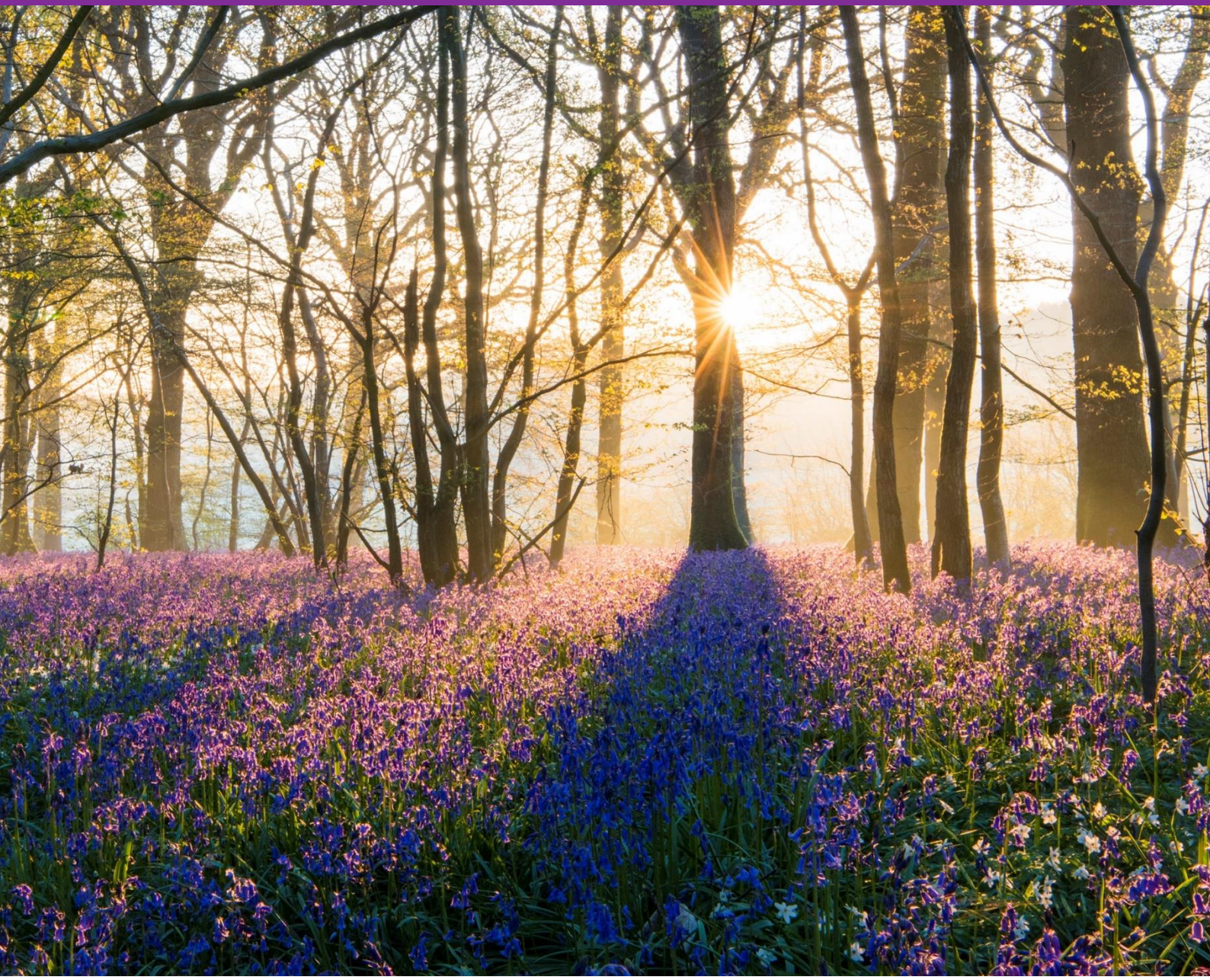


Validating Woodland Water Code (WWC) metrics and methodologies:

A project to finalise and deliver Version 1 of the WWC, providing a standardised methodology for the quantification and verification of water quality, flood alleviation and water shading benefits from woodland creation by March 2026.

For further information on the project please visit the [Developing a Woodland Water Code webpage](#) or contact romany.vassell@forestryresearch.gov.uk



What is the Woodland Water Code (WWC)?

Similar to the Woodland Carbon Code (WCC), the WWC represents a crediting mechanism to encourage private investment in trees for the ecosystem services they provide. It uses a robust methodology to calculate three separate water benefits provided by woodland creation: **water quality, flood alleviation and water shading.**

Why develop a WWC?

Woodlands provide multifunctional benefits for the environment. Contributing to the England Trees Action Plan, the WWC aims to deliver coordinated woodland creation benefits within priority catchments, harness private investment and maximise environmental benefits.

What is a Woodland Water Unit (WWU)?

WWUs will represent a new type of unit. Each unit will quantify the benefits provided by the new woodland for three water ecosystem services: water quality (nutrients, sediment, pesticides and faecal indicator organisms), flood alleviation and water shading. The benefits will be quantified using bespoke tools, optimised for use by the WWC.

Further work is needed to define how the different water benefits will be combined within a unit, the monetary value of a unit, and to establish when units will be released during the woodland creation project.

Who is likely to buy WWUs?

As part of the initial development of the Code, market research was conducted to ascertain market demand for a new WWC. The research explored commercial drivers that might incentivise companies to measure their impact to the water environment and mitigate these through woodland creation, as well as what opportunities and constraints exist for landowners who might engage with a new Code. Key findings included:

- Water companies need the Code to be robust enough to convince regulators that it will contribute to their water targets.
- Other prospective buyers are interested in purchasing high integrity carbon credits with measured co-benefits (such as water).
- Setting the price of the WWUs must be carefully considered and reflect associated risks.

Will all woodland creation projects be eligible for the WWC?

The WWC is designed for woodland creation projects that meet UKFS requirements.

Maps have been developed, and are being improved, to prioritise catchments where new woodland can contribute to improved water quality, flood alleviation and/or provide shading over watercourses.

To be eligible for water quality WWUs, projects must include agricultural land conversion to woodland or planting in-field/riparian woodland buffers.