



Forestry England

Growing the nation's forests

Proposed new woodlands near Old Buckenham and New Buckenham in Norfolk

Forestry England are planting new woodlands to expand the nation's forests we care for

We are planning new woodlands near Old Buckenham and Haugh Farm, near New Buckenham in Norfolk. We would like your comments and feedback 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 combating flooding.

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

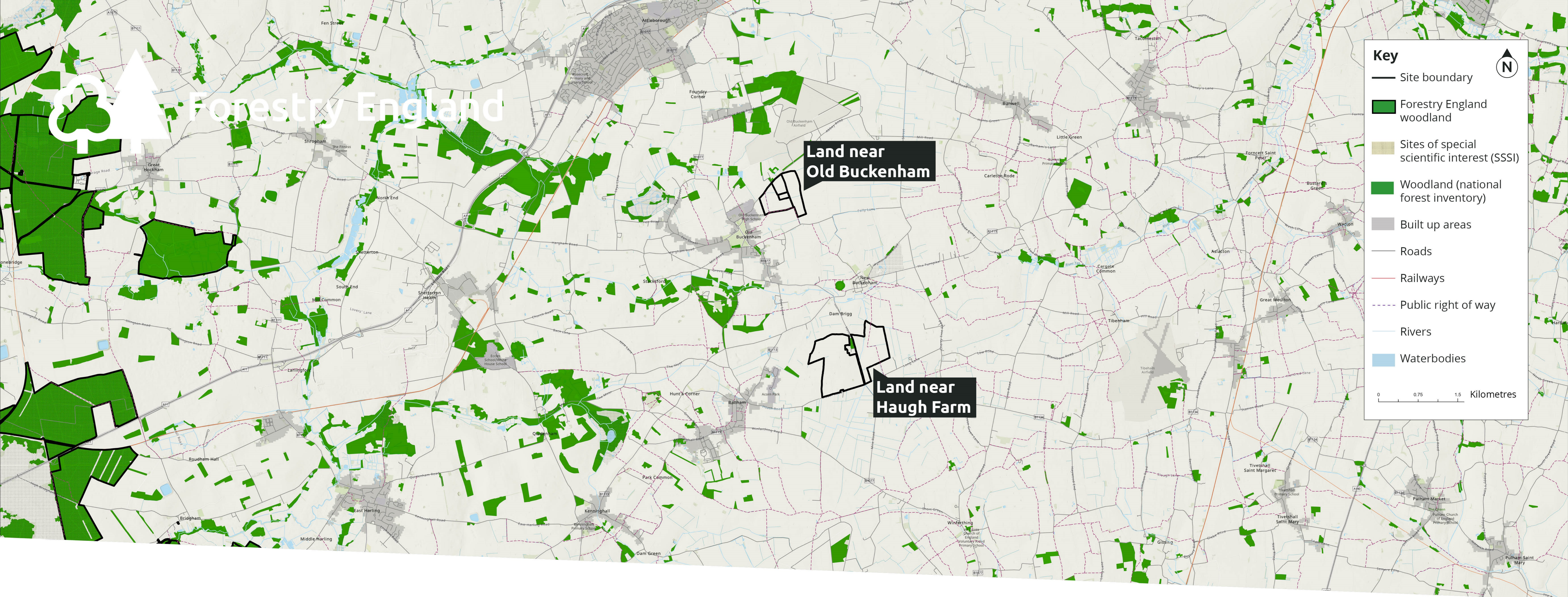
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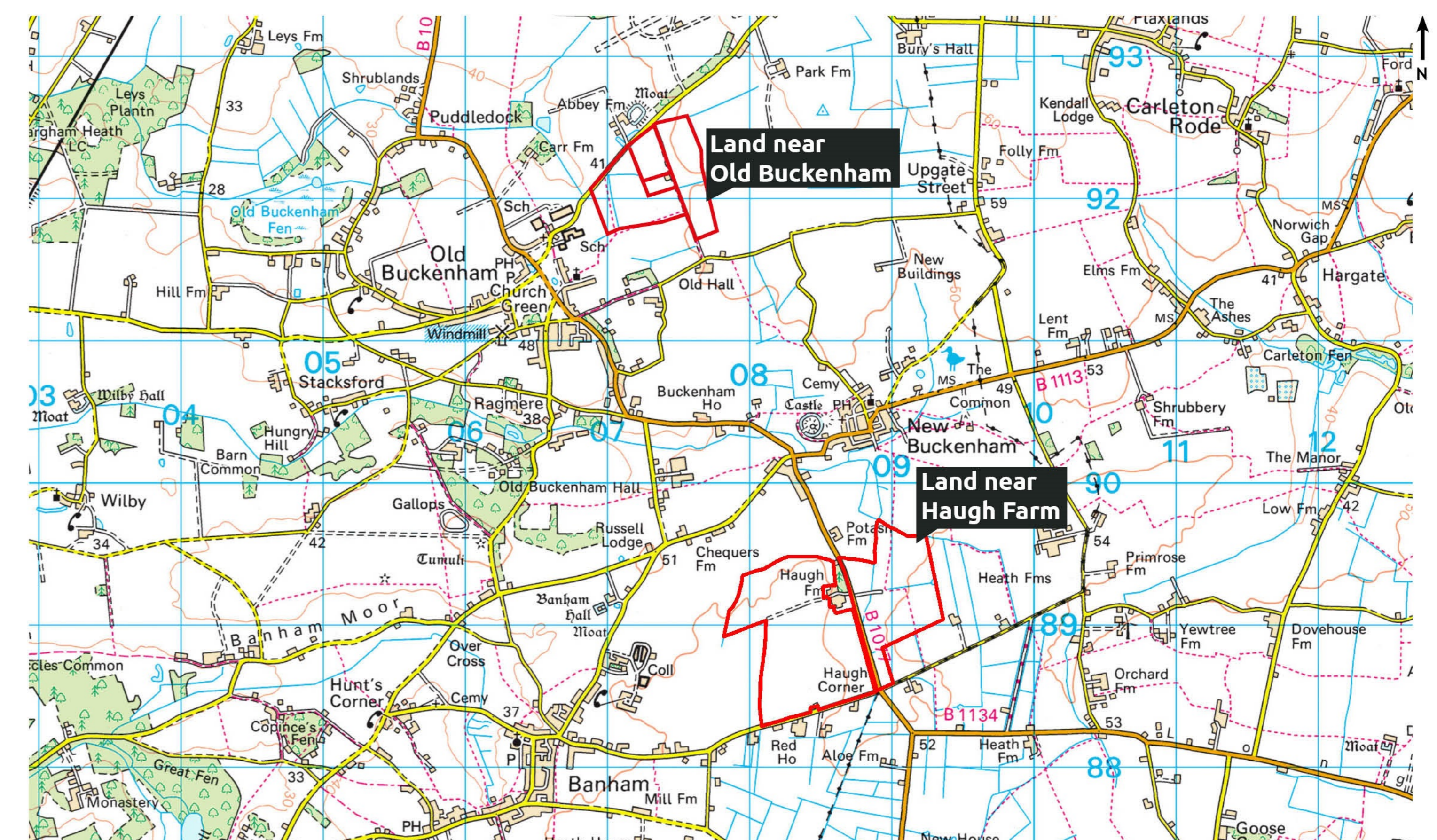


Site locations & context

The proposed new woodlands near Old Buckenham and Haugh Farm are in Norfolk close to the villages of Old Buckenham and New Buckenham. The area falls within Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 83 South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands.

This area spans central East Anglia from just below Norwich to the River Gipping in the south. To the west, the landscape becomes the more open and drier Breckland NCA. High Suffolk, is known for its mix of formerly well wooded areas and the open spaces to the east and west. Today, the area is known for its high, mostly flat clay plateau, which shapes the character of the region. The plateau has many small wooded river valleys with complex slopes.

Today, comparatively little remains of the historic wood pasture which characterised this area up until the 18th century, although some important ancient woods like Pulham Market Big Wood SSSI (part of Tyrrels Wood) have survived or been restored. These woods support rich ecosystems, especially where coppicing is maintained. Small woodlands and copses linked by hedgerows with hedgerow trees create notable features in the landscape and give a wooded character around the edges of the open arable plateau. (Natural England, 2013)





Our response to frequently asked questions

The questions and answers below, are responses to some of the themes we are frequently asked about when creating new woodlands:

Public access

The new woodlands will be open to the public. Once we have finished creating the woodland we will dedicate it under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act so people can explore the site.

At Old Buckenham, a public footpath runs through the site from Old Buckenham village. At the land adjacent to Haugh Farm, a public footpath runs through the eastern side of the site from the village of New Buckenham. These existing public rights of way and a network of new unsurfaced grass paths will give access for walkers to enjoy both new woodlands, linking to local villages and the wider countryside. We are not proposing to create new surfaced trails or provide specific infrastructure for horse-riding or cycling.

Our draft designs for the new woodlands include open spaces perfect for peaceful picnics and quiet areas for people to enjoy wildlife and nature.

Once the woodland is established, we would be happy to discuss potential opportunities for educational activities with local organisations and schools.

Visitors will be welcome to walk their dogs in the new woodlands, but we won't put a fence around the whole woodland. Dog owners must be responsible and keep their pets under control in all the forests and woodland we care for, following signs and our Forest Dog Code.

Traffic and parking

The new woodlands have been designed for local people to enjoy; both the woodlands can be visited by foot on the existing footpaths. We will consider signs in appropriate locations to discourage parking if necessary.

To plant and maintain the new woodlands, we plan to create a new access off Abbey Road for Old Buckenham. For the new woodland near Haugh Farm, for the western part of the site we plan to use the existing access on Haugh Road and we will create a new access point on the eastern side, also off Haugh Road.

In 20–25 years' time, when the timber is ready for harvest, we will work with the local highways authority to agree routes for transporting the timber.

Design, landscape and views

We have undertaken ecology surveys to tell us more about the plants, wildlife and ecosystem at both the new woodland sites to help shape our final designs.

For both woodlands, our draft designs will include some open spaces and wider spaced trees to create diverse habitats for wildlife and connect to the surrounding areas. We will maintain the existing hedges and trees within the new woodland to benefit birds and wildlife, in particular Turtle Doves. In addition, ditches will be maintained at both sites for the benefit of aquatic species.

At the new woodland near Haugh Farm we will preserve the locally important, pingo ponds. These ponds were created after the last ice age by melting deposits of left-over glacial ice. They will provide important space for wildlife such as newts and birds and for visitors to enjoy. At Old Buckenham, we will plant wider spaced broadleaf trees, respecting the historic context of the local landscape close to Buckenham Priory and Castle.

Our designs also sensitively consider how close the new woodlands will be to our new neighbours. For example, on the land next to Haugh Farm, properties to the south of the site on Heath Road and Long Lane and to the north on Haugh Road will have views over the new woodland. We will have open space with wide-spaced shrub and broadleaved tree species to keep the views open and add colour and texture to the woodland planting, beyond this we will plant more broadleaved trees because they are shorter than some conifers and live longer.

The trees we will plant

Our professional foresters carefully choose which trees to plant and where to plant them. They understand the soil, how quickly the trees will grow, and the important habitats, species, and geographical features nearby. They also consider tree pests and diseases and future climate conditions to keep woods as healthy as possible.

We propose to plant a range of species at the new woodlands. This would include mixtures of conifer and broadleaf trees at both sites. These might include Macedonian pine, Scots pine, Douglas fir, Western red cedar, pedunculate oak, rowan, hornbeam, wild service tree and wild cherry. We will also plant a range of shrubs species such as hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn and guelder rose.

Establishing and managing the woodland

We plan to plant the new woodlands in winter 2024/25. It will take about five years to become established, The Forestry England team and local contractors will carry out crucial maintenance during this time.

The woodlands will eventually provide a supply of sustainable timber. We plan to manage the woodland as "continuous cover" which means only gradually removing individual trees or small groups of trees, leaving the majority of the canopy intact and replacing those felled with new trees. This approach maintains tree cover which benefits the woodland biodiversity.

What are the research trials you are planning?

Climate change and the increase in tree pests and diseases means we must diversify forests to make them more resilient. One way to do this is by planting a wider variety of tree species in mixtures. We also need to work out which species will thrive in the future.

At land adjacent to Haugh Farm, we are experimenting in small areas of the new woodland with broadleaved species that haven't been widely planted in the UK before, will thrive in a changing climate and produce a sustainable supply of timber for a variety of uses, including manufacturing and building industries.

At Old Buckenham, as part of wider research trials to understand the effect of climate change, site location, and the spacing of trees on future growth and resilience, we will conduct two research trials in small areas of the new woodland.

The first will consider the growth rate and form of English oak trees planted at varied spaces apart. The second, as part of a pan-European research trial, will study how different tree species, combinations of species and single species affect the biodiversity and stability of the forest ecosystem.

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 rangers 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.

Forestry England is part of the Deer Initiative, a partnership that promotes sustainable deer management in England and Wales. We will use deer fencing to protect larger blocks of new planting and tree tubes in smaller areas. Our highly skilled wildlife rangers replace the role of Britain's missing predators by safely and humanely controlling deer populations in our woodlands, working to the highest standards whilst undertaking other vital conservation works to protect and increase the numbers of other threatened species. More information about how Forestry England manage deer can be found on our website.

Deer fencing would be removed and where possible recycled after the trees become established.

Why are you planting agricultural land?

Forestry England is creating new woodlands which will capture carbon, restore and connect habitats, enhance biodiversity, supply sustainable, homegrown timber and be great places for people to enjoy. Sites are individually and carefully assessed so they are suitable for woodland creation and sensitive to the local landscape. Forestry England understands concerns around food security and keeping the best land in agricultural production. Our woodland creation programme seeks to avoid the most productive land (grades 1 & 2). The land at Old Buckenham and next to Haugh Farm is graded at 3.

Timber is a crucial material for the UK's green economy helping a move away from higher-emission materials like steel, concrete, aluminium and bricks. It is renewable, sustainable, and has a lower carbon footprint, making it essential for environmentally friendly construction and manufacturing practices.

Currently the UK imports over 80% of its timber¹ and we are more reliant on imported timber than imported food (40% of food is imported)².

References:

¹ Forestry Facts & Figures 2023 (forestresearch.gov.uk)

² United Kingdom Food Security Report 2021: Theme 2: UK Food Supply Sources - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)



Forestry England

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

Responding to this consultation

Please let us have your views by:

- Completing the online feedback form at:
consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/nw-hf-ob
- Emailing us at
woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk
- All views should be received by 11.59pm on Sunday
11th August 2024

What's next ?

- Review of consultation feedback
- Further design work to refine our proposals
- Application to the Forestry Commission for permission to create the new woodland
- Planting (Winter 2024/25)

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