

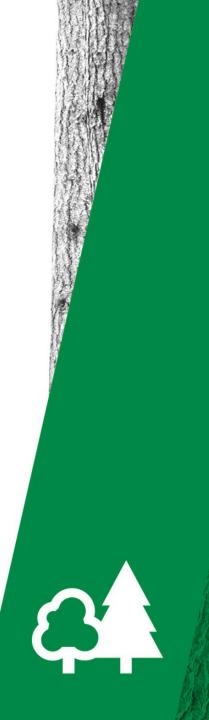
Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

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 <u>now</u> to make a difference to LA planting rates.

WCAF - The key features;

- A simple competitive grant for upper tier local authorities only.
- Funding for two FYs to increase capacity (<u>revenue only</u>) 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.

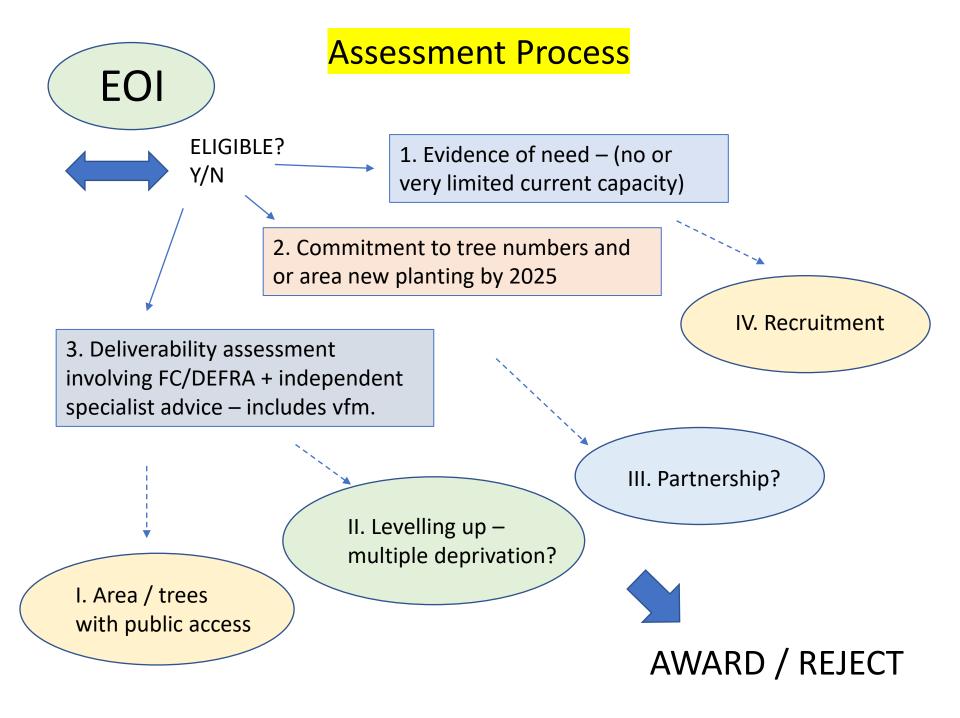
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The key features (continued);

- 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.



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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 todays webinar



Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport