

Evaluation of Better Woodlands for Wales Grant Scheme

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1 Introduction

1.1 Context

The Better Woodlands for Wales (BWW) grant scheme ran as the successor to the *Woodland Grants Scheme* (WGS) from 2006 until the introduction of the new *Glastir Woodland Creation Grant scheme* in 2010/11. The BWW woodland creation grants were phased out then with the introduction of the *Glastir Woodland Management scheme* in 2012/13. The BWW scheme was worth approximately £3.25 million p.a.¹, and offered grants specially designed for improving Welsh woodland management in line with Welsh Government objectives for woodlands expressed in the *Woodlands for Wales* policy documents and Action Plans of 2001 and 2009. The scheme was supported by the European Regional Rural Development Programme (RDP) for Wales. Support for BWW Objectives under the RDP 2007-2013 was delivered through Axis 2 “Improving the environment and the countryside” and focused on measures concerned with sustainable use of land - 221, first afforestation of agricultural land; 223, first afforestation of non-agricultural land; and 227, support for non-productive forestry investments - maintaining the integrity of the natural resource base and conservation of biodiversity.

The combined policy objectives through the RDP and Welsh Government *Woodlands for Wales* strategy mean that BWW provided grant aid to land managers for the creation of new woodlands and for the management of existing woodlands in order to secure a range of beneficial environmental and social amenity outcomes, including:

- Combating climate change.
- Improving water quality.
- Maintaining and improving soil quality.
- Reversing bio-diversity decline.
- Improving public access to woodlands.
- Maintaining or improving the economic value of woodlands.

Other Welsh Government policies which have a bearing on woodland creation and improved woodland management and connections to the wider set of public benefits provided by woodlands are: “One Wales: One Planet sustainable development scheme” steering sustainable development in Wales; the *Wales Spatial Plan 2006/2008* and plans for Strategic Regeneration Areas; the *Climate Change Action Plan 2010*; and the currently evolving *Natural Environment Framework*. These all strengthen commitments

¹ See BWW stakeholder reports available <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-7M2DY2> last accessed 11.11.11.

to which improved and increased areas of woodland can contribute, including combating climate change, providing spatially coherent stocks and flows of ecosystem services, and ensuring environmental quality in support of human wellbeing.

The BWW scheme was open to land owners and managers including farmers, community groups and small woodland owners. Uptake of the scheme covers approximately 40,000 hectares, and close to 2,000 owners. The overall **aim** of this evaluation was to establish the impact of the BWW scheme on those individuals that have participated in the scheme and how those individuals have benefited from the scheme.

The specific objectives of the evaluation were:

1. To measure the impact and effectiveness of BWW scheme on the forestry sector across Wales
2. To determine the extent to which BWW has achieved its stated aims and key objectives as stated above
3. To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery model adopted
4. To evaluate the extent to which BWW supports delivery of the Welsh Government's strategic aims and aspirations for Rural Development and the fit with other Welsh Government policies
5. To assess any future need and provide a clear set of recommendations to assist the Welsh Government with its forward strategy and in the planning of any future scheme.

1.2 Evaluation methodology

Whilst recognising the need to maintain auditable evaluation methods and results, there is a growing acceptance and use of multiple methodologies within evaluation research because of the difficulties of assessing multiple levels of benefits, outcomes and causation. The evaluation method combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a range of economic and other measures of impact.

1.2.1 Data collection methods

The data collection methods consisted of the following:

1. Database interrogation for analysis of trends and outputs (using the Business Objects and other data sources such as e-Financials)
2. Document interrogation for supplementary detail (GLOS system, secondary data and RDP etc reports)
3. Interviews with grant recipients (agents, landowners, managers and farmers)

4. Interviews with grant providers and administrators, policy advisors and other stakeholders (Welsh Government, FCW – Policy and Programmes Group, FCW Grants and Licences, Management Planners, and other bodies including farming unions and professional/trade bodies)
5. Use of secondary data sources

1.2.1.1 Database interrogation

The original expectation was for production of quantitative data summaries, showing inputs and outputs against the objectives of the BWW scheme, through interrogation of the FCW business databases. The description of the data searches that could be run in the original tender documentation implied that interrogation of all 2,000 plus cases in the database could provide a clear summary of actual and planned outputs of the BWW scheme filters and cross-variable analysis procedures. However, extracting and collating data from the data systems was not a straightforward process, and, rather than being a task suited to data analysts new to the system, it required expert support. The Forest Research evaluation team worked in close co-operation with FCW data analysts and FCW-G&L support team to extract robust data in the best possible format. The additional support provided by Jeff Evans and Rachel Chamberlain in particular should be acknowledged. In addition, it was agreed at the interim project meeting that the anticipated summary of headline indicators of output² were part of the FCW reporting procedure. As such there was less need to present this data as part of the evaluation. Data interrogation was subsequently limited to extraction of the data required for the models of impact concerning carbon sequestration, biodiversity and employment.

1.2.1.2 Interviews with grant recipients

Telephone interviewing applied a standard set of semi-structured questions to a purposive quota sample of grant recipients selected on the basis of: woodland area, location, and type of owner³. The target sample was 30. A total of 26 interviews were completed from 49 cases contacted. The sampling frame was restricted to the 1,320 **approved** BWW cases, from the 2,472 cases in the system. The types of applicants included in the sample are shown in Table 1.

² e.g. headlines figures for the grant as a whole and over time such as: Number beneficiaries x type of owner x type of grant x total area or Headlines against improved biodiversity and high nature value such as, Objective of payment (Situation) PAWS x total grant x area applied or Objective of payment (Situation) Conversion to native woodland x total grant x area applied

³ Sampling frame was constructed using data and categories included in the GLOS data accessed through Business Objects. Interviews were conducted with recipients of Approved grant applications only.

Table 1. Summary characteristics of the grant recipient sample

Type of Applicant	Non-farmer	Farmer
Business occupier	5	2
Other	2	
Personal occupier	7	6
Public ownership	1	
Voluntary organisation	3	
Total	18	8

The purpose of the interviews was to explore:

- The effectiveness of the grant application and payments process, including the role of Management Planners, on-line systems, and any interactions with the FCW Grants and Regulations team
- The impact of BWW on the woodland holdings as well as the wider operations of the recipient
- The degree to which BWW supported work they would have done anyway or provided the means to undertake operations they would not have done without grant aid
- Any perceived future needs for support
- An assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the BWW scheme including any additional or unexpected effects the scheme had or leveraged

Interview data was collected using ACCESS and analysed using EXCEL. Analytical methods were limited to content analysis and descriptive statistics suited to the non-probabilistic dataset.

1.2.1.3 Interviews with grant providers, administrators and other key stakeholders

Telephone interviews were applied using a standard set of semi-structured questions to a purposive sample of grant administrators and other key stakeholders. The target sample was 20. Of a total of 30 people initially contacted 12 interviews were completed as follows:

- 7 approved Management Planners from 75 in the approved BWW list. Selection was by: areas of service provision; type of Management Planner (business, sole trader, development organisation); and provision of service in Welsh.
- 1 policy and decision makers within FCW and the Welsh Government
- 1 members of FCW Grants and Regulations team
- 3 representatives from amongst other key stakeholders

The purpose of the interviews was to explore:

- The effectiveness and performance of the grant application and payments process, including the role of Management Planners, the role of FCW Grants and Regulations team, and the use of on-line systems
- Perceptions of impact including attribution and additionality of BWW across Wales
- Any perceived future needs for support
- An assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the BWW scheme including any additional or unexpected effects the scheme had or leveraged
- Strategic and operational fit of the scheme with forestry, landuse, rural development, and natural environment policy

Interview data was collected using ACCESS and analysed using EXCEL. Analytical methods were limited to content analysis and descriptive statistics suited to the non-probabilistic dataset.

1.2.2 Analysis methods

1.2.2.1 Impact analysis

Impact analysis included an assessment of:

- Attribution and Counterfactual
- Economic valuation of outcomes
- Additionality model
- Unintended and unexpected effects
- Cost effectiveness – value for money

Attribution and Counterfactual, economic valuation and additionality

The techniques used to account for attribution (establishing what impacts can be attributed to the grant scheme specifically, mapping cause and effect relationships through input-output-outcome analysis), counterfactual (what would have happened without uptake of the grant), economic valuation (providing a monetary value for the benefits realised) and additionality (how much extra benefit was derived from the grant) are reported in the analysis of outputs and impacts in section 2.1. below.

Attribution and additionality are constant area of debate in evaluation and assessment. Simple in theory, the assumptions lying behind causality models are rarely met. These assume time series data of trends in outcomes with differences visible at a point in time at which the intervention was introduced. In this case BWW was not the only financial intervention within the time period which saw other overlapping grants in operation on parcels of land where affecting outputs and impacts of interest, impacts on flooding for example would be attributable to other land management practices besides woodland management within any given catchment area. In addition the lack of any

baseline data confounded a before and after analysis that would illustrate the changes brought about by the BWW scheme. There was some discussion of using data from other grant schemes as a plausible base-line but this idea was eventually discounted.

In terms of testing the counterfactual methods depend on survey data from two groups those who took part in an intervention and those who did not with a clear articulation of the subsequent outcomes. The proposed method aimed to use the Wavehill survey data (Wavehill, 2009) to establish the with/without BWW outputs along a number of parameters, and use this in a modified matched comparisons method to generate a counterfactual. However, the raw data and interview schedules from the Wavehill study disaggregated grant receipts and types of recipients in a non-comparable way, as well as mixing responses from grant recipients receiving more than one form of grant. A simplified method was employed using part of the qualitative survey data which looked at the critical nature of BWW to grant recipients and used this figure as the route to calculating additionality.

The indicative **value of outcomes/impacts** was established using a **benefit transfer approach** (i.e. using established economic values from other studies of woodland creation and improvement) following a simplified version of the model suggested by Regeneris (2009) in some cases applied against aggregated areas and values established in the analysis of BWW outputs. The valuation of outcomes and impact include three lines **of attributable impact** as follows:

Climate change - Carbon sequestration
(tonnes of net C sequestered in each year by the new woodland planted [based upon assumed species and average yield class] x value of carbon applying in each year)

Improving conservation and biodiversity values - Biodiversity values
(area of woodland created by woodland type x biodiversity value for different kinds of woodland x no. households in Wales)

Productive sector – Employment
(area woodland created x average FTE jobs per ha woodland in Wales)

The method and results are reported in section 2.1., the data tables are included as Annex 1.

Impacts on soil and water are not included because of the difficulties associated with attribution and calculation.

A qualitative assessment of impacts was also undertaken using data from the interviews. Respondents ranked outcomes using a 7 point LIKERT-type scale⁴ which included 'Don't know' and 'Too early to tell' categories. The same questions were asked of all three respondent groups (grant recipients, management planners, stakeholders). Analysis of the responses was through frequency and visual display of the data from all respondents, and a comparison between respondent groups.

Unintended and unexpected effects

The unintended effects of the scheme relied on qualitative data collected during beneficiary and stakeholder interviews and were investigated using content analysis.

Cost effectiveness - Value for Money (VFM).

The value for money realised by projects and programmes is a key issue when evaluating public sector interventions and assessing future actions. However, cost effectiveness is difficult to assess in projects and programmes such as BWW with multiple objectives, and multiple measures of achievement/outputs and which mix monetary and non-monetary outputs. In addition to these complications, a quantitative ex-post cost effectiveness analysis would require the collation of data on:

- total public spend on grants
- total costs of staff time used in development, administration, delivery and all other tasks
- consumable and other inputs including software and IT costs
- investment materials including software development and capital equipment
- user inputs and time in the application and implementation process.

Collecting this additional data, particularly from the user (beneficiary) side, is time consuming (costly). There is also a degree of uncertainty about the results where there are non-monetary benefits (outcomes) which are being assessed and where attribution and the choice of key outcomes and results are an area of contention. It is also worth noting that arguments for using quantitative methods rather than qualitative forms of VFM assessment do not necessarily give more robust results. There are no simple relationships between additionality and VFM. A project with high returns (overall outputs) but low additionality may have better overall VFM than a project with low returns and high additionality.

⁴ This is a summative scale used by a wide variety of social scientists where answers are measured on the basis of how strongly the respondent agrees or disagrees with a given statement. Generally, respondents are provided with a statement, then asked to rate their level of agreement as one of five degrees: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree or strongly agree.

A quantitative ex-post assessment of value for money therefore fell beyond the scope of this evaluation. An acceptable qualitative alternative is Programme Performance Assessment. The method refers to National Audit Office criteria of Value for Money – relevance, efficacy, efficiency – and generates a short list of programme variables under each criteria which are then ranked or scored by different stakeholder groups. This provides a holistic measure of Value for Money involving multiple criteria and stakeholder perspectives.

Three different Value for Money matrices were used with the 3 respondent groups (stakeholders, management planners, grant recipients) to reflect their different areas of knowledge. The matrices are shown in the interview schedules included as Annex 2. Data from the interviews with grant recipients and stakeholders was investigated using content analysis and descriptive statistics based on average scores against value criteria. Results were pooled to demonstrate differences between groups.

1.2.2.2 'Process' analysis

Process analysis consisted of an assessment of the effectiveness of BWW as a delivery model drawing on the qualitative interview data and the analysis of outputs. Particular attention was focused on the systems used and the role of support and delivery staff. Emphasis was on understanding what aspects of the delivery model worked well, what if any barriers existed to access and achieving success and what the implications of these might have been to overall outcomes.

1.2.2.3 Analysis of successes and achievements

This was based on an analysis of the qualitative data gathered during the interviews with respondents. The focus was on gathering information about:

- what worked well,
- what, if any, barriers existed to achieving success
- what the implications of these barriers might have been.

2 BWW Outputs and Impacts

2.1 Quantitative analysis

The forestry objectives of the BWW scheme were to bring existing woodland into sustainable management as well encourage the creation of new woodland. The management element of the BWW scheme, and the employment generated, represented the larger part of the programme value.

Issues with data collation have already been explained in section 1.2.1.1. Furthermore, **additionally** and **attributable impact** are a key feature of the evaluation required, as a consequence, and from the outset, the scope of the study did not extend beyond evaluating the **woodland creation measures**. Changes in woodland management funded under the under the BWW scheme could also be expected to impact on carbon and biodiversity values, and on employment. However, in the relatively short periods focused upon in this evaluation it is unlikely that any impacts on carbon and biodiversity values associated with felling mature coniferous woodland and replanting with broadleaves would be positive. Furthermore, no published estimates of the economic impacts of such changes were identified in a recent review of evidence of the net economic benefits of greenspace projects (Sarajevs, forthcoming), and economic evidence upon which estimated impacts on biodiversity values of such management changes might be based appears sparse.

With regard to the woodland creation element of the scheme around 418 ha of new woodland was created under the BWW scheme from 2008-2011 inclusive. In order to estimate the impacts of the scheme it was necessary initially to split the total area between broadleaves and conifers.

Data on areas planted by species provided by FCW (Jeff Evans, 23rd Jan 2012) provides information on 409 ha. For the purposes of this study the remaining 9 ha planted was assumed to be in the same proportions for different categories.

The 409 ha included around 16 ha of woody shrubs. Although it is unclear which species are included, BWW rules stipulate that they should be broadleaf.

Despite enquiries to FCW, what the 'SPR' species code stands for (5.4 ha planted in total) was unclear. In the absence of guidance, it was similarly assumed to also be broadleaf rather than coniferous for the purposes of this study.

Areas eligible under the scheme can include up to 0.1 ha of ineligible features (e.g. rocks and tracks). Excluding the areas of open ground, a total of around 390 ha of woodland

was created under the BWW scheme, of which conifers accounted for about one eighth (13%) and broadleaves seven-eighths (87%) of the total area planted (see Table 2).

Table 2. Woodland created under the BWW scheme by financial year

Financial Year	Broadleaves (ha)	Conifers (ha)	Total (ha)
2007/8	31.4	24.2	55.7
2008/9	88.1	7.4	95.5
2009/10	96.2	15.4	111.6
2010/11	100.8	5.0	105.8
2011/12 (to Dec)	20.6	0.8	21.4
All	337.1	52.8	389.9

Source: Forestry Commission Wales / Forest Research estimates.

Of the total, a generic “native broadleaves” category accounted for the largest share (18%) of the area of new woodland created for which information on the species planted was available. Excluding this category and the woody shrubs (as well as the open ground), eight species account for over 90% of the remaining area of new woodland. These are ash (26%), oak (26%), Sitka spruce (15%), birch (8%), alder (7%), rowan (5%), wild cherry (3%), and hazel (3%). Sitka spruce accounted for around 90% of the total area of conifers planted.

This section focuses upon estimating headline indicators for three impacts associated with new woodland creation under the BWW scheme: carbon sequestration, biodiversity, and employment generation. These are considered over the short period of the scheme to date (i.e. for new woodland creation from 2008-2011 inclusive) and, as this is considered far too short a time-horizon to expect tangible benefits from the scheme, also over a 20-year time-frame (i.e. 2008-2027 inclusive) based upon modelling future benefits.

The survey undertaken for this study found that 42% of the grant recipients interviewed who planted new woodland under the BWW scheme (including those undertaking both woodland creation and forest management measures) said that grant support was critical to their decision to undertake these operations which would not have been carried out otherwise. Based upon this result, in computing central estimates 42% of the total impact of the new woodland planted under the BWW scheme is assumed to be additional. Due to the small sample of grant recipients planting new woodlands responding to the survey (12 respondents), 95% confidence intervals constructed for this result (5/12) are wide, at 15% and 72%, implying that there is a 95% probability that the true value lies between the low and high bounds of the range. These percentages have been applied in computing low and high estimates, respectively, for

additional impacts of the new woodland created under the scheme, with the wide range a primary source of uncertainty affecting the estimates in this report.

In order to estimate impacts of the scheme, data by calendar year was needed. A species breakdown by calendar year was unavailable. However, as data on total area planted for 2007/8 relates just to 2008 (the first calendar year of planting under the scheme) and data for 2011/12 to 2011 (the last calendar year of planting under the scheme), it was possible to use this information to estimate the proportion of the total area planted in each financial year occurring in each calendar year. This showed a preponderance of planting under the scheme from January to March in the first two financial years (71% in 2008/9 and 54% in 2009/10), whereas in 2010/11 most (67%) of the new woodland was planted in the months up to December. Estimates of the area planted in each calendar year by species type were derived by assuming the proportions for the split of the total planting in each financial year is the same for both coniferous and broadleaf woodlands. This gave the estimates shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Woodland created under the BWW scheme by calendar year

	Broadleaf (approx ha)	Conifer (approx ha)	Total (ha)
2008	56.9	26.4	83.3
2009	106.4	12.3	118.7
2010	119.5	11.7	131.2
2011	54.3	2.5	56.8

The effect of assuming a different split over the financial year of planting of the coniferous and broadleaf woodlands was tested by attributing the coniferous plantings in 2008/9-2010/11 either entirely to the first part of the financial year (ending December), or entirely to the last part (January-March). However, this was found to have a minimal impact on estimated carbon values, which were found to vary by less than 2% compared to those reported below, while estimated biodiversity values were found to vary by up to 3% over the 20-year time-frame (2008-2027 inclusive) and up to 7% over the shorter time horizon (2008-2011 inclusive).

2.1.1 Carbon sequestration

Yield models do not currently exist for all species. In cases where one does not currently exist, for the purpose of providing indicative carbon sequestration estimates the species are mapped to the existing yield model considered most similar (Time Randle, pers. com.). This is also the case of some species that can be classified as shrubs (see: <http://www.vocabulary.com/definition/shrub>). For example, Hungarian lilac is mapped to

sycamore, while blackthorn and hawthorn are mapped to oak. (Whether a species is categorised as a shrub or a tree can depend in part on the management regime applied).

Drawing upon the same set of options for which estimates from FR’s C-SORT model were based for a recent WAG report (WAG, 2010), three sets of species/spacing/yield class/type of management/soil options/previous land use were assumed to typify new woodlands created under the BWW scheme. These are:

- i) option D1: sycamore/ash/birch mix YC4, 1.5m spacing, no thinning, no final felling (indefinite rotation), gley, rough pasture;
- ii) option F1: oak YC6, 1.2m spacing, ATC selection, no final felling, gley, rough pasture;
- iii) option G1: sitka spruce YC12, 2.0m spacing, standard thinning, 60-year rotation, gley, rough pasture;

Sitka is assumed in the case of new coniferous woodland. For new broadleaf woodland, 56% is assumed to be represented by the sycamore/ash/birch mix (which, in the absence of yield tables for these species, alder and hazel are assumed to map to), and 44% by the oak (which rowan and wild cherry are assumed to map to). This reflects the approximate proportions for the top seven broadleaf species planted (ash, oak, birch, alder, rowan, wild cherry, and hazel), with the ‘native broadleaf’ and ‘woody shrub’ categories assumed to be similar. As stocking density of tree planting is increased to allow for features such as rocks and tracks, the full area planted is used without subtraction of areas of open ground for the purposes of computing indicative carbon sequestration estimates.

Based upon this approach, Table 4 shows the assumed breakdown of the new woodland planted in each year used to generate the carbon sequestration estimates.

Table 4. Woodland creation options assumed for carbon sequestration estimates

Year of planting	Woodland creation options			
	Sycamore/Ash/Birch (ha)	Oak (ha)	Sitka spruce (ha)	Total (ha)
2008	31.9	25.1	26.4	83.3
2009	59.6	46.8	12.3	118.7
2010	66.9	52.6	11.7	131.2
2011	30.4	23.9	2.5	56.8

The C-SORT estimates take account not just of carbon sequestration in the stand of trees, but also changes in soil carbon, debris (e.g. litter), and emissions due to forestry management operations (e.g. planting and harvesting). Estimates of the impacts over

the two time horizons are provided in Table 5. These show the impacts over the first 4 years of the BWW scheme to be negative as a consequence of initial disturbance of pre-existing soil carbon and the emissions associated with woodland planting operations. Over the 20-year time horizon they suggest an additional total net sequestration due to planting new woodland under the BWW scheme ranging from around 3,300 tCO₂ (low estimate) to 31,500 tCO₂, (high estimate), with a central estimate of about 13,300 tCO₂. Valuing the net carbon sequestration at the low, central and high social values of carbon recommended by DECC for sectors not covered by the EU emissions trading scheme (see:

http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/about/ec_social_res/iag_guidance/iag_guidance.aspx) and discounting at Treasury Green Book rates, imply that the present value of the carbon sequestered ranges from -£17,000 to -£240,000 for 2008-2011, and from £64,000 to £1.9m for 2008-2027 at 2012 prices. Central estimates of the present values are -£92,000 for 2008-2011, and £530,000 for 2008-2027 (reflating DECC social values of carbon at 2011 prices by 2.8% based upon the Treasury's forecast for the GDP deflator).

Table 5. Estimated net carbon sequestration (tCO₂) by time period

Time horizon		Estimated net carbon sequestration (tCO ₂)			
		Sycamore/Ash/Birch	Oak	Sitka spruce	Total
2008-2011	Low	-235	-381	-30	-646
	Central	-597	-1,066	-71	-1,734
	High	-1,113	-1,828	-103	-3,043
2008-2027	Low	1,915	689	662	3,267
	Central	7,324	3,290	2,696	13,311
	High	17,730	7,810	5,946	31,486

2.1.2 Biodiversity benefits

The data required for biodiversity estimates require three major components: area of woodland created by woodland type, biodiversity values for different kinds of woodland and the number of households in Wales.

One set of biodiversity estimates is provided by (Eftec, 2010) based on a meta-analysis of data from the European studies. They suggest that the non-use value of woodland biodiversity together with the cultural services value of woodlands ranges from £30-£300/ha/yr, depending on the priority status of the woodland. However, for this evaluation it was decided to give priority to a UK study (Hanley *et al.*, 2002) which focuses on biodiversity alone.

The biodiversity marginal benefit estimates derived by (Hanley *et al.*, 2002) depend on forest type and are assumed constant (rather than changing with the level of woodland creation). These include:

- £0.35 per household per year for enhanced biodiversity in each 12,000 ha of Commercial Woodland (coniferous mostly, size 100 ha and larger);
- £0.84 per household per year for a 12,000 ha increase in new Lowland Broadleaved Native (e.g. oak or birch) forest. This applies to small-scale (5-100 hectare) woodlands of up to 50 years in age, mostly left unmanaged with small areas of felling, that tend to be established on arable land;
- £0.61 per household per year for a 12,000 ha increase in new Upland Native Broadleaved Woods. This is also for small-scale (5-100 hectare) broadleaved native woodland of around 50 years of age.

The values for commercial woodlands and for upland native broadleaves from the study (Hanley *et al.*, 2002) were selected as likely to be most representative of the new conifer and broadleaved woodlands, respectively, created under the BWW scheme. The values were reflat to 2012 prices using HMT GDP deflator data (http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/data_gdp_fig.htm, accessed 02/02/12), giving estimates of £0.46 per household per year for enhanced biodiversity associated with new coniferous woodland and £0.80 per household per year associated with new broadleaved woodland. However, as confidence intervals are not reported by (Hanley *et al.*, 2002) and transfer to a different context requires caution, estimates derived below should to be treated as indicative.

There were around 1,318,500 households in Wales in 2010. The mean household size was 2.24 persons (<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/housing2011/111006/?lang=en>, accessed 02/02/12).

In order to estimate the biodiversity impacts it is necessary to consider the temporal distribution of benefits. The approach adopted in the recent study for Defra (Nisbet *et al.*, 2011) is proposed for this study as well. The benefits are assumed to have zero value at the year of planting and to increase linearly until the benefits are fully realised and their maximum values are reached once the trees are a certain age (Nisbet *et al.*, 2011, Appendix): 55 years old (low estimate), or 20 years old (central estimate), or 10 years old (high estimate). It is assumed that benefits continue at the maximum thereafter.

Estimates are presented in Table 6 below for each scenario. These incorporate the assumed level of additionality of the new woodland planted (i.e. low/central/high estimates correspond to assumed 15%, 42%, and 72% levels of additionality, respectively). The estimates range from £10,000 to £280,000 for 2008-2011 and from

£71,000 to £1.1m for 2008-2027, with central estimates of £80,000 and £550,000, respectively.

Table 6. Biodiversity benefits of woodland created under BWW scheme (at 2012 prices)

Time-horizon		Estimated value of biodiversity benefits (£)		
		Broadleaved	Coniferous	Total
2008-2011	Low	10,127	315	10,442
	Central	77,978	2,422	80,400
	High	267,354	8,305	275,658
2008-2027	Low	69,530	1,319	70,849
	Central	535,383	10,156	545,539
	High	1,050,885	18,769	1,069,653

2.1.3 Employment benefits

Recognised methods for evaluating the employment benefits drawn from woodland are very limited. This report draws upon methodology in the Mersey forest study (Regeneris, 2009, p. 28) which relied upon the Annual Business Inquiry 2006 data on GVA and employment in the forestry sector (using SIC 02: Forestry, logging and related service activities). Using this data two assumptions were derived: £46,000 of GVA per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) and 1,000 hectares of woodland supporting four FTE jobs. However, that study assumed that the benefit was calculated at the point where the trees have matured. This may lead to an overestimation of value.

The initial results of the National Forest Inventory (NFI) estimate for the area of woodland in Wales to be 303,500 hectares (ha) in 2010 (FCW, 2011, p. 6). Regional Gross Value Added (GVA) of the forestry sector in Wales for SIC 02 (Forestry, logging & related services) was £25 million in 2008 (FCW, 2011, p. 31) with employment estimated at 821 FTEs (FCW, 2011, p. 26). These figures imply mean employment of 2.7 FTEs per 1,000 ha of woodland and £30,450 of GVA per FTE.

Were a similar approach to the Mersey forest study adopted in estimating the employment impacts of the BWW scheme, this would imply that the total planting of 390 ha would result in additional employment of between 0.16 FTE (low estimate) and 0.76 FTE (high estimate), with a central estimate of 0.44 FTE. However, as wood production is not envisaged during the twenty year time horizon for this study, basing the assessment upon the employment figures including harvesting is also likely to lead to over-estimation.

An alternative approach would be to consider only employment in forestry planting and the area of woodland planted as relevant, and only for the limited time-span (e.g. year) in which the planting occurs. However, disaggregated data which separate out 'forest planting and management' from 'timber production and processing' were not available within the timeframe for this report.

In the absence of more precise information, a hybrid approach is adopted to derive indicative employment estimates based upon assuming that the mean employment per hectare of woodland in Wales for SIC 02 is applicable but that it applies in the year of planting only. This approach yields estimates of the mean employment impact for the years 2008-2011 inclusive due to the additional woodland creation under the BWW scheme ranging from 0.04 FTE (low estimate) to 0.19 FTE (high estimate), with a central estimate of 0.11 FTE.

2.2. Qualitative analysis of outputs and impacts

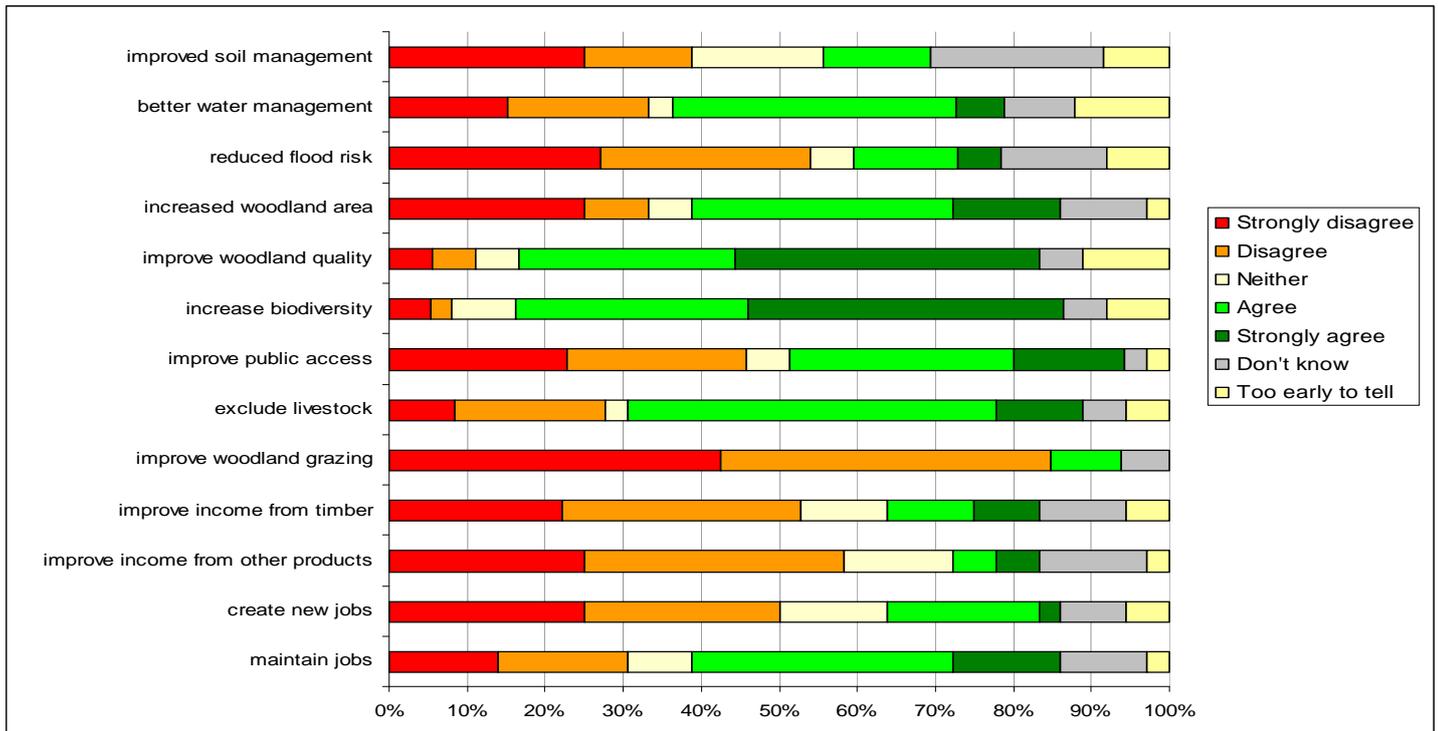
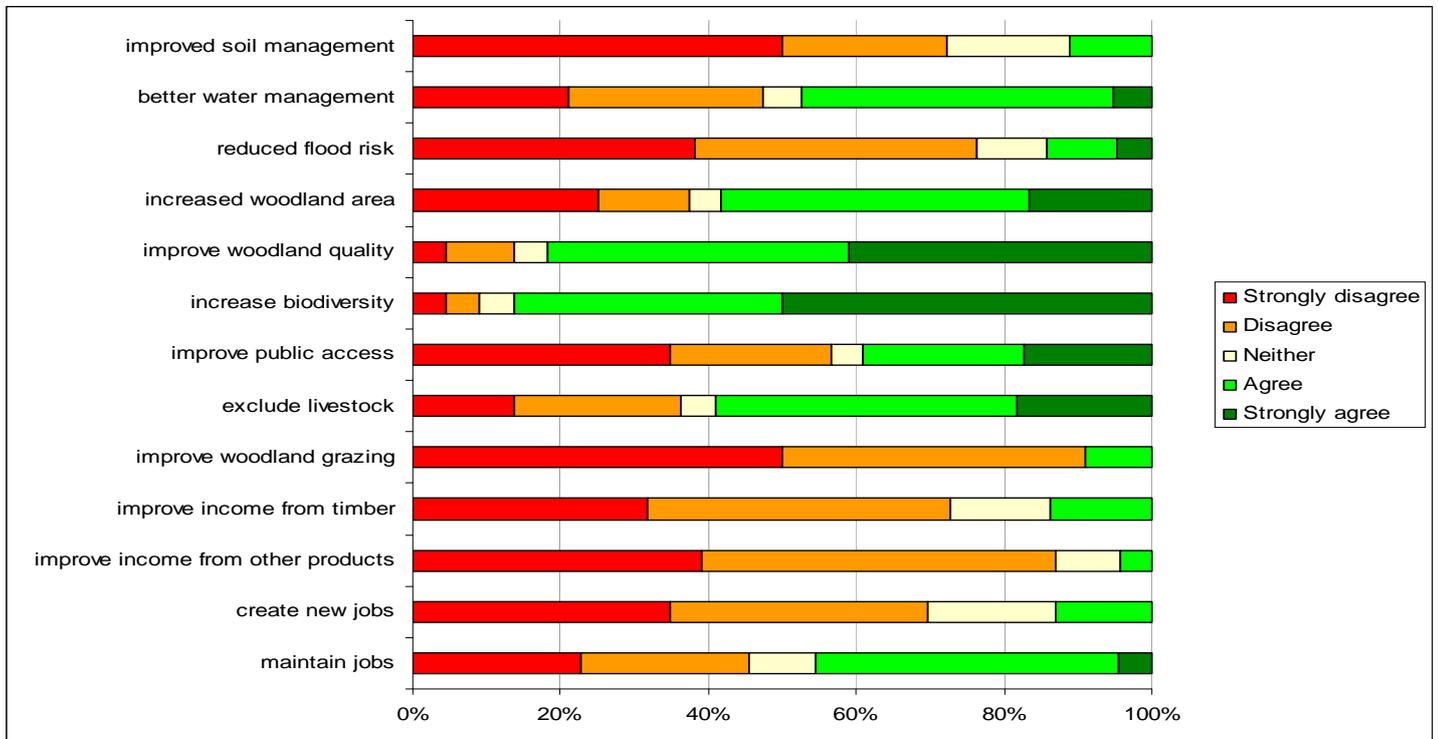
A summary analysis of the qualitative data as illustrated in Figure 1 shows clear agreement by all respondents that the major impacts of the scheme were:

- improved woodland quality
- increased woodland biodiversity
- increased woodland area
- better control of livestock within woods
- maintenance of rural jobs linked to woodlands

There were slight differences in perspectives between groups, where the Management Planners were more positive about the ecosystem service impacts of the scheme, such as improved soil and water management, as well as the impact on rural employment. Other stakeholders were less certain of the outputs and impacts of the scheme overall compared with management planners and grant recipients and returned more 'don't know' and 'too early to tell' responses than the other groups.

The grant recipients clearly agreed that grant funded operations had a positive effect on increasing biodiversity and increasing woodland area and/or quality which were the major objectives of the RDP funded portion of the grant.

Respondents were asked to identify the single most important impact of the BWW grant scheme. Results are shown in Table 3.

Figure 1. Assessment of BWW impacts by all respondents (n=38)

Figure 2. Grant recipient's assessment of BWW impact (n=26)⁵


⁵ Because of small numbers involved, the 'Don't know' and 'Too early to tell' categories have not been included in this chart

Table 3. Single most important impacts of the BWW scheme

Reported impacts	Grant recipients No.(%)	Management planners	Stakeholders	TOTAL No.(%)
Improve the crop	6 (23)		1	7 (18)
Woodland creation	5 (19)			5 (13)
Improved access	4 (15)	1		5 (13)
Improved Biodiversity	4 (15)	1		5 (13)
The management plan	2 (8)	2	2	6 (16)
Other	5 (19)	2	0	7 (18)
Not able to comment		1	2	3 (8)
Grand Total No. (%)	26 (100)	7 (100)	5 (100)	38 (100)

The results in Table 3 broadly reflect those shown in Figure 1, but emphasise the economic importance of woodlands as a commercial resource to grant recipients. Whilst the management planners and stakeholders listed the production of management plans as a major positive impact of the BWW scheme, amongst grant recipients there does not seem to have been a strong impact on encouraging people to continue to have management plans in the future. Only 27% of grant recipients said they would continue to use management plans as the main means to manage their woodland in future. Of those who were using the BWW management plan they noted that the management plan helped them to be more consistent with their woodland management and kept them more focused on carrying out operations over time rather than having good intentions but letting these slip at a later date.

Whilst Figure 1 showed some agreement that BWW contributed to rural employment, management planners and stakeholders perceived a greater positive impact than grant recipients. Grant recipients agreed BWW maintained existing jobs but did not identify a strong impact on the creation of new jobs. A total of 69% of grant recipients reported that BWW had not discernibly improved their livelihood. Of those who reported an impact, 3 people (11.5% of the sample), said the impact was negative. This was linked to them taking the land out of agriculture which represented a loss in land rental income. In cases where the impacts were positive, one publicly owned woodland had used BWW money to attract other funding, for one applicant it had improved their tourism trade and for another couple their firewood sales and future timber sales prospects had been improved.

The majority of grant recipients had not considered climate change directly when planning their BWW operations, although for some it was a significant concern. A total of 3 (43%) of Management Planners mentioned species choice as the main mechanism

for taking climate change into account. One Management Planner had tried to promote Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) as an adaptive management approach. However, the degree of uncertainty surrounding climate change both in terms of the location and severity of effects (e.g. where will increased risks of wind and storms might be located) as well as future market responses, have meant that Management Planners and Woodland Officers did not promote this aspect of management even though the variety of options within BWW supported climate change planning.

When asked how far the impacts listed could be attributed to BWW, overall 50% of grant recipients said BWW grant support was absolutely critical to their decision to implement operations that they would not have carried out otherwise; 15% said it was an important contributory factor; and 35% said they would have carried out the operations without BWW grant support. There was a difference in the critical nature of support with regard to the type of operation undertaken as shown in Table 4 and also when looking for variation across applicant types. The BWW support was significant to those owners undertaking management activity alone where 6 out of 9 (67%) reported that they would not have done the work without the grant. BWW was particularly critical to business occupiers as a group, with 71% stating the grant was crucial to their operations. Personal occupiers in contrast were less likely (only 23% of responses) to say the grant was critical for their woodland creation and improved management work, and appeared to be motivated by personal environmental values and goals to restore habitat diversity and woodland cover on their land regardless of grant support.

Table 4. Grant recipients statements about how critical the BWW scheme was to supporting their woodland operations

BWW funded operation	Was BWW Critical?			
	Contributory	No	Yes	Total
management		3	6	9
planting	1	3	3	7
planting and management		3	2	5
restocking	1		2	3
restocking and management	2			2
Grand Total No (%)	4 (15)	9 (35)	13 (50)	26 (100)

This compares with the perception of 100% of Management Planners who thought that, on balance, BWW grant support was critical to their clients following through on woodland planting and management activity. Farm woodland in particular was not considered to be an economic resource and was therefore noted by Management Planners and stakeholders alike as being in specific need of grant support.

2.2 Unintended and unexpected effects

The qualitative data revealed very few unintended and unexpected effects of the BWW scheme. Those which respondents mentioned were:

1. Positive

The delivery mechanism, using Management Planners and woodland plans, has increased the skills and knowledge of woodland management issues in Wales and provided the country with an important cadre of woodland management expertise outside the public sector

Amongst small woodland owners, the overall size of woodlands being entered into the scheme increased from an average of 4ha to approximately 6 ha (Forestry Commission Wales data)

Although not quantifiable, the stream of public benefits derived from woodlands was maintained particularly where these relate to biodiversity, water management and public access.

2. Negative

Robust data on the time and other resources spent administering and delivering the scheme were not available, and was consequently not possible to provide a ratio of costs and benefits or scheme delivery costs against programme costs⁶. However, within the sample interviewed the opinion of 3 (60%) of stakeholders and 5 (71%) Management Planners⁷ support the view that the overall costs in terms of FCW staff and Management Planner time were high. The impacts reported were:

- i. a negative impact on the number of grant applications processed by some Management Planners and, therefore, an assumed decrease in the potential rate of new woodland planting and improved management they could have achieved
- ii. a negative impact on the enthusiasm for woodland management amongst a small number of private small woodland owners and farmers.

Whilst reporting these perceptions, it should be remembered that apart from the first year of delivery, when uptake of many grant schemes can be slow (Lawrence et al, 2010), the BWW scheme was always **over-committed**. Whilst there may

⁶ This is the primary reason a qualitative rather than quantitative analysis of cost effectiveness was undertaken as explained in section 1.2.2.4.

⁷ There were 75 Management Planners in total, of which 66 could be characterised as 'active' having submitted plans to approval stage. The sample discussed here therefore represents 10.6% of Management Planners as a group.

have been an impact on uptake for some sections of the landowning community the absolute numbers were small.

3. Neutral

Differences in the grant rates provided led to uneven distribution of benefits amongst grant recipients. The economies of scale in some woodlands meant that larger owners with less complex woodland holdings benefitted more at an individual business level than smaller owners with more diverse and challenging woodlands. However, this was not an issue if the woodland manager/owner set management objectives aimed more towards woodland heritage and cultural benefits than financial return alone.

The degree of control Management Planners had over planning and the potential income derived from woodland increased significantly. There were positive and negative aspects of this relationship depending on examples examined.

2.3 Cost effectiveness

The measures against which respondents were asked to score the BWW scheme were:

- **Relevance** of the scheme: to policy, sector and business needs
- **Effectiveness** of the delivery model: e.g. use of Management Planners, woodland plans, grant spend against output
- **Efficiency** of the scheme processes: e.g. application process, on-line systems, and payment systems

The overall scores given by the three different respondent groups are shown in Figure 2 and the associated data table. The three highest scoring aspects of the scheme representing particular value for money were related to the:

- efficiency of the payments system
- effectiveness of improving woodland quality
- relevance of the scheme to business needs.

The major area of divergence in perception between respondent groups was around the efficiency of the scheme application and delivery processes. Although stakeholders and grant recipients assigned mid-range scores, the experience of the management planners was very different with low and negative mean scores. The message from Management Planners was quite clearly that the administration of the scheme was not cost effective.

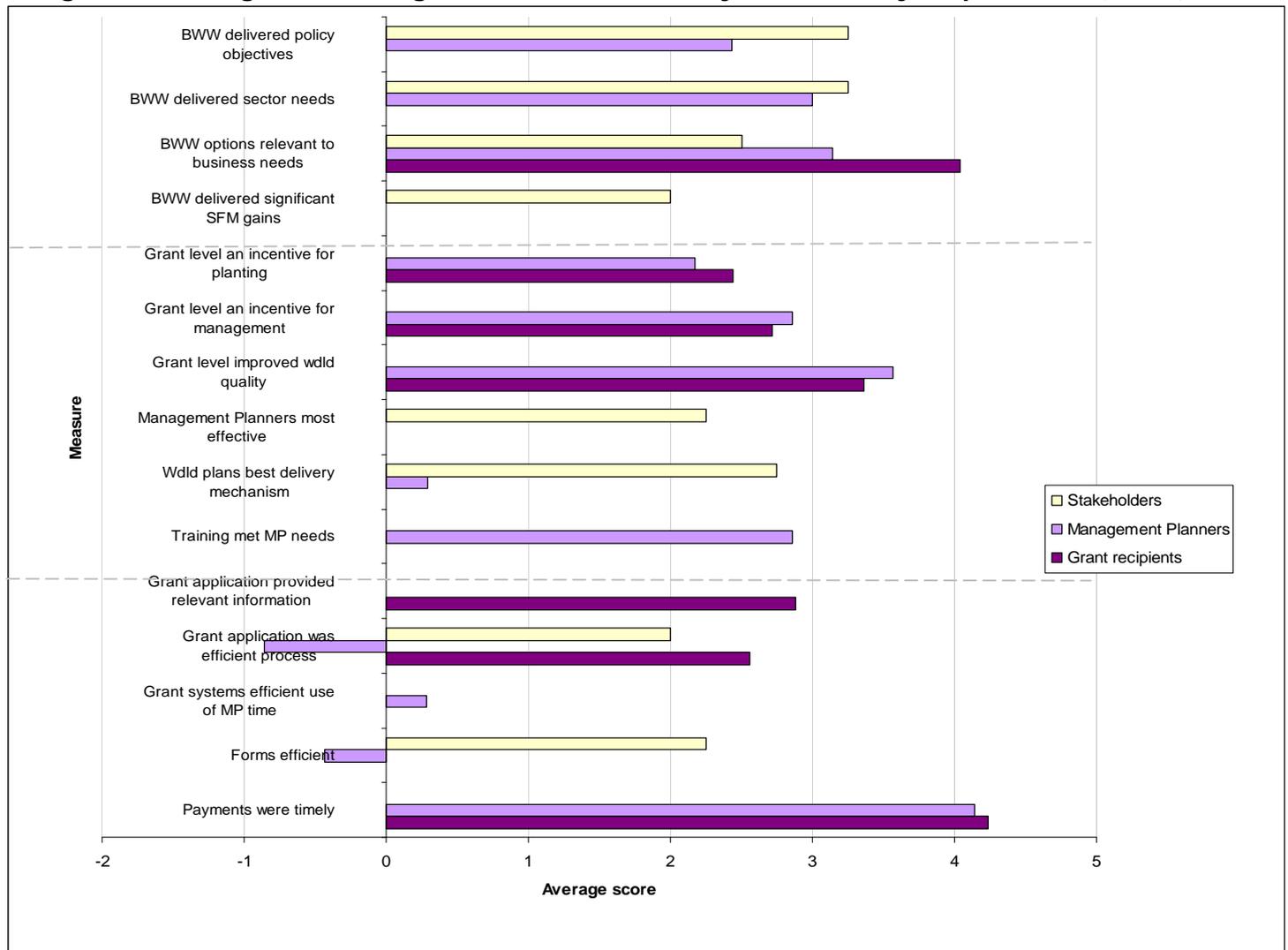
Data from the interviews provides more detail. All but three grant recipients (88.5% of the sample) reported that the grant had met their original objectives and had been fully effective. For those landowners who felt the grant had not been fully effective (11.5% of the sample), the reasons were linked to survival failure of new planting⁸, and the economic viability of timber extraction. Although grant recipient views varied on whether the level of grant acted as an incentive for management and/or planting, more respondents scored in the 1-3 range than the 4-5. There were also mixed views over whether or not the grant application process provided all the necessary information either to complete the grant application, or to fully understand the management plan produced. Almost all grant recipients reported that the grant application was far from easy.

However, the mid-range mean score was generated as a consequence of the more positive scores assigned by grant recipients who said their Management Planner had taken care of everything for them (although some of these people noted that they knew the process had not been easy for their Management Planner). All grant recipient types whether farmers or non-farmers reported that that BWW provided options relevant to their specific business and woodland management objectives, 80% of respondents assigning scores of 4 or 5. Similarly, the majority of respondents, 84%, scored 4 or 5 with regards to the payments system, noting that they received payments quickly and when they expected to.

The stakeholders and Management Planners thought that, overall, the scheme represented good value for money against the original policy objectives, and in the provision of a mix of private and public benefits. There was a divergence of opinion over the degree to which the scheme had improved the condition of PAWS and native woodland. Some stakeholders and Management Planners thought this was where most value of the scheme was to be found, whilst others questioned whether grant delivery failed to engage with the small woodland owner segment of the sector that hold more than half of this kind of woodland in Wales (Pryor and Smith, 2002).

The low and negative scores assigned by Management Planners to the efficiency of grant delivery were related to perceptions about the way in which the administration costs of the scheme were not kept within FCW, and a general complaint that the computer-based and on-line systems were “not fit for purpose”, particularly during the first three years of BWW operation.

⁸ This is of course an inherent risk of woodland creation dependent on the seasonal conditions at time of planting.

Figure 2. Average score assigned to Value for Money measures by respondents (n=38)


		Measure	Grant recipients	Management Planners	Stakeholders
Relevance	1	BWW delivered policy objectives		2.43	3.25
	2	BWW delivered forest sector needs		3.00	3.25
	3	BWW options relevant to business needs	4.04	3.14	2.5
	4	BWW delivered significant SFM gains			2
Effectiveness	5	Grant level an incentive for planting	2.44	2.17	
	6	Grant level an incentive for management	2.72	2.86	
	7	Grant level improved woodland quality	3.36	3.57	
	8	Management Planners effective means of delivery			2.25
	9	Woodland plans were the best delivery mechanism		0.29	2.75
	10	Training met Management Planner needs		2.86	
Efficiency	11	Grant application provided relevant information	2.88		
	12	Grant application was efficient process	2.56	-0.86	2
	13	Grant systems efficient use of MP time		0.29	
	14	Forms efficient		-0.43	2.25
	15	Payments were timely	4.24	4.14	

Regardless of the fact that the Management Planners interviewed recognised that they were remunerated for their efforts, and that the performance of the GLOS system was poorer initially than subsequently, the result was a widely reported increase in the time burden on Management Planners dealing with the administration of the system, which resulted in a felt loss to their productivity and frustrations about the cost effectiveness of this aspect of the scheme.

3 BWW successes and achievements

3.1 What worked well

3.1.1 Concept and design approach

There was major agreement between all respondent groups that overall the original design concept for BWW, i.e. encouraging short and medium term planning of woodland as a holistic enterprise rather than providing a grant for short term operations that were not linked to a strategic plan, was something which worked well in terms of moving towards reviving and strengthening woodland management standards across the country. One respondent's summing up was typical when they said that BWW was:

"probably the best ever grant scheme we could expect to see in Wales because of the "whole woodland" in context approach which really achieved better woodland creation and management on those holdings where it was applied, even the larger more commercial stands"

(Stakeholder respondent)

And other typical comments were:

"I think BWW has, despite frustrations with time consuming admin, over the time period that it has been in place, proved to be a good holistic planning system that ensures full consultation and a more strategic way of managing woodland, reducing the chances of mis-management for species."

(Management Planner respondent)

"The financial incentive was a good rate and all the advice and things was free of charge, they were professional and they knew what they were doing. It is a scheme which has been well managed and you planted what is required and what suits the landscape here."

(Grant recipient respondent)

"There were a lot of good things about it [the BWW grant scheme], the management planner was excellent, the application process was very easy, it was

very low on bureaucracy, it was very easy to submit claims - the computer system, once you'd worked out how to use it was very efficient. There was good help with the computer system if you got stuck...there was good access to advice on how to use it and we got these occasional newsletters which were interesting and kept you informed and you got them by email so there were no trees felled for that. It gave you an annual incentive to complete that years work, and a deadline which was very good and when we had the very bad winter they were flexible over the deadline and they gave us extra time. I thought it was really well run."

(Grant recipient respondent)

In addition to this, the breadth of operations funded was frequently mentioned as a very positive design aspect. The result was a grant which was inclusive and catered for very diverse kinds of woodland owners (from community groups and voluntary organisations to commercial forestry companies) and a very broad range of woodland management objectives. The reasons for the grants were clearly stated and the links to policy objectives transparent as a result.

The 5 year planning horizon was appreciated by Management Planners and grant recipients for the flexibility it gave owners to respond to evolving market conditions.

3.1.2 On-line systems and data capture

Where the on-line systems worked, comments were positive, specific issues noted by respondents were:

- On-line processing represented excellent data capture
- On-line systems kept all information in one readily accessible location
- Mapping facilities represented a step forward aiding discussion with consultees as well as owners
- Where owners had access to reliable internet connections and were competent computer users, on-line systems provided wider access enabling woodland owners to complete the application process themselves more easily than with paper documents, or better understand the application process and management plan compared to previous systems.

3.1.3 Provision of advice

Although there were different opinions about how well the relationship between Management Planner and landowner might have worked, the majority of grant recipients mentioned the value of the Planner in providing information and knowledge which built their confidence around woodland management. Management Planners were credited with:

- better equipping owners with the operational knowledge required to manage their woodland in future
- supporting owners through grant application process and guiding them on what to do which provided them with confidence for future applications
- simplifying the woodland management plan and providing a timetable for operations in a way which motivated new owners or managers
- helping many owners understand why management objectives for their wood are important and how these link to personal and business aims for their holdings.

3.2 Barriers

3.2.1 Process and delivery mechanisms

As noted in the cost effectiveness analysis, the grant application process, the production of the management plan and the process stages to final grant approval acted as a barrier to Management Planners and land owners alike in taking their applications to final approval and completion. The following remarks are typical:

"I feel that the system overall has been pretty onerous, requiring a lot of investment of planners time in training and learning the system, setting up GIS etc to improve efficiency. I think it is extremely unfortunate that after the amount of time and public investment that has gone into setting up and making the BWW scheme work more efficiently (and it has taken 4-5 years to get to that stage in my book!), it is to be lost".

(Management Planner respondent)

"It felt a bit like snakes and ladders, you know, you'd think you were moving forwards along the process only to be knocked back down again by the next delay and the next set of queries or the next IT technical issue."

(Management Planner respondent)

"The BWW scheme, you know, how it was implemented, was akin to a Soviet system to buy a loaf of bread"

(Management Planner respondent)

"This has been a nightmare of a scheme in terms of administration and the application process"

(Stakeholder respondent)

The consequences of the problems with the IT, on-line forms and application materials, and the administration system were:

- reduction in Management Planner productivity and total numbers of grant applications processed through the system
- a felt increase in workload for Woodland Officers and technical support staff particularly during the early roll-out of the programme
- long delays in processing applications, some of the early applications taking 1-3 years to process
- production of paper-based woodland management plans that were long and complicated reflecting IT needs and output rather than being suitable for use as a management planning tool by woodland owners
- some loss of early applicants because of the lengthy and complex planning and contract documents.

3.2.2 Engaging with farmers and small woodland owners

Marketing and engagement mechanisms were noted by Management Planners and grant recipients as a key barrier to grant uptake by this particular segment of land owners and woodland managers. Whilst larger scale woodland owners and managers as well as forest management companies have little difficulty in accessing forest and woodland grants, farmers and other non-traditional woodland managers pose particular challenges as a new customer group (see for example Lawrence *et al* 2010). Many of the farmers and small woodland owners grant recipients in the survey sample learnt about BWW either by word of mouth from other land owners, or were contacted directly by the Management Planner. Effective ways of engaging with different segments of the land owning sector, particularly farmers, that were identified included:

- better use of established communication pathways to reach farmers and small woodland owners (e.g. including information in Gwlad, sending out leaflets through WG communications that come with other grant payments, increased communication with partner organisations e.g. farming unions)
- continuing to ensure that promotional and explanatory material is paper-based as well as on-line, paper documents may still be more accessible than electronic forms of information and have the advantage of being readily passed on between farmers and landowners
- ensuring presentation and marketing of woodland grant schemes is focused on the business and land management needs and concerns of the target group (e.g. clearly explaining need for woodland creation and management, how this fits in with farm planning)
- adjusting language and terminology to make forestry and woodland management more understandable to new entrants and non-specialist land managers.

3.2.3 Fit with other grant schemes and processes – BWW in the wider RD scheme context

The terms of reference for this evaluation required a consideration of the fit between BWW and other grant schemes or rural policies, not only from the point of view of stakeholders and decision makers, but also from the experience of grant recipients. This puts some of the issues associated with RD schemes into wider context. There are common conditions of entry required by all Rural Development (RD) schemes that are not specific to BWW. Whilst there were few issues reported by the larger landowners and more commercial forestry operators, it is worth noting here the uncertainties and confusions about RD requirements that were reported by small woodland owners and farmers as an impediment or barrier to taking up the BWW grant. The issues listed were:

1. Requirement for CRN across all EU funded grants

- A reported difficulty experienced by tenant farmers with woods-in-hand was trying to raise CRN reference numbers against the woodland rather than the farming enterprise. Although it should be possible for each parcel of land to hold more than one CRN, 2 of the surveyed Management Planners and 2 of the stakeholders interviewed said that this was a problem that had effectively excluded some tenant farmers from participation in the woodland grant scheme. Even though this is an issue linked to EU procedures rather than the BWW scheme *per se* it is an important consideration when understanding barriers against uptake amongst different customer groups.
- community groups, schools and local authorities as non-traditional land owners had difficulty applying for a CRN particularly where the application required a single named individual rather than 'corporate' or group representative. Although companies can register using the name of the MD or equivalent and are happy to do so, amongst the less traditional woodland managers and land owners the use of a single name as the 'responsible owner' acted as a barrier to uptake because fears of the liability implications acted as a disincentive.

2. Scheme rules

The links maintained between compliance requirements of different grant schemes paid to owners means that applications to new schemes such as BWW represent a risk to landowners. The perception amongst owners that applications were lengthy and subject to delay acted as a barrier to some fearful their other grant payments would be adversely affected.

3. Lack of a clear roadmap to negotiate required forms

There were several comments from Management Planners and from grant recipients about the barriers posed by bureaucracy associated with grant applications. Management Planners indicated that woodland owners have not gone ahead with new planting or management of existing woods because of the complexity of required forms. Of note were confusion over use of the Single Application Form (SAF), Customer Details Wales (CDW), and the Welsh Government's Field Maintenance (FM3) form to register the land and the associated mapping processes which can take up to 6 months.

4 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Remarks against CMEF questions

Application of the evaluation findings against the Common Monitoring Evaluation Framework questions are as follows:

i. Measure 221, 223, and 227 the result/output tables asked for in the CMEF were not addressed (see comments in methodology section 1.2.1.1)

ii. Measure 221, 223. Impact level. Contribution to combating climate change

A full evaluation of the impact of the programme to combating climate change requires analyses of changes brought about by improved woodland management and new planting to multiple factors including soil condition, water cycling, emissions, and avoided deforestation. Such a multi-factor analysis is subject to significant problems of empirical data capture, baseline condition assessment, attribution and additionality. This study choose a measure of carbon sequestration as an indication of how the programme may have contributed to climate change as this takes into account impacts on soil and water and provides a measure of the **additionality** of the programme as it calculates the additional carbon sequestered as a result of woodland creation. The present value of carbon sequestered ranges from -£17,000 to -£240,000 for 2008-2011, and from £64,000 to £1.9m for 2008-2027 at 2012 prices. Central estimates of the present values are -£92,000 for 2008-2011, and £530,000 for 2008-2027 This represents a modest contribution to combating climate change.

iii. Measure 221, 223. Evaluation question. To what extent has the measure contributed to maintaining the countryside and improving the environment?

A full assessment of how far the programme has contributed to maintaining the countryside and improving the environment requires analyses of multiple factors such as avoided deforestation, changes to soil quality, water quality, and impacts to

woodland dependant species. Such a multi-factor analysis is subject to significant problems of empirical data capture, baseline condition assessment, attribution and additionality. This study choose a measure of biodiversity value as an indication of how the programme may have contributed to maintaining or improving the environment. This monetised value provides a measure of the additionality of the programme as it calculates the **additional** biodiversity brought about as a result of woodland creation. These incorporate the assumed level of additionality of the new woodland planted (i.e. low/central/high estimates correspond to assumed 15%, 42%, and 72% levels of additionality, respectively). The estimates range from £10,000 to £280,000 for 2008-2011 and from £71,000 to £1.1m for 2008-2027, with central estimates of £80,000 and £550,000, respectively. This represents a modest contribution to environmental improvements by this single measure.

- iv. Horizontal question. To what extent has the programme contributed to the realisation of Community priorities in relation to the renewed Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs with respect to, a. the creation of employment opportunities?

The quantitative analysis provides estimates of the mean employment impact for the years 2008-2011 inclusive due to the **additional woodland creation** under the BWW scheme ranging from 0.04 FTE (low estimate) to 0.19 FTE (high estimate), with a central estimate of 0.11 FTE.

Looking beyond the employment impacts of new planting, the qualitative analysis indicated that whilst more than 80% of grant recipients thought that the programme had not created new employment opportunities, more than 40% of grant recipients reported that existing jobs were maintained as a consequence of the operations supported by BWW in existing woodland. The contribution of the programme with respect to the creation of new employment opportunities was not significant, but impacts on the maintenance of existing employment appear substantial although unquantified.

4.2 Lessons learned and application to future schemes

The three respondent groups were asked to mention the three most important lessons they had drawn from their experiences of BWW. The list of lessons generated was long and varied, but a summary of the most often mentioned lessons is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Top ten lessons learned mentioned amongst all respondents (n=38)

Lessons learned	Frequency
Simplify grant application process	30
Stop changing the form and scope of woodland grant schemes	8
On-line systems represent good value where they work	8
The use of agents (MPs) in the process was supportive where the relationship between MP and owner works in favour of the landowners and policy objectives	7
Marketing requires focus on customer needs and should include packages of relevant information	7
Never let the needs of IT lead over the needs of the customer	7
Landowners require on-going advice and guidance around woodland management issues	4
Ensure management plans meet owner needs	4
Woodlands need to be seen in totality, as complex land management units, not as disparate parts and grants should reflect this	3
More effort should be directed towards understanding the perverse incentives and barriers associated with woodland grant schemes	3

All groups of respondents agreed that grant application processes need to be simple and easy to complete, and that where they work, on-line systems can represent good value for money in terms of efficiency, transparency and data capture. It was interesting to note that several respondents mentioned the Cydcoed grant as a model of accessibility, functionality, timeliness and being user-friendly⁹. Grant recipients complained about what they perceived to be constant changes to the form and scope of woodland grants – they found change unsettling and confusing. The switch from WGS to BWW was disruptive. However, grant recipients noted that the evolutionary adaptation of existing schemes, such as the progress of BWW, means that people can learn the system and find it easier to use over time. They suggested that evolving BWW into a new scheme rather than starting something new and perceived to be as radically different as Glastir would be helpful not least because learning about the objectives and application methods of new schemes is time consuming. Most of the land owners interviewed said they were not going to be applying for Glastir woodland element. Although many of them stated they would have liked to, they either wanted to wait to find out how the grant “would settle down”, or they feared that the operations they would like to carry out would not be covered by the scheme or that they would not be eligible to apply. It is important to note that the Glastir woodland element scheme rules and grant rates were not published at the time of the survey, so these remarks are based on perceptions

⁹ It is important to note that the Welsh Audit Office has found a number of audit risks associated with this scheme which interview respondents almost certainly were not aware of. This limits any replication of the processes and methods employed.

and fears rather than actual understanding of the new scheme. None the less such comments underscore the need for strong and clear communication about the new Glastir woodland element. Grant recipients also mentioned that ongoing longer term support would be useful, it is not only help creating a woodland through BWW that is important, but on-going support to manage it.

All three respondents groups talked about the need for improved communication. For grant recipients this concerned the relationship with the Management Planner as well as better documentation on 'rules and policy' to justify why different operations were or were not eligible. For Management Planners and stakeholders communication concerned:

- outward facing monitoring information which showed the progression of the grant scheme against policy targets
- forums for discussing evolving issues and problem solving
- internal communication amongst grant administrators so consistent messages and information delivered

On balance the important lessons for future woodland grant schemes would be:

- 1 Management Planners proved to play an important role in the operation and delivery of the woodland grant, particularly with respect to smaller and less confident woodland managers and land owners. Look to **a continuing role for Management Planners** but ensure the relationship works in favour of policy targets and owner needs.
- 2 **Improve communication strategies** associated with the grant scheme, specifically:
 - i. Marketing and promotion strategies need to be tailored to specific target segments of landowner or forest sector communities
 - ii. Provision of clear and concise supporting information for grant recipients
 - iii. Regular collation and release of monitoring and progress data to allow
 - a. better focus and targeting of subsequent applicants and applications
 - b. building a sense of teamwork between Planners, applicants, administrators and other stakeholders
 - iv. Stakeholder meetings or other discussion fora which allow Management Planners, other stakeholders and grant administrators to inform each other and learn about evolving issues as well as problem solve collaboratively. Such fora evolved as part of BWW (as BWW stakeholder and BWW technical groups) and there is a concern that this approach will not continue under Glastir.
 - v. Ensure that communications about the woodland grant scheme are clear and consistent, particularly where this relates to significant issues such as budget allocations and allocated spend over the course of financial years.

- 3 Continue to **integrate woodland grants** with other land management programmes
 - i. the ease of application and payment delivery using systems already familiar and well established was a noted advantage of the scheme strengthening such links are likely to aid the customer
 - ii. similarly the provision of clear and concise marketing and supporting information for grant recipients delivered through existing channels may extend the reach and recruitment of woodland grants

- 4 Develop efficient **mechanisms for data capture, monitoring and assessment**
 - i. Continued development of data collection systems and analysis would be beneficial allowing for improved monitoring and evaluation to help inform scheme funders and administrators of wider trends and issues connected with delivery and outputs, although a balance between IT needs and the needs of the customer should be sought
 - ii. A case could be made for additional data capture around the reasons for uptake or low uptake of grants amongst certain segments of the land owning community that would help target delivery.

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Annex 1. Data tables and models

Annex 1 is contained in a separate CD which accompanies this report.

Following standard social science research ethics the names and personal details of the survey respondents have been withheld. The original sample frames are available on request and where appropriate permissions have been obtained.

File 1.1. Carbon sequestration estimates

File 1.2. Carbon sequestration estimates conifers Jan-March

File 1.3. Carbon sequestration estimates conifers December

File 1.4. Biodiversity and Employment values

File 1.5. Grant recipients data

File 1.6. Management Planner Survey data

File 1.7. Stakeholder survey data

File 1.8. Likert analysis

File 1.9. VfM analysis

Annex 2. Interview schedules

2.1. GRANT RECIPIENT INTERVIEWS

Section 1. Interviewee information

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1.1. Date</p> <p>1.2. Interviewer name</p> <p>1.3. Respondent name</p> <p>1.4. Type of recipient.</p> <p>1.5. Size of land holding</p> <p>1.6. Size of woodland</p>
<p>1.10. What did your BWW grant fund?
 Woodland creation - %
 Woodland management - %
 Other – please list with approx %</p> <p>1.11 Do you receive any other land management grants? (i.e. any others applicable to the landholdings not just the woodland)
 Yes
 No
 If 'Yes' please list</p> | <p>1.7. Size of BWW area</p> <p>1.8 Length of time recipient has owned woodland (yrs)</p> <p>1.9 Was the BWW grant the first grant you have received for woodland?
 Yes
 No
 If 'No' i.e. there have been others – please list</p> |
|--|--|

Section 2. Effectiveness of BWW

- 2.1 Can you explain briefly why you chose to apply for a grant under BWW? (i.e. look for key objectives – top 3 enough – and any important reasons which played an influence)
- 2.2. Did you meet your objectives? (i.e. relate this to question 2.1. and 1.10)
Yes
No
If no, could you briefly explain why not? (look for any differences between woodland management and woodland creation aspects)
- 2.3 Please could you score different aspects of the BWW grant scheme according to your experience (NB 1 = low – you do not agree, and 5 = high – you agree strongly)

	Score (1 low, 5 high)					
	1	2	3	4	5	D/K
Relevance						
BWW provided options for grant support which were relevant to your business/objectives						

Effectiveness						
The level of the BWW grant was adequate						
The level of the BWW grant acted as an incentive to plant woodland						
The level of the BWW grant acted as an incentive to manage woodland						
Efficiency						
The grant application process was easy						
The grant application process provided all the information needed						
The grant payment system was timely (i.e. the payments arrived efficiently and when you expected them to)						
The grant payments system was flexible enough to accommodate changes						

2.4. In the case of your land holding, to what extent do you consider that the grant **was critical** to the creation of new woodland - or improving woodland management - as opposed to any other factors? (NB. look for, and note, any differences between woodland management and woodland creation aspects. Probe for any other factors such as market trends which may have influenced the decision)

Section 3. The impact of BWW

3.1. Was the BWW management plan the first you have had for your woodland?

Yes

No

If 'Yes' i.e. there were others – please summarise

3.2. Will you continue to plan your woodland management in this way in future (i.e. will the grant recipient continue to use woodland management plans as a consequence of BWW?)

Yes

No

In either case please explain why briefly

3.3. Did you carry out all the work you originally planned under the BWW management plan?

Yes

No

If 'No' please explain briefly what work was not completed and why this happened (separate out the woodland management and woodland creation aspects of this answer.

NB this is not a policing question – needs to be explained appropriately by the interviewer.

Remember EU only allowed for 5% of projects to be checked against plans)

3.4. What difference do you think that the operations BWW funded have made to your woodland? (i.e. specific to their own woodland holding and changes to date. Beware of collecting a 'general opinion' about 'woodlands in general'. PLEASE NOTE we are trying to assess changes to date - as per Magenta Book advice on evaluation - if the respondent mentions benefits expected in the future please make a note of this but do not include on the grid.)

	Strongly disagree	Dis-agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / can't say
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Improved soil quality						
Better water management						
Reduced flood risk						
Increased woodland area						
Improved woodland quality						
Increased woodland biodiversity						
Improved public access						
Provided opportunities for education						
Excluded livestock						
Provided more woodland grazing						
Improved incomes from timber						
Improved incomes from other woodland products						
Created new jobs						
Maintained existing jobs						

3.4.1. Notes of any future benefits

3.5. What do you think is the single most important difference that the BWW grant funded operations have made to your woodland? (NB. look for brief explanation)

3.6. Have the BWW grant funded operations made a difference to any of your other activities and operations? For example, did the BWW grant enable you to do things in other parts of your business you did not foresee as a consequence of your woodland management plan (NB. Looking for unexpected impacts of the grant)

3.7. Has the BWW grant make a difference to your livelihood/income stream?

Yes

No

In either case explain briefly

3.8 Did you think about climate change at all when you planned your operations?

Yes

No

In either case explain briefly (i.e. if 'No' reasons why not, and if 'Yes' how was this incorporated? Separate out as far as possible the woodland creation and woodland management aspects of this question)

Section 4. Counterfactual

4.1. If the BWW grant had **NOT** been available, would you have carried out these operations anyway?

Woodland management Yes No

Woodland creation Yes No

Other - please note if appropriate

(NB this question triangulates with 2.4 above)

4.2. Has BWW made any difference to your future management of woodland?

Yes

No

In either case explain briefly

4.3. Will you be applying for Glastir woodland grants?

Yes

No

4.4. Do you think you will need any form of support to continue woodland management/planting in the future?

Yes

No

If Yes briefly describe the kind of support. (NB. Looking for information about incentives – grant & level of grant, advice, management plans etc. and trying to establish owners own priorities for these)

Section 5. SWOT

5.1. In your opinion what – if any - were the main strengths of the BWW grant scheme? (Looking for information additional to that covered in section 2, i.e. not just main impacts but anything else related to the process etc. Leave if no additional information forthcoming)

5.2. In your opinion what – if any - were the main weaknesses of the BWW grant scheme? (Please probe for main issues if any – make sure data relates to recipients own experiences not 'things in general')

5.3. What are the three most important lessons you learnt from your experiences of BWW? (i.e. lessons relevant to future schemes)

2.2. MANAGEMENT PLANNER INTERVIEWS

Section 1. Interview information

1.1. Date

1.2. Interviewer name

1.3. MP Respondent name

1.4. Years working as MP

1.5. Number BWW plans completed

Section 2. Process Analysis

We are interested in finding out more about your experiences of the administration and overall running of the scheme.

2.1. What are your opinions about the information and promotion used to generate interest and recruit woodland owners to the BWW scheme?

2.2. What are your experiences and opinions about the training and supporting information provided to you in your role as a Management Planner?

2.3. What are your experiences/opinions about the forms and materials used in the application and administration processes?

2.4. Do you have any comments about the systems used to administer the grant scheme? (NB. this includes both application and subsequent payments etc)

2.5. How effective was the support from, and interaction with, FCW and other agencies involved in the grant scheme?

2.6. What are your experiences/opinions about the timescales involved in the application processes and administration of the scheme?

2.7. Any other comments?

Section 3. Success and achievements

3.1. What do you think are the most important impacts/outcomes that the BWW grant funded operations have made to the woodlands you have been involved with? (i.e. overall success of the scheme in terms of tangible outputs – triangulates with 3.5)

3.2. Do you think that BWW brought about any unexpected benefits or disbenefits?

3.3 How successful do you think BWW was at achieving forest policy objectives ? (i.e. expand as far as possible to find out more detail re. scheme successes not already mentioned in 3.1. and relate to W4W policy statements)

3.4. Using your expert opinion, could you indicate the extent to which you think BWW operations have made a difference to the woodlands you have been involved with? (i.e. respondents should answer specific to their own experiences not provide a 'general opinion' about 'woodlands in general. PLEASE NOTE we are trying to assess changes to date - as per Magenta Book advice on evaluation - if the respondent mentions benefits expected in the future please make a note of this but do not include on the grid.

	Strongly disagree	Dis-agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / can't say
Improved soil quality						
Better water management						
Reduced flood risk						
Increased woodland area						
Improved woodland quality						
Increased woodland biodiversity						
Improved public access						
Provided opportunities for education						
Excluded livestock						
Provided more woodland grazing						
Improved incomes from timber						
Improved incomes from other woodland products						
Created new jobs						

Maintained existing jobs						
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3.4.1. Any information about future benefits

3.5. Did you consider climate change issues in your advice and design of woodland plans?
 (explain briefly i.e. if 'No' reasons why not, and if 'Yes' how was this incorporated?)

Section 4. Value for Money

4.1 Do you feel the grant paid to landowners represented value for money in terms of the outputs and impacts produced? (cost / benefit judgement – don't forget to separate out public versus private benefit element of this question)

4.2. Do you feel the process and systems administering the scheme represented value for money?

4.3. Please could you score different aspects of the BWW grant scheme according to your experience and professional judgement (NB 1 = low - disagree and 5 = high - strongly agree)

	Score (1 low, 5=high)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Relevance					
BWW performance against forest policy objectives					
BWW performance against forestry sector needs					
BWW met business needs of landowners					
Effectiveness					
The training provided met management planners needs					
The woodland plans produced represented the most effective implementation tool?					
The structure and payment rates provided by the scheme encouraged improved woodland management					
The structure and payment rates provided by the scheme encouraged woodland planting					
The structure and payment rates provided by the scheme had a positive impact on woodland quality					
Efficiency					
The BWW application process was an efficient use of your time					
The BWW support systems were an efficient use of your time					
The BWW forms and associated materials were an efficient way of administering the scheme					
The grant payment scheme was timely					

Section 5. SWOT

- 5.1. In your opinion what – if any - were the main strengths of the BWW grant scheme? (Looking for information additional to that covered in section 3, i.e. not just main impacts but anything else related to the process etc. Leave if no additional information forthcoming)
- 5.2. In your opinion what – if any - were the main weaknesses of the BWW grant scheme?
- 5.3. Were there any synergistic effects between the BWW scheme and other grant support or land-use trends which contributed to scheme uptake and outputs? (e.g. other economic trends such as increasing demand for woodfuel or changes to market price for timber?)
- 5.4. On balance, how critical do you think the BWW scheme was to the majority of woodland owners undertaking woodland planting or woodland management work. (N.B. as far as possible pull out reasons why in each case and relative proportion of owners if possible)
- 5.5. What are the three most important lessons you learnt from your experiences of BWW? (i.e. how to learn lessons relevant to future schemes)

2.2. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS
Section 1. Interview information

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| SH number | 1.3. Respondent name |
| 1.1. Date | 1.4. Respondent position (role) |
| 1.2. Interviewer name | 1.5. Respondent category |

Section 2. Success, achievements, impacts

- 2.1 How successful do you think BWW was as a scheme in achieving its policy objectives? (i.e. expand as far as possible to uncover detail re. scheme successes as relating to forest policy objectives or wider WG rural dev objectives)
- 2.2. What do you think are the most important impacts/outcomes that the BWW grant funded operations have made to woodlands across Wales? (i.e. overall success of the scheme in terms of tangible outputs – triangulates with 2.4)
- 2.3. Do you think that BWW brought about any unexpected benefits or disbenefits?
- 2.4. Using your expert opinion, could you indicate the extent to which you think BWW operations have made a difference to the woodlands across Wales? (i.e. specific to their own judgement. PLEASE NOTE we are trying to assess changes to date - as per Magenta Book advice on evaluation - if the respondent mentions benefits expected in the future please make a note of this but do not include on the grid.)

	Strongly disagree	Dis-agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / can't say
Improved soil quality						
Better water management						
Reduced flood risk						
Increased woodland area						
Improved woodland quality						
Increased woodland biodiversity						
Improved public access						
Provided opportunities for education						
Excluded livestock						
Provided more woodland grazing						
Improved incomes from timber						
Improved incomes from other woodland products						
Created new jobs						
Maintained existing jobs						

2.4.1. Note any future impacts

2.5. Do you think climate change concerns were adequately incorporated into the scheme? In either case explain briefly (i.e. if 'No' reasons why not, and if 'Yes' how was this incorporated?)

Section 3. Design and Administration

We are interested in finding out more about your understanding and perception of the grant application, payments process and programme administration. This includes the different roles (e.g. Management Planners, Grants and Regulations (Licences) team), and the use of on-line and other administration systems.

3.1. How effective was the information and promotion used to generate interest in and recruit woodland owners to the BWW scheme?

3.2. Do you have any comments about the grant application process, including the role of Management Planners and other agencies?

3.3. Do you have any comments about the on-line systems and materials used to administer the grant scheme? (NB. this includes both application and subsequent payments etc)

3.4. Do you have any comments about the grant administration processes? (i.e. not the systems themselves but the resources supporting the smooth running of the grant scheme)

3.5. What are your opinions about the liaison and support between FCW and the other Management Planners or other agencies involved in the grant scheme?

3.6. What are your opinions about the timescales involved in the application process and administration of the scheme? (e.g. too long? And if too long, at what point and why?)

3.7. Any other comments?

Section 4. Value for Money

4.1 On balance, do you think that the grants that have been paid out to landowners represent value for money in terms of the impacts they have generated? (cost / benefit judgement – don't forget to separate out public versus private benefit element of this question)

4.2. On balance, do you think that the process and systems administering the scheme represented value for money?

4.3. Please could you score different aspects of the BWW grant scheme according to your experience and professional judgement (NB 1 = low – disagree and 5 = high – strongly agree)

	Score (1 low, 5=high)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Relevance of the scheme					
BWW good fit with WG objectives for the land-use sector (i.e. Wales-wide rural policy fit)					
BWW performance against forest policy objectives					
BWW performance against forestry sector needs					
BWW met business needs of landowners					
Effectiveness of the BWW delivery model					
Using Management Planners was an effective and necessary part of the delivery model					
Production of woodland management plans was the most effective implementation mechanism					
BWW grants are responsible for significant improvements to SFM					
Efficiency					
The BWW application process was an efficient model					
The BWW systems and processes used to administer the programme were efficient					

Section 5. SWOT

5.1. In your opinion what – if any - were the main strengths of the BWW grant scheme? (Looking for information additional to that covered in section 2, i.e. not just main impacts but anything else related to the process etc. Leave if no additional information forthcoming)

5.2. In your opinion what – if any - were the main weaknesses of the BWW grant scheme?

5.3. How well did the BWW scheme fit alongside other related policies (e.g. forestry, landuse, rural development, and natural environment)? (NB look for synergistic effects or points of overlap or contradiction)

5.4. On balance, how critical do you think the BWW scheme was to the majority of woodland owners undertaking woodland planting or woodland management work. (looking for a measure of N.B. as far as possible pull out reasons why in each case and relative proportion of owners if possible)

5.5. Please describe three important lessons from the BWW scheme which are relevant to the future? (i.e. how to learn lessons relevant to future schemes)

