



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund (WCAF)

June 2022 – Outline Presentation

ADEPT Webinar

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WCAF Quick Background / Setting the scene;

- 🌳 On paper and by public commitment local authorities (LAs) represent the **largest opportunity for tree planting on Public Land** (over 30,000ha of Public Commitments to Tree Planting in 2021 x 80 LAs).
- 🌳 Over 90% of LAs have declared a climate emergency and the majority have referred to tree planting as a key part of tackling both residual emissions and biodiversity crises - but progress to planting has been very slow.
- 🌳 LAs are eligible for a range of NCF capital grants (particularly EWCO and LATF) and also the FE Woodland Partnership lease scheme. **There is no guarantee that they will be eligible for any funding after 2025** – it is therefore in the interest of the LA to push forward with big schemes while the capital funding is in place.
- 🌳 Lack of enabling capacity within LAs is one of the biggest barriers slowing down the uptake of schemes & planting. Tackling this issue is at the heart of the WCAF.
- 🌳 We only have 3 planting seasons left until the end of the NCF. We need to act now to make a difference to LA planting rates.

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WCAF - The key features;

- 🌳 A **simple** competitive grant for **upper tier local authorities** only.
- 🌳 Funding for two FYs to increase capacity (**revenue only**) in exchange for a commitment to accelerate woodland planting plans in 23/24 and 24/25 planting seasons.
- 🌳 **You tell us** what will make the biggest difference to accelerate planting in your areas – could include WCOs, POs, Community Engagement, Specialist Advice (Landscape Architects / Historic Advisors, Access & Recreation). New staff posts and or consultants.
- 🌳 Maximum grant **£150k** per LA – **£300k** for **LA partnerships**. Based on £75k as a total for 1 suitably qualified FTE - **No match funding required.**

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The key features (continued);

- 🌳 ADEPT engaged to help promote the scheme and to provide independent support, monitoring and evaluation.
- 🌳 4 week EOI window. First grant offers to go out in late July / Aug 2022 – 2nd grant April 23. Grant managed by DEFRA Commercial – using the Bravo contract system. **Closing date Fri 8th July.**
- 🌳 Grant assessment criteria based on evidence of lack of capacity + the level of woodland creation commitment to planting 2025 + an assessment of deliverability.
- 🌳 **Welcome urban (street trees) as well as rural authority (woodland planting) proposals – and those covering both.**
- 🌳 Additional requirements in Community Forest areas – letter of support from CF Director.
- 🌳 2 WCPs (Cornwall & Northumberland) and TCAF funded LAs not eligible. Double funding concerns.

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- 🌳 **Land ownership** – the planted land does not need to be LA owned only. Your commitment can include 3rd party owned land.
- 🌳 **Staffing & recruitment** - looking for a creative approach to the national forestry skills shortage.
- 🌳 **Extend to 2025/26?** – NCF programme expected to close April 1st 2025. Happy to see your expenditure to this point.
- 🌳 **Secondments?** – New staff or contracted staff – secondments possible.
- 🌳 **Staff can be placed with partners** – LA responsible.
- 🌳 **Documents available in word format for sharing.**
- 🌳 **Funding for staff only** – not spatial data acquisition.

Assessment Process

EOI

ELIGIBLE?
Y/N

1. Evidence of need – (no or very limited current capacity)

2. Commitment to tree numbers and or area new planting by 2025

3. Deliverability assessment involving FC/DEFRA + independent specialist advice – includes vfm.

IV. Recruitment

III. Partnership?

II. Levelling up – multiple deprivation?

I. Area / trees with public access

AWARD / REJECT

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Timetable

- 🌳 Application window closes **5pm on Friday 8th July.**
- 🌳 2 x weeks assessment
- 🌳 First year grants issued w/b July 25 and Aug 1st.
- 🌳 Review of delivery 6 months on.
- 🌳 2nd year grants first week in April 23.
- 🌳 Monitoring and evaluation to 2025



Questions ?

With many thanks to ADEPT for
hosting today's webinar

ADEPT

Association of Directors of
Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport