

Forestry England

Growing the nation’s forests

Proposed new woodland Barlow Wood in Gateshead

Forestry England are planting new woodlands to expand the nation’s forests

We are planning new woodland in Barlow, Gateshead, which will be known as Barlow Wood. We would like your comments on our initial ideas. Your input will help shape our final designs.

Working with public and private landowners, we’re choosing the right places for woodlands to grow and flourish, carefully planting a mix of tree species to be resilient in our changing climate.

Every new woodland will have public access so you can explore and enjoy them to support your health and wellbeing.

They will be valuable places for wildlife, often linking other woods to provide green corridors for wildlife to move and thrive across the landscape.

In time, each new woodland will provide sustainable timber, contributing to a green economy and they’ll have wider environmental benefits including absorbing carbon, improving soil health and air quality, and water management.

Forestry England is creating these woodlands through the government’s Nature for Climate Fund.

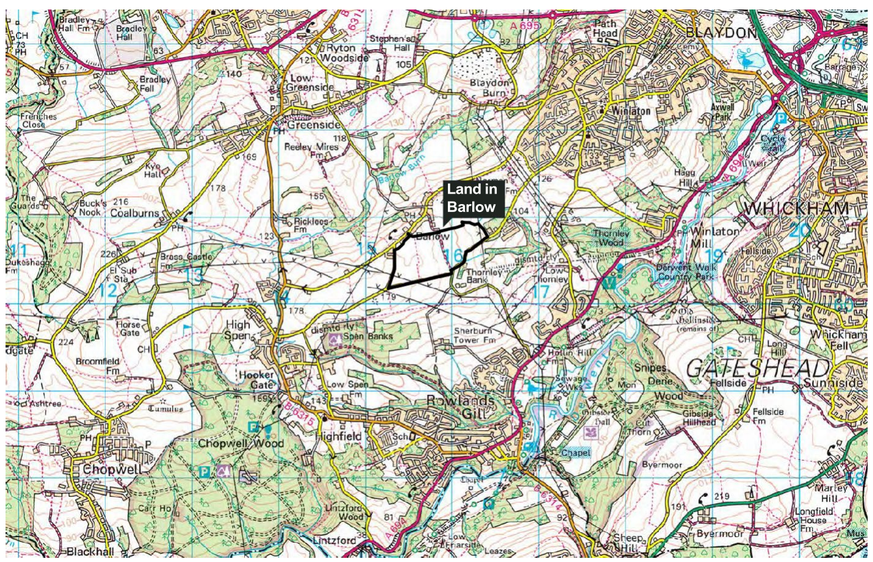
Scan the QR code to find out more:

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Site location & landscape context

The proposed new woodland in Barlow, Gateshead, is within Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 16 Durham Coalfield Pennine Fringe. It is a transitional landscape between the North Pennines to the west and the Tyne and Wear Lowlands to the east. It is formed by a series of broad ridges, separated by river valleys. The west is more upland in character, with large, open, regular fields bounded by drystone walls or fences, and is primarily used for sheep and cattle grazing. In the east the farmed landscape becomes more mixed, with arable crops grown on the richer land, and more irregular fields divided by hedges rather than walls. Networks of hedges and strips of woodland in river valleys and alongside streams, combined with shelterbelts and large conifer plantations, give parts of the area a well-wooded appearance. A number of major rivers run through the area, including the Wear and Derwent.

The proposed new woodland in Barlow is approximately 0.5 miles from land Forestry England manages at Spen Bank and 2 miles from Chopwell Wood to the southwest.



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Barlow medieval village extent

Some properties within Barlow have open views across the site

Some long distance views towards the River Tyne are possible from public footpaths

Existing mature trees form distinctive features from public footpaths

Norman's Riding wood priority habitat deciduous woodland is adjacent to site

Powerlines are a distinctive feature in the landscape and cross the site in several places

Land is more steeply sloping in the east

Key:

- Site boundary
- Listed Buildings
- Heritage feature
- Northern Powergrid utilities
- Footpath
- Gateshead Council woodland creation site
- Historic environment features (mine shafts)
- Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland
- Priority habitat - deciduous woodland
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Access point
- Photo viewpoints

0 0.03 0.05 0.1 Kilometers

The existing site

The site was previously used as arable farmland and grassland, divided into eight fields with internal hedgerow boundaries, some containing mature oak and ash trees. Norman's Riding Wood, a priority deciduous woodland habitat, forms the eastern boundary, with valley woodland and shelterbelts visible in the wider landscape.

Two public footpaths run parallel to each other north–south between Barlow village and Ashtree Lane, offering open views toward the River Tyne, Newcastle, and Gateshead. Several properties in Barlow also have open views into the site. Overhead powerlines are a distinctive feature and cross the site in several places.



1: Wide view north over site from Ashtree Lane public footpath & field access point. 2: View east from break in hedgerow from footpath to west of site. 3: Wide view south and west from public footpath near Barlow. 4: View south along public footpath towards Ashtree Lane. 5: View northwest into lower site from Garesfield Lane field gate.

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Open space next to neighbouring properties in Barlow

Barlow medieval village extent

Small broadleaved trees and shrubs planted at low density near to Barlow with mixed broadleaved woodland beyond

Mixed broadleaved and conifer woodland planting to centre of site

Wildlife corridors are created where open space is left for powerlines and paths

Grass paths with views out across open landscape

Small broadleaved trees and shrubs on edges to soften the appearance of woodland in the landscape with mixed woodland beyond

Grass paths through the site linking to existing public footpaths and to Gateshead Council new woodland to south

Route of historic wagon way retained in centre of site

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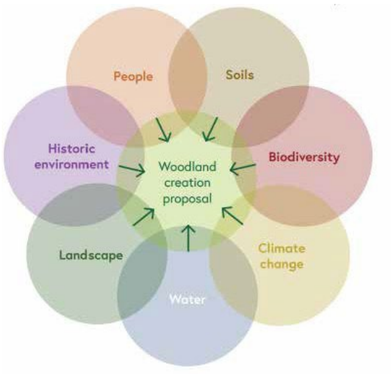
Proposed woodland features

- Broadleaved planting
- Low density planting
- Mixed conifer and broadleaved planting
- Operational access
- Pedestrian access
- Grass paths
- Access track and turning point
- Possible planting types

0 0.03 0.05 0.1 Kilometers

How the new woodland in Barlow could look

We are designing the new woodland to benefit people, wildlife and the wider landscape (natural capital approach). Our design meets the UK Forestry Standard, which takes into account the following elements (Forestry Commission, 2021):



Detailed desktop surveys, site surveys and analysis will inform our design. This includes:

- Local environment record review
- Preliminary ecological appraisal
- Historic environment records review
- Landscape and visual appraisal
- Soil mapping
- Ecological site classification
- Utilities searches
- Responses to initial consultation

Objectives for the new woodland

Future forest resources and resilience: plant a mix of trees for a lasting supply of sustainable timber.

Thriving habitats for wildlife: increase connectivity between woodlands in the landscape, creating a mosaic of habitats including areas of low density planting to enhance biodiversity.

Public access for health and wellbeing: create low-key public recreation opportunities with new green space for people to walk in the woodland.

Benefits for the wider landscape: capture carbon, supporting net zero emissions targets.

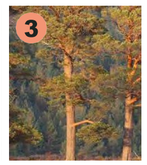
Types of woodland we could plant



Low density planting: wild cherry, sycamore



Douglas fir, with Pacific silver fir, beech, sycamore



Scots pine with Macedonian pine, beech



Oak, hornbeam, silver birch



Macedonian pine



Hazel



Alder



Hornbeam



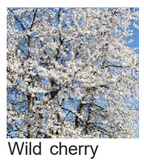
Sycamore



Beech



Silver birch



Wild cherry

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Gateshead Council woodland creation scheme

Forestry operational access point for future management

Public access point connecting to public footpath through site

Grass paths connecting to existing public footpaths to create loop walks

Mixed broadleaved and conifer woodland

Public access point connecting to public footpath through site

Small broadleaved trees and shrubs on edges to soften the appearance of woodland in the landscape with mixed broadleaved woodland beyond

Wildlife corridors are created where open space is left for powerlines and paths

Mixed broadleaved and conifer woodland

Small broadleaved trees and shrubs planted at low density near to Barlow with mixed broadleaved woodland beyond

Open space next to neighbouring properties in Barlow

Public access point connecting to public footpath through site

Suggested pedestrian link between Forestry England Barlow Wood and Gateshead Council woodland

Mixed broadleaved woodland

Mixed broadleaved and conifer woodland

Public access point connecting to public footpath through site

Artist's impression location: Barlow public footpath (east)

Artist's impression location: Barlow public footpath (west)

Hollinhill Lane

Garesfield Lane

Garesfield Lane

Ashtree Lane

Ashtree Lane

Public footpath

Public footpath

Barlow Crescen

Pawston Road

Barlow

Barlow Road

NORTH

How the new woodland could look

Our initial designs include proposals to:

- Plant coniferous and broadleaved trees together, with shrub species along some edges. This will add variety, colour and texture in the landscape.
- Create circular grass routes for woodland management and public access, linking to existing rights of way to Barlow and to Gateshead Council's new woodland to the south.
- Create wildlife corridors by leaving open space next to hedgerows, powerlines and heritage features, adding some shrub planting at the edges of woodland for wildlife to thrive.
- Include low-density native trees, shrubs and open space to keep some open views from nearby properties and add year-round interest.

Artist's impressions:



Barlow public footpath (east) how it looks now



Barlow public footpath (west) how it looks now



How it could look 5 years after planting



How it could look 5 years after planting



How it could look in 25 years



How it could look in 25 years



Your views are important to us, let us know what you think about proposals for new woodland in Barlow

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A new woodland in Barlow - our response to key themes from early engagement

We recently asked local people for their early views on plans to create a new woodland on land in Barlow, Gateshead. Here are our responses to the key themes and questions raised.

Access to the new woodland

The new woodland will be open for local people to enjoy as a quiet, natural space. Once it is established, we will dedicate it under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act so people can explore the site.

The new woodland can be easily reached using the existing Public Rights of Way that cross the site and the pedestrian entrances shown on the site plans. Once there, a network of new grass paths will make it easy for people to explore the new woodland. Other than the new forest track needed for our woodland vehicles, we're not planning any additional surfaced trails or facilities for cycling or horse-riding.

Dogs will be welcome, but the woodland will not be fully fenced and we do not plan to install dog waste bins. We expect all dog owners to act responsibly and keep their pets in sight and close by at all times in the new woodland, following our Forest Dog Code[1].

Traffic and parking

The new woodland will be easy to reach on foot using local footpaths and lanes and we're not planning any visitor or recreational facilities. We therefore won't be providing public parking. This will help keep local roads free from extra traffic.

Our forestry vehicles need to be able to access the new woodland from the road so they can manage and maintain the site. We plan to use the existing southern entrance on Garesfield Lane, supported by upgrading the existing track. We will include barriers at this entrance to prevent unauthorised vehicle access and reduce the risk of antisocial behaviour.
Our draft design includes proposals for a further access point for woodland vehicles on the southern side of the site at Ashtree Lane. This would need funding and planning permission to go ahead.

It is expected that no timber will be harvested from the site for around 20-25 years, allowing the woodland to establish and mature. When harvesting eventually begins, transport routes for the sustainably managed timber will be agreed with the local highways authority as required.

Design, wildlife and views

The new mixed woodland will enrich the landscape by boosting biodiversity and enhancing the natural environment. As part of our planning, we have done surveys to tell us more about the plants, wildlife and soil. These surveys, along with a landscape and visual appraisal and feedback from local people, have helped to shape our draft designs.

We have planned the woodland layout to respect views from neighbouring properties. A wide area of open space has been left between the woodland boundary and the properties on Barlow Road, with an additional area of shorter shrubs and widely spaced broadleaved trees such as oak, hornbeam, silver birch, cherry and sycamore. Low density edge planting, including berry and fruit species, will also be included along the new grass paths on the northern boundary of the site, creating a more visually diverse edge to the woodland. Low density planting will also create ecologically valuable and structurally diverse habitats (often referred to as ecotones).

Whilst some views will be retained, it remains important to balance the objectives of woodland creation with the desire for open space and visual connectivity. The design therefore introduces productive new planting while still aiming to preserve some key sightlines and maintain a sense of openness where appropriate. For example, some views from the northern part of site across to the Tyne will be kept.
The new woodland will reconnect fragmented habitats across the wider landscape and increase valuable nesting, roosting, foraging and overwintering areas for local wildlife, including insects, amphibians, birds and mammals.

The trees we will plant

We are using years of experience and the latest scientific evidence to choose the right trees to plant in the new woodland. Our surveys help us to choose the trees most suitable for the site now and as the climate changes. Our professional foresters carefully choose what trees to plant and where to plant them. They understand the local soil, how quickly the trees will grow, and the important habitats, species and geographical features nearby. We also consider tree pests and diseases and future climate conditions to keep woods as healthy as possible.

The species will be a mix of broadleaf and conifer, often planted together in mixtures, with groups of shrub species along edges to increase the variety and provide seasonal colour and texture. Species have been chosen to produce a future source of sustainable timber. This supply of homegrown wood products will support the wider British timber and forestry industry, helping to reduce the demand for imports from other countries.

Species at Barlow Wood might include oak, hornbeam, silver birch, Scots pine, Macedonian pine, beech, Douglas fir, Pacific silver fir, sycamore, wild cherry, and sweet chestnut. Shrubs could include hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, and dog rose.

Establishing and managing the new woodland

We aim to plant the new woodland in winter 26/27. Maintenance during the first five years is especially important to ensure the woodland's long-term success. The woodland will be managed by the Forestry England team and our contractors.

Longer term, Forestry England will develop a Forest Plan to make sure that future timber production is sustainable. As part of our ongoing management of the woodland, we will begin to remove some trees after about 20-25 years to provide a sustainable supply of timber and help the woodland to continue to grow healthily for many years to come.

Protecting the new woodland from deer

The UK is home to six species of deer. As their natural predators (bears, lynx and wolves) are no longer present in the UK, our wildlife management team have to manage the deer populations. Without predators or management, deer populations become unnaturally large, and their browsing can damage or kill young trees and wildlife habitats, reducing the resilience of the new woodland to the effects of climate change and lowering the carbon captured from the atmosphere.

We will use deer fencing to protect larger blocks of new planting and tree tubes in smaller areas. Rabbit and deer fencing will protect young trees from browsing, while tree tubes will safeguard smaller, widely spaced areas. After the woodland has become established, deer fencing and tree tubes will be removed and recycled where possible. This usually happens after approximately 10 years.

Forestry England is part of the Deer Initiative[2], a partnership that promotes sustainable deer management in England and Wales. Our highly skilled wildlife management team will safely and humanely control deer populations in our woodlands, working to the highest standards. More information about how Forestry England manage deer can be found on our website[3].

Use of agricultural land

We understand concerns around food security, and we want to keep the best-quality land in agricultural production. This is why we do not create woodlands on the most productive land (grades 1 & 2). The land at Barlow Wood has been found to be grade 3 and is not considered to be of high agricultural quality.

Forestry England's role is to manage and expand the nation's forests to ensure they are healthy and sustainable and benefit wildlife, people, and the economy. The new woodland will capture carbon, connect existing woodland habitats for wildlife to move between, and provide a sustainable source of timber, which is crucial for the UK's green economy.

References:
1 https://www.forestryengland.uk/dog-code

2 http://www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk/

3 https://www.forestryengland.uk/article/managing-deer-the-nations-forests

Forestry England

Your views are important to us - let us know what you think

Responding to this consultation

We encourage you to submit your response online. You can view our plans and submit your views by completing the online feedback form at:

- bit.ly/barloww

- If you are unable to do this, you can respond via email at woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk

All views should be received by 11.59pm on Sunday 29th March 2026

What's next ?

- Review of consultation feedback
- Further design work to refine our proposals
- Application to the Forestry Commission for regulatory review
- Planting (Winter 2026/27)

Scan the QR code to find out more:

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