

## Guidance notes for Woodland Opportunities Map (WOM) version 1

### Why was a map produced?

The Regional Forestry Framework (RFF) for the West Midlands was launched in October 2004 ([www.growingourfuture.org](http://www.growingourfuture.org)). A key output was the production of a Woodland Opportunities Map (WOM) due for delivery by Spring 06 in the RFF Delivery Plan 0506.

### What does the WOM aim to do?

The WOM does not substitute for or over-ride existing codes of practice such as the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS- [www.forestry.gov.uk/publications](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/publications)) or England Woodland Grant Scheme conditions (eWGS- [www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/ewgs](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/ewgs)) etc but aims to:

- Assist landowners and managers in making decisions about how their proposals fit into the wider regional aspirations of the RFF
- Save time spent developing possibly inappropriate proposals and indicate where further information and advice may be needed
- Help focus activity on areas of maximum public benefit in creating and managing woodlands in the region
- Assist the FC and other funding bodies regionally in making decisions about proposals to create and manage woodlands (via future regional scoring)

Regionally, the WOM is part of a move to a more spatial approach to land use planning, exemplified by the Regional Spatial Strategy and Character Area Framework project, eg:

- Environmental Stewardship Targeting Statements ([www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/jca-ts/jca-map-wm.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/jca-ts/jca-map-wm.htm))
- Biodiversity Enhancement Areas, (further details at West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership website [www.wmbp.org/beas](http://www.wmbp.org/beas))

### What does the map show?

The WOM follows a **traffic light** principle, colour coding landscape units derived from local Landscape Character Assessments, as follows:

1. Areas where the creation of certain types of new woodland or woodland on an appreciable scale may not be appropriate because of their present value with respect to other factors (**sensitive areas**: coloured **red**);
2. Areas where the creation of new woodland would be most advantageous, and would bring local benefits (**preferred areas**: coloured **green**);
3. Remaining areas that do not fall within either of these categories (the working term **neutral** has been applied so far: coloured **orange**).

These three classes indicate the broad opportunities for woodland planting, compared to broad sensitivities **at a landscape scale** as outlined in the following table:

Class	Opportunities	Sensitivities
<b>Preferred</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most opportunities for planting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally preferred areas with fewest limitations other than individual site sensitivities or eg very large scale or inappropriate species</li> </ul>
<b>Neutral</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer opportunities for planting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More limitations to planting due to eg scale or inappropriate species</li> </ul>
<b>Sensitive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewest opportunities for planting due to other factors such as valuable open landscapes/ habitats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most sensitivities due to presence of other factors such as valuable open landscapes/habitats</li> </ul>

NOTE because these descriptions are generic being in any area does not avoid the need for assessment of the individual site characteristics.

## Will there be only one map?

There is one composite map, together with four theme maps. The theme maps are for:

- Landscape (produced by the West Midlands Living Landscapes Group drawn from individual authorities data)
- Biodiversity (produced at county level by a variety of local stakeholders)
- Cultural Heritage (produced by County Archaeologists, in future to link to county Historic Landscape Characterisations)
- Access (based on data from the Woodland Trust/FC *Space for People* project - [www.woodland-trust.org.uk/woodsforpeople/finalreport/finalreport.htm](http://www.woodland-trust.org.uk/woodsforpeople/finalreport/finalreport.htm) & CROW Open Access land)

Decision rules for the theme data are available. There is incomplete data coverage for biodiversity (Shropshire) and cultural heritage themes (Shropshire, Telford, Warwickshire).

## How should I use the map?

The map will guide you on how your proposal fits in terms of the balance of opportunity and sensitivity in your area. It can help you scope what/how much further work you might need to do on your proposal. It will also, via the theme maps help you identify what theme any general sensitivities fall into. Sources of further advice are given below.

For example, if you are proposing to plant a large block of woodland in an area coded **sensitive** then you will need to consider what steps to take to ensure that your proposal addresses the sensitivity identified. The table below may help with this scoping process:

Map	Preferred	Neutral	Sensitive
Composite	At least one theme area <b>preferred</b> , none <b>sensitive</b> : woodland <b>generally</b> preferred	Theme areas <b>neutral/ other</b> but not <b>sensitive</b> : new woodland is <b>generally</b> neutral	At least one theme area <b>sensitive</b> : new woodland is <b>generally</b> sensitive
Landscape	Woodland creation will generally reinforce landscape character and is encouraged	Woodland creation could generally reinforce character, but there maybe sensitivities	Woodland creation will <b>not</b> generally reinforce landscape character and could harm it
Biodiversity	Woodland creation will generally benefit biodiversity and is encouraged	Woodland creation could generally benefit biodiversity but there maybe sensitivities	Woodland creation will generally <b>not</b> benefit biodiversity and could harm it
Cultural heritage	Woodland creation will generally fit well with cultural heritage and is encouraged	Woodland creation should generally fit well with cultural heritage but sensitivities exist	Woodland creation will generally <b>not</b> fit with cultural heritage and could affect it
	<b>Most preferred</b>	<b>Preferred</b>	<b>Neutral</b>
Access	There is generally a lack of woodland access and CROW open access land. Woodland for access is encouraged	There is limited woodland access and/or CROW open access land	There is already some woodland access and/or CROW open access land

## Where can I find further help?

1. Your local Woodland Officer (01905 362730) who can also help you with additional contacts:
  - Your local English Nature/Natural England/County Ecologist/Local Records Centre contact
  - Your local County Archaeologist
2. Other resources:
  - MAGIC ([www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk)) – environmental designations and grant scheme areas
  - Nature on the Map ([www.natureonthemap.org.uk/](http://www.natureonthemap.org.uk/)) – Nature Reserves/SSSIs/one of the priority BAP inventory types