

National Forest Guide for Developers & Planners: Summary



THE NATIONAL FOREST

Introduction

The National Forest is one of the country's boldest environmental projects, creating a new Forest, for the nation, across 200 square miles of central England.

Development and planning continue to have a key role in this creation. Since 1995, around 1,600 hectares of new green infrastructure have been secured through the planning system by way of on-site tree planting, mineral and waste disposal site restoration and derelict land reclamation schemes or through financial contributions. This represents around 22% of the 7,270 hectares so far planted in the Forest (as at March 2017).

Planning policies for the National Forest, including guidelines for creating attractive, wooded settings for new development, have been adopted into Core Strategies, Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans.

This document forms a summary of the Guide for Developers and Planners. The full guide is currently being reviewed and will be published shortly.

Planting Guidelines

The National Forest Strategy (2014-24) promotes planting guidelines relating to all forms of development in the National Forest.



Development Type	Thresholds	Proportion of site to be Forest green infrastructure
Residential	between 0.5ha and 10ha	20%
Employment	between 1ha and 10ha	20%
All development	Over 10ha	30%

In exceptional circumstances, where planting cannot be accommodated to this scale within the development, the shortfall should be addressed by a contribution to off-site planting of £35,000 per hectare secured through a Section 106 agreement.

The guide provides further details on the expected green infrastructure provision in new development in Section Two.



Planting Options

Forest-related green infrastructure will consist of some or all of the following elements depending on the character of the site and its surroundings:-

- New woodland planting (ideally a minimum size of 0.25ha)
- Creation of woodland belts (minimum of 15m wide)
- Planting to form parkland style landscapes
- Ecologically designed sustainable drainage systems
- Creation of new habitats (wetlands, reedbeds, meadows, heathlands)
- Incorporation and management of existing woodland and hedgerows
- Greenways - landscaped footpath and cycle routes
- Roadside trees
- Development landscaping with a strong tree emphasis
- Incorporation of heritage features

Green infrastructure should be an integral part of the development masterplan. An initial assessment of the sites existing tree and hedgerow assets should be used as a basis for developing a network of green infrastructure through the site. The network should be a combination of existing features, new planting and other habitat creation that seeks to connect to both adjoining ecological networks and footpath/cycleway routes. Further details are provided in Section 3 of the Guide.

Well designed and sustainable development.

Developers are encouraged to create sustainable, design-led schemes that reflect local character and the site's location within the National Forest. Assessments against the Code for Sustainable Homes, BREEAM and Building for Life are welcomed.

Buildings should incorporate sustainably-sourced timber prominently within their design, while wood fuel heating systems should be considered where appropriate. These will help tie the built form to the natural environment and emphasise the development's setting within the National Forest.

Further details on sustainable development and high quality urban design are provided in Section 4 of the Guide and the National Forest Design Charter.

Further Details.

The Guide also includes case studies that provide examples of how previous schemes have incorporated green infrastructure. Housing, industrial, leisure and road schemes all feature in Section 5.

The long-term ownership and management of new green infrastructure should be considered at the initial design stage. Sections 7 and 8 provide details of organisations that offer management solutions or may take ownership of planting and open space.

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