal”. “The woodland will add to local wildlife and help trap carbon” and “This is an excellent idea and will be supportive for the local wildlife and environment”.

### 3.4 Concerns/negative comments

We received 25 concerns/negative comments. These included:

#### 1. Parking and access (12):

- Concerns that the lack of parking in the plans will lead to more careless parking in the village, particularly on Hollinhill Lane, Ashtree Lane and Barlow Crescent, which are already narrow.
- Concerns that extra visitors will increase risks for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

#### 2. Wildlife and deer (1)

- Concern that deer won’t be managed humanely.

### **3. Woodland design (5)**

- Concern about the impact on views from Barlow Crescent as well as Barlow Road with a suggestion that these should be considered in the proposals.
- Concern about the impact on light and security for neighbouring properties.
- Concern about the presence on the site of former mine entrances and the potential impact of the woodland on ground stability.

### **4. Woodland harvesting (2)**

- Concern about the impact that any future tree harvesting might have on the local area. With one response suggesting they would not support the proposals if the planted trees were to be harvested at all.

### **5. Woodland maintenance (2)**

- Concern about the use of specific pesticides in the woodland.
- Concern about the impact of falling leaves from the trees into neighbouring gardens.

### **6. Woodland users (3):**

- Concern about dogs straying onto neighbouring land and that there are no plans to include dog bins.
- Concern about safe horse riding on the roads.

## **3.5 Questions, comments and suggestions**

In addition to the 28 general positive comments (see section 3.3), we received a further 10 questions and 29 comments and suggestions .

All feedback is included in the code frame in Appendix E.

### **1. Archaeology (2)**

- Consider the mine shaft and wagonway for information or artwork relating to the post medieval mining history of the area.
- Suggestion that the Barlow Medieval Village on the north-west of the site is excluded from operations and not subject to ground disturbance during the creation or lifetime of the woodland.

### **2. Consultation and community (2)**

- Include fly throughs to aid understanding of timelines.
- Practical approach/useful level of information.

### **3. Parking and access (9)**

- Introduce measures such as double yellow lines and managed parking to help control parking issues.
- Question about plans to mitigate parking impacts in Barlow and along nearby routes, including Ashtree Lane and Garesfield Lane?

- Improve sustainable access to the site, for example by providing cycle parking at key entry points.
- Identify and promote alternative parking locations where suitable options are available.

#### **4. Paths and bridleways (10)**

- Confirm whether any diversions, stopping up or alterations to Public Rights of Way (PROW) are proposed.
- Confirm that all PROW will remain open and unobstructed unless a formal legal order is applied for and approved.
- Clearly define and confirm the exact alignment of all public footpaths.
- Explain how footpaths will be protected and kept safe for the public during construction.
- Explain how PROW will be protected and enhanced, particularly improving access from Barlow Village where routes are currently hard to find and appear to pass through private land.
- Clarify how operational entrances that overlap with PROW will function, including types of vehicles and measures to protect pedestrians.
- Confirm consultation with Gateshead Council's PROW team.

#### **5. Water management (1)**

- Site is prone to standing water - tree planting will address this.

#### **6. Wildlife and deer (1)**

- Give more information about long term pest control.

#### **7. Woodland design (8)**

- Identify and assess old mine workings before starting work on site and obtain any required Coal Authority permits.
- Retain the existing hedgerows as part of the scheme.
- Extend the open space left behind homes on Barlow Road (which runs north-south and includes the area around the historic mineshaft) be extended further along to include Barlow Crescent?
- Opportunity to enhance Thornly Wood SSSI by optimising the value of the native/broadleaf.
- Exclude invasive non-native and naturalised species, including sycamore and beech, from wooded buffers to protect deciduous woodland priority habitats.
- Confirmation that no breeding bird survey is required.

#### **8. Woodland users (2)**

- Include horse riding.
- When will the woodland be open to the public.

#### **9. Woodland maintenance (2)**

- Agree a schedule with the local council for regular road sweeps.
- Provide prior warning of spraying.

#### 10. Woodland harvesting (2)

- Provide more information about harvesting and thinning.
- Establish access and servicing arrangements for timber harvesting in principle at an early stage to avoid potential difficulties in the future.

The code frames summarising the comments received to the consultation are included in **Appendix E**.

### 3.6 Feedback from the consultation drop in event

Over 50 people attended the event which displayed the information already published on the consultation website on large posters around the venue. Forestry England staff were on hand to talk about the proposals, answer questions or queries and listen to any concerns from those attending.

Attendees were also encouraged to leave immediate feedback on sticky notes on the comments board and left 32 sticky notes on the board. Many of the comments mirrored those also received from the formal consultation responses. The comments are summarised below:

#### **Supportive (12 comments): General approval of the plan's appearance and intent**

- Welcomed the protection of the green belt, woodland creation (including the mix of tree species) and the continued agricultural character of the land. The scheme is widely seen as a valuable long-term asset, with clear benefits for wildlife, carbon capture and safer walking routes, and confidence that it aligns with the Land Use Framework and includes appropriate deer management.

#### **Concerns (7)**

##### **Woodland access and users:**

- Concern about access and movement around the site
- Access barriers for disabled users and horse riders, the lack of bridle paths, and worries about parking given narrow local roads.
- Concerns about loss of views and sunlight along some footpaths
- Requests for public access to be managed carefully, particularly near Normans Riding Wood and neighbouring land.

#### **Suggestions (13)**

Suggestions focused on:

- **Wildlife:** Strengthening wildlife benefits, such as adding ponds to support frogs, newts and other wildlife.

- **Tree species:** Broadening species choice with suggestions for the inclusion of alder and larch, the donation of larger trees.
- **Woodland creation and management:** Use locally sourced materials, avoid chemical weed control and place a stronger emphasis on continuous cover forestry.
- **Woodland access and users:** Suggestions to improve access and connectivity for walkers and horse riders, including better links to existing paths and nearby woodland.
- **Community:** Several comments emphasised the value of working closely with neighbouring landowners, the local authority and the local community, as well as considering site naming and a stronger emphasis on continuous cover forestry.

We also asked attendees to leave their contact details if they would like to be kept updated about the proposals.

## 4. Summary of stakeholder responses

We received formal responses from the following stakeholders during the public consultation period. The stakeholder feedback has been included in the analysis.

Stakeholder responses
The Coal Authority
Gateshead Council - Natural Environment
Gateshead Council - Public Rights of Way
Gateshead Council - Contaminated Land
Gateshead Council - Heritage
Gateshead Council - Transport
Natural England
Historic England
Tyne and Wear Archaeology

**The Coal Authority** - Advised there are several unmapped and untreated former mine entries within the Barlow Wood site, which may pose risks to ground stability and public safety. Their key recommendation is that Forestry England should ensure these features are fully understood, located and assessed before any site works begin, and that any intrusive activity will require prior permission through the Coal Authority's permit process.

### **Gateshead Council - Natural Environment**

Overall, the Council is broadly supportive, noting the wide environmental and social benefits the woodland will bring as well as its location next door to the council's own woodland creation site at Garesfield. Suggests the site design should

be informed by a full ecological impact assessment (EclA) and include a breeding bird survey with a particular focus on skylark. Concerned about the potential impact of deer fencing on brown hare and badger and suggests that the EclA survey should inform the justification, extent, and specification of fencing on the site. Suggests consideration should be given to the provision of car park at the proposed main access on Ashtree Lane.

#### **Gateshead Council - Public Rights of Way**

The Public Rights of Way Officer confirmed that two public footpaths cross the site and requested more information to assess the impact of the proposals, including confirmation of the exact routes shown on the plans, how the paths will be managed during construction and after completion, and whether any diversion or changes are proposed. The response also set out the legislative background should changes be required to any public footpaths.

#### **Gateshead Council - Contaminated Land**

Confirmed that the overall risk of land contamination is low as the site is undeveloped agricultural land. However, past mining activity could create localised contamination from waste materials, particularly if disturbed during tree planting.

The site lies within a coal authority “development high risk area” due to likely shallow workings and coal outcrops. Suggests that a coal mining risk assessment is required, and intrusive investigations may also be needed. Confirms there are multiple recorded mine entries within the site. Tree planting excavations could encounter mine shafts or “bell pits”, which may also contain infilled coal waste and pose localised contamination risks.

#### **Gateshead Council - Heritage**

Confirmed there are no designated heritage assets on the site and the presence of two disused coal shafts and a well. Three historic wagonways cross the site, and the woodland design should avoid obscuring them and reflect their routes in the woodland design. Recommendation to consult with the Tyne and Wear Archaeologist.

#### **Gateshead Council - Transport**

Highlighted several transport considerations for the proposed woodland. Raised concern about the location of the main operational access and consideration for how this will be made safe. Confirmed the site includes two public rights of way that must be protected and enhanced, with current access points, especially from Barlow Village, being difficult to identify. Recommended we consult with the Gateshead Council PROW officer. Concern the development may create parking pressure due to limited public transport, particularly near access points, and suggested consideration for how parking will be discouraged and the promotion of alternative parking locations if these can be identified. Finally, although timber

harvesting is not planned for 25 years, suggested that access and servicing arrangements should be considered early to avoid future issues.

### **Historic England**

Confirmed that the proposed new woodland does not affect any designated heritage assets.

### **Natural England**

Based on a desk assessment, Natural England have no concerns about the proposal subject to confirmation that the preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) has ruled out the presence of priority habitat.

Suggests there's an opportunity to enhance the nearby Thorney Wood SSSI by optimising the value of the native/broadleaf components of the proposal.

Sets out the priority habitats and species and confirms there is no indication of open priority habitat within or immediately adjacent to the proposed area.

Advises that invasive non-native and naturalised species, including sycamore and beech, are excluded from wooded buffers designed to protect deciduous woodland priority habitats.

After assessment of afforestation guidance consider the woodland creation to be low risk to breeding waders and consider that a breeding bird survey is not needed to inform the Forestry EIA screening of the proposal.

Has no concerns about the impact of the proposals on peat.

Suggests other opportunities and points to think about, including guidance on choosing tree species, using species suited to wet woodland, and establishing ground plants in the native woodland area once the trees are in place. It also recommends following good practice for wildlife-friendly woodland design and keeping open space around any existing mature trees within or next to the planting area.

### **Tyne and Wear Archaeology**

Welcomes that the design keeps the medieval village area free from planting and recommends that the area should be excluded from all operations and not subjected to ground disturbance to protect any remains.

Notes that operational access is to the south of the site which will help preserve any below ground remains associated with the Barlow medieval village .

Notes that parts of the old 17th-century Brockwell Way wagonway are kept (HER 5957) which will preserve an element of the early industrial period and landscape between the planted areas, preserving some of the historic landscape.

The line ends at a mine shaft (HER 3363), which may have been contemporary with the wagonway. If interpretation or signage is included, this would be a good place to add information or artwork about the area's mining history.

## 5. Our responses to issues raised

We have considered all the feedback we received to the consultation, and our responses to the key issues raised are set out on the following pages.

We have grouped the issues into broad themes for a more readily understood overview of the issues. Many respondents made positive comments about the proposals, all of which have been noted. For conciseness, these have not all been included.

After carefully considering the responses, further design work, and in response to consultation feedback, we have updated our proposed designs for the new woodland to include the following change:

- To improve connectivity into the woodland, we have included a new pedestrian entrance at the south-west corner of the site, on the corner of Ashtree Lane and Barlow Crescent.
- To support the local nature recovery strategy, we have added 2 new ‘scrapes’ (a shallow, naturally wet feature) in areas of the site prone to waterlogging or where we understand ponds to have been located in the past. One is in the north-east corner of the site and the other to the west of the site.

### 1. Archaeology

#### 1. Consider the mine shaft and wagonway for information or artwork relating to the post medieval mining history of the area.

We recognise the importance of the area’s post-medieval mining history, including features such as the mine shaft and wagonway. We will include signs at the entrances; however, we have no plans to install additional signs or artwork within the woodland itself. This is a deliberate choice to preserve the site as a quiet, natural space rather than a formal destination with built features. By keeping the woodland free from signage, we can protect its informal character and allow people to experience the woodland in a more peaceful and immersive way.

#### 2. Suggestion that the Barlow Medieval Village on the north-west of the site is excluded from operations and not subject to ground disturbance during the creation or lifetime of the woodland.

We have left a 20 metre open space buffer around the Barlow medieval village, which will remain unplanted to preserve its historic setting. This area will be excluded from forestry operations and will not be subject to ground

disturbance, both during the creation of the woodland and throughout its lifetime.

**3. Reflect the 3 wagonways present on the site within the design.**

Although archived maps show several possible wagonway routes, they are not always accurate or reliable. The best evidenced route is the Winlaton/Brockwell wagonway, and this has been used to guide the design. Of the other routes, one just touches the site boundary, and part of another follows an existing hedgerow that will be kept as part of the planting design. This approach focuses on protecting the most important route while keeping the design clear, practical and in line with UK forestry guidance.

## 2. Consultation and community

**4. Work closely with neighbouring landowners, the local authority and community, and include education facilities.**

As part of developing our project, we engaged with Gateshead Council, the North East Community forest as well as neighbouring properties and landowners.

While our current resources are focused on delivering this project, we will be open to exploring future opportunities with neighbouring landowners to support biodiversity net gain and create wider landscape benefits.

We have limited capacity to support long term volunteering opportunities on the site; however, we hope to host a community planting day as we create the new woodland for local people to join in creating this special place.

While some of our larger forests across the country have a range of facilities for educational forest visits, this will not be possible at Barlow Wood. Our funding for this project is from the government Trees Programme and does not include funding for any visitor infrastructure, including educational facilities.

**5. Request to see the proposals for the new community woodland opposite side by side.**

Gateshead Council have confirmed that the first phase of planting was completed this spring, with over 37,000 native trees planted by contractors, volunteers, and schoolchildren. The Council is now focusing on caring for the young trees, continuing to enhance open habitats across the site, and improving public access. For further information visit Gateshead Council website at: <https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/34638/New-woodland-of-50-000-trees-for-Gateshead>

### 3. Parking and access

- 6. Concerns about an increase in visitors to the area and the impact of careless parking on narrow lanes and in areas where parking is already limited for local people. Desire to understand potential mitigations to manage this, with a specific request to include a car park at the proposed main access on Ashtree Lane and double yellow lines in areas where parking could cause an issue.**

We want to avoid a significant increase to car traffic on local roads and inconsiderate parking that may cause problems on narrow lanes and nearby properties. Barlow Wood has been designed primarily for local people to enjoy, and we have no plans to include visitor facilities or car parking. For those visitors that would like to visit a woodland by car, [Chopwell Wood](#) is just 2 miles away and provides parking, picnic areas, horse-riding and walking trails. If inconsiderate parking does become an issue, we will consider signs in appropriate locations to discourage this. Responsibility for the inclusion of yellow lines would rest with the Local Highways Authority.

- 7. Consider potential improvements to sustainable access to the site such as cycle parking at public access points.**

Our funding for this project does not extend to the creation of dedicated cycling infrastructure, and we are therefore unable to include these as part of our current plans. We offer dedicated cycling routes and facilities at Forestry England's nearby Chopwell Wood, about 2 miles away <https://www.forestryengland.uk/chopwell-wood>

- 8. Vehicle access for woodland maintenance has poor visibility along Garesfield and Ashtree lane - consider suitability and how vehicle access will be made safe.**

Our main access for woodland maintenance into the site will be from Garesfield Lane. We will improve the junction so vehicles can enter and leave safely from the east. This will include clear sight lines that meet highway safety standards.

### 4. Paths and bridleways

- 9. Confirm the exact alignment of all public footpaths, including any proposals to relocate them.**

The footpath alignment will be mapped out in detail using the official definitive maps as guidance, ahead of any planting for the new woodland.

**10. How will the public rights of way be affected during construction and once the project is complete and clarify whether any alterations are proposed?**

All existing footpaths will stay in their current locations, and no changes or diversions are planned. They have been fully incorporated into the woodland design and will be kept clear of trees and other obstacles so people can continue to use them.

We will follow all relevant rules for public rights of way and tree planting. In the unlikely event that planting temporarily obstructs the footpath, this will be clearly marked, with signs to let people know what is happening and if there are any temporary changes to the pathway.

Once the woodland is established, the footpaths will remain open and easy to use, forming part of the new woodland for people to enjoy.

**11. How will operational entrances, which are also PROW be used - what kind of vehicles, how will the PROW and pedestrians be protected?**

At the start of creating the new woodland, we'll need to bring in vehicles to deliver equipment and materials like fencing and tree saplings, and materials for creating tracks. This will mostly happen over the first one to two years. After that, vehicle visits will be much less frequent. Where our operational entrances are also for pedestrians, there will be a safe walking route around the security barrier we will be installing at the woodland entrance, keeping pedestrians and vehicles separate at this narrow point. The barrier will be set 18 metres back from the road, so all vehicles will be able to fully pull off the road before stopping to open it. Vehicles will already be travelling slowly as they approach the barrier, which helps reduce risk for people entering or leaving the site.

We use a range of off-road and specialist vehicles to plant and manage our woodlands. These include 4x4 vehicles and small utility vehicles to move staff and materials as well as tractors and excavators to prepare the ground. We also use larger machines such as harvesters and forwarders to manage timber, along with dumpers and other equipment to build and maintain tracks. All of these are designed to work on rough ground while limiting damage to the environment. During forestry work such as tree thinning and harvesting, there will be clear signs in place to let people know what is happening and guide them safely around the area. Trained staff (banksmen) will be on site to direct walkers, stop work if needed, and make sure it is safe for people to pass through or around the site. This will help ensure that pedestrians can continue to access the woodland site safely while work is taking place.

**12. Request for the relocation of an existing public footpath that currently runs through private property to within the new woodland boundary.**

Public footpaths are protected rights of way, and any diversion would require a formal legal process and clear justification. After careful consideration, we consider that the existing route remains appropriate, and there is no wider benefit to users that would support a change.

**13. Consult Gateshead Council's Public Rights of Way team and protect existing routes, particularly access from Barlow Village, which can currently be difficult to find as it appears to run through private or farm entrances with limited signage.**

We have engaged with Gateshead Council's Public Rights of Way team as part of our consultation . At this stage, we are not proposing any changes to the access from Barlow Village. All public footpaths will be retained, kept clear and remain fully accessible as part of the woodland. While no formal changes to routes are planned, we will consider appropriate signage at key entrances, where suitable, to help people find and use the woodland more easily without affecting its rural character.

## **5. Wildlife and deer**

**14. Strengthen wildlife benefits, such as adding ponds to support frogs, newts and other wildlife.**

As part of the design for the new woodland, and in line with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, we are including two 'scrape' features in areas of the site prone to waterlogging or where we understand ponds to have been located in the past - one is in the north-east corner and one in the west of the site. These shallow, seasonally wet areas will collect and hold water at certain times of the year creating a more varied habitat type suitable for supporting a wider range of wildlife such as insects, amphibians (frogs and newts), and birds. By introducing these seasonally wetter areas alongside the tree planting, the design will support strengthening the overall biodiversity of the woodland.

**15. Humanely manage the deer and rabbit population.**

We will use deer fencing with rabbit netting to protect larger sections of the new woodland, and tree tubes in smaller areas. Our highly skilled wildlife rangers also replace the role of Britain's missing predators across our woodlands by safely and humanely controlling deer and rabbit populations where necessary. England is part of the Deer Initiative, a partnership that promotes sustainable deer management in England and Wales. More information on how Forestry England manages deer can be found here: [www.forestryengland.uk/article/managing-deer-the-nations-forests](http://www.forestryengland.uk/article/managing-deer-the-nations-forests)

## 16. Give more information about long term pest control.

As well as deer and rabbits, other pests we manage when creating new woodlands would include grey squirrels, which strip bark from growing trees. We may also need to manage insect pests and diseases that affect tree health.

**Grey squirrels** - can pose serious threats to young woodlands. While natural predators like pine martens may help to balance grey squirrel numbers in the long term, their populations currently need to be monitored and controlled where necessary. Our wildlife rangers carry out grey squirrel control across our woodlands where it is needed to protect the trees. You can read more on our position here: [www.forestryengland.uk/article/managing-grey-squirrels](http://www.forestryengland.uk/article/managing-grey-squirrels)

**Protecting tree health** - we play an important role in protecting our woodlands from pests and diseases. We grow many of our trees from seed, choosing seeds from areas where today's climate is similar to that expected in the future, so the trees we are planting at Barlow Wood will be better suited to long-term climate conditions.

We work with experts to regularly monitor our trees and woodland conditions, allowing us to spot early signs of disease, damage or stress and act quickly. We also aim to increase the mix of tree species we plant, which helps make the woodland more resilient to pests, diseases and the impacts of a changing climate.

Where necessary, we carefully remove affected or damaged trees to protect the health of the wider woodland. This ongoing management helps ensure the woodland can establish successfully and remain healthy for the future. <https://www.forestryengland.uk/blog/protecting-tree-health-england>

**Biosecurity management** - our staff follow simple precautions to stop the spread of pests and diseases in our forests - such as cleaning boots, tools and machinery. We also encourage visitors to do their part by following a few easy steps, such as cleaning boots, bikes and buggies. This helps to reduce the risk of spreading pests and diseases through mud and water. [Biosecurity advice for forest visitors | Forestry England](#)

## 17. Undertake a EclA to include a breeding bird survey with a focus on farmland species such as skylark.

We have considered the suggestion to carry out an Ecological Impact Assessment and a breeding bird survey. When we carried out ground preparations on the site in early spring, we deliberately left some grass areas uncut to provide suitable habitat for farmland birds such as skylark during the breeding season.

Forest Services, the regulator responsible for reviewing and approving forestry proposals, has reviewed our woodland designs and advised that a breeding bird survey is not needed in this case. On that basis, no further survey work is planned.

**18. Use information from the ECIA to inform the use of deer fencing and its potential impact on species such as brown hare and badgers.**

No evidence of badgers has been recorded on the woodland site itself but are known to be in the wider landscape. Deer fencing with rabbit netting is proposed to protect the planted young trees, reduce damage from grazing species such as deer and brown hare and allow them to establish fully. The fencing will be installed in compartments rather than across the whole site, allowing animals to continue moving through and around the site, and maintaining wildlife corridors and connectivity across the surrounding landscape. Once the trees are established, the deer fencing will be removed and where possible recycled.

## **6. Woodland maintenance**

**19. Concern that fallen leaves may build up in neighbouring gardens and create a hazard and suggestion to agree a schedule with the local council for regular road sweeps.**

Buffers between the new woodland and the roads will be at least 10 metres and we will manage the woodland responsibly to reduce any potential impact where possible.

We do not expect leaf fall to be a significant issue. However, if any noticeable build-up occurs on the adjacent highways, this can be raised with the local authority, who are responsible for cleaning roads and footpaths, including road sweeping, as part of their normal maintenance duties.

**20. Do not use chemical weed killers and provide prior warning of spraying.**

Sometimes we need to use herbicides to control vegetation around young trees, so they are not crowded out and can grow properly. We have seeded the former arable areas of Barlow Wood with a low-growing grass and wildflower mix, which should reduce the need for ongoing management. This means herbicides will only be used where needed to help trees establish. Forestry England follows strict guidance drawing on nationally recognised standards and good practice, including:

- The Code of Practice for using plant protection products  
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pesticides/using-pesticides/codes-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-using-plant-protection-products.htm>

- The UK Forestry Standard  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/651670336a423b0014f4c5c0/Revised\\_UK\\_Forestry\\_Standard\\_-\\_effective\\_October\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/651670336a423b0014f4c5c0/Revised_UK_Forestry_Standard_-_effective_October_2024.pdf)
- Wider guidance such as the Natural England Weed Control Handbook  
<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5280611902947328>

If herbicides are used, this will be done in line with these regulations and best practice to minimise any impact on the surrounding environment and to protect people nearby. Where appropriate, we will put up clear signs during spraying and may inform neighbouring properties in advance so people are aware.

**21. Provide more information about tree thinning and harvesting and place more emphasis on continuous cover forestry.**

We have designed the new woodland to be managed under a continuous cover approach in the future, meaning it will always retain tree cover. Initial thinning will begin at around 20-25 years to support healthy growth and provide a sustainable supply of timber. Most trees will be left to mature, with different species reaching harvesting age at different times, ensuring trees are removed gradually rather than all at once.

After felling, new trees will be planted to maintain this cycle. Over time, this will create a woodland of mixed ages, which is beneficial for wildlife. Managed in this way, the woodland will become a productive resource while remaining healthy and resilient. Responsible timber harvesting will also contribute to tackling the climate crisis by supplying renewable materials that can replace more carbon-intensive products and help store carbon long-term.

**22. Establish access and servicing arrangements for timber harvesting in principle at an early stage to avoid potential difficulties in the future.**

It will be about 20-25 years before any timber can be removed from the site. Transport routes for the sustainable timber will be agreed with the local highways authority as required.

## 7. Woodland design

**23. Identify and assess old mine workings before starting work on site and obtain necessary Coal Authority permits.**

We have reviewed the site for any evidence of historic mine workings and no visible features have been identified. This will continue to be considered as part of our standard site assessments before work begins. We will engage with the Coal Authority (formerly the Mining Remediation Authority) where required

and obtain any necessary permits ahead of works on site to ensure all relevant requirements are met.

**24. Extend the open space left behind properties on Barlow Road further along to included properties that back onto the woodland on Barlow Crescent.**

Whilst slightly wider areas of open space have been retained behind some properties on Barlow Road, this is to protect the medieval village archaeological features in this area. We believe there is already a clear separation between the woodland and the existing homes on Barlow Crescent, including a road, established hedges, and a variable open buffer of at least 10 metres within the site before low-density planting begins. A scrape (a shallow, naturally wet feature) has now also been included, which increases the open space to around 26 metres in a small area and provides additional ecological benefit. We are also proposing a graduated planting approach, with low-density planting closest to the boundary and taller planting set further back. For these reasons we have no plans to increase the area of open space between the woodland planting and properties on Barlow Crescent.

**25. Retain the existing hedgerows as part of the scheme.**

Existing hedgerows will be retained. They provide valuable habitat and wildlife corridors, supporting species movement and enhancing biodiversity. Keeping these established features also supports natural shelter and boundary structure within the woodland design.

**26. Exclude invasive non-native and naturalised species, including sycamore and beech, from wooded buffers to protect deciduous woodland priority habitats.**

Sycamore and beech will not be planted near existing woodland, and a buffer will be maintained to protect the integrity of the current habitat. Existing power lines also provide additional separation, helping to safeguard the edge of the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The new woodland will use a diverse mix of suitable native species to support biodiversity and increase resilience.

**27. Broaden the species choice and include alder and larch.**

We are planning to plant a mix of tree species at Barlow Wood, including native species like alder, pedunculate oak, beech, small-leaved lime, silver birch, and hornbeam. Larch has been considered but is not proposed due to the potential risk posed by Phytophthora disease in the area. Shrub species will be planted along woodland edges, and open spaces will be woven throughout the site, creating a mosaic of different habitats. Our species selection has been guided by extensive site surveys and the latest climate science, which has helped us select trees likely to be resilient to future conditions. This will

ensure the new woodland provides benefits for generations to come. Once the woodland is established and we begin to harvest trees for timber, new trees will be planted to replace them. Over time, this means the new woodland will naturally develop trees of different ages and sizes.

## 8. Woodland users

### 28. Provide dog bins.

Visitors will be welcome to walk their dogs in the new woodland, dog owners must be responsible and keep their pets under control in all the forests and woodlands we care for, following signs and our [Forest Dog Code](#). We have no plans to include dog waste bins and owners are asked to always pick up after their dog, bag it and take it home with them.

### 29. Improve access and connectivity for walkers and horse riders, including better links to existing paths and nearby woodland.

Barlow Wood will provide public access for local people who wish to explore and enjoy a quieter woodland environment. It is not intended to be a destination site in the same way as some of our larger forests. Our funding for Barlow Wood comes from the government's Trees Programme, which does not cover the cost of additional recreational infrastructure within or outside the new woodland. As such, we have no current plans to create surfaced paths for horse-riding or cycling.

Visitors will be able to explore the woodland using forest tracks, along with a series of unsurfaced grass paths that will be created to support woodland management. Once the new trees are established, the land will be dedicated as open access, allowing people to explore more freely.

To improve connectivity into the woodland, we have included a new pedestrian entrance at the south-west corner of the site, on the corner of Ashtree Lane and Barlow Crescent. This will provide visitors approaching the site via the public footpath (BL/40/2) from the south-west of the site with easier and safer access into Barlow Wood, reducing the distance they would otherwise need to walk along the road to reach the existing connecting footpath into the woodland.

We have also included a pedestrian entrance on the south-east corner of the site further along Ashtree Lane, opposite the entrance to the new woodland being created by Gateshead Council. This will provide direct access between the two woodland sites, improving accessibility and creating opportunities for people to enjoy a wider area of connected woodland once established.

## Appendix A: Our response to key themes from early engagement (included in consultation materials)

### A new woodland in Barlow - our response to key themes from early engagement

We recently asked local people for their early views on plans to create a new woodland on land in Barlow, Gateshead. Here are our responses to the key themes and questions raised.

#### **Access to the new woodland**

The new woodland will be open for local people to enjoy as a quiet, natural space. Once it is established, we will dedicate it under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act so people can explore the site.

The new woodland can be easily reached using the existing Public Rights of Way that cross the site and the pedestrian entrances shown on the site plans. Once there, a network of new grass paths will make it easy for people to explore the new woodland. Other than the new forest track needed for our woodland vehicles, we're not planning any additional surfaced trails or facilities for cycling or horse-riding.

Dogs will be welcome, but the woodland will not be fully fenced and we do not plan to install dog waste bins. We expect all dog owners to act responsibly and keep their pets in sight and close by at all times in the new woodland, following our Forest Dog Code<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Traffic and parking**

The new woodland will be easy to reach on foot using local footpaths and lanes and we're not planning any visitor or recreational facilities. We therefore won't be providing public parking. This will help keep local roads free from extra traffic.

Our forestry vehicles need to be able to access the new woodland from the road so they can manage and maintain the site. We plan to use the existing southern entrance on Garesfield Lane, supported by upgrading the existing track. We will include barriers at this entrance to prevent unauthorised vehicle access and reduce the risk of antisocial behaviour.

Our draft design includes proposals for a further access point for woodland vehicles on the southern side of the site at Ashtree Lane. This would need funding and planning permission to go ahead.

It is expected that no timber will be harvested from the site for around 20-25 years, allowing the woodland to establish and mature. When harvesting eventually begins, transport routes for the sustainably managed timber will be agreed with the local highways authority as required.

### **Design, wildlife and views**

The new mixed woodland will enrich the landscape by boosting biodiversity and enhancing the natural environment. As part of our planning, we have done surveys to tell us more about the plants, wildlife and soil. These surveys, along with a landscape and visual appraisal and feedback from local people, have helped to shape our draft designs.

We have planned the woodland layout to respect views from neighbouring properties. A wide area of open space has been left between the woodland boundary and the properties on Barlow Road, with an additional area of shorter shrubs and widely spaced broadleaved trees such as oak, hornbeam, silver birch, cherry and sycamore. Low density edge planting, including berry and fruit species, will also be included along the new grass paths on the northern boundary of the site, creating a more visually diverse edge to the woodland. Low density planting will also create ecologically valuable and structurally diverse habitats (often referred to as ecotones).

Whilst some views will be retained, it remains important to balance the objectives of woodland creation with the desire for open space and visual connectivity. The design therefore introduces productive new planting while still aiming to preserve some key sightlines and maintain a sense of openness where appropriate. For example, some views from the northern part of site across to the Tyne will be kept. The new woodland will reconnect fragmented habitats across the wider landscape and increase valuable nesting, roosting, foraging and overwintering areas for local wildlife, including insects, amphibians, birds and mammals.

### **The trees we will plant**

We are using years of experience and the latest scientific evidence to choose the right trees to plant in the new woodland. Our surveys help us to choose the trees most suitable for the site now and as the climate changes. Our professional foresters carefully choose what trees to plant and where to plant them. They understand the local soil, how quickly the trees will grow, and the important habitats, species and geographical features nearby. We also consider tree pests and diseases and future climate conditions to keep woods as healthy as possible.

The species will be a mix of broadleaf and conifer, often planted together in mixtures, with groups of shrub species along edges to increase the variety and provide seasonal colour and texture. Species have been chosen to produce a future source of sustainable timber. This supply of homegrown wood products will support the wider British timber and forestry industry, helping to reduce the demand for imports from other countries.

Species at Barlow Wood might include oak, hornbeam, silver birch, Scots pine, Macedonian pine, beech, Douglas fir, Pacific silver fir, sycamore, wild cherry, and sweet chestnut. Shrubs could include hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, and dog rose.

### **Establishing and managing the new woodland**

We aim to plant the new woodland in winter 26/27. Maintenance during the first five years is especially important to ensure the woodland's long-term success. The woodland will be managed by the Forestry England team and our contractors.

Longer term, Forestry England will develop a Forest Plan to make sure that future timber production is sustainable. As part of our ongoing management of the woodland, we will begin to remove some trees after about 20-25 years to provide a sustainable supply of timber and help the woodland to continue to grow healthily for many years to come.

### **Protecting the new woodland from deer**

The UK is home to six species of deer. As their natural predators (bears, lynx and wolves) are no longer present in the UK, our wildlife management team have to manage the deer populations. Without predators or management, deer populations become unnaturally large, and their browsing can damage or kill young trees and wildlife habitats, reducing the resilience of the new woodland to the effects of climate change and lowering the carbon captured from the atmosphere.

We will use deer fencing to protect larger blocks of new planting and tree tubes in smaller areas. Rabbit and deer fencing will protect young trees from browsing, while tree tubes will safeguard smaller, widely spaced areas. After the woodland has become established, deer fencing and tree tubes will be removed and recycled where possible. This usually happens after approximately 10 years.

Forestry England is part of the Deer Initiative<sup>2</sup>, a partnership that promotes sustainable deer management in England and Wales. Our highly skilled wildlife management team will safely and humanely control deer populations in our woodlands, working to the highest standards.

More information about how Forestry England manage deer can be found on our website<sup>3</sup>.

### **Use of agricultural land**

We understand concerns around food security, and we want to keep the best-quality land in agricultural production. This is why we do not create woodlands on the most productive land (grades 1 & 2). The land at Barlow Wood has been found to be grade 3 and is not considered to be of high agricultural quality.

Forestry England's role is to manage and expand the nation's forests to ensure they are healthy and sustainable and benefit wildlife, people, and the economy. The new woodland will capture carbon, connect existing woodland habitats for wildlife to move between, and provide a sustainable source of timber, which is crucial for the UK's green economy.

References:

- 1 <https://www.forestryengland.uk/dog-code>
- 2 <http://www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk/>
- 3 <https://www.forestryengland.uk/article/managing-deer-the-nations-forests>

## Appendix B: Consultation materials



Forestry England

# Growing the nation's forests

## Proposed new woodland

### Barlow Wood in Gateshead

## Forestry England are planting new woodlands to expand the nation's forests

We are planning new woodland in Barlow, Gateshead, which will be known as Barlow Wood. We would like your comments on our initial ideas. Your input will help shape our final designs.

Working with public and private landowners, we're choosing the right places for woodlands to grow and flourish, carefully planting a mix of tree species to be resilient in our changing climate.

Every new woodland will have public access so you can explore and enjoy them to support your health and wellbeing.

They will be valuable places for wildlife, often linking other woods to provide green corridors for wildlife to move and thrive across the landscape.

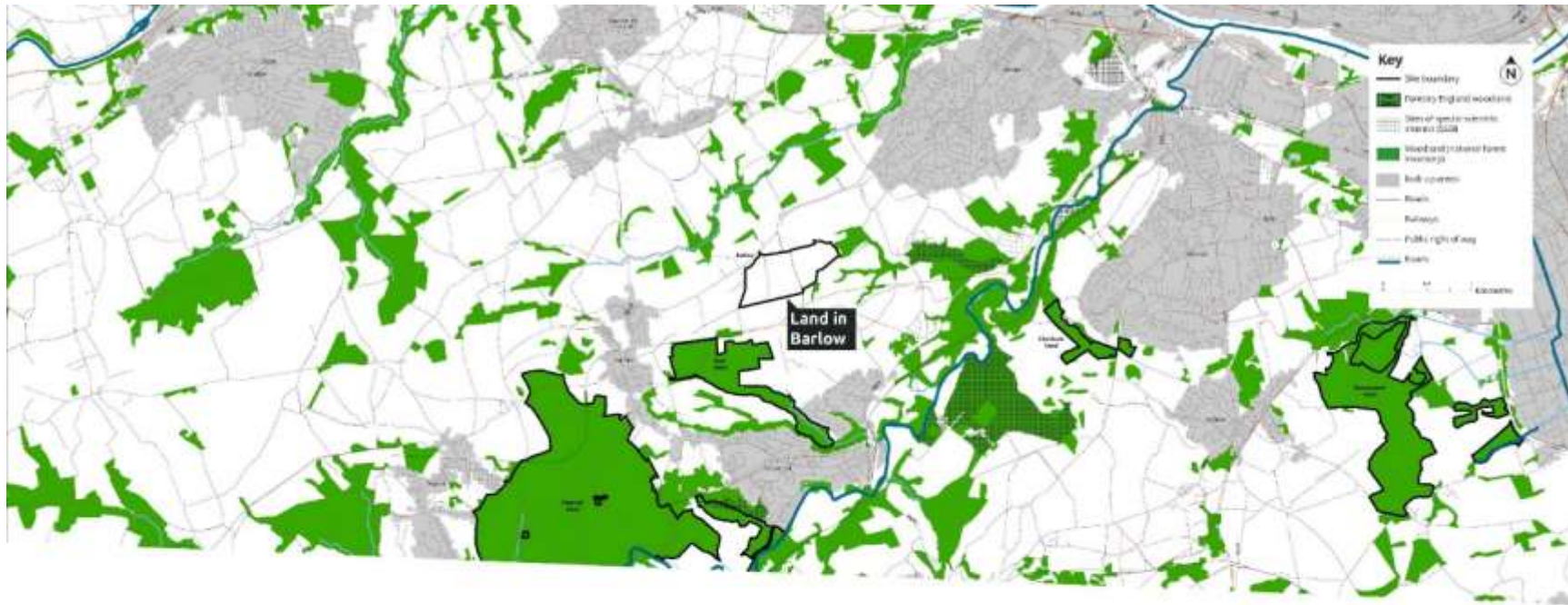
In time, each new woodland will provide sustainable timber, contributing to a green economy and they'll have wider environmental benefits including absorbing carbon, improving soil health and air quality, and water management.

Forestry England is creating these woodlands through the government's Nature for Climate Fund.

Scan the QR code to find out more:

[forestryengland.uk](https://forestryengland.uk)





## Site location & landscape context

The proposed new woodland in Barlow, Gateshead, is within Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 16 Durham Coalfield Pennine Fringe. It is a transitional landscape between the North Pennines to the west and the Tyne and Wear Lowlands to the east. It is formed by a series of broad ridges, separated by river valleys. The west is more upland in character, with large, open, regular fields bounded by drystone walls or fences, and is primarily used for sheep and cattle grazing. In the east the farmed landscape becomes more mixed, with arable crops grown on the richer land, and more irregular fields divided by hedges rather than walls. Networks of hedges and strips of woodland in river valleys and alongside streams, combined with shelterbelts and large conifer plantations, give parts of the area a well-wooded appearance. A number of major rivers run through the area, including the Wear and Derwent.

The proposed new woodland in Barlow is approximately 0.5 miles from land Forestry England manages at Spen Bank and 2 miles from Chopwell Wood to the southwest.





## The existing site

The site was previously used as arable farmland and grassland, divided into eight fields with internal hedgerow boundaries, some containing mature oak and ash trees. Norman's Riding Wood, a priority deciduous woodland habitat, forms the eastern boundary, with valley woodland and shelterbelts visible in the wider landscape.

Two public footpaths run parallel to each other north-south between Barlow village and Ashtree Lane, offering open views toward the River Tyne, Newcastle, and Gateshead. Several properties in Barlow also have open views into the site. Overhead powerlines are a distinctive feature and cross the site in several places.

1: Wide view north over site from Ashtree Lane public footpath & field access point. 2: View east from break in hedgerow from footpath to west of site. 3: Wide view south and west from public footpath near Barlow. 4: View south along public footpath towards Ashtree Lane. 5: View northwest into lower site from Gatesfield Lane field gate.





## How the new woodland in Barlow could look

We are designing the new woodland to benefit people, wildlife and the wider landscape (natural capital approach). Our design meets the UK Forestry Standard, which takes into account the following elements (Forestry Commission, 2021):



Detailed desktop surveys, site surveys and analysis will inform our design, This includes:

- Local environment record review
- Preliminary ecological appraisal
- Historic environment records review
- Landscape and visual appraisal
- Soil mapping
- Ecological site classification
- Utilities searches
- Responses to initial consultation

### Objectives for the new woodland

- Future forest resources and resilience:** plant a mix of trees for a lasting supply of sustainable timber.
- Thriving habitats for wildlife:** increase connectivity between woodlands in the landscape, creating a mosaic of habitats including areas of low density planting to enhance biodiversity.
- Public access for health and wellbeing:** create low-key public recreation opportunities with new green space for people to walk in the woodland.
- Benefits for the wider landscape:** capture carbon, supporting net zero emissions targets.

### Types of woodland we could plant





## How the new woodland could look

Our initial designs include proposals to:

- Plant coniferous and broadleaved trees together, with shrub species along some edges. This will add variety, colour and texture in the landscape.
- Create circular grass routes for woodland management and public access, linking to existing rights of way to Barlow and to Gateshead Council's new woodland to the south.
- Create wildlife corridors by leaving open space next to hedgerows, powerlines and heritage features, adding some shrub planting at the edges of woodland for wildlife to thrive.
- Include low-density native trees, shrubs and open space to keep some open views from nearby properties and add year-round interest.

### Artist's impressions:





## A new woodland in Barlow - our response to key themes from early engagement

We recently asked local people for their early views on plans to create a new woodland on land in Barlow, Gateshead. Here are our responses to the key themes and questions raised.

### Access to the new woodland

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The new woodland can be easily reached using the existing Public Rights of Way that cross the site and the pedestrian entrances shown on the site plans. Once there, a network of new grass paths will make it easy for people to explore the new woodland. Other than the new forest track needed for our woodland vehicles, we're not planning any additional surfaced trails or facilities for cycling or horse-riding.

Dogs will be welcome, but the woodland will not be fully fenced and we do not plan to install dog waste bins. We expect all dog owners to act responsibly and keep their pets in sight and close by at all times in the new woodland, following our Forest Dog Code.

### Traffic and parking

The new woodland will be easy to reach on foot using local footpaths and lanes and we're not planning any visitor or recreational facilities. We therefore won't be providing public parking. This will help keep local roads free from extra traffic.

Our forestry vehicles need to be able to access the new woodland from the road so they can manage and maintain the site. We plan to use the existing southern entrance on Gatesfield Lane, supported by upgrading the existing track. We will include barriers at this entrance to prevent unauthorised vehicle access and reduce the risk of antisocial behaviour. Our draft design includes proposals for a further access point for woodland vehicles on the southern side of the site at Ashtree Lane. This would need funding and planning permission to go ahead.

It is expected that no timber will be harvested from the site for around 20-25 years, allowing the woodland to establish and mature. When harvesting eventually begins, transport routes for the sustainably managed timber will be agreed with the local highway authority as required.

### Design, wildlife and views

The new mixed woodland will enrich the landscape by boosting biodiversity and enhancing the natural environment. As part of our planning, we have done surveys to tell us more about the plants, wildlife and soil. These surveys, along with a landscape and visual appraisal and feedback from local people, have helped to shape our draft designs.

We have planned the woodland layout to respect views from neighbouring properties. A wide area of open space has been left between the woodland boundary and the properties on Barlow Road, with an additional area of shorter shrubs and widely spaced broadleaved trees such as oak, hornbeam, silver birch, cherry and sycamore. Low density edge planting, including berry and fruit species, will also be included along the new grass paths on the northern boundary of the site, creating a more visually diverse edge to the woodland. Low density planting will also create ecologically valuable and structurally diverse habitats (often referred to as ecotones).

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sightlines and maintain a sense of openness where appropriate. For example, some views from the northern part of site across to the Tyne will be kept. The new woodland will reconnect fragmented habitats across the wider landscape and increase valuable nesting, roosting, foraging and overwintering areas for local wildlife, including insects, amphibians, birds and mammals.

### The trees we will plant

We are using years of experience and the latest scientific evidence to choose the right trees to plant in the new woodland. Our surveys help us to choose the trees most suitable for the site now and as the climate changes. Our professional foresters carefully choose what trees to plant and where to plant them. They understand the local soil, how quickly the trees will grow, and the important habitats, species and geographical features nearby. We also consider tree pests and diseases and future climate conditions to keep woods as healthy as possible.

The species will be a mix of broadleaf and conifer, often planted together in mixtures, with groups of shrub species along edges to increase the variety and provide seasonal colour and texture. Species have been chosen to produce a future source of sustainable timber. This supply of home-grown wood products will support the wider British timber and forestry industry, helping to reduce the demand for imports from other countries.

Species at Barlow Wood might include oak, hornbeam, silver birch, Scots pine, Macedonian pine, beech, Douglas fir, Pacific silver fir, sycamore, wild cherry, and sweet chestnut. Shrubs could include hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, and dog rose.

### Establishing and managing the new woodland

We aim to plant the new woodland in winter 2027. Maintenance during the first five years is especially important to ensure the woodland's long-term success. The woodland will be managed by the Forestry England team and our contractors.

Longer term, Forestry England will develop a Forest Plan to make sure that future timber production is sustainable. As part of our ongoing management of the woodland, we will begin to remove some trees after about 20-25 years to provide a sustainable supply of timber and help the woodland to continue to grow healthily for many years to come.

### Protecting the new woodland from deer

The UK is home to six species of deer. As their natural predators (wolves, lynx and boars) are no longer present in the UK, our wildlife management teams have to manage the deer populations. Without predators or management, deer populations become unustainably large, and their browsing can damage or kill young trees and wildlife habitats, reducing the resilience of the new woodland to the effects of climate change and lowering the carbon captured from the atmosphere.

We will use deer fencing to protect larger blocks of new planting and tree tubes in smaller areas. Rabbit and deer fencing will protect young trees from browsing, while tree tubes will safeguard smaller, widely spaced areas. After the woodland has become established, deer fencing and tree tubes will be removed and recycled where possible. This usually happens after approximately 10 years.

Forestry England is part of the Deer Initiative, a partnership that promotes sustainable deer

management in England and Wales. Our highly skilled wildlife management team will safely and humanely control deer populations in our woodlands, working to the highest standards. More information about how Forestry England manage deer can be found on our website.

### Use of agricultural land

We understand concerns around food security, and we want to keep the best-quality land in agricultural production. This is why we do not create woodlands on the most productive land (grades 1 & 2). The land at Barlow Wood has been found to be grade 3 and is not considered to be of high agricultural quality.

Forestry England's role is to manage and expand the nation's forests to ensure they are healthy and sustainable and benefit wildlife, people, and the economy. The new woodland will capture carbon, connect existing woodland habitats for wildlife to move between, and provide a sustainable source of timber, which is crucial for the UK's green economy.

#### References:

1 <https://www.forestryengland.uk/boj-code>

2 <http://www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk/>

3 <https://www.forestryengland.uk/article/managing-deer-the-nations-forests>





Forestry England

Your views are important to us - let us know what you think

### Responding to this consultation

We encourage you to submit your response online. You can view our plans and submit your views by completing the online feedback form at:

- [bit.ly/barloww](https://bit.ly/barloww)
- If you are unable to do this, you can respond via email at [woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk](mailto:woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk)

All views should be received by 11.59pm on Sunday  
29th March 2026

### What's next ?

- Review of consultation feedback
- Further design work to refine our proposals
- Application to the Forestry Commission for regulatory review
- Planting (Winter 2026/27)

Scan the QR code  
to find out more:


[forestryengland.uk](https://forestryengland.uk)



Sticky notes left at consultation event



Poster - to promote the consultation and the public drop-in event



**Forestry England**

# New Woodland in Barlow

**Come along to our public  
consultation event**

Monday 23 March 4:00pm - 7:00pm  
Winlaton Centre, North St, Winlaton,  
Blaydon, NE21 6BY

Forestry England is planning to create a new woodland called Barlow Wood, at Barlow, in Gateshead. Please drop-in at our local consultation event to view our proposed designs and speak to members of our team.

You can also share your views with us online by scanning the QR code or visiting <https://bit.ly/barloww>  
The consultation closes on Sunday 29 March



You can also contact us at:  
[woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk](mailto:woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk)

**forestryengland.uk**

Photographs of the consultation panels ahead of the consultation event opening



# Appendix C: consultation questionnaire



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## A proposed new woodland in Barlow

### Overview

Forestry England would like to share with you our proposed plans on new woodland we are planning to create in Barlow

### Why your views matter

Your feedback, as well as site surveys, will help shape what the new woodland could look like. Forestry England value your comments and feedback and welcome you to our consultation event.

### Introduction

Thank you for taking part in this consultation on the design proposals for Barlow Wood Wood

You can submit information without completing the name and email details, but if you choose to do so they will be held by Forestry England as per our privacy policy [Privacy Policy | Forestry England](https://www.forestryengland.uk/privacy) (<https://www.forestryengland.uk/privacy>)

1. What is your name?

2. What is your address?

3. What is your postcode?

4. Are you responding as:

- A local resident
  - A local business
  - A elected official
  - Other stakeholder: Please name below
-

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5. If you're responding on behalf of an organisation, what is the name of your organisation?

6. What is your e-mail address?

7. Would you like to be notified about future consultation on these new woodland proposals?

Yes (please make sure you have provided your e-mail address above)

No

### Feedback

8. Please use this space to add feedback or questions on the proposed plans

## Appendix D: Letters/emails announcing the launch of the consultation

**Sent:** 09 March 2026 10:29  
**Subject:** Public consultation on design proposals for Barlow Wood - a new woodland in Barlow, Gateshead

Dear neighbour

### **Public consultation on design proposals for Barlow Wood - a new woodland in Barlow, Gateshead**

Thank you for your interest in Barlow Wood, the new woodland we are planning to create on land in Barlow, Gateshead.

We are contacting you as we have today launched a public consultation on our draft design proposals for the new woodland.

These are available to view and comment upon **until midnight on Sunday the 29th March at :**  
<https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/barloww>

While we continue with our detailed planning for Barlow Wood, we are keen to hear your views on our initial designs. These have been informed by site surveys as well as valuable insights gained from you and other local people last year. This new woodland is one of many we're creating across the UK to grow the nation's forests. It will become a valuable habitat for wildlife and an important carbon store. In time, it will also provide a source of sustainable timber and become a new green space for you to explore and enjoy.

### **Public drop-in event**

As part of the consultation, we will also be holding a drop-in event where you can view our initial designs for the new woodland and talk to members of the Forestry England team. This will be held at **The Winlaton Centre, North Street, Blaydon, NE21 6BY on Monday 23rd March from 4pm - 7pm.**

### **Responding to the consultation**

We encourage you to submit your response online. You can view our plans and submit your views here: <https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/barloww>. If you are unable to do this, you can respond via email, typing 'Barlow Wood' in the subject line of your email and including your name, address, and postcode in your response.

### **Next steps**

The consultation will close at **11.59 on Sunday 29th March**. All responses will then be summarised and included in a consultation report, along with our response to the key issues raised, and published on our website. Consultation feedback and further surveys will help shape the final design proposal we will submit for regulatory review ahead of planting the new woodland. We will update our website as our plans for the new woodland progress. You can see the latest information here: [Barlow Wood | Forestry England](#)

Please feel free to share this email with anyone else who might be interested.

We look forward to receiving your comments.

Kind regards

The Woodland Creation Team  
**Forestry England**

## Appendix E: Code frame

General positive comment	General positive
Archaeology	Consider the mine shaft which may be contemporary with the wagonway for information or artwork relating to the post medieval mining history of the area
Archaeology	Recommend the Barlow Medieval Village on the NW of the site is excluded from operations and not subject to ground disturbance during the creation or lifetime of the woodland
Consultation approach	Include fly throughs to aid understanding of timelines
Consultation approach	Practical approach/useful level of information
Other	Can we view the proposals for the new community woodland opposite
Parking and access	Concerns about careless parking in the area, including Hollinhill lane which leads to Ashtree Lane which is particularly narrow and the Crescent
Parking and access	Plans to mitigate parking issues in Barlow itself or along Ashtree Land/Garesfield Lane
Parking and access	Include parking
Parking and access	Existing parking in the village is already limited, and there are concerns that careless parking could block access routes.
Parking and access	Supportive of car parking not being included - there is already too much traffic in Barlow
Parking and access	Additional visitors could worsen parking pressures and increase risks for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.
Parking and access	Include double yellow lines
Parking and access	Vehicle access for woodland maintenance has poor visibility along Garesfield and Ashtree lane -consider suitability and how vehicle access will be made safe
Parking and access	There is limited alternative access to the site other than by private car
Parking and access	Consider potential improvements to sustainable access to the site such as cycle parking at public access points
Parking and access	Promote alternative parking locations if these can be identified
Paths and bridleways	Confirm that all Public Rights of Way will stay open and unobstructed unless a formal legal order is applied for and approved.

Paths and bridleways	Explain how the routes will be protected and kept safe for the public during construction.
Paths and bridleways	If any changes are proposed, provide plans showing any new alignments, including details on width, surfacing, boundaries and accessibility features such as gates, barriers, steps or gradients.
Paths and bridleways	Clarify whether any diversions, stopping up or alterations are proposed.
Paths and bridleways	Set out how the existing routes will be affected during construction and once the project is complete.
Paths and bridleways	Confirm the exact alignment of the public footpaths
Paths and bridleways	Relocation of existing public footpath
Paths and bridleways	Protect and enhance the PROW - in particular the access from Barlow Village as they are difficult to notice/access as they appear to through private residential/farm access with little/no provision to the start of the woodland
Paths and bridleways	How will operational entrances, which are also PROW be used - what kind of vehicles, how will the PROW and pedestrians be protected
Paths and bridleways	Consult Gateshead Council's PROW
Positive	Overarching supportive comment
Water management	Site is prone to standing water - tree planting will address this
Wildlife and deer	Humanely manage the deer population
Wildlife and deer	Give more information about long term pest control
Woodland design	Identify and assess old mine workings before starting work on site and obtain any required Coal Authority permits.
Woodland design	Former mine entrances within the woodland could affect ground stability
Woodland design	Take account of views from properties on the Crescent when developing the proposals and considering views
Woodland Design	Concern about possible loss of views from property
Woodland design	Proximity of property to woodland and impact on light and security
Woodland design	Include education facilities
Woodland design	Could the open space left behind homes on Barlow Road (which runs north-south and includes the area around the historic mineshaft) be extended further along to include the Crescent?
Woodland design	Retain the existing hedgerows as part of the scheme

Woodland design	No concerns about the proposal subject to confirmation that the preliminary ecological appraisal has ruled out the presence of priority habitat
Woodland design	Opportunity to enhance Thornly Wood SSSI by optimising the value of the native/broadleaf
Woodland design	Exclude invasive non-native and naturalised species, including sycamore and beech, from wooded buffers to protect deciduous woodland priority habitats.
Woodland design	No breeding bird survey required
Woodland harvesting	Impact of harvesting on local area
Woodland harvesting	Do not support proposals if planted trees are to be harvested
Woodland harvesting	More information about how harvesting is done
Woodland harvesting	Establish access and servicing arrangements for timber harvesting in principle at an early stage to avoid potential difficulties in the future
Woodland maintenance	Agree a schedule with the local council for regular road sweeps
Woodland maintenance	Concern that fallen leaves may build up in neighbouring gardens and create a hazard
Woodland maintenance	Do not use Roundup/chemical weed killer
Woodland maintenance	Provide prior warning of spraying
Woodland maintenance	Further information about tree thinning
Woodland users	When will the woodland be open to the public
Woodland users	Include horse riding
Woodland users	Roads are increasingly problematic for horse-riders
Woodland users	Concern about dogs and livestock in neighbouring fields
Woodland users	Provide dog bins

## Appendix F: Stakeholders contacted

<b>Parliamentary MP</b>
Blayden and Consett Constituency
<b>Northeast Combined Authority</b>
Mayor's Office
<b>Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council</b>
<b>Elected representatives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Winlaton and Spen ward councillors</li> </ul> <b>Officers:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conservation and Ecology - strategic nature recovery and woodland policy</li> <li>County Archaeologist</li> <li>Flood department</li> <li>Highways</li> <li>Local Nature Recovery (LNRS)</li> <li>Planning</li> <li>Environmental Health -Private Water Supplies</li> <li>Public Rights of Way</li> <li>Tree Officers</li> <li></li> </ul>
<b>Tyne and Wear Council</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tyne and Wear Joint Local Access Forum</li> <li>Tyne and Wear Archaeology</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historic England</li> <li>Natural England</li> </ul>
<b>Wildlife groups</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Durham Wildlife Trust</li> <li>Bat Conservation Trust</li> <li>Butterfly conservation</li> <li>RSPB</li> </ul>
<b>Special interest</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Geology Trust</li> <li>Friends of Chopwell Wood</li> <li>Mining authority</li> <li>National Farmers Union (NFU)</li> <li>North East Community Forest</li> </ul>
<b>Utilities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Power Grid</li> </ul>

