

Sustaining ambition

Forest Research's Strategy

2025-29



Contents

- 02. Our purpose
- 03. Introduction
- 04. Our themes
- 13. Our values
- 14. What success will look like
- 15. Our unique attributes



To be a world leader
in applied forest
science and a trusted
provider of expertise,
data, products and
services.



Introduction

It is an exciting time for forestry and Forest Research. We are building on the success of our previous Strategy for Growth. There is a continuing focus on tree health, woodland creation and better woodland management in England, Scotland and Wales as we play our part in helping meet the UK's net zero targets. Key areas of our activity include making sure our forests remain resilient, meeting the changing needs of today's society, and tackling the threats posed by climate change.

As part of the Forestry Commission, we support its new 'Thriving for the Future' strategy and the five guiding principles of:

- **Act now for the future**
- **Lead with science and evidence**
- **Partner with purpose**
- **Focus on customers**
- **Challenge the status quo**

This Forest Research Strategy for Sustaining Ambition embraces all five guiding principles, particularly: leading with science and evidence, partnering with purpose, and challenging the status quo.

Our expertise is focused on trees, woods, and forests in both rural and urban settings, and their contribution to, and importance for, nature recovery. The roles forests play in the future are dependent on the science that puts

them in place or protects them. The research and practical solutions we develop and communicate are pivotal. Our work informs the improvement and delivery of the UK Government and devolved administrations' policies. Crucially, it provides an evidence base to inform and inspire change that benefits society, the economy, the environment, and the forestry sector.

The Strategy for Sustaining Ambition will shape our approach to tailored research and knowledge exchange, and will reinforce Forest Research's place as a world leader in the delivery of applied forest science.

We will monitor and report on our progress to deliver the Strategy and we will build the activities needed to achieve our goals into our core business plans.

- **Grow engagement**
- **Build resilience**
- **Unlock new opportunities**
- **Expand horizons**



Theme one: grow engagement

The **forestry sector** is our **primary focus**. We will conduct timely, rigorous, and **independent research** to give our customers the quality science, evidence, data, products, and services they need to make **informed decisions**, support **policy development**, or develop and **nurture their businesses**.



Theme one: grow engagement

We will continue to grow our relationship with our customers by:

- understanding their needs;
- providing constructive challenge, insight, and evidence based on quality applied science;
- providing authoritative advice, data, and statistics.

This will be achieved through:

- understanding the challenges facing trees, woods, and forests and those responsible for them;
- informing policy by broadening and diversifying our existing networks and collaborations both nationally and internationally;
- constantly innovating, refining, developing and sharing our science, products, and services, such as Forest Research's Geostore data repository;
- enhancing our approach to knowledge exchange and impact, and increasing our digital presence;
- monitoring and responding to feedback on our impact and performance.

Theme two: build resilience

Forest Research's staff are fundamental to our success. Their expertise, pride, and passion have made us the UK's leading provider of applied forest research. We recognise that our reputation depends on the work we will do, not just on the work we have done.



Theme two: build resilience

We will continue to develop by:

- investing in our staff, facilities, and core systems;
- providing opportunities for career development and supporting training and professional development;
- collaborating and increasing opportunities for partnership working.

This will be achieved through:

- sustaining our business while making Forest Research an attractive, stimulating, and positive place to work;
- encouraging staff to develop new areas of research and to push the boundaries of forest science;
- developing a Forest Research science strategy;
- continuing to invest in new and refurbished facilities and equipment, as well as business systems and processes;
- building on areas of expertise and growing and developing our capabilities through training, staff exchanges, post-doctoral placements and secondments, and apprenticeships.

Theme three: unlock new opportunities

Through well-established **connections** across the forestry sector, we **understand the issues** facing our **trees, woods, and forests** and those involved with them. We will continue to give the best **research advice, information,** and **data** to our customers.



Theme three: unlock new opportunities

We will enhance our business by:

- developing new and existing strategic partnerships across the UK and internationally to strengthen our capabilities and offer;
- maintaining, extending, and exploiting our unique sets of long-term data, forest trials, and experimental plots, alongside our ability to conduct long-term applied research;
- building on, and investing in, our established interdisciplinary approach across the whole forest-wood supply chain so we can provide integrated solutions and remain as the trusted expert advisor to the forestry sector.

This will be achieved through:

- consolidating newly acquired income streams and diversifying arrangements with key partners;
- developing and extending our approaches to knowledge-exchange and technology-transfer;
- growing and integrating our expert modelling, analysis, experimental plot network, and consultancy services to provide robust and innovative solutions;
- embracing new technologies to build on our established areas of expertise and knowledge and investigating how big-data analytics, continuous monitoring, machine learning, and artificial intelligence can be applied and used in our work;
- developing bespoke services in the arboriculture and urban-forestry sectors.

Theme four: expand horizons

Using and adapting new and existing technology, techniques, and approaches is fundamental to delivering quality research and data services.



Theme four: expand horizons

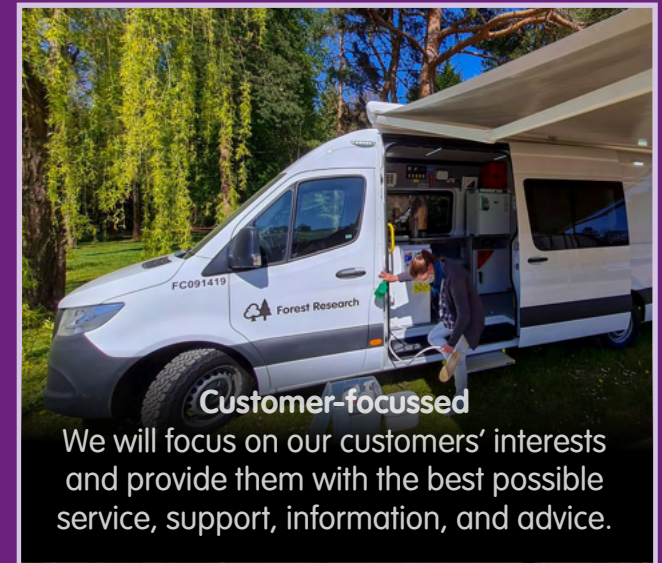
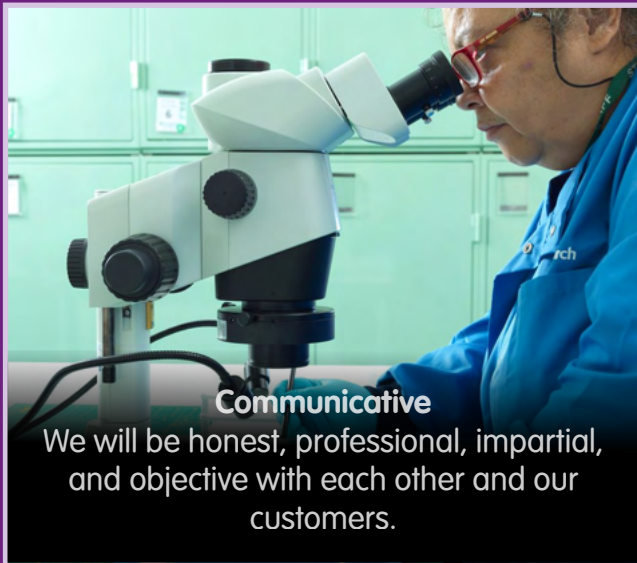
Our creative, interdisciplinary science and data provision will offer trusted and quality-assured insight and innovation by:

- being objective, impartial, and at the forefront of forest science technology, modelling, official statistics production, data analysis, and development;
- being solution- and impact-focussed and independently quality assured through regular evaluation by Forest Research's Expert Committee on Forest Science;
- being applied, accessible, relevant, and easily understood.

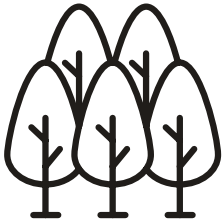
This will be achieved through:

- collaborating to bring together the best insights and practices;
- establishing new long-term experimental plots and monitoring networks to underpin and evidence the role of trees in nature recovery and landscape scale restoration;
- producing a 10-year strategy for our silvicultural research activities;
- growing our world-leading science in managing planted forests, tree-health research, forest inventory and carbon accounting, land-use and ecosystem services, climate mitigation and adaptation, applied social science, and economics;
- developing our expertise in forest informatics and investing in our capabilities in forest remote-sensing, decision-support systems, modelling, and production forecasting;

Our values



What success will look like



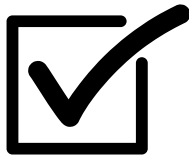
We will continue to be recognised by the sector as a world leading partner and the cost-effective provider of choice for applied forest science and data services



We will continue to be trusted by our stakeholders for our expertise and advice



Our data, products, and services will continue to demonstrably add value to the future for trees, woods, and forests



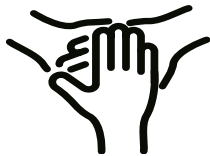
Our science will continue to be quality assured, and our products and services innovative, user-driven, and user-tested



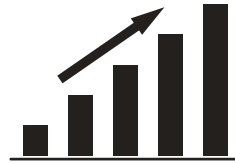
Our scientific credibility will be recognised nationally and internationally



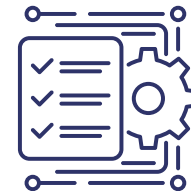
We will continue to attract and retain professional staff who excel at what they do and who are committed to understanding and meeting customer needs



We will continue to value our staff and have a coherent and inclusive culture



We will consolidate and build upon the significant growth achieved in the last five years



We will operate efficiently, continue to meet the needs of the business, and adjust to meet demand

Our unique attributes

