

Written evidence submitted by Mr Richard Bellamy (TPW0049)

I submit this paper as evidence to the government request in respect of the above. All comments and statements are purely mine and I do not represent any other person nor organisation.

The Strategy should commit to a balanced long-term tree cover target for England that is commensurate with the scale of the ecological and climate crises and need to provide food.

Targets to increase woodland cover should be balanced. The UK cannot be compared with Europe as they have different land mass and populations so I query the need to have actual targets.

The Strategy should support a diversity of approaches for growing more trees and woodlands, including agroforestry, natural regeneration, street trees, broadleaved woodland and productive forestry. The strategy also needs to include management so that thinnings are included as a positive element as shown by Forest Research, such as at Alice Holt.

The Strategy must set out more funding and support for foresters, landowners, land managers and tenants to create and manage both new trees and existing woodlands.

This should be part of a just transition for farmers and rural communities, in which they are given the skills, advice and financial incentives needed to grow more trees and manage existing woodlands in accordance with The Forestry Commission Forest Standards (FCFS).

There should be no requirement to have other assurance schemes as these are expensive and bureaucratic with no additional benefit to the value of the timber product. The FCFS covers all the elements in the schemes such as UK Woodland Assurance Scheme.

The right trees should be grown in the right place to optimise the multiple benefits that trees can provide, including carbon storage, wildlife habitat creation, flood risk mitigation, cleaner air and water. There is a very useful source for this with the Forestry Commission's Ecological Site Classification programme.

Tree planting must be avoided in sensitive habitats where it could cause ecological damage. Sourcing of plants must be restricted to UK and seed and saplings be home grown. (Reference: Ash die-back) Also more research is needed to balance the carbon lost from disturbed soil when planting versus the net gain. Carbon sequestration also needs to balance the transpiration loss in heat waves.

The question of public access is a difficult one but should not be an automatic right. Permissive access is a better and fairer balance and at the discretion of the Landowner.