Broadford and Strath Community Company

Broadford North Wood

Feasibility Study Final Report

31 July 2025

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BROADFORD & STRATH COMMUNITY COMPANY

CREATING A STRONG, SELF-SUFFICIENT, INCLUSIVE AND ECO-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

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Map 1 Broadford woodlands
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1 Summary

Broadford and Strath Community Company (BSCC) is a charitable Company Limited by Guarantee with community membership, which seeks to create a strong, self-sufficient, inclusive, eco-friendly community.

BSCC acquired 23ha of woodland from Forestry Commission Scotland in 2011 and is now considering the acquisition of the adjacent Broadford North Wood, currently owned by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), to manage and develop for community benefit (see Map 1).

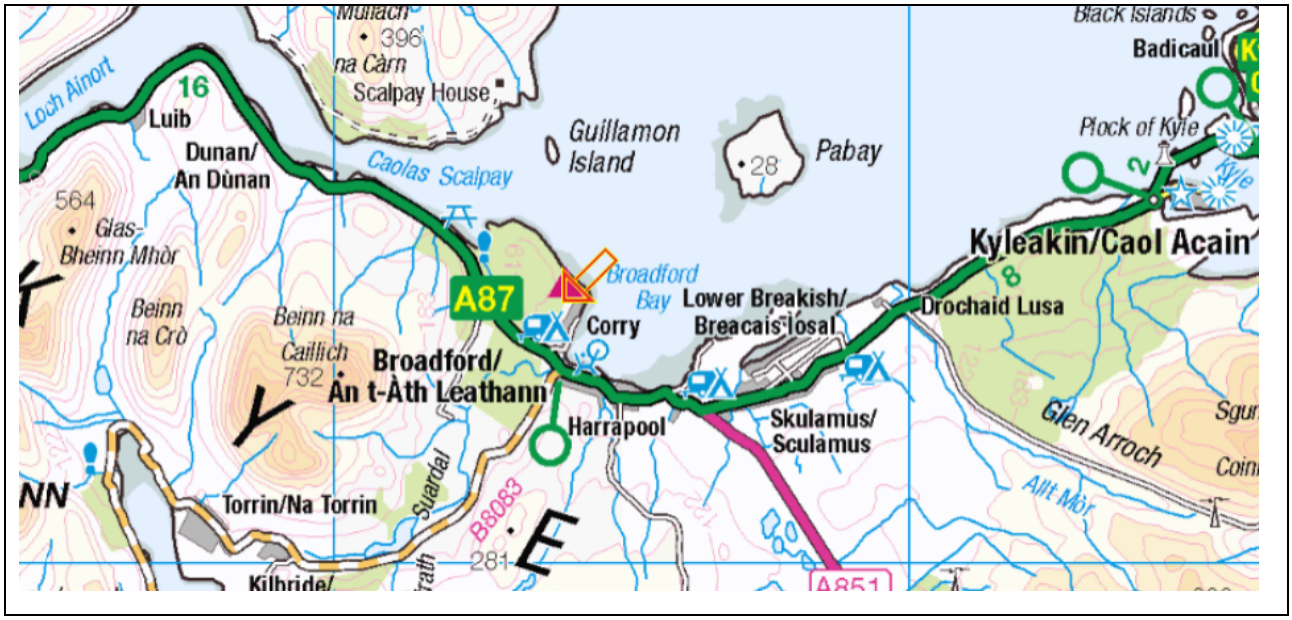
The Broadford North Wood was established in 1977; it extends to 12.4ha and is composed predominantly of poor and moderate quality Sitka spruce and lodgepole pine, with areas of open ground. There is currently no provision for public access and there has been no active woodland management since the southern portion of the wood was clearfelled 15 years ago.

BSCC has commissioned this feasibility study to assist the company, on behalf of the Broadford and Strath community, to make an informed decision about the asset acquisition. The study is intended to evaluate harvesting and restocking operations, access options and potential community projects and activities in the woodland, and to provide a risk analysis and detailed consideration of costs, income and available funding for the acquisition and subsequent management and development of the site.

The first stage report contained detailed descriptions of the local community area and the woodland, an outline of relevant national and regional policy, management proposals for the wood and an assessment of potential development projects which might deliver BSCC's objectives.

Initial indications were that a community acquisition of Broadford North Wood, with subsequent harvesting and restocking, should generate a small surplus for BSCC, and will facilitate or enhance the development of various community projects and activities, including the development of volunteering opportunities and the extension of the local path network, as well as unlocking access to the existing community woodland.

This final report confirms and costs BSCC's preferred options and is informed by the results of community consultation and discussion with stakeholders. It will be used to support BSCC's asset transfer request to HIE and the funding bid to the Scottish Land Fund if the project progresses.



Map 4: Location map

1.1 Key elements of the proposal

BSCC will acquire the Broadford North Wood and an additional small plot of land, and create a new access road into the wood from the industrial estate to facilitate timber harvesting and extraction.

Broadford North Wood and two small isolated stands in the community woodland will be clearfelled and restocked with a mix of broadleaved and conifer species.

BSCC will employ and equip a Community Woodland Manager to deliver the community's plans for the woodland, including overseeing harvesting operations and managing development projects.

The Community Woodland Manager will promote and coordinate community involvement in the management of the woodlands, and develop the woods as a venue for community volunteering,

New paths will be created, including links between the Growers Hub, the telecoms mast and the Rathad na Cloinne path.

Peatland and wetland areas will be restored and invasive species tackled, with native broadleaves and Scots pine planted to replace Sitka spruce regeneration.

BSCC will develop additional projects e.g. woodfuel, Christmas trees, commemorative trees, to generate income to support the long-term sustainability of the community woodlands.

1.2 Key benefits of ownership

Our communities will achieve more sustainable economic, environmental and/or social development through ownership of land and buildings.

- The acquisition of Broadford North Wood will bring a valuable but neglected local asset into community ownership and enable BSCC to develop and manage it to contribute more fully to the sustainable development of the Broadford area.
- Employment of a Community Woodland Manager will increase the local economic benefit of the forest and build community capacity and resilience.

Our communities will have a stronger role in and control over their own development.

- Ownership of Broadford North Wood will allow the community to lead and control the management of the site, bringing new opportunities for volunteering and broadening community use of the forest through school visits, guided walks and events.
- Improvements to paths and provision of seating will improve access to the woods, helping to ensure that all of the community can get involved and benefit from the community woodlands.

Our communities own well managed, financially sustainable land and buildings.

- In the short term, income from timber harvesting will be reinvested in the management of the woodlands.
- BSCC will develop additional projects e.g. woodfuel, Christmas trees, commemorative trees, to generate income to support the sustainability of the community woodlands.
- In the longer term there is potential to develop additional income streams from a wind turbine and / or glamping pods.

2 Broadford

Broadford has a population of 1170[1] and is the second largest settlement on the Isle of Skye after Portree. It has a largely linear, dispersed, coastal, crofting pattern of settlement, lying alongside the A87 primary route from Invergarry in the Great Glen and Kyle of Lochalsh to Portree and the ferry terminal at Uig.

The village serves as a major centre for the south end of the island, offering a range of accommodation, a supermarket, hospital and medical centre, as well as a range of small scale retail and business enterprises. Broadford Primary School[2] has a roll of 71 and falls within the catchment of Portree High School.

Broadford is a remote rural community which faces many of the challenges common across the Highlands and Islands, including a lack of opportunity for young people, an ageing population, and limited year-round work opportunities, while the local environment is threatened by the impacts of tourism and climate change.

There are also concerns over potential developments: a 16-turbine windfarm and battery storage facility has been proposed to the south-east of Breakish,[3] although (if constructed) it would provide a substantial community benefit fund.

Local employment is dominated by tourism, which brings issues around seasonality, skills development potential and sustainability, particularly in terms of the long-term retention of young people within the community. The lack of local and available affordable housing provides an extra challenge in terms of attracting and retaining staff for local businesses already struggling with the impact and aftermath of Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Compounding the impact of an ageing population on local health services is the growing crisis in adult health and well-being. As the Public Health profile for Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross[4] indicates, local prescriptions for anxiety and depression have increased over the past 10 years: supporting health and well-being is a key aim of the woodland acquisition and development proposal.

The local community is served by the Broadford and Strath Community Council (see section 2.4 below) and the very active Broadford and Strath Community Company (see section 2.5), who worked in collaboration to produce the Broadford & Strath Local Place Plan, published in 2024, which provided a comprehensive and detailed analysis of local issues and challenges: it is discussed more thoroughly in section 3.5 below.

2.1 Regional demographics and economy

The population of the Highland Council area shows a small increase between 2011 and 2021, however, this masks several important regional trends, including:

- Significant population growth in Inverness and the surrounding Inner Moray Firth area
- Significant population loss in e.g. rural Caithness and Sutherland
- Broadly stable population totals but ageing populations elsewhere, including Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross

The HIE area profile for Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross,[5] published in 2020, showed that the top 3 employment sectors were:

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[1] 2020 mid-year population estimate from NROS https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/population-estimates-for-settlements-and-localities-in-scotland-mid-2020/

[2] https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/1463872/broadford_primary

[3] https://breakishwindfarm.co.uk/

[4] https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/media/pd3e144h/adulthealth-skyelochalshandwestross-2023.pdf

[5] https://www.hie.co.uk/research-and-reports/our-reports/2020/november/03/highlands-and-islands-area-profiles-2020/

- accommodation & food services (25.0% of total employment)
- wholesale and retail (12.8%)
- human health and social work (12.5%)

which collectively accounted for around 10,000 jobs across the area. Jobs in agriculture, forestry and fishing comprised just 5% of the total.

The accommodation & food services sector was particularly hard hit by COVID-19, and the rates of economic activity and employment, previously higher than the HIE area or Scottish averages, were significantly reduced in 2020/21. Notably, small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) account for a higher share of private sector employment (74.4%) than the HIE area (67.6%) or Scotland (50.6%) and the self-employment rate 22.9% is much higher than for the HIE area (11.6%) or Scotland (8.4%).

2.2 Local demographics

Highland Council has produced profiles for community council areas based on the 2011 census[6]. All figures in the tables in this section are drawn from this source. These figures are now >10 years old and it likely that some demographic factors (e.g. the ageing population) may have become more pronounced.

The Broadford and Strath Community Council area has a much higher population density than many areas around the north and west coast (there are eleven Community Council areas with a population density below 1 person per square kilometre) but it is still well below the mean for Highland or Scotland.

	Area in km^2	Population	Pop/km^2
Broadford and Strath	235	1,517	6.4
Highland	25,659	232,132	9.0
Scotland	77,925	5,295,403	68.0

Table 1: Area, population and density cf. Highland and Scotland[7]

The age structure of the Broadford and Strath Community Council area is broadly similar to that of the Highland Council area, and only marginally older than Scotland, although there is a notably high proportion of 45-65 year-olds.

	Under 16	16 to 64	65 and over	45 and over
Broadford	17.7%	63.8%	18.4%	53.2%
Highland	17.8%	63.6%	18.5%	48.5%
Scotland	17.3%	65.9%	16.8%	44.3%

Table 2: 2011 Census data for Broadford CC, Highland Council and Scotland

2.2.1 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

In the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation,[8] the Broadford and Strath Community Council area is covered by two large rural data zones.

[6] https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/11093/profiles_for_community_council_areas
[7] Note all figures in this table are from 2011 census
[8] https://simd.scot

Most of the village is within data zone S01010673 which ranked 2,784,[9] in the 4th decile overall, whilst the rest of the Community Council area is within data zone S01010674, ranked 3,127, in the 5th decile; this data zone also covers most of the Kyleakin and Kylerhea CC area.

Both data zones (predictably) score low in geographic access, but both also score poorly in the housing domain.

Data Zone	Overall	Income	Employ't	Health	Education	Housing	Access	Crime
S01010673	4	5	5	5	4	3	2	4
S01010674	5	6	6	7	5	3	1	5

Table 3: SIMD components 2020

Care is needed when interpreting SIMD results for rural data zones, given their size and the number and variety of communities aggregated therein.

The SIMD also provides numbers of working age, income deprived and employment deprived people in each data zone.

Data Zone	Total Population	Working Age	Income Deprived	Employment Deprived
S01010673	944	596	102	50
S01010674	941	576	78	38

Table 4: Employment figures from SIMD 2020

2.2.2 Small area population estimates

Small area population estimates from the National Registers of Scotland (NROS)[10] for the two data zones show a population which is rising gradually but ageing rapidly.

Estimates for both data zones show falls in the 0-24 age groups, and large increases in the 65-74 and over 75 age groups. The population of the 25-44 age group has fallen in data zone S01010674 but grown slightly in data zone S01010673.

Age Group	2011	2021	Change	% change	% of total
0 to 24	224	218	-6	-2.7%	22%
25 to 44	198	202	4	2.0%	20%
45 to 64	322	324	2	0.6%	32%
65 to 74	125	155	30	24.0%	15%
75+	79	102	23	29.1%	10%
Total	948	1001	53	5.6%	

Table 5: Age breakdown of data zone S01010673

[9] Where 1 is the most deprived and 6,976 the least deprived.
[10] https://scotland.shinyapps.io/nrs-small-area-population-estimates/

Age Group	2011	2021	Change	% change	% of total
0 to 24	257	234	-23	-9.0%	24%
25 to 44	232	187	-45	-19.4%	19%
45 to 64	306	321	15	4.9%	33%
65 to 74	101	152	51	50.5%	15%
75+	42	93	51	121.4%	9%
Total	938	987	49	5.2%	

Table 6: Age breakdown of data zone S01010674

Age Group	2011	2021	Change	% change	% of total
0 to 24	481	452	-29	-2.7%	23%
25 to 44	430	389	-41	2.0%	20%
45 to 64	628	645	17	0.6%	32%
65 to 74	226	307	81	24.0%	15%
75+	121	195	74	29.1%	10%
Total	1886	1988	102	5.4%	

Table 7: Age breakdown of combined data zones

The Local Place Plan[11] reports that the population of Skye and Raasay has risen by 3.2% in recent years (2010-20), while the proportion aged over 65 has increased by 40.2% and that of school aged children has gone down by nearly 11% in the same period. In particular, the 20 – 35 age group is increasingly under-represented, with implications for businesses, the local economy and schools. Making it possible, and attractive, for more young people to stay and/or return to live and work in the area and bring up families of their own would help address the demographic imbalance.

2.3 Landownership and land use

The majority of the land covered by the Broadford and Strath Community Council is held by a small number of large landholdings in a variety of public, private and NGO ownership, notably:

- The Strathaird, Torrin and Sconser estate, owned by the John Muir Trust (12,044ha)[12]
- The Fearann Eilean Iarmain estate, owned by Lucilla CJ Noble (9,535ha)
- The Kilbride Estate, owned by Scottish Ministers (3,466ha)
- Strollamus Farm, owned by Christina Alexandra Nicolson (907ha)
- Strollamus Estate, owned by Macfarlane (St Helier) Corporation (670ha)

Land use is dominated by crofting agriculture, predominantly rough grazing, with small areas of improved grassland fringing the coast.

[11] https://www.broadfordandstrath.org/project/local-place-plan/ p6

[12] Information in this section from Who Owns Scotland website https://whoownsscotland.org.uk/ unless otherwise stated.

There are significant areas of forest, including

- Broadford Forest, part of the National Forest Estate (330ha)[13]
- Suardal Plantation, owned by the Suardal Forest LLP (153ha)
- Riverside & Old Corry Forest, managed by Scottish Woodlands (180ha)

And additional areas of forest SW and open land S of Broadford not listed in Who Owns Scotland.

All these blocks are conifer dominated; there is very little native woodland. There is an FLS Carpark and picnic area at Skinadin (west end of Broadford Forest), and trails which link up with BSCC paths and host the local parkrun.[14]

2.3.1 Outdoor recreation

The Highlands and Islands have experienced rapid growth of visitor numbers in recent years: reflecting growing leisure time, especially for the more affluent sections of society, increased demand for outdoor recreation, a trend towards "staycations" during the COVID-19 pandemic and the popularity of partly or fully self-contained vans and motorhomes.

Whilst tourism is a significant component of the local economy, it can also bring significant disbenefits for rural communities, not least because infrastructure is often inadequate for the growing demand. The issues arising from the North Coast 500 route are the most high-profile example but similar impacts have been felt elsewhere.

Broadford lies on the main transport corridor from the Skye Bridge to Portree and the north of Skye; an estimated 500,000 vehicles pass through the settlement between April and September each year.[15] BSCC has sought to address these issues through various projects, including the campsite and toilets (see sections 2.6.2 & 2.6.5 for more details) and the development of path networks.

The WalkHighlands website lists several walks in the local area[16] including three routes which start and/or finish in or around Broadford:

- Rubh an Eireannaich: 3.5km from the Broadford carpark shoreside path out and back
- Broadford Marble Line: heading south, tracing the line of the railway line for the marble quarries at Kilchrist
- Rubha Ardnish

Beinn na Caillich (732m) can be climbed via the western ridge from the village.

Broadford is the southern terminus point of the 120km Skye trail, which starts from Skye's most northerly tip, Rubha Hunish.[17]

2.4 Broadford and Strath Community Council

The Broadford and Strath Community Council covers a large area of south Skye, along with four small Islands – Scalpay, Longay, Pabay and Soay, three of which are inhabited.

The majority of the population live in Broadford and the associated townships alongside the A87, with a smaller number living in outlying townships of Elgol and Torrin, and in the coastal settlements to the north west: Strollamus, Dunan and Luib.

[13] FLS also manages ~7,400ha of woodland and open land at the east end of Skye and ~3,500ha in Glen Brittle
[14] https://www.parkrun.org.uk/skinadin/
[15] Broadford and Strath Local Place Plan p6
[16] https://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/skye/broadford.shtml
[17] https://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/skye/skye-trail.shtml

Map 5: Broadford Community Council area[18]

2.5 Broadford and Strath Community Company

Broadford and Strath Community Company was incorporated on 24 March 2003 as a Company Limited by Guarantee (Company number SC246279) with community membership.[19] BSCC has been a registered charity (charity number SC034829) since 28 July 2003.[20]

The Company's current articles of association were adopted in June 2021. They appear to meet the eligibility requirements for Asset Transfer (AT) contained in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, but do not meet the requirements for Community Right to Buy (CRTB) contained in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.

BSCC is preparing revised articles, for approval at an Extraordinary General Meeting in summer 2025. These extend the community area to match the Broadford and Strath Community Council area and make a number of technical changes designed to meet the eligibility criteria for the Community Right to Buy.

2.5.1 BSCC purposes

BSCC's constitution states that the organisation has been formed to benefit principally the Community of Broadford and Strath. The charitable purposes are:

- the prevention or relief of poverty
- the advancement of education
- the advancement of citizenship or community development
- the advancement of the arts, heritage, culture or science

[18] https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/772/politicians_elections_and_democracy/364/community_councils
[19] https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/SC246279
[20] https://www.oscr.org.uk/about-charities/search-the-register/charity-details?number=SC034829

- the advancement of public participation in sport
- the advancement of environmental protection or improvement
- the relief of those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage.

2.5.2 BSCC community area and membership

The revised BSCC articles of association for approval at the forthcoming EGM define the community as the Broadford and Strath Community Council area.

Ordinary Membership is open to any person aged 16 years or over who is ordinarily resident in the Community, is entitled to vote at a local government election in a polling district that includes the Community or part of it, and supports the objects of the company.

Associate Membership is open to individuals who are not ordinarily resident in the Community and to organisations that support the objects of the company.

Individuals who are aged between 12 and 15 and support the objects may become Junior Members. They are not eligible to vote at General Meetings or to become a Director.

As of May 2025, BSCC has 229 Ordinary Members, 16 Associate Members and no Junior Members.

BSCC is managed by a Board of Directors: the minimum number of Directors is seven, the maximum is fifteen. The Board currently has seven Directors. Biographies of BSCC Directors are provided in Appendix 1.

2.5.3 BSCC staffing

BSCC employs a number of part-time staff under various contract arrangements to deliver projects and support the organisation. Details of staff and key skills are contained in Appendix 1.

Camping Skye staff are employed through BSCC's trading company Strath Leisure Ltd.

There is not currently a member of staff with specific responsibility for managing the community woodland.

2.5.4 BSCC accounts and taxation

BSCC prepares consolidated accounts[21] covering the parent charitable company and the trading company Strath Leisure Limited, which manages Camping Skye. Strath Leisure Limited is a (non-charitable) company limited by shares and taxable profits are subject to corporation tax.

BSCC is VAT registered as a result of being in a VAT group with Strath Leisure. The recovery of input VAT by BSCC is currently blocked because it does not make taxable supplies. However, this may change after acquisition of Broadford North Wood when BSCC sells standing timber or woodfuel; BSCC should consider whether to establish a new trading subsidiary to manage the community woodland.

2.6 BSCC projects

BSCC has delivered a wide range of projects and activities to benefit the local community and environment since its incorporation in 2003, some of which are outlined below.[22] Many of these projects have been led by BSCC, which has secured over £2m of investment over the last decade or so, and often involve partnership working with a wide range of public, private and community bodies.

[21] https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/SC246279/filing-history
[22] For more information on BSCC projects see https://www.broadfordandstrath.org/our-projects/

2.6.1 Community woodland

BSCC acquired 22.8ha of land from Forestry Commission Scotland in 2011. Some of this land has been taken out of woodland management and developed as a campsite and community hub (see sections below), but ~19ha remains as a mix of woodland and open ground habitats. Broadford Community Woodland is discussed in more detail in chapter 4 below.

2.6.2 Camping Skye

The Isle of Skye is an iconic tourist destination attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, with many passing through Broadford. Concern about the lack of facilities was an important driver of the original community woodland project in 2006. Planning consent for the campsite was granted in 2014 and in 2015 the Big Lottery Fund made an award of £1.2 million to support the development of the site.

Image 2: Aerial view of campsite from the south west with the Growers Hub beyond and Broadford North Wood upper left

Camping Skye opened in 2018 and is managed by BSCC's trading arm, Strath Leisure. Strath Leisure Limited is a company limited by shares, company number SC534203, incorporated 3 May 2016. BSCC is the sole member and shareholder, and has the power to appoint and remove Directors. Camping Skye provides a significant income stream for BSCC (~£100k in the most recent financial year), which supports many of the company's projects and activities.

The site has 26 motorhome and caravan pitches, each with 240V/230V 16A electric hook-up and individual barbecue/awning area; and 20 tent pitches, with a dedicated picnic area and firepit. The site is disability-friendly and features toilets, showers, wash-up, laundry and drying room, with a waste disposal point and fresh water available. There is free wifi and a tech charging point. In 2025 the campsite is open from 24 March to 1 November. A new events space adjacent to the campsite opened in 2023.

2.6.3 Growers Hub

As part of the same planning consent as the campsite and events centre, permission was granted for a community growing, recycling and educational facility, funded by the Climate Challenge fund over a three-year period. This area, known as the "Growers Hub", has become a hub for a wide range of community learning and growing activities, and hosts a range of projects and activities, including community allotments, dedicated growing spaces for the Flourish Together horticultural therapy group, the Corry Capers outdoor learning project, the local playgroup, the Men's Shed, a Community Tree Nursery and BSCC's small office and meeting space.

The Community Tree Nursery was launched in summer 2024, initially as a 14-month pilot project, to establish tree growing areas and infrastructure and produce a few thousand native broadleaf trees from locally sourced seed and berries. The nursery could be an important source of planting stock for both the existing community woodland and the potential acquisition.

2.6.4 Path network

BSCC sees the creation of a safe and attractive paths network as fundamental to its aim of achieving an inclusive and eco-friendly community for all. Since 2003 BSCC has supported the development of over 6km of paths, including the Marble Line walking route, the Rathad na Cloinne path through the community woodland, and the path between Broadford's Community Garden and pier.

The Broadford Bay Heritage Trail Project (2007-2011) was developed to raise awareness of the area's archaeological, industrial, maritime and cultural heritage, and aimed to encourage more people to access and become more involved in their heritage. The trail links key sites and themes located around three miles of Broadford Bay. The ambitious project included paths, interpretation panels, the restoration of an archaeological site and a footbridge.

In 2025 BSCC published a Paths for People report,[23] which identified local priorities for improvements to the community paths network. Meanwhile the Skye Cycle Way project[24] is set to create an active travel route for all between the Skye Bridge and Broadford. This work will support active and greener travel by making it easier for everyone to walk, wheel and cycle.

2.6.5 Public toilets

The previously council-run toilets in Elgol were threatened with closure, whilst the public toilets at Broadford were run down and in need of significant upgrading. BSCC stepped in on behalf of the community to build and maintain public toilets, which are critical infrastructure in rural communities with high tourist numbers. Elgol and Broadford now enjoy modern, clean, 24-hour facilities including disabled facilities and baby change. The Elgol toilet also has waste disposal facilities for use by motor homes.

[23] https://www.broadfordandstrath.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Paths-for-People-Report-FINAL-compressed.pdf
[24] https://www.broadfordandstrath.org/project/skye-cycle-way/

3 National and Regional Policy Background

Recent national policy statements provide overwhelming and unequivocal support for community ownership, management and development of woodland to deliver health and well-being benefits and contribute to local sustainable development.

However, some older policy statements are less helpful, being more focused on the conservation of other species and habitats, whilst the practicalities of community woodland management and development for community benefit, including woodland croft establishment, may be constrained by local planning requirements.

3.1 National Performance Framework

The National Performance Framework[25] sets out eleven National Outcomes[26] which describe the kind of Scotland the Government aims to create. Several of these could be relevant to this project, including:

- live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe
- value, enjoy, protect and enhance their environment
- have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone
- are healthy and active
- tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally.

Progress against the outcomes is measured by national indicators, including:

- community ownership
- visits to the outdoors
- physical activity
- satisfaction with housing.

3.2 Land Reform and community asset ownership

The Scottish government has initiated a number of measures designed to improve Scotland's system of land ownership, use, rights and responsibilities, in order that our land may contribute to a fair and just society. These include publishing and promoting the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement[27] and establishing the Scottish Land Commission to drive a programme of land reform spanning both urban and rural land, to create a Scotland where land is owned and used in ways that are fair, responsible and productive.[28]

Community ownership of land and assets is an important component of the broader land reform agenda and has been supported by providing financial assistance through the Scottish Land Fund[29] to help communities take ownership of land and buildings; and furthered by successive legislation including the Land Reform Acts of 2003[30] and 2016[31] and the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015,[32] which introduced Asset Transfer provisions designed to enable eligible community bodies to take ownership of land and built assets from Scottish public authorities.

[25] https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/
[26] https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/national-outcomes/explore-national-outcomes
[27] https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-land-rights-responsibilities-statement-2022/
[28] https://www.landcommission.gov.scot/
[29] https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/scottish-land-fund
[30] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2003/2/contents
[31] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/18/contents
[32] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/contents

Communities from the Highlands and Islands have long been in the vanguard of the community land movement, following pioneering efforts at Assynt Crofters, Knoydart and Eigg, and boosted by the establishment of HIE's Community Land Unit in 1997/8.

Across Skye there are many other community-based land and asset owners engaged in a wide range of large and small scale projects, including:

- Sleat Community Trust[33] owns and manages a community shop and the 440ha Tormore forest, which hosts a 34kw hydro scheme and provides feedstock for the community woodfuel business.
- The Glendale Trust[34] has taken ownership of the disused Borrodale School and is looking to redevelop the site to take it into community use.
- Minginish Community Hall[35] acquired land to establish a new car park at the Fairy Pools and is working with the Communities Housing Trust to progress a community housing project.
- Staffin Community Trust's[36] projects include housing, health and business development at Taighean a' Chaiseil and the delivery of two phases of the Skye Ecomuseum project.
- Dunvegan Community Trust[37] is currently progressing an asset transfer from HIE at Orbost to create two woodland crofts at Cruachan wood and safeguard and develop recreational access and Cnoc nan Craobh.

3.3 Forest and woodland policy

Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019–2029[38] presents a long-term framework for the expansion and sustainable management of Scotland's forests and woodland. It lays out three objectives:

- Increase the contribution of forests and woodlands to Scotland's sustainable and inclusive economic growth
- Improve the resilience of Scotland's forests and woodlands and increase their contribution to a healthy and high quality environment
- Increase the use of Scotland's forest and woodland resources to enable more people to improve their health, well-being and life chances.

and identifies six priorities for action, including:

- Enhancing the environmental benefits provided by forests and woodlands
- Engaging more people, communities and businesses in the creation, management and use of forests and woodlands.

Sustaining thriving rural communities is one of the key strategic drivers for forest policy. The strategy notes that rural areas in Scotland are facing problems of depopulation and that "Scotland's forests and woodlands can contribute to creating and sustaining thriving rural communities by providing quality jobs and attractive environments, and by supporting the provision of affordable rural housing."

Greater involvement of communities in decisions about forests and woodlands, as well as in direct management and ownership, is recognised as increasing communities' control and influence over their local environments, leading to greater empowerment, whilst the role of forests and woodlands

[33] https://www.sleat.org.uk/
[34] https://theglendaletrust.org/
[35] https://minginishhall.co.uk/
[36] https://skyeecomuseum.co.uk/why-staffin
[37] https://dunvegantrust.co.uk/
[38] https://forestry.gov.scot/forestry-strategy

in supporting health and well-being by "providing spaces for people to exercise, relax, play and learn" is also noted.

The Scottish Government's ***policy on control of woodland removal,***[39] which dates from 2009,[40] provides policy direction for decisions on woodland removal in Scotland.

The policy notes the strong presumption in favour of protecting Scotland's woodland resources, with a guiding principle being that "woodland removal should be allowed only where it would achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits" and that "in appropriate cases a proposal for compensatory planting may form part of this balance."

Although the policy is intended to facilitate achievement of the Scottish Government's woodland expansion ambition in a way that integrates with other policy drivers (including increasing sustainable economic growth and rural/community development), in practice it severely disadvantages social and economic outcomes vis-a-vis environmental projects.

Whilst large-scale woodland removal which is considered to enhance priority species and habitats is permissible without compensatory planting, community development projects such as woodland crofts may be required to carry out compensatory planting even if the net woodland loss is below the deforestation thresholds set by Environmental Impact Regulations.[41]

The 2018 ***Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy***[42] (HFWS) is one of a series of Supplementary Guidance documents prepared by The Highland Council to support the Highland-wide Local Development Plan. It is intended to guide the sustainable development and management of woodlands in Highland to benefit social, environmental and economic values. The strategy has eight themes, including:

- Encouraging community engagement and empowerment
- Integrating with development and tourism
- Strengthening connections with health, access and recreation and learning

The "Community Empowerment" theme includes the following objectives:

- Continue to support asset transfer, community woodland ownership and management within Highland.
- Encourage and promote community led affordable housing within appropriate woodland settings as described in The Highlands Council's Trees, Woodland & Development Supplementary Guidance.
- Support accessible access and recreational facilities, local employment, rural skills and community energy projects.
- Opportunities for the creation of new Woodland Crofts and woodland crofting communities should be identified in order to encourage a locally focused approach to forestry which delivers benefits to local and often remote communities.

The "Development and Tourism" theme includes:

- Support sensitive development in woodlands in accordance with Scottish Planning Policy and Highland-wide Local Development Plan and Supplementary Guidance on Trees, Woodland and Development.

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[39] https://forestry.gov.scot/support-regulations/control-of-woodland-removal

[40] Although the policy states it "will be reviewed after not more than 5 years" this has not yet happened.

[41] 0.5ha in National Scenic Areas, 1.0ha elsewhere.

[42] https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/712594/forest_and_woodland_strategy

- Support opportunities for linking accessible and active outdoor access/recreation and tourism in and between Highland forests and woodlands, including hutting developments, mountain biking, walking and activities such as orienteering and eco- tourism.

The "Health and Well-being" theme includes:

- Promote the role of woodlands in providing a resource for physical activity close to where people live and work;
- Encourage and promote the use of Highland forests and woodlands for outdoor learning through Forest School and Highland OWL.[43]

3.4 Local development planning

The Broadford area is covered by the Highland Council's ***West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan*** (2019)[44] the headline outcomes for which are grouped into 4 themes: growing communities, employment, connectivity and transport, and environment and heritage. Community ownership and management of Broadford North Wood could contribute to several aspects of this, including:

- community control of local resources
- safeguard the natural and cultural heritage
- developing affordable housing.

Place-making priorities for Broadford include:

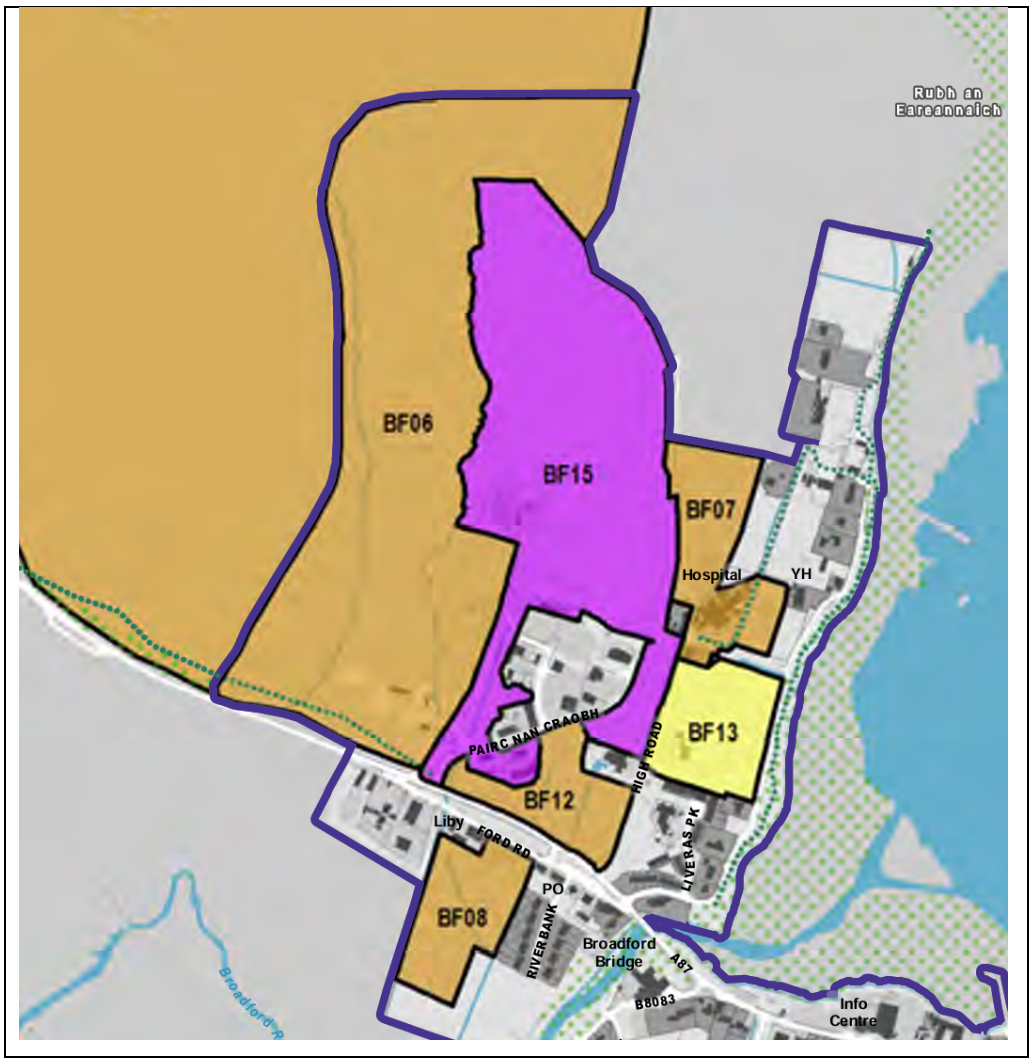
- Promote the delivery of affordable housing.
- Expansion of recreational tourism activity to the west of the village including extension of green networks.
- Promote active travel links to the village centre.
- Ensure that the natural heritage interests that surround the settlement, particularly those around the shoreline, are not compromised.

The existing community woodland is zoned for mixed use (Community, Business/Tourism) in the plan (BF06 on map below). Developer requirements are:

- Retain and where possible enhance the core path network.
- Minimum 6 metre buffer between watercourses and development.
- Integrate watercourses as recreational and natural features within the development.
- Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Retain as much woodland as possible.
- Compensatory Planting may be required.
- Protected species survey may be required.
- Water treatment works cordon sanitaire, and setbacks between potentially incompatible adjoining uses.
- Peat management plan to demonstrate how impacts on peat have been minimised, and vegetation survey to demonstrate how impacts on wetlands have been avoided.
- Presence of deep peat and wetlands may limit area that can be developed.
- High quality of siting and design that will avoid adverse impacts on the special qualities of the Cuillin Hills NSA.

[43] OWL = Outdoor and Woodland Learning

[44] https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/21199/westplan_adopted_september_2019



Map 8: Land Zoning in Local Development Plan

The HIE woodland (BF15 on map above) is zoned for industry. Developer requirements are:

- Minimum 6 metre buffer between watercourses and development.
- Integrate watercourses as recreational and natural features within the development.
- Flood Risk Assessment (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding).
- Compensatory Planting may be required.
- Protected species survey may be required.
- Water treatment works safeguard, appropriate cordon sanitaire and allowance for its expansion.
- Active travel connections through the site and to the village; may require a Land Contamination Site Investigation.
- Peat management plan to demonstrate how impacts on peat have been minimised, and vegetation survey to demonstrate how impacts on wetlands have been avoided.
- Presence of deep peat and wetlands may limit area that can be developed.
- A native species woodland buffer to be provided along the eastern boundary of the site.

The Highland Council's ***Trees, Woodland & Development Supplementary Guidance,***[45] was adopted in 2013. It places the onus on the applicant to demonstrate why there is a clear need to develop a wooded site, as opposed to an alternative unplanted site, and that accommodating development will not result in the woodland losing its essential character.

[45] https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/354/trees_woodlands_and_development_supplementary_guidance

Although development proposals within existing woodland will only be supported on a suitable site where the development and the woodland will co-exist to provide mutual benefits, and where a clear and significant public benefit can be demonstrated, the policy states that Council will generally support development within existing woodland which is associated with the creation of woodland crofts where it helps to sustain and enhance rural communities.

The Highland Council has more recently (2021) adopted ***Rural Housing Supplementary Guidance***[46] to provide detailed advice on acceptable locations for new house sites and advice on the siting and design of new housing. This states that "the establishment of Woodland Crofts is an emerging land-use across Highlands and one the Council is keen to support."

Formal applications for a croft house or a house on croft land must be supported with:

- Croft registration information including: reference number(s); size of croft; access to common grazing or woodland.
- Information on the croft land quality and how this has influenced the siting of the proposed house.
- A Business Plan and/or a Woodland Management Plan where relevant.
- A Masterplan for the entire development area for new or significantly extended crofting townships.

A formal planning application for a new Woodland Croft Township must be supported with:

- Business Plan, setting out how the Community will control/manage the woodland crofts (including intended tenancy conditions). There will be no expectation of a full time income from operating the croft.
- Masterplan for the entire development area, outlining the siting, density and layout and associated infrastructure and services.
- Woodland Management Plan to UK Forestry Standard (covering the whole area, not individual crofts).
- Ecological Reports (Birds, Squirrels, Bats and Badgers).

Community Crofting (including Woodland Crofts) schemes are required to conform to the criteria for Community-Led Housing:

- The Community Housing Trust proposing the scheme will be required to demonstrate that they have a robust and sustainable business model in place recognised by an appropriate body, which includes future succession planning/long-term management.
- Community housing schemes should include a mixed tenure of owner occupation, shared ownership, mid-market and social rent.
- The new houses are of an exceptionally high-quality building design and energy performance standard. With the use of 'modern methods of construction', sustainable design and passive housing standards being strongly supported.
- At least 75% of the properties to include burdens on the property titles to retain the homes in local ownership and be recognised as affordable.

3.5 Local Place Plan

The creation of the Broadford & Strath Local Place Plan 2024-34 (LPP)[47] was undertaken by the Broadford and Strath Community Council and facilitated by Broadford and Strath Community Company.

[46] https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/683410/housing_in_the_countryside
[47] https://www.broadfordandstrath.org/project/local-place-plan/

The Plan sets out a vision for how the community wants to see the community thrive and develop over the next 10 years. It aims to capture what people value about living in Broadford & Strath, what they want to preserve, restore and protect, what they want to change and develop, and how they think community life and quality of life can be enhanced and protected.

The Local Place Plan is intended to:

- Inform the preparation of the single Highland Local Development Plan, which will replace the Highland-wide Local Development Plan and the West Highlands and Islands Local Development Plan.
- Help the Community Council and Highland Council consider the impact of planning decisions on communities.
- Influence decisions about investment in the environment, infrastructure, services and facilities by public bodies as well as private developers, funders and landowners.

The LPP takes account of local and national planning policy in terms of creating sustainable, liveable and productive places, and builds upon community engagement undertaken for various projects and initiatives over the past five years, as well as engagement activity specifically related to this Local Place Plan in 2024. This included meetings with community representatives; a series of public drop-in sessions; activities with local youth groups and primary school and an online survey. This resulted in over 1000 individual comments received.

Key feedback included:

- Improved accessible play space and protection of greenspace provision.
- Restore and protect our valued natural environment and landscape – land and sea – from threats including human pressure (inappropriate development and over-tourism) and invasive species.
- Implement visitor management intervention at key tourism 'hot-spots'.
- More affordable housing options for young people, families and key workers in particular.

Mapped proposals include:

- The potential community acquisition of Broadford North Wood, where uses might include recreation and amenity, timber processing, woodfuel and woodland crofts.
- The restructuring of Broadford Community Woodland to promote biodiversity and support amenity in line with the Forest Plan.

3.6 Crofting

The Crofting Commission[48] is the regulatory body for crofting. The Commission does not have the power to initiate the creation of new crofts, which must be by application from:

- The owner of any land in the crofting counties or in an area outside the crofting counties designated where new crofts can be created, or
- The tenant of a non-croft holding in an area outside the crofting counties which has been designated where new crofts can be created.

Applications for new crofts can be approved where the Commission consider it is in the public interest, and there would be social and economic benefits. As a guideline, in order to be sustainable, the Commission generally look for any land constituted as a new croft to be a minimum of 3 hectares in extent. Applicants must register the croft with the Keeper of the Registers of Scotland.[49]

[48] https://www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk/
[49] https://www.ros.gov.uk/our-registers/crofting-register

The Scottish Government's National Development Plan for Crofting[50] also provides support for the creation of new crofts, including new woodland crofts.

[50] https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-development-plan-crofting/

4 Broadford Community Woodland

Broadford and Strath Community Company owns a substantial area of woodland and open ground which was acquired from the then Forestry Commission Scotland through the National Forest Land Scheme (NFLS) in 2011. The site has undergone some striking changes in the succeeding 14 years. The areas which are now the campsite, event space and Growers Hub have seen very substantial investment and have been completely transformed to deliver a wide range of benefits for visitors and the local community. Other than the construction of the path along the southern and western boundaries, and the use of a small area of mature Sitka and a wildlife pond for outdoor learning, the remainder of the wood has seen minimal management intervention and has been allowed to develop naturally.

4.1 Background

Community interest in the woodland originated around 1995 following a Planning for Real exercise organised by the Forestry Commission and attended by over a hundred people. Subsequently the Broadford Environmental Group was formed (2000) and in 2003 the Broadford and Strath Community Company was incorporated to support sustainable regeneration of the area.

A community woodland survey in January 2004 produced 370 supportive signatures, and a 2005 feasibility study was conducted into community management of the wider Broadford Forest area. The study noted the limited community benefit or employment derived from the forest and identified a lack of recreational space and facilities for locals and visitors. It recommended that the community seek to enter into a management agreement over the entire Broadford Forest (~376ha) and to acquire approximately 20 ha of land adjacent to the village for community activities and enterprise development, notably, the establishment of a Timber Utilisation Facility, creation of events space and to develop a camping and caravan site.

An NFLS application to acquire 20ha, based on this study, was approved in 2006 but was not taken forward by the community, largely for lack of funds both for acquisition[51] and for investment in post-acquisition developments.

Various other consultation activities and community events took place, including an open evening for the woodland featuring a presentation by the Community Woodlands Association, an environmental survey, community tree planting with local school children, and a path building course.

A revised NFLS application was submitted in 2009 and duly approved. This was for a slightly larger area of 22.8ha (the additional area was to the north and north-east of the HIE woodland), with community activity now focussed on the campsite and events space, with the timber utilisation facility deferred due to financial and operational constraints.

Fundraising was successful and the community purchase of Broadford Community Woodland was completed in November 2011. A series of successful funding bids allowed the employment of two part-time project officers and partial clearance of brash and stumps by mulching in-situ during 2012. Full planning permission was granted during 2014 for a woodland camp site and events centre and for the recycling and educational facility now known as the Growers Hub, discussed previously.

4.2 Woodland description

Approximately 19ha of the area acquired in 2011 remains as a matrix of woodland and open habitats. The site is dominated by a low ridge running north-south between two small streams which run in parallel approximately 150m apart. The highest elevation is ~70m above sea level (ASL) in the northwest corner, the lowest about 10m ASL in the southeast corner.

[51] The Scottish Land Fund was not operating at this time

Map 2 shows the type and distribution of woodland cover in Broadford Community Woodland. Just under 5ha is covered with plantation conifers from the 1970s and 1990s, predominantly Sitka spruce with small pockets of hybrid larch. No obvious signs of Phytophthora ramorum were apparent, although it has been recorded on Skye.[52] The spruce stands are of poor or moderate quality, with apparently younger stands (blocks B and D) on relatively well-drained grounds along the sides of the ridge showing markedly better growth than those on flatter, wetter ground, such as Block C.

Volume estimates based on rapid inspection are presented in the table below.

Block	Area (ha)	Volume (m^3)	Tonnage
A	0.25	100	80
B	1.50	300	240
C	1.75	350	280
D	0.45	112	90
E	0.80	320	256
F	0.20	25	20
Total	**4.95**	**1207**	**960**

Table 8: estimates of volume and recoverable tonnage from Broadford Community Woodland

Approximately 7ha of the woodland has younger, (<20 years) naturally regenerating woodland: approximately 2.5ha of this is broadleaves, 4.5ha is spruce.

At the southern end of the site there is a developing woodland comprised of mixed broadleaves (mostly birch, sycamore and willow) with some Sitka also present. To the north of the campsite and to the east, on wet ground adjacent to Growers Hub, regeneration is predominantly willow.

Elsewhere, regeneration is almost entirely Sitka, but with some significant differences between stands. There was an obvious immediate post-felling pulse, often in very narrow lines, taking advantage of favourable growing conditions along extraction lanes, and there is an expanding zone of regeneration around the small mature block used by Corry Capers, both of which seem to be flourishing. More recent pockets of Sitka regeneration, higher on the central ridge, look less healthy and are showing signs of nutrient (phosphorus, nitrogen) deficiencies.

The remainder of the site is a mix of open ground habitats. The top of the main ridge is heather dominated, whilst damper areas are rush-dominated. One small area in the northeast has bog-cotton, and could be returned to peatland.

The Rathad na Cloinne, an unbound stone path, 1-1.20m wide, has been constructed along the southern and western edges of the community woodland, this links with paths on neighbouring Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) land to create a circular route around Cnoc na Cachaille. There is some evidence of damage from surface water flow, and there are some steep sections which ensure that it does not comply with all-abilities standards.

Pedestrian access to the woodland is possible from a couple of points by the Growers Hub in the southeast of the wood, where a wildlife pond has been created, but there is no apparent recreational use of the main part of the wood.

[52] https://www.forestry.gov.scot/sustainable-forestry/tree-health/tree-pests-and-diseases/phytophthora-ramorum

4.3 Previous plans

4.3.1 2017 Forest Plan

Following extensive community consultation, a 10-year Forest Plan was produced by BSCC in 2017. The long term vision of the plan is "Together the people of Broadford and Strath will create a woodland resource which brings social, environmental and economic benefits now and for future generations." The management objectives are:

- Transform the existing coniferous clearfell site and remnant conifers to natural woodland and open spaces capable of providing sustainable social, environmental and economic benefits.
- Restore peatland and wetland habitats.
- Improve and add to the network of forest trails and other recreational facilities.
- Encourage environmental learning and the development of good physical and mental health within all sectors of the community.

The plan contained a number of actions intended to facilitate the transformation of the site to more natural habitats: the proposed future habitat mix is shown in table 9 below. In practice very few of these actions have been implemented, due to a combination of limited funding and human resources, difficulties in accessing the woodland and the COVID-19 pandemic. In the meantime, there has been considerable expansion by natural regeneration of both Sitka and various broadleaved species.

Proposed future habitat types	Area (ha)	Species/habitat
Native woodland on drier soils	2.33	Silver birch, rowan, aspen, Scots pine, oak, hazel, holly
Native riparian woodland	3.24	Alder, eared willow, downy birch, bird cherry
Native riparian woodland	3.20	As above, may include non-native species to supply local crafts
Open native woodland on exposed soils	2.40	Juniper, birch (downy & silver), rowan, Scots pine
Restore coniferous plantation to wetland and peatland	2.69	Low value plantation / rush pasture
Maintain grazing/mowing to develop species rich meadow flora	1.80	Tall herb communities and emerging neutral grassland
Accessible woodland managed as coppice for firewood and crafts	1.57	To be designed
Oak planted by local school children	0.23	To be designed
Thinning/brashing of larch and Sitka spruce to encourage gradual development of riparian woodland.	2.06	Thin to favour larch and native species
Forest campsite & events area (removed from woodland management)	2.21	n/a
Community polytunnels and forest classroom (removed from woodland management)	0.98	n/a
Total	**22.71**	

Table 9: Proposed future habitat types and uses from 2017 Forest Plan

4.3.2 Felling licences

BSCC applied for a felling licence in 2021 to clearfell 3.9ha of Sitka spruce and hybrid larch, with a total estimated volume of 426m^2. BSCC intended to co-ordinate felling with FLS operations on the neighbouring site, to facilitate timber extraction and haulage and minimise disruption to public access.

Restocking was to be birch 30%, alder 30%, rowan 15%, goat willow 15% and aspen 10%, at an overall stocking density of 1600 stems/ha, following a long fallow period (subject to Scottish Forestry approval) to minimise damage to planted trees by Hylobius abietis,[53] and to enable deer control to reduce numbers to a level at which broadleaves can be planted without damage. If this was not possible then BSCC and FLS had discussed the line of a shared deer fence.

Whilst the majority of FLS's restock will be with Sitka spruce and other conifers,[54] its plans include a 12ha block of mixed broadleaves (sycamore, oak and birch) on the eastern edge of Broadford forest, adjacent to Broadford Community Woodland, so there is a shared interest in and imperative for deer control and/or protection.

The BSCC felling licence application states that "areas felled during 2014/5 will be restocked simultaneously" but the area referred to or the proposed species are not identified. The initial felling permission was not actioned and the licence expired in 2023. A re-application for an identical area was submitted and approved, and will expire in August 2025.

4.3.3 2024 Woodland Development Plan

In 2024 BSCC commissioned consultants to produce a feasibility study and accompanying action plan setting out woodland management options and enterprise opportunities for Broadford Community Woodland.

Following an initial site assessment and discussions with forestry professionals, the consultants concluded that, given the limited volume of timber and the lack of access, it was not feasible to pursue harvesting and extraction and expressed concerns with the cost implications of the approach laid out in the 2017 Forest Plan and BSCC's capacity to sustain long term woodland management.

Three management options were presented:

- Let nature take its course
- Managed regeneration
- Additional acquisition, cut to extract

Let nature take its course

Option one was to adopt a low impact, light touch approach to managing the woodland which would involve intervening only where necessary, e.g. protecting paths, removing unsafe trees as required, and allowing the woodland to continue to regenerate on its own.

This approach would be low input and low cost, giving BSCC the opportunity to develop a network of volunteers, who would be responsible for helping deliver "soft" woodland maintenance, whilst experiencing the social benefits that volunteering provides.

This option would avoid the large-scale damage to soils and disruption to habitats arising from clearfelling and timber extraction, but would delay the transition from conifer plantation to more "natural" woodland habitats.

Managed regeneration

[53] See section 6.5.8 for more details

[54] https://forestryandland.gov.scot/what-we-do/planning/active/kinloch-and-broadford Map 6a

The second option seeks to achieve the objectives of the 2017 Forest Plan, but rather than using conventional timber harvesting and extraction methods, this option would employ tree surgeons to cut the remaining standing timber, perhaps with some extraction for local use but otherwise felling to waste or ring-barking standing trees.

This would enable a more rapid habitat transition but would be considerably more expensive, as there would be little or no income offsetting harvesting costs. However, it might still be cheaper than the costs of providing access for conventional harvesting.

For reasons that aren't entirely clear, the potential to fell and extract material for woodfuel wasn't considered, but given the ongoing expansion by natural regeneration there is clearly a larger volume available than estimated in the 2017 plan, and whilst such operations might not be particularly profitable, the income generated would at least offset some of the costs. Removal of felled material would also facilitate restocking.

Additional acquisition, cut to extract

The third option presented seeks to make conventional harvesting viable through the acquisition and felling of the neighbouring HIE woodland, which would enable BSCC to extend harvesting efforts across a much larger area of woodland, and thus potentially offset the cost of machinery deployment and access creation. Acquiring this additional woodland might also present additional opportunities for community development projects.

4.3.4 Enterprise opportunities

The 2024 Woodland Development Plan also considered a number of enterprise opportunities, listed below. These are considered in more detail in Chapter 7.

- Timber processing yard
- Low cost woodfuel
- Improvements to existing infrastructure & introduction of new forest products
- Woodland play area
- Glamping pods
- Practical skills in woodworking
- Improved woodland amenity
- Woodland crofts
- Christmas Trees
- Woodland Ashes Burials
- Wind turbine for campsite

4.3.5 Community consultation

During the preparation of the 2024 Woodland Development Plan, a public meeting was held at Camping Skye on 27th January 2024, in which key ideas were presented to the local community, offering opportunities for feedback. A survey (also available on line) was distributed, seeking views on development areas, and to assess interest in future volunteering opportunities.

26 individuals, all fulltime residents of the Broadford area completed the survey (12 on paper, 14 online), 96% of whom said they used the forest recreationally on a regular basis.

Perhaps not surprisingly, "development of the forest amenity (paths, wildlife, nature interpretation)" was the most popular "enterprise opportunity", with "learning and skills development", "creating new/improved wildlife habitats", "woodland play area" and "small wind turbine for campsite" all rated highly, and "Christmas trees" the least favoured.

88% of respondents said 'yes' or 'maybe' to getting involved in volunteering, with 54% citing practical management (e.g. path maintenance) and nature/ wildlife activities as the areas they would most likely get involved in.

4.3.6 Summary

The 2017 Forest Plan[55] proposed a rapid and radical transformation of the site, with intensive harvesting and extraction of Sitka spruce and restocking with a range of predominantly native species considered to be more appropriate for environmental and amenity objectives. These plans have not, however, been implemented, and the 2024 Woodland Development Plan[56] questioned whether the forest plan was deliverable or viable given the scale and disposition of the land.

Three options were presented: to continue with light touch management, allowing the woodland the develop naturally, to actively intervene, largely felling to waste, to enable a more rapid transition to more natural habitats or the acquisition of the neighbouring block to the east from HIE, which could potentially help "unlock" the access to Broadford Community Woodland and make timber harvesting viable.

As noted previously, the 2024 Woodland Development Plan did not seem to consider the potential to progressively fell the conifer stands and extract timber for woodfuel (either in-house or through a contracted woodfuel merchant). Although there is currently no suitable access it would not be particularly difficult or costly to establish a route from the north-west corner of the Growers Hub.

4.4 Future management options

The acquisition of Broadford North Wood from HIE is being considered, in part at least, as a means to facilitate the future management of Broadford Community Woodland. Creation of a new access to permit extraction of felled timber from Broadford North could also expedite harvesting of some or all of the residual Sitka stands in the community wood, whilst the income generated from harvesting may be sufficient to fund a fencing solution encompassing both woods.

The acquisition should also catalyse broader management interventions in the community woodland, facilitating the development of regular volunteering and the delivery of various operations including path works, tree planting and maintenance and control of invasive species. Any large scale timber extraction from the community woodland will take place through Broadford North Wood: a suitable extraction route will need to be identified, to avoid crossing the wide wetland area alongside the stream which forms much of the boundary between the holdings. An alternative route into the community woodland will need to be developed, probably from the north west corner of the Growers Hub, to facilitate volunteer access and, potentially, small scale extraction for woodfuel.

Six forest blocks are identified on Map 2. Of these, Block A is used by Corry Capers and should be retained for as long as possible: the block is rough and wet internally, but the dense Sitka canopy provides plenty of shelter for woodland activities. There is some evidence of windblow on south-west corner, and an obvious medium term risk of catastrophic storm damage, but the block is fringed on almost all sides by natural regeneration of Sitka, which gives a certain amount of protection.

Blocks B and D are apparently younger than other stands, have some larch present and are generally growing well on well-drained ground. There seems little value in felling them immediately, and they could be allowed to grow on to maximise their productivity. With some brashing they could be used for path routes.

[55] https://www.broadfordandstrath.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Forest-Plan-updated-2017.pdf
[56] https://www.broadfordandstrath.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Broadford-Community-Woodland-Feasibility-Study-v5.pdf

Blocks C and E are older stands, seemingly of an age with the stands in Broadford North Wood. Block E has grown well, Block C less so and is very mixed. They could be felled and restocked as part of the Broadford North Wood harvesting operation, alternately Block C could be retained and then felled in stages for woodfuel. Block F comprises small remnants of plantation forest fringing an area which could be returned to peatland, obviating the need for restock.

The older Sitka regeneration, dating from the initial post harvesting pulse, could be left to grow on, providing shelter and in due course timber, but the more recent regeneration, especially in the large central area on top of the ridge, could be removed and replaced with scattered groups of native broadleaves and Scots pine.

5 Broadford North Wood

Broadford North Wood lies ~1km to the northwest of the centre of Broadford village, occupying a prominent position on a low ridge.

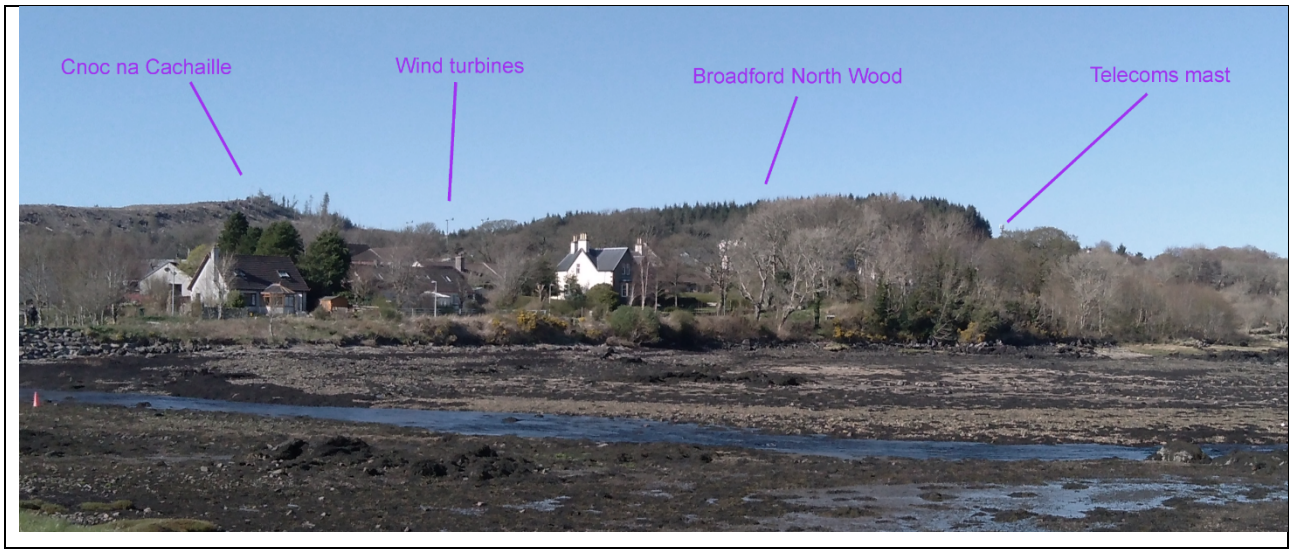


Image 3: Broadford North Wood from Broadford Community Garden

The property extends to 12ha and has two distinct sections with different management histories. The larger, northern block is comprised of mature conifer woodland (planted c. 1977) whilst the smaller, southern area was mostly felled 10 or more years ago and has apparently been left to regenerate naturally.[57]

5.1 Ownership and past management

Broadford North Wood, along with the neighbouring industrial estate to the south, is owned by Highland and Islands Enterprise (HIE). The Title sheet[58] sourced from Registers of Scotland records that the property was acquired by HIE for £18,000 in 2009.

The property does not appear to be covered by a formal management plan and there is no evidence of recent or ongoing management.

The Scottish Forestry Map Viewer[59] has one relevant record: felling licence reference 030/45/07-08 which covers much of the southern block. This was approved in November 2007, with restocking due by June 2011.

In 2022 HIE commissioned Tilhill Forestry Ltd to undertake an independent review of the woodland to identify future management requirements and to inform crop/ land value; this was carried out by Calum Murray.

5.2 Site information

5.2.1 Geology & soils

The British Geological survey map viewer[60] shows that the bedrock geology of the southern portion of the site is Ardnish Formation (sandstone and mudstone) This sedimentary bedrock formed between 201.3 and 190.8 million years ago during the Jurassic period.

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[57] Alternatively, if it was restocked, much of this has failed.
[58] Title number INV24682
[59] https://forestry.gov.scot/support-regulations/scottish-forestry-map-viewer
[60] https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/

The northern portion of the site contains a small area of Skye Central Complex (basaltic andesite and rhyolite). This much more recent igneous bedrock was formed between 66 and 23.03 million years ago during the Palaeogene period.

The south-eastern corner of the site, and much of the industrial estate to the south, sits on superficial raised marine deposits of gravel, sand and silt formed between 2.588 million years ago and the present during the Quaternary period.

There are localised areas of deep peat in hollows and on the western fringes, which have a very clear impact on tree growth. Elsewhere soil fertility appears to improve at lower elevations in the southern portion of the wood, but is at best moderate, allowing reasonable growth of the main tree species planted but likely to constrain species choice when restocking.

5.2.2 Climate & exposure

Broadford has a mild, windy and moist climate, which is generally favourable to a wide range of tree species. The nearest Met Office recording station is at Lusa, ~6km to the east, where average annual rainfall is 2019mm.[61]

Adjacency to the sea reduces the extremes of temperature but the risk of severe storms has a significant impact on management. The expected impact of climate change is that the climate will remain wet and mild, but with an increased frequency of extreme weather events.

The risk of wind damage is a significant constraint to woodland management across much of Scotland. The average windiness of a site can be calculated using the DAMS[62] system. DAMS is based on location, elevation and topographic exposure, and gives a good representation of both the average wind speed and the frequency of strong winds at a site. Values of DAMS in northern Scotland typically range from below 10 (sheltered) to over 26 (very exposed).[63]

The DAMS score across the Broadford North Wood is 17, reflecting the regular experience of westerly gales. This level of exposure, particularly when combined with poor drainage, is a significant constraint to commercial timber crops but should not impact on native woodlands.

5.2.3 Topography, aspect, drainage

The woodland occupies a low ridge which extends south as an outlier from Cnoc na Cachaille, a low hill to the west with a summit at 102m above sea level (asl). Elevation varies from ~25m asl in the SE corner of the site to >60m asl at the northern end.

Most of the wood has a westerly or southerly aspect, but a small strip on the eastern edge has an easterly aspect.

A small stream runs along the western edge of much of the wood, and forms the boundary with the neighbouring Broadford Community Woodland. There are no other formal streams within the property, although there is significant standing water and surface drainage in the northern portion of the wood.

5.2.4 Flora & fauna[64]

The main portion of the Broadford North Wood has a closed canopy with very little ground flora. Heather and moor grasses are apparent in checked areas, along rides and on the eastern fringe.

The southern portion of the wood has been apparently allowed to develop naturally since clearfelling 10-15 years ago: there are large areas of rank heather, and also significant areas of bramble and

[61] https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/climate/maps-and-data/location-specific-long-term-averages/gf5vezmdh
[62] Detailed Aspect Method of Scoring.
[63] DAMS scores for Kylerhea and the summit of Beinn na Caillich are 12 and 29 respectively
[64] No detailed survey of flora or fauna was undertaken, and no information has been provided on protected species.

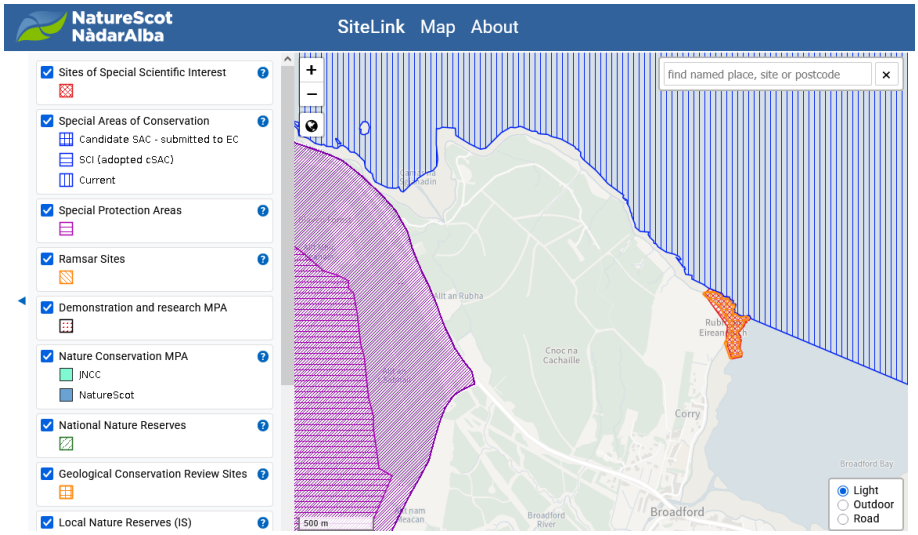
other invasive species. Rhododendron, fuchsia and gorse are present in the southern portion of the wood, there is also one small rhododendron bush in the northern block.

Red deer are present and will be a major issue for any future restocking.

5.2.5 *Environmental designations*

There are no statutory environmental designations at or immediately adjacent to the woodland. The nearest terrestrial designated site is the Rubh' an Eireannaich Geological Site of Special Scientific Interest[65] approximately 600m to the north-east.

The Cuillins Special Protection Area,[66] designated for golden eagles, extends to within ~1400m of the Broadford North Wood, while the boundary of the Cuillin Hills NSA[67] is a little further west. The western portion of the BSCC area is part of the Cuillin Wild Land Area.[68] Wild Land Areas are identified as nationally important in Scottish Planning Policy but are not a statutory designation. Most of the waters around Skye are part of the Inner Hebrides and the Minches Special Area of Conservation,[69] although the southern part of Broadford Bay is excluded.



Map 12: screenshot from NatureScot Sitelink[70] showing environmental designated sites

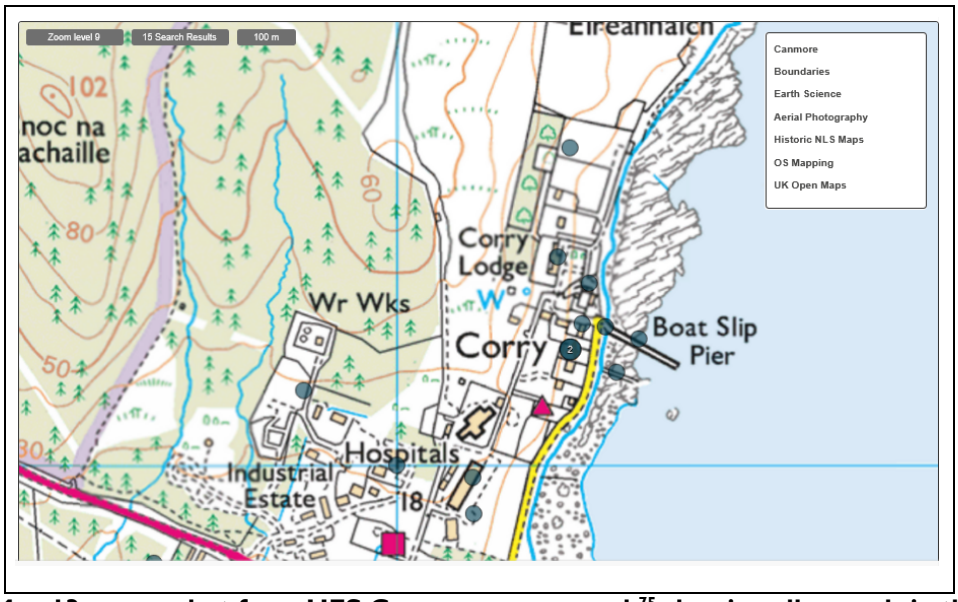
It does not seem likely that any designated sites would be affected by any of the community's proposals for the woods.

5.2.6 *Historic environment*

There are no designated heritage features in or adjacent to the woodland. The nearest site recorded on Canmore, the national record of the historic environment maintained by Historic Environment Scotland (HES), is the industrial estate itself.[71] Otherwise there are numerous sites adjacent to Broadford Bay to the east, including Corry Lodge,[72] the Temperance Hotel[73] and the Broadford

[65] https://sitelink.nature.scot/site/1389
[66] https://sitelink.nature.scot/site/8610
[67] https://sitelink.nature.scot/site/9153
[68] https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2021-06/Wild%20land%20Description%20Cuillin-July-2016-23.pdf
[69] https://sitelink.nature.scot/site/10508
[70] https://sitelink.nature.scot/home
[71] https://canmore.org.uk/site/350697/skye-broadford-industrial-estate
[72] https://canmore.org.uk/site/331644/skye-corry-lodge
[73] https://canmore.org.uk/site/275854/skye-corry-campbells-temperance-hotel

tramway.[74] It seems unlikely that any of these sites would be affected by any of the community's proposals for the woods.



Map 13: screenshot from HES Canmore map search[75] showing all records in the area.

5.2.7 Ancient Woodland Inventory / Native Woodland Survey of Scotland

Map 14: Screenshot from the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland

The Ancient Woodland Inventory has no records of ancient woodland either in the Broadford North Wood or within 2km of the site.[76]

There is an area of native wet woodland approximately 600m north of the wood which is recorded in the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland[77] (NWSS). It is noted that the canopy coverage is ~50% and herbivore pressures are high.

[74] https://canmore.org.uk/site/75417/skye-broadford-tramway
[75] https://canmore.org.uk/map/about
[76] Checked at https://map.environment.gov.scot/sewebmap/
[77] https://forestry.gov.scot/forests-environment/biodiversity/native-woodlands/native-woodland-survey-of-scotland-nwss

5.3 Woodland description

The property extends to 12.4ha, of which approximately 9.2ha is high forest, the remaining 3.2ha comprises open ground, scattered mature trees and natural regeneration.

There are two distinct blocks: the larger, northern area covers 9.9ha, of which ~9ha is stocked with trees, while the smaller, southern block covers 2.5ha and is a mixture of open ground, scrub, natural regeneration and small clumps of older trees.

The forest areas are stocked with Sitka spruce and lodgepole pine, predominantly in pure crops, with Sitka occupying the greatest proportion, but also in mixture, where Sitka is again usually dominant.

	Area (ha)	% of total area	% of stocked area
Sitka spruce	6.16	50%	67%
Lodgepole pine	1.96	16%	21%
Sitka/lodgepole mixture	1.08	9%	12%
Open ground / scattered trees	3.20	26%	
Total	**12.40**		

Table 10: Broadford North Wood Species

5.3.1 Northern block

The larger, northern portion of the wood, covers ~9.9ha. It is bounded to the west by a small stream (the boundary is otherwise demarcated), the neighbouring land is mix of spruce woodland and open ground owned by BSCC.

The northern boundary with the BSCC holding is undemarcated: there is a stock fence running roughly ENE-WSW near the northern edge of the HIE wood, but this does not appear to coincide with the property boundary.[78]

The eastern boundary is marked with a stock fence, beyond which there is a rough track to a telecoms mast, and open moorland with considerable regeneration of spruce and gorse, which is owned by Corry Estate.

In the south-west corner this block adjoins the water treatment works, and the remainder of the southern boundary is deer-fenced, beyond which is the southern portion of the property.

This block is predominantly high forest, apparently all planted in 1977 with Sitka spruce and lodgepole pine, mostly in single species blocks but with small areas in mixture.

A couple of short rides are apparent but there are otherwise no obvious internal boundaries between species blocks.

There is very considerable variation in growth rates of the Sitka: most is moderate, with some good timber in the south-east corner, but there are also areas where the spruce has been severely checked.

Growth of lodgepole pine is more consistent but moderate at best. One area appears to have high mortality which may reflect dothistroma infection.

Some lodgepole in the mixed blocks appears to be of south coastal provenance (with relatively high volume but very poor form and heavily branched), but the single species blocks appear to be of an inland provenance (less volume, cleaner form)

[78] The Title sheet suggests that this fence is intended to mark the boundary.

There are pockets of windblow apparent: there are two areas on the western fringe where Sitka has blown, and some damage to lodgepole stands on the eastern edge of the wood. Vigorous spruce regeneration is apparent where lodgepole has died and/or blown.

There is an unplanted strip along the eastern and southern fringes of the wood and some unstocked wet areas by the stream at the western boundary but other than a couple of very small glades there is almost no internal open ground.

There are no established watercourses other than the boundary stream, but surface drainage and standing water is apparent in much of the northern and western parts of the wood.

5.3.2 Southern block

The southern portion of Broadford North Wood is a roughly rectangular block, mostly south facing, with shallow slopes, which covers ~2.5ha.

It is bounded by the water treatment works and access road to the west, the industrial estate to the south, the Three Herons Cottage and the track to the telecoms mast to the east and the main block of woodland to the north.

This area was largely clearfelled 10 or more years ago and has apparently been allowed to regenerate naturally. There are small clumps of older Sitka and many scattered younger trees, largely around the western, southern and eastern boundaries, with a central northern area with very low stocking.

Rhododendron, fuchsia, gorse and brambles are all apparent, especially on the lower slopes, making much of the area impenetrable. There is a deer fence, in good condition, on the eastern and northern boundaries (and possibly along the southern boundary too but this has not been verified.)

There is a gate in the fence midway along the eastern boundary but the vegetation immediately inside is impenetrable.

5.4 Inventory

There are various methods of mensuration, each with the strengths and weakness; all provide an estimate of standing volume, with a margin of error, rather than a definitive number.

The most intensive method, tariffing, would involve accurately stratifying the wood (i.e. dividing it into areas of similar growth rates and species), counting all the trees, measuring the diameter at 1.3m[79] above ground level of between 2.5% and 5% of the trees and felling 10% of these for more detailed measurement on the ground.

At Broadford North Wood this would require making 500-1000 diameter measurements and felling between 50 and 100 trees. Even so there is still a large margin of error: "assuming measurement errors are minimal, and that the procedure has been properly carried out, the true volume will be within +/- 10% of the volume estimate at the 95% probability level."[80]

Other less intensive methods rely on measurements of standing trees to assess the basal area[81] and top height of the stand, from which tables and charts facilitate volume estimates. Basal area can be assessed either through the use of sample plots (typically 5.6m in diameter, which equates to 100m2) or by point sampling using a relascope.[82]

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[79] Conventionally referred to as "breast height"

[80] Forest Mensuration handbook, p76

[81] The basal area of a tree is the cross-sectional area of the stem at breast height. Basal area per hectare is the sum of the basal areas of all the trees in a hectare

[82] A relascope is a device which enables assessment of basal area in woodland. There are various designs but all work essentially by the operator executing a 360degree spin at a sampling location and counting all live stems which have an apparent width greater than a specified value.

Given the wide variety of growth rates, estimates of standing timber volume are more dependent on mapping the woods than on measuring the trees and in particular the mapping of the differential growth rates, although this is challenging in the absence of clear boundaries between blocks.

Estimates of standing volume in this report are based on field survey and point sampling on 1 and 2 April 2025, and subsequent analysis of aerial photos, by the author. Table 11 below contains estimates of standing volume and recoverable tonnage.

For calculation purposes the woodland has been divided into areas of broadly similar growth rates, as shown on Map 2: in practice whilst the boundary between Sitka and lodgepole is clear on the ground, the change in growth rates is often more gradual.

5.4.1 Yield class

Yield class is an index which is conventionally used in British forestry to describe the potential productivity of even-aged stands of trees. It is based on the maximum mean annual increment of cumulative timber volume achieved by a given tree species growing on a given site. It is measured in units of cubic metres per hectare per year (m^3/ha/year) and conventionally expressed in increments of 2. The range of values found in GB is from 2 to 30.

Spruce stands show considerable variability across the site, apparently reflecting ground conditions and drainage: the best growing stands reach YC 18, whereas in the checked areas stands are barely YC 2

There is less variability in the lodgepole pine, which is generally around YC 6-8

These growth rates are typical of spruce and pine plantations on west coast sites with variable soils and high levels of exposure.

5.4.2 Standing timber volume and recoverable tonnage

All the inventory methods described above produce estimates of standing volume in cubic metres, however timber once felled is conventionally marketed by the tonne.

1 cubic metre of wood typically weighs somewhat less than a tonne, with the ratio varying slightly according to species and greatly according to moisture content: the longer the wood is left to dry out before transport to market, the less it will weigh on the timber mill's weighbridge.

Additionally, it is never possible to recover every cubic metre of timber from a site: some volume will always be left in stumps, some in offcuts which didn't fit the specifications of the harvesters. Marketable material is often lost through use in bridging streams or crossing wetland areas for extraction. Shorter trees, and those with poor form (bends, forks) typically give lower recovery rates. This can be mitigated somewhat if shorter lengths are set aside and retained as firewood.

The estimated standing volume in the Broadford North Wood is 3,529m^3 [83] and the estimated recoverable tonnage is 2,784t[84] of which 80% is Sitka spruce. An estimated 1,127 tonnes of spruce could be sawlogs, which fetch a considerably higher price, the remainder being short roundwood. A small proportion of the lodgepole pine is of sawlog diameter and might fetch a slightly higher price than short roundwood.

Annual growth is adding 80-90 cubic metres per year; this will gradually slow, and increasingly will be balanced by losses to windblow and mortality from competition (and possibly disease).

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[83] Which should be understood as saying that there is a high level of confidence that actual standing volume is in the range 3,200-3,900m3

[84] Assuming a skilled operator and limited drying time for felled timber. Poor harvesting practice and slow uplift of timber will reduce the tonnage.

Species	YC	Area (ha)	Vol/ha	Vol (m3)	Tonne (t)	Sawlogs (t)
SS	18	0.84	700	588	470	353
SS	14	1.18	560	661	529	317
SS	10	2.10	420	882	706	282
SS (WB)	10	0.40	250	100	50	0
SS	6	1.00	220	220	176	18
SS	2	0.63	50	32	16	0
LP	8	1.26	330	416	333	0
LP	6	0.60	240	144	115	0
LP (WB)	6	0.10	50	5	4	0
SS MIX	12	0.82	480	392	314	157
LP MIX	8	0.27	330	90	72	0
SS Total		6.97		2,875	2,260	1,127
LP Total		2.23		655	524	0
Total		**9.20**		**3,529**	**2,784**	**1,127**

Table 11: potential timber and sawlog volumes

SS = Sitka spruce
LP = Lodgepole pine
WB = Windblow
MIX = planted in mixture
YC = Yield Class (see 5.4.1)

5.5 Other issues and constraints

5.5.1 Access

There is no established access to the woodland for recreational or management purposes. Informal access on foot is possible from the east, approaching on the rough track which leads to the telecoms mast. Access from the south would require climbing the deer fence and negotiating impenetrable vegetation. There is a gate on the eastern side of the deer-fenced southern block but no associated path into the woods. Access from the west is possible but difficult due to boggy ground by the stream and windblow on the edge of the forest. Similarly, other than a couple of short lengths of ride there are no internal access routes or paths.

Access for management purpose will be required after a community acquisition. Section 6.3 below considers options for creating access suitable for large scale timber harvesting, extraction and haulage, whilst section 6.3.6 considers options for smaller scale working.

5.5.2 Overhead powerline

There is an overhead powerline in the south east corner of the wood. This should have minimal impact on timber harvesting but any access routes using High Road will have to pass under it.

5.5.3 Water treatment works

The water treatment works to the southeast of the wood will impact on potential developments and activities:

- The obvious odour in the wood downwind of the works make this part of the property unsuitable for many community uses.
- The Local Development Plan notes the expectation of a cordon sanitaire around the works (90m) within which there is no development.

5.5.4 Dothistroma needle blight

Dothistroma needle blight (DNB) is an economically important disease of conifer trees, particularly pines, caused by the fungus Dothistroma septosporum. It causes premature needle defoliation, resulting in loss of timber yield and, in severe cases, tree death.

Trees of all ages can become infected. Symptoms are first seen at the base of the crown on older needles. Infected needles typically develop yellow and tan spots and bands, which soon turn red. Then, as the disease progresses, the ends of the needles turn reddish-brown while the needle base remains green. Symptoms are most apparent in June and July, when the small, black, spore-containing fruit bodies can be found in the red bands. After this point, the symptomatic needles are shed, and branches can acquire a 'lion's tail' appearance typical of the disease, with only a tuft of the recently infected current year's needles remaining at the branch ends. This defoliation can continue year on year and gradually weaken the tree, significantly reducing timber yields (see picture below) and causing the death of the tree.

There is no statutory requirement to notify findings in woodland or on other mature trees. The prevalence of DNB has increased greatly in the last 30 years and it is now found in many pine forests. Corsican and lodgepole pine have been heavily impacted and are now rarely used in restocking, native Scots pine is generally less severely affected.

6 Woodland Management Options

6.1 Preparation

There are a number of actions that BSCC will need to take following acquisition before any timber could be harvested. BSCC will also consider whether it would be advantageous to establish a trading subsidiary to manage the community woodlands - ownership of the assets would remain with BSCC.

6.1.1 Land registration

It is unclear whether BSCC is currently registered with the Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate (RPID), if not it will need to register and obtain a Business Reference Number (BRN): this is essential to register land and gain access to Scottish Rural Development Plan (SRDP) funding streams.

Once BSCC has a BRN it can register Broadford North and Broadford Community Woodland with RPID and obtain a Land Parcel Identifier (LPID) for each block: this is a requirement for access to land-based funding through the SRDP.

6.1.2 Felling permission / Long Term Forest Plan

Any harvesting works will need felling permission from Scottish Forestry: this can be obtained via a stand-alone felling permission or through the production of a Long-term Forest Plan (LTFP).[85]

The felling permission process, detailed on the Scottish Forestry website[86] requires the production and approval of a restocking plan. Grant applications for restocking the felled areas can be completed at a later date.

An approved LTFP is a requirement for receipt of Forestry Grant Scheme management grants for woods over 100ha, but they can be produced for smaller areas, and several community woodland groups have done so. If BSCC were to draw up an LTFP then it should cover the full area in its ownership. LTFP preparation is supported by FGS grants, [87] but the process can take a considerable amount of time and is likely to cost rather more than the available grant aid.

An alternative option is the production of an approved woodland management plan, for Broadford North (or a single updated plan covering both woods); this is a requirement for UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) certification (see below) and SRDP woodland management grants. No grant aid is available for preparation, and a separate felling permission would be required for clearfelling operations.

6.1.3 Forest certification

Forest certification provides a mechanism to promote the sustainable management of forests and ensure that forest-based products reaching the marketplace have been sourced from sustainably managed forests.

Timber from certified woodlands can command a small premium (£1-2/t) compared to that from forests which have not been certified, known as "controlled wood". Timber processors can only use a certain percentage of controlled wood, so certification might also help with the rate of uplift, which is important when selling by weight, as the longer the wood sits on-site the more it dries out and loses weight, especially in the summer.

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[85] Note that the 2017 Forest Plan is not a formal approved LTFP

[86] https://forestry.gov.scot/support-regulations/felling-permissions

[87] https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/woodland-improvement-grant/long-term-forest-plan/ The grant rate is £25 per hectare for first 200 hectares, £5 per hectare thereafter, i.e. about £750 for the Broadford woods combined

The Tilhill report noted that certification can be achieved through a resource manager scheme or a group scheme, such as that offered through forest management companies. For resource manager schemes which tend to be lower cost, the woodland must be managed by the certifying company. These benefit from company systems of management already certified by UKWAS with only the additional forest detail requiring assessment. For group schemes the woodland management can be with any party who will then take on responsibility for writing the management plans and managing to UKWAS standards. All management systems and the woodland will be assessed against standards for groups schemes hence a more detailed audit and higher cost.

The Tilhill report suggested that certification through a resource manager scheme typically costs around £2,500-3,000, which equates to ~£1 per tonne in the Broadford North wood, so this is unlikely to be provide significant benefit for BSCC.

6.2 Timber harvesting

Timber prices fluctuate considerably. Because the UK imports the majority of its timber, prices are particularly sensitive to exchange rates and harvesting rates across Europe,[88] and also to activity levels in the UK construction sector, which is the most important domestic market.

Prices are currently down from the peaks of a few years ago but are still considerably above pre-COVID levels. The growth of woodfuel markets in recent years has helped maintain prices, especially for the lowest grade material. Road transport to timber processors is a major contributor to costs, the nearest mills are at Fort William and around the Moray Firth (Dingwall, Nairn, Ardersier).

Timber harvesting and extraction is typically carried out by external contractors using large, specialized machinery, working under contract to timber processors and/or forest management companies. These systems benefit greatly from economies of scale conversely, harvesting of smaller parcels can be expensive.

A small proportion of harvesting is still carried out by motor-manual (chainsaw) methods, but usually only on highly sensitive or inaccessible sites, or where parcels are too small to justify machine deployment.

There are various options for management of the forest stands at Broadford North Wood, as outlined below.

6.2.1 Leave unfelled

There is no legal obligation on UK woodland owners to manage their woods at all, and unless there are specific plant health issues, there are no rules obliging them to fell trees at or by a certain date. It would therefore be possible to BSCC to acquire Broadford North wood and not harvest the timber, either continuing the current neglect or working to enhance access and amenity without felling.

However, the woodland is nearly 50 years old and as noted previously, there are pockets of windblow apparent at the western and eastern fringes, and evidence of poor stand stability elsewhere. It is therefore likely that windblow will increase throughout the wood, which will compromise any access or amenity enhancement, increase the cost of clear-up and reduce the value of the timber crop.

6.2.2 Thinning

Thinning is the selective removal of some trees to make room for the growth of others. It is an important silvicultural mechanism enabling foresters to improve the quality of a stand whilst

[88] E.g. increased felling in Europe due to storms or pests increases wood supply and depresses princes in the UK

generating some income from timber removed, however it is best initiated relatively early in the rotation (age 20-30) to minimise the risk of windblow.

As noted above, this site is relatively exposed, with evidence of poor drainage in parts: any attempt at thinning at this late stage in the rotation would only exacerbate the windblow risk and it should not be considered as a viable option at Broadford North.

6.2.3 Clearfell in stages

This option would involve felling the wood in several small tranches: a couple of hectares at a time. This would increase the windblow risk on the exposed side of the wood; a risk which could be partially mitigated by starting in the SE corner and working back against the prevailing wind.

It is prohibitively costly to deploy harvesting machinery for very small jobs, so this option would only be feasible if BSCC had a market for local use of the timber: either its own woodfuel business or a local firewood contractor, and could arrange for motor-manual (chainsaw) felling.

It would be difficult to fund large scale access provision suitable for timber lorries from the proceeds of a small felling operation, so timber extraction would have to be by ATV or small tractor.

6.2.4 Clearfell in one operation

Clearfelling the woodland in one operation has several advantages. It is the most efficient, both practically, in terms of machine deployment, and bureaucratically, for BSCC in terms of contracts and permissions. Furthermore, it almost certainly offers the best chance of generating sufficient surplus to fund access provision and restock.

Felling the wood in one tranche also allows a rapid transformation to a new woodland structure and species mix, and might, by removing potential seed trees, reduce (although not remove completely) the extent of conifer regeneration.

Conversely, it necessitates the highest disruption to the ecology and amenity of the site, and brings significant replanting obligations to BSCC. It also implies the export of most or all of the timber felled, leaving little or none for local development projects and leaves BSCC vulnerable to fluctuations in timber prices.

6.3 Access for conventional timber harvesting

Conventional timber harvesting, extraction and haulage typically requires substantial investment in roading and access if this is not already available.

Lorry road: needs to be suitable for passage and timber loading by articulated timber lorries (6 axles, maximum gross vehicle weight of 44 tonnes). The road will need a suitable turning area, and should be wide enough for at least part of the run for two lorries to pass.

Forest roads are typically constructed with graded and compacted stone. There doesn't appear to be a source onsite so this will require significant import of roadstone: there are quarries at Kyleakin and Sconser. If the forest road emerges onto the public highway it will need a substantial bell-mouth and clear lines of sight (see section on Highland Council requirements below).

Stacking area: cleared area either side of the lorry road, does not need construction to same standard as the forest road but should be level and well drained.

The stacking area should be oriented along the slope: this facilitates loading, but also ensure that stacked timber (perpendicular to road) does not roll down the hill.

A very substantial area will be needed. Total likely harvest could be in excess of 3000m^3 (~150 lorry loads) with the actual amount dependent on how much of BSCC's existing forest is felled. Haulage typically has a significant lag time after harvesting and extraction so it is quite possible that 1500m^3 will need to be accommodated: this might need an area 150m long by 5m wide as Health & Safety

concerns militate against stacking too high, particularly where there is public access (3m is reasonable limit).

Extraction route: Where the stacking area is outwith the forest an extraction route across open ground will be required. Depending on ground conditions this may need some construction / reinforcement / repair.

6.3.1 Access options for timber haulage

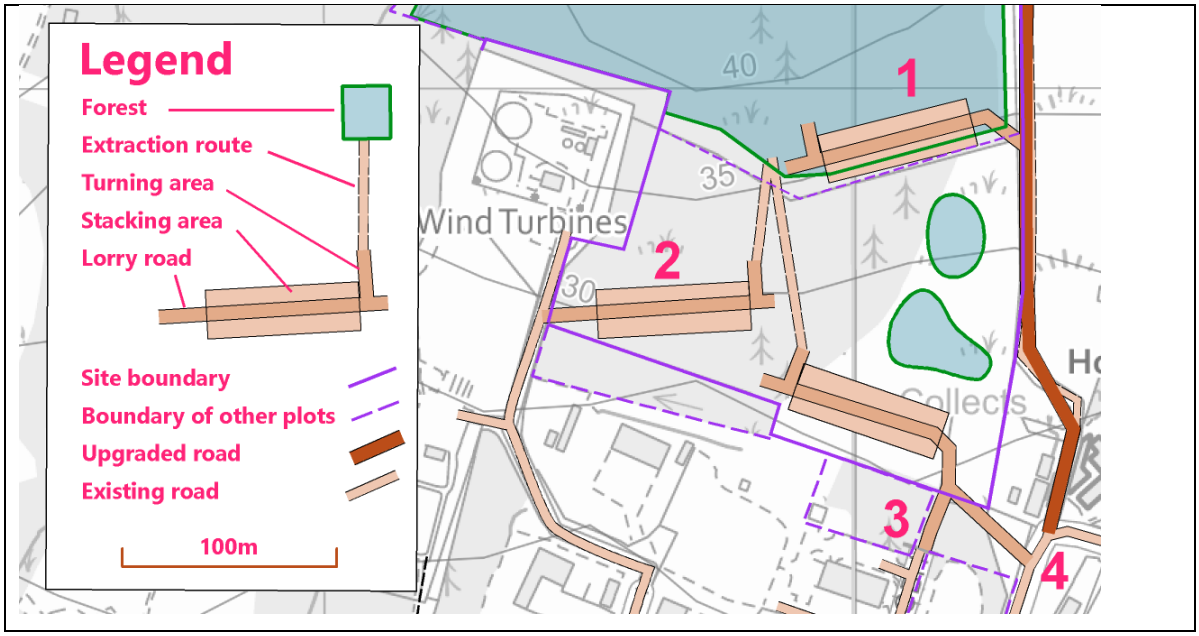
Four potential access routes for timber haulage from the southern end of the Broadford North Wood have been identified. Other routes west or south through Broadford Community Woodland might be possible but have not been considered here.

#1 has a stacking area in the southeast corner of the existing forest and takes access eastward onto the track owned by Corry Estate, and thence onto High Road. This option is not currently viable as the track is not passable by timber lorries (especially the narrow and steep chicane by the old hospital). However, a Prior Notification Application[89] has been lodged for a very substantial[90] agricultural warehouse development "to store agricultural vehicles and supplies ancillary to the farm use", and it seems likely that this will be accompanied by a significant upgrade of the track for construction and use of this building (although not necessarily to the standard required for timber haulage).

#2 has a stacking area in the southwest corner of the "wilderness" area to the south of the main forest, and takes access westward onto the unadopted road to the water treatment works and thence south through the industrial estate.

#3 has a stacking area in the southeast corner of the area to the south of the main forest, and takes access southward between two development plots onto the unadopted road through the industrial estate.

#4 has a stacking area in the southeast corner of the area to the south of the main forest, and takes access south-eastward onto High Road just south of Three Herons Cottage.



Map 15: access options

[89] https://wam.highland.gov.uk/wam/caseDetails.do?caseType=Application&keyVal=SR60WMIH0JS00
Highland Council determined that prior approval was not required.

[90] 32m*31m*10m, i.e. a floor plan of 992m^2, just under the 1,000m^2 limit for permitted development.

The precise area and boundaries of any community acquisition have yet to be confirmed. The property boundary is shown by the solid purple line on the plan above, with additional plots shown with a broken purple line: these comprise a vacant area to the south west and two development plots to the south east of the property.

Options 3 and 4 involve crossing a small parcel of land currently outwith the main property, and come very close to two development plots owned by HIE which are currently on the market. The images below are reproduced from the website[91] of Graham and Sibbald, the marketing agents, which contains annotated aerial images of the two development sites, from which the boundaries on the map above have been drawn.

Image 4: Development Plot 1 (from Graham and Sibbald website)

Image 5: Development Plot 2 (from Graham and Sibbald website)

[91] https://g-s.co.uk/properties/property/51980/ and https://g-s.co.uk/properties/property/52691

The boundaries on the ground are undefined, so the images above cannot be regarded as definitive: if either of these is the preferred option, negotiation and agreement with HIE will be necessary to agree the boundaries of any additional acquisition area.

6.3.2 Legal requirements[92]

- Any groundwork that constitutes development within 25m of a classified (A, B or C) road requires planning permission.
- In Scotland works carried out on or abutting a public road require permission under Section 56 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.
- Contractors carrying out work within the Public Road must be accredited to work within the public road through the holding of a New Roads and Street Works Act 1984 accreditation.
- Work associated with private ways for forestry purposes will require to be considered by the planning authority under the Prior Notification process to ascertain if it is Permitted Development as outlined in the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) (Scotland) Amendment (No2) Order 2014 (SSI 2014 No. 300).
- Improving or constructing a new access onto a classified (A, B or C) road requires planning permission.
- Improving or constructing a new access onto an unclassified road requires a road opening permit from the local authority. Local authorities will specify appropriate sightline and bell-mouth design requirements.

6.3.3 Highland Council requirements

The Highland Council (THC) has produced a Technical Advice Note for Timber Extraction[93] which provides construction specifications and layout drawings for forestry access onto the public road network (reproduced below).

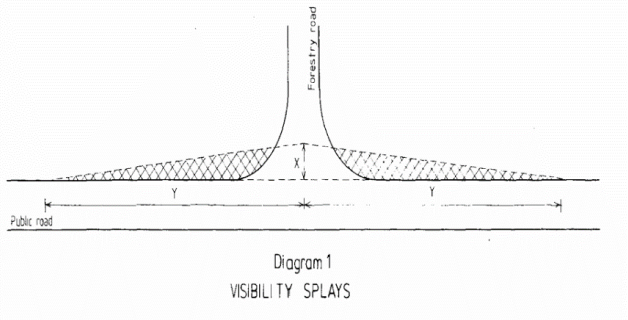


Diagram 1
VISIBILITY SPLAYS

Indicative Visibility Splays:- No obstructions exceeding 0.6 metres above adjacent road level.						
Speed on public road _kph	100	85	60	50	30	
Speed on public road _mph	60	50	40	30	20	
Distance Y metres	215	160	120	90	60	
Distance X metres	9m but may be reduced to 4.5m in difficult circumstances, subject to approval by Area Community Works Manager					

Image 6: Highland Council visibility splays

[92] From https://timbertransportforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Loading-Timber-From-Roadside-Forests-Good-Practice-Guide-2023-digital-version-1.pdf

[93] https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/17068/technical_advice_note_for_forestry_extraction

Key design requirements include:

- Construction of the access bell-mouth shall consist of a minimum thickness of 350mm Type 1 sub-base material, all on a sound formation, laid and shaped so that surface water from the access will not discharge onto the public road or from the public road onto the access.
- A minimum 3m wide strip from the edge of the public road over the full width of the bell-mouth shall be finished with a minimum of 40mm thick 14mm nominal size close graded asphalt concrete Surface Course to Clause 912 of the Specification for Highway Works, laid on 60mm thick 20mm nominal size dense asphalt concrete Binder Course to Clause 906 of the Specification of Highway Works.
- The gradient of the access for the first 6m back from the edge of the public road should not be in excess of 2.5% (1 in 40).
- Entrance gates, if any, shall not be less than 15m from the edge of the carriageway and shall open away from the carriageway only.

The extent of the visibility splay required is dependent on the speed limit, but even at 20mph a substantial line of sight is required.

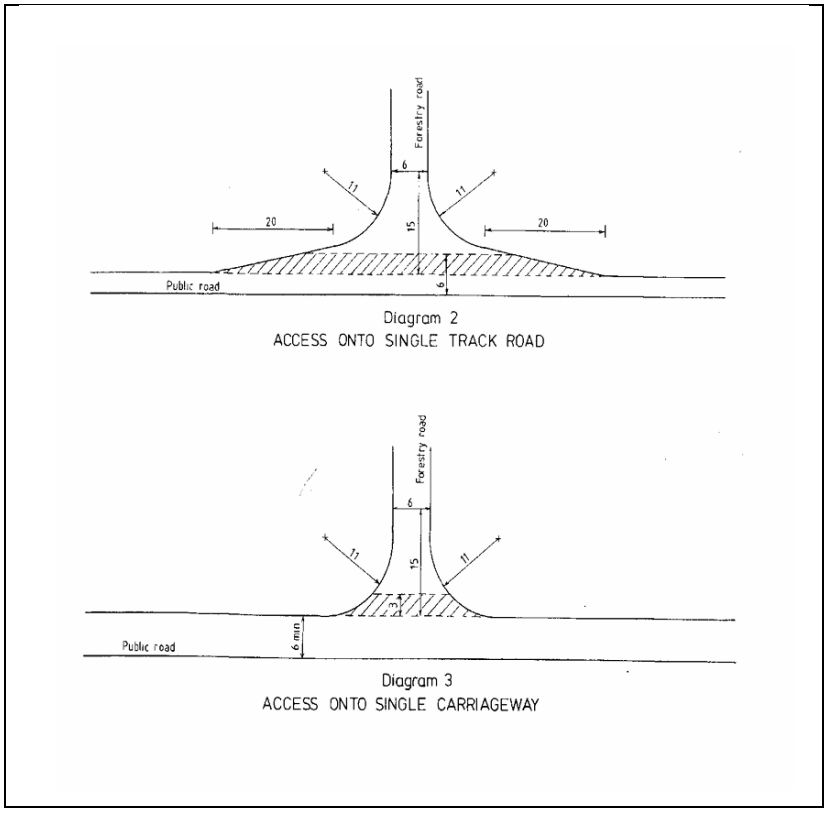


Image 7: Highland Council visibility splay diagrams

6.3.4 Summary

Option 1 is dependent on Corry Estate upgrading their access track to a suitable standard for timber haulage; use (presumably for a fee) by BSCC would have to be negotiated with the owners.

Longer term use of this access for forest management (except pedestrian access) would also need to be negotiated with Corry Estate.

This option requires the least road construction within the forest and does not emerge directly onto the public road network, which simplifies design requirements and reduces construction costs.

There would be significant lorry traffic past the Three Herons Cottage and the hospital.

Option 2 requires site clearance in the southern block, and would necessitate an extraction route across open ground, which might need reinforcement or repair.

It's unclear whether the access road to the water treatment works is adopted, but it would be necessary to agree construction works with the Water Company.

There should be sufficient frontage onto the road to meet Highland Council requirements for visibility splay, especially if BSCC was to acquire the additional plot to the south-west of the woodland property which has apparently been offered by HIE.

This option requires lorry transit through the industrial estate, where there is a tight 90-degree bend to negotiate, and which may necessitate some management of roadside parking.

Option 3 requires site clearance in the southern block, and would necessitate an extraction route across open ground, which might need reinforcement or repair.

It would require the acquisition of some or all of the small plot of land bounded by the two development plots to the south and west, the High Road to the east and the Broadford North Wood and Three Herons Cottage to the north.

This option connects directly to the existing unadopted road end through the industrial estate. HIE would need to grant a right of access over the industrial estate road (this could be a straight negotiation or part of the asset transfer request). There would be shared maintenance implications over the road.

This option requires lorry transit through the industrial estate, which may necessitate some management of roadside parking.

Option 4 requires site clearance in the southern block, and would necessitate an extraction route across open ground, which might need reinforcement or repair.

It would require the acquisition of some or all of the small plot of land bounded by the two development plots to the south and west, the High Road to the east and the Broadford North Wood and Three Herons Cottage to the north.

This option connects to the public High Road between Three Herons Cottage and Development Plot 2, opposite the new Broadford Hospital. It is unclear whether there would be sufficient frontage onto the public road to meet Highland Council requirements for visibility splay.

This route would also be required to negotiate overhead power lines which run alongside High Road and behind Three Herons Cottage.

Site clearance and construction works for this option would bring considerable disruption / potential nuisance for the residents of Three Herons Cottage, and there would be significant lorry traffic past the hospital and medical centre.

6.3.5 Assessment

All of the options will require substantial investment, which would consume a large part of any surplus from timber harvesting.

None of the options are without obstacles, but currently option 3 appears the most straightforward, as it does not need direct connection with the public road work and does not rely on negotiations with Corry Estate over the use of an upgraded track.

As BSCC would need to construct an access road to the forest, which would cross a small strip of HIE land outwith the woodland property boundary, it will be necessary for BSCC to acquire some or all of this plot. The area needed by BSCC will not extend wider than the footprint of the road

and any associated drainage provision,[94] and does not require BSCC to acquire either of the two development plot on either side of the option 3 route.

Initial discussions with HIE suggest that they will be willing to facilitate the development of option 3, by selling the additional small plot of land and by granting a right of access over the unadopted industrial estate road.

6.3.6 Access for small scale harvesting and management.

If BSCC decided to acquire Broadford North Wood but pursue a different management strategy, e.g. small scale motor-manual felling for local firewood production, then correspondingly smaller access infrastructure would be required.

An access track suitable for the intended machinery (ATV, tractor/trailer) would be required, but this would be a much smaller affair than the forest road for 44 tonne lorries.

Provision of a stacking and storage area would depend on whether wood was being processed on site or transferred across to the Growers Hub.

The same four basic access options would exist. Option 1 would not require the same level of upgrade for the telecoms track, but would still necessitate agreement with Corry Estate.

If the intention was to process wood at the Growers Hub, then option 2 would facilitate this best, however, if the wood was to processed on-site (or exported by a local firewood merchant) then option 3 would appear preferable.

6.3.7 Grant support

Some grant aid may be available through the Forestry Grant Scheme. The Forest Infrastructure[95] option includes funding to provide support for new access infrastructure that will bring small scale, undermanaged or inaccessible existing woodlands back into active management so as to:

- improve the economic value of forest and woodland through timber production
- increase the area of woodland in Scotland that is in sustainable management
- improve the environmental and social benefits of woodland

The capital grant operations and payment rates are:

- Construction of Forest Road: £25.80 per linear metre
- Construction of lay-bys, turning areas or loading bays: £6.60 per square metre
- Construction of Bell-mouth junction: £32.40 per square metre

6.4 Restocking

All felling proposals require a restocking plan.[96] Modern forest design principles usually require that restocking employs a wider range of species and creates more open ground than the stand being felled. At Broadford North the restocking plan is likely to require replanting of most of the felled area, with pockets of deep peat (where current crop has grown poorly) left as open ground.

The mix of species to be used depends on BSCC's long term objectives for the site, and on BSCC's appetite for and commitment to future management inputs. Costs and management input requirements vary considerably between potential planting options: if BSCC commit to an expensive or difficult option they need to be able to deliver it.

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94 Although HIE may require that BSCC purchase the whole plot, to avoid being left with a tiny and unmanageable area.

95 https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/forest-infrastructure/

96 Unless the felling is being carried out to restore open ground habitats. Where felling is taking place to facilitate built development (roads, houses, windfarms etc.) compensatory planting elsewhere is usually required.

Mixed woodlands, with large trees and a wider range of species, may be more desirable for woodland amenity, with conifers providing more internal shelter for walkers than broadleaves, as demonstrated in the block used by Corry Capers.

If BSCC's objectives include any consideration of future productivity, whether for local use or for export, then the restocking plan needs to include suitable species, planted at an appropriate stocking density, as part of the planting mix.

Exposure and poor soils constrain the choice of both conifer and broadleaved species. The most successful tree for timber production (in both quantity and quality terms) across most of the site would be Sitka spruce, although the small size of the woodland reduces the absolute commercial value of any future crop. Other conifer species which could be expected to grow well on the better areas include Norway spruce, Scots pine and larch species, although planting of the latter is constrained by the threat of Phytophthora ramorum.

A range of native and non-native broadleaved species could be considered. Forest Research's Ecological Site Classification (ESC) model suggests that W4 "Birch with purple moor-grass" is the most likely National Vegetation Classification (NVC) woodland type. W17 "Oak-birch with blueberry" would also be possible in some better areas but realistically the prospects for oak growth are limited across much of the site. Native woodland would likely be dominated by downy birch, with occasional rowan and hazel, with willow and alder (and possibly aspen) in wetter areas.

Native broadleaved planting is typically at 1600 stems/ha, which may be acceptable for environmental purposes, but is inadequate for any future timber production, where a significantly higher stocking density is required. If productivity is an objective, silver birch should be preferred to downy birch on drier sites and sycamore and oak could be employed in the southern, more fertile, area of the wood. Ash would have been an option on fertile sites but planting is currently suspended due to Chalara ash dieback.

A further consideration is that there will likely be significant natural regeneration of Sitka across the site, and as demonstrated both on BSCC's existing land and to the east of the wood on Corry Estate, Sitka regeneration can establish even without deer control or fencing. This could be a management headache or a boon, depending on restocking plan.

It is uncertain whether such regeneration alone would sufficiently restock the site to Scottish Forestry's satisfaction within the necessary timespan, even if that fitted BSCC's objectives, so some planting will be necessary, but if the restocking plan is purely for native broadleaves then BSCC will be obliged to remove Sitka seedlings. If the restocking plan were designed to create a mixed woodland delivering mixed objectives then it should be possible to adopt at least some of the natural regeneration, reducing the planting effort and cost.

6.4.1 Ground preparation

Most planting and restocking projects employ ground preparation to provide an enhanced planting site for the seedling. Key objectives are to lift the planting site above the water table and remove competing vegetation.

The two main methods employed on restock sites are mounding and screefing.

Mounding involves an excavator heaping the soil into small mounds. The trees are then planted into the mounds which provide a vegetation free zone above the water table.

Screefing involves scraping away the surface vegetation, and is usually employed only on well drained sites where there is no need to provide an elevated planting site. It can be carried out by specialised machines, or by hand, although it can be difficult to ensure a large enough area is screefed manually.

6.4.3 Fertiliser

A small quantity of granular fertiliser is often applied around the base of newly planted trees on woodland creation schemes to give them an early boost, however, it is much less common to do so on restock sites where transplants should benefit from the release of nutrients from decomposing litter, brash, stumps and root systems of the previous crop.

6.4.4 Maintenance

Weeding is usually only required on very fertile sites, or where treeshelters have been employed (seedlings can get swamped by weeds growing inside the shelter).

"Beating up", i.e. replacing failed seedlings is a standard requirement for woodland creation and restocking projects, and an allowance for this should be factored into cost calculations.

6.5 Protection

Sitka spruce is generally considered the least palatable species to deer, but successful establishment of any other species, conifer or broadleaf, will almost certainly require protection from deer and other herbivores.[97] If deer numbers cannot be reduced by culling – and this would be very difficult for BSCC to achieve unless FLS was heavily committed – protection is usually by fencing or treeshelters although other options are sometimes used.

6.5.1 Fencing

Conventional post and wire net fencing is in widespread use as the primary method of protecting young trees (and other crops) from deer. The main drawback is the initial cost: £15/m, which makes fencing small areas uneconomic.

Deer fences need regular checking but are generally low maintenance and can be expected to last for 20 years if well-constructed. They are only as good as the weakest points: crossing of ditches and small streams, or gates. In upland areas they can be vulnerable to ingress in winter when deep snow drifts against fences and deer can walk over the top, but this is probably not an issue at the relatively low elevation and maritime location of Broadford.

There are two main options: BSCC could erect a deer fence around the main felled area at Broadford North Wood, or construct a larger enclosure which incorporates the northern part of Broadford Community Woodland. The latter option would be facilitated if FLS ring-fences Broadford Forest.

An alternative fencing approach might be to create smaller, temporary exclosures around targeted clumps of trees.

NB the title deeds for Broadford Community Woodland appear to prohibit "the erection of any boundary walls, fences, hedges or any other defining boundary feature" along the stream which forms the current boundary between Broadford Community Woodland and Broadford North Wood. It is not clear if that means a fence cannot be exactly on top of the stream (which wouldn't be desirable or practicable anyway) or if it also prohibits a fence set back say 10m from the stream.

6.5.2 Treeshelters

Treeshelters are frequently employed on planting and restocking schemes, especially where deer fencing is uneconomic or otherwise impossible. However, they are very expensive, unsightly, and the commonly-used plastic versions are increasingly recognized as environmentally unsound.

[97] On fertile sites, where there is plenty of alternative feeding, alder will often establish without protection but this may not be case here.

Treeshelters are usually only used for broadleaves, and often not specified large enough to be out of reach of larger herbivores, which simply nibble the new shoots at the top of the shelter. They also bring a long term management commitment to maintenance, weeding and removal of shelters once no longer needed. They are probably only worth considering for small areas, or where there are small numbers of particularly vulnerable trees.

6.5.3 Alternative methods

Various other options have been trialled, from chemical repellents and provision of alternative feeding to human hair and lion dung. Most can be effective on a very small scale (i.e. domestic garden), but with the possible exception of chemical repellents such as Trico are difficult to scale up to woodland size.

One straightforward option is to accept that there will be significant losses, and seek to compensate for this by planting a much higher number of trees: trees themselves are much cheaper than fences or treeshelters and the economics of this become even more favourable when volunteer labour is available.

6.5.4 Hylobius abietis

Hylobius abietis (Large pine weevil) is a major pest of restock sites, which despite its name is a pest of many conifer and broadleaved species. There is typically a short-lived population boom after clearfelling, with larvae breeding in stumps and emerging adults feeding on the bark of newly planted trees, often ring-barking them and killing them.

Historically the primary control method involved insecticides, either before[98] or after planting, but environmental concerns have limited their use. Various alternative methods have been trialled: biological control by nematodes, and habitat mitigation by destumping, have both been found to be effective but have significant practical limitations, whilst "natural" insecticides have largely been demonstrated as ineffective.

Physical protection methods including various stem coatings have been found effective in Scandinavia, but have been trialled with limited success in Scotland; this may be due to higher Hylobius populations here, or reflect higher rainfall washing off stem coatings.

Using larger transplants for restocking can help reduce mortality as although the trees might still be heavily damaged and weakened by weevils they are considered more likely to recover.

FLS often addresses the issue of Hylobius by delaying restocking operations, leaving a five-year fallow period during which the weevil population booms and then declines. Any delayed restock at Broadford Community Woodland would have to be agreed by Scottish Forestry. Fallow periods are only effective if adjacent blocks are not felled just prior to or just after restocking.

6.5.5 Management of invasive species

As noted above, several invasive species are present in Broadford North wood, including rhododendron, fuchsia and gorse. All will need to be controlled to ensure that they do not overwhelm any restock area, and it would be preferable to ensure that rhododendron at least is eradicated from the site.

6.6 Delivery

There are six main operations to consider:

- Planning and felling permissions, and grant applications
- Construction of Access

[98] By treatment of plants at the nursery

- Harvesting, extraction and transport of timber
- Fencing
- Ground preparation
- Restocking and subsequent maintenance

There are several options as to how these various elements could be delivered: from separate contracts managed in-house by BSCC to all bundled into a single contract and tendered to timber processors or forestry management companies (FMC) such as Tilhill and Scottish Woodlands, as well as various combinations of the above. There are advantages and disadvantages to working with a FMC: they have professional expertise, access to skilled subcontractors and can purchase materials (especially trees) at preferential rates. On the other hand, they will charge a management fee, and BSCC may be able to deliver some operations at a lower cost through the use of volunteers. Local control may also give BSCC opportunities to support local businesses.

Planning and felling permissions, and grant applications

BSCC has previously made applications for planning consents and felling licences, as well as multiple grant applications, so these elements are probably best delivered in-house, with advice if necessary from the Community Woodlands Association or with short-term contract support funded by SLF.

Construction of Access

This element is probably best bundled with the timber felling work, not least because the work needs to be completed before harvesting takes place but the money to pay for it won't come till after felling is done. Additionally, the timber contractors should be familiar with the required standards and specifications.

An alternative approach might be considered if BSCC had a reliable local contractor it wanted to use, and was willing and able to carry the cashflow deficit for a while.

Harvesting, extraction and transport of timber

This is best contracted to FMC and/or timber processors: it would be very difficult for BSCC to engage harvesting and extraction subcontractors directly, and then to market controlled wood to processors, and there would be major cashflow implications arising from paying harvesting contractors before receiving income from mills (which can take several months).

Fencing

This element could be bundled with the timber harvesting work, or could be delivered under a separate contract managed by BSCC. If the preferred fencing option is a ring fence in conjunction with FLS then there may be an opportunity for joint contracting, or at least using the same contractor under two separate contracts.

Ground preparation

Again, any mounding work could be part of the main contract, or could be managed in-house by BSCC: there are likely to be potential mounding contractors available locally.

Restocking and subsequent maintenance

This work could be delivered as part of a unified contract, however, there are advantages in BSCC managing this work in-house, not least the opportunity to make cost savings through the use of volunteers. Some if not all of the seedlings required could be sourced from the community tree nursery at the Growers Hub, subject to them meeting the Plant Reproductive Material Regulation requirements.[99]

[99] https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/publications/forest-reproductive-material-regulations-controlling-seed-cuttings-and-planting-stock-for-forestry-in-great-britain-2nd-edition/

7 Development projects

A wide variety of development projects have been proposed for the Broadford North Wood once it is in community ownership. Many of these require substantial, specific further planning and development, including market research, before progressing; some necessitate capital investment and grant funding. Critically, they can't all be taken forward together – they require differing approaches to woodland management and some are mutually incompatible.

It is important to note that, just as community acquisition and management of Broadford North Wood is, by unlocking access, expected to facilitate harvesting in the existing community woodland, so it may also facilitate delivery of a wider range of projects. The assessment of potential development projects therefore covers their potential location in both the "new" wood and the "old" one, i.e. looking at potential delivery across the expanded 31ha holding, rather than just the 12ha that might be acquired from HIE.

7.1 Timber processing

The proposal to establish a timber utilisation facility was a key part of BSCC's original National Forest Land Scheme application in 2006, although there were concerns about the level of capital investment required (>£500,000 in 2006 prices), supply of material, access to markets and availability of skilled labour.

It seems unrealistic to imagine that a facility on that scale is viable now, but smaller-scale options might have potential. The 2024 Development Plan suggested that "for BSCC to make use of the timber resource and develop in house projects and other enterprise opportunities, the group could consider investing in a sawmill and timber processing yard. Once timber is extracted and stored in a yard, it could either be sold to a local buyer in whole lengths, or BSCC could add value through processing into firewood; further value could be added through processing into sawn timber to be sold for local construction projects (e.g. garden sheds). A further micro business could be established to develop a range of forest products, e.g. planters, picnic benches."

There are a number of options for adding value to local wood bundled together here, which are unpicked below. Community sawmills (Kilfinan, NSCFT at Forsinain) do exist but they and all other small scale operators have to address the same basic issues of investment, feedstock, markets and skills.

One fundamental maxim is that trees can only be used once. As demonstrated in chapter 5 above, there is a finite and fairly limited volume of standing timber in the two woods: if this needs to be sold for export to pay for access infrastructure and restocking it's not going to be available for local processing. Almost certainly therefore, a significant investment in wood processing would imply a clearfell by stages approach to harvesting, with the costs and risks that entails.

Establishing a timber processing facility would require significant capital investment. There are potential funding schemes, including the Forestry Grant Scheme Harvesting & Processing grant,[100] which supports new specialised equipment which will increase local small-scale harvesting and processing capacity, with one key aim of bringing woodlands into management, although this fund only contributes 40%, with the balance of funding coming from private funds and not from other public funds. Equally important, BSCC would need to attract and retain suitably skilled staff to operate the facility.

Likewise, commitment to wood processing also raises issues about restocking: will BSCC include productive commercial species in the restocking plan, or rely entirely on timber imported from elsewhere, or give up timber processing when local timber supplies run out?

[100] https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/harvesting-and-processing/

7.1.1 Sawn timber

Mainstream markets for sawn timber are very difficult to enter, with existing markets saturated by the products of large-scale, mechanised processors and national chains of building merchants. Large levels of capital investment in machinery and buildings are needed; additionally, most sawn timber (except larch) is treated, which requires further investment.

To justify such investment, the facility needs to operate for many years, with considerable throughput. However, as per chapter 5, there is a limited volume of Sitka timber suitable for sawing available at Broadford North, and a very limited quantity of larch in the existing community woodland and none in the new woodland.

Once these areas were felled, there would be no feedstock for future production, so unless BSCC was prepared to buy additional forest areas it would be necessary to buy timber from other growers.

If BSCC intended to process timber locally, it would necessitate a little and often approach to felling, and a slower transformation of the site to more natural habitats. Felling could be motor-manual but extraction machinery would have to be capable of handling sawlogs, and access construction would have to be commensurate with the machinery to be used.

7.1.2 Niche products

There may be more potential for BSCC to develop a business producing very specific niche products: planters, picnic benches, etc. There will also be ongoing internal demand for small amounts of sawn timber to repair and extend existing facilities and the Growers Hub, or for boardwalks etc. in the community woodland.

This would be less demanding in terms of feedstock volume and capital investment, however, it still requires suitable grade material and personnel with appropriate skills.

This option could also be taken forward very organically, with small scale production and testing in conjunction with the Men's Shed.

7.1.3 Woodfuel

A considerable number of community woodland groups have developed successful woodfuel businesses, especially in more rural areas without mains gas.

There are several advantages to a focus on woodfuel: it has lower requirements in terms of machine investment and operator skill level and is least demanding in terms of material grade: helpful when the woods that communities take on tend to be those with high proportions of lodgepole pine and poor grade spruce.

The green credentials of woodfuel cf. fossil fuels have helped attract grant aid, and the sale of firewood provides an opportunity to strengthen community relationships with local customers

Community woodfuel businesses can be structured in various ways: in many cases the community carries out everything in-house, but e.g. at Abriachan the work is franchised to a local crofter. Alternatively, if there is an existing woodfuel merchant operating in the Broadford area they could carry out the work under contract.

The basic requirements are a woodfuel processor and a well-drained area for processing and storage. Small, petrol-driven vertical processors are available and would be suitable if throughput volume was low. A larger sales volume might justify a horizontal processor and a drying / storage shed.

Woodfuel production requires harvesting operations to be little and often, which implies motor manual methods. It could utilise all the timber obtained from harvesting operations, although if there was adequate access and volume it might be more profitable to send spruce sawlogs to timber mills, whilst larch is usually more valuable when sawn or used for e.g. fencing.

Getting the logistics right (minimising handling during felling, extraction, seasoning and delivery) is critical. Felled material can usually be left stacked in the forest until such time as it is dry enough for processing.

Not all potential firewood customers will be familiar with how to manage their stock of wood once it has been delivered. BSCC could offer advice on the storage and stacking of firewood prior to use, and there is a potential additional market in the sale of firewood storage and shelters.

It would be possible for BSCC to develop a small woodfuel business based entirely on the existing community wood, although the total volume available is relatively small, which may make it difficult to justify the necessary levels of investment in machinery. Whilst the acquisition of Broadford North Wood appears to considerably expand the potential scale of a community woodfuel business, the age and poor ground conditions do not favour delaying harvesting over a long period of time to facilitate woodfuel production.

An alternative approach would be to contract thinning works to a local firewood merchant: this would reduce returns but obviate the need to invest in harvesting, extraction and firewood processing capacity and machinery. A further option might be to contract harvesting operations, with BSCC taking on the processing and sale of firewood.

7.2 Woodland crofts[101]

Woodland crofts[102] are a great opportunity for individuals and communities to build lives and livelihoods based on a woodland resource. Several community woodland groups, including North West Mull Community Woodland Company and Kilfinan Forest Trust have established woodland crofts, while the Dunvegan Community Trust is currently progressing the acquisition of a small woodland at Orbost from HIE for woodland croft creation.

Crofting is regulated by the Crofting Commission, with woodland crofters having the same rights and responsibilities as any other crofters. The woodland aspects of croft management are regulated by Scottish Forestry, and again, woodland crofts are subject to the same rules (e.g. on Woodland Removal) and have access to the same grants as other woodland managers.

Crofters can be either tenants or owner-occupier crofters, and a community landowner looking to create new crofts can consider either letting them or selling them to owner-occupier crofters. A croft tenancy will usually be the more affordable option of the two and therefore likely to be more accessible to local budgets. In either case, mechanisms are available to enable community landowners to control the occupation and use of the croft, in order to avoid many of the problems which have undermined crofting more generally, such as absenteeism, neglect, and speculation on croft land.

For individual crofters, a croft can provide a place to live and a site for a business, an opportunity to contribute to their household needs in food and fuel, and crucially, security of tenure. Demand for woodland crofts is often driven by the potential for housing provision. Croft house sites are often on the croft but this is not essential: the Orbost proposal involves the provision of two house sites at a separate location where suitable servicing and access can be provided.

For the community landowner, the benefits of creating new crofts are the provision of support for local enterprise and the contribution to tackling the shortage of affordable housing. There will also

[101] See Appendix 2 for additional information on the process of creating Woodland Crofts

[102] A croft is a unit of land whose occupation and cultivation is subject to the Crofting Acts and is recorded in the Crofters Commission Register of Crofts. A woodland croft is a croft with sufficient tree cover overall to be considered a woodland under UK forestry policy; it is thus subject to forestry regulation. However, it is important to note that "woodland croft" is a descriptive term only: crofting legislation does not recognise woodland crofts as distinct from any other croft.

be some financial benefit from entry fee and annual rent if tenanted, and potentially some savings in the costs of woodland management if these are devolved to the crofter, but there will also be significant set-up costs and (much lower) ongoing costs as a landowner.

As noted above, the Crofting Commission guidance suggests that new crofts should cover a minimum of 3 hectares. If BSCC acquire Broadford North Wood, there would be considerable scope within the expanded ~31ha community holding to create 2 or 3 new crofts. Provision of suitable serviced house sites, access for management and minimizing conflict with other woodland activities would be key considerations for design and layout of any new crofts.

Woodland croft development is feasible within the existing Broadford Community Woodland, but would be greatly facilitated by acquisition of Broadford North and the subsequent development of an access route from the industrial estate.

In particular, the most likely location for any croft housing would be at the southern edge of Broadford North Wood, where access and servicing would be easiest.

7.3 Glamping pods

As described in section 2.6.2 the community owned Camping Skye has proved very successful since opening in 2018, and there appears to be potential for more tourist accommodation. There may be scope to expand the site and also enhance the offer through the provision of glamping pods. These are available in a range of designs from multiple suppliers, and have proved very popular across the Highlands.

The 2024 Development Plan suggested that BSCC could adopt a low cost build approach to this project and construct them using local timber from the forest and labour; this would be dependent both on establishing a timber processing facility and ensuring suitably skilled labour, and as noted above this seems unlikely.

Further market research would be required before progressing, to assess potential demand and avoid direct competition with other local providers: this will be essential to secure grant aid for this project.

It is likely that any expansion of tourist provision (by glamping pods or by expansion of existing hardstandings or tent pitches) would take place within the existing community woodland: a large part of Broadford North Woodland might be ruled out by the location downwind from the water treatment works.

7.4 Amenity and recreation

Development of the forest amenity was the most popular future project in the 2024 community consultation. This may reflect the limited public access to the existing community woodland, and it would of course be possible to improve this substantially without acquiring the Broadford North Wood.

If BSCC develops options which generate high footfall, or are seeking to widen accessibility, it will be necessary to consider car parking provision: not everyone can walk from the village.

7.4.1 Paths

There are various potential new path routes, covering both the existing community woodland and the potential acquisition area.

Acquiring the Broadford North Wood would enable the construction of a link route between the village and the existing FLS/BSCC path, by filling the ~500m gap to the track to the telecoms mast: this missing link was highlighted in the recent Paths for People report commissioned by BSCC. Part of this route crosses land already owned by BSCC.

If a new access were to be created at the south of the wood to facilitate timber harvesting and extraction, this could subsequently be used as a public path, although it might be preferable to separate management use and public recreation as much as possible.[103]

There is considerable potential for less formal paths, not least the short length of path at the existing access at the north-west corner of the Growers Hub which could be extended to provide access into both Broadford Community Woodland and the Broadford North wood at its south-western corner.

7.4.2 Benches and shelter

Provision of simple bench seats at regular intervals along main paths can greatly enhance accessibility and inclusion, with very low cost (especially if produced by the Men's Shed) and minimal maintenance requirements.

A number of community woodlands have found that installation of a simple roofed shelter is an effective means of increasing the recreational and community value of the wood, providing a focus for activity as well as a shelter for visitors, volunteers and forest school participants during poor weather.

There is a wide range of possible designs and specifications: a shelter at Broadford, perhaps near the north end of the woodland, would likely be towards the smaller / simpler end of the scale, and designed to minimise ongoing maintenance costs. It could be constructed as part of a larger project for the volunteer group.

7.4.3 Waymarking, interpretation and art

Low-key and consistent waymarking will be welcomed by visitors and those less familiar with routes.

Interpretation is often a matter of taste: a useful principle is that it should only be used when there is something worth interpreting!

Several community woodland groups have developed their woodlands as venues for art installations & sculptures, including both ephemeral projects that use natural resources or more permanent works such as sculpture trails.

Some projects reflect the local culture and heritage, for example a poetry trail[104] using new or existing poems or ballads of the local area; or an installation inspired by the Gaelic tree alphabet.[105]

7.4.4 Play area

The 2024 Development Plan proposed the development of a forest play area, which would also provide an extended facility for Corry Capers Outdoor Learning, and an additional attraction for visitors to Camping Skye.

Providing suitable pedestrian access and convenient car parking would be important considerations, and such a facility might be best located in the existing community woodland, adjacent to or within the Growers Hub or campsite areas.

It could possibly be constructed from local timber, with volunteer involvement, but it would have to meet all relevant construction standards for insurance purposes.

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[103] Partly for H&S reasons, but mainly because management access can cause damage to paths, which necessitates more frequent repair if they are also main pedestrian routes.
[104] E.g. https://www.corbenicpoetrypath.com/
[105] https://nswg.org.uk/the-gaelic-tree-spiral/

7.5 Volunteering

Voluntary involvement is an important key component of the community development benefits arising from community woodland ownership, contributing to community cohesion and providing health and wellbeing benefits to participants. Whilst some forest management operations will necessitate the use of appropriately skilled and qualified professional contractors (e.g. felling of mature trees), many other activities can be carried out by volunteers.

BSCC could establish and equip a regular volunteer group to undertake practical management tasks in the woods, including:

- Path creation and maintenance (including control of pathside vegetation)
- Tree planting and maintenance
- Fence inspection and repair
- Control of invasive species (rhododendron, fuchsia, gorse)
- Enhancement of non-woodland habitats
- Surveys of woodland and non-woodland habitats

The volunteer group could also take forward specific projects, such as the installation of a woodland shelter, and be involved in the operation of a Christmas tree growing facility.

Experience from other community woodland groups suggests that establishing standard dates (i.e. same time / day of the week or month) for a volunteer group is an effective way of encouraging regular attendance and fostering camaraderie amongst volunteers. Some potential volunteers will prefer weekends and others midweek opportunities: it may take some experimentation to find the most convenient dates for the greatest number of volunteers.

In the consultation for the 2024 Development Plan, 28% of respondents answer "yes" and a further 12% "maybe" to the question "Would you interested in volunteering at Broadford Community Woodland" so it should be possible to develop a regular monthly work party with an average of 6 volunteers.

BSCC would need to acquire appropriate tools and personal protective equipment (PPE) for volunteers, ensure that appropriate insurances are held and risk assessments made and arrange for promotion of opportunities and management and training of volunteers. There are various funding options for volunteer development projects, including the Scottish Forestry Community Fund.[106]

7.6 Environment and biodiversity

The replacement of conifer monocultures with native broadleaved species, or with a mix of broadleaves and conifers, with increased areas of open ground habitats, will in itself bring significant environmental benefits.

Peatland and wetland restoration could be a particular focus, with the removal of tree cover in the north-eastern triangle facilitating peatland restoration and the careful management of restocking and regeneration to enable wetland development.

7.7 Christmas trees

The 2017 Forest Plan noted that "Planting Christmas trees amongst native trees as a "nurse" species may be a source of future income" and the 2024 Development Plan suggested that a separate area within the wood could be allocated for this purpose, and that BSCC could seek to address the sustainability issues around "single use" trees by e.g. selling or renting potted trees, or offering a return and mulch facility.

[106] https://www.forestry.gov.scot/forests-people/communities/community-fund

A range of species are grown, from the traditional Norway spruce and Scots pine to lodgepole pine and various more exotic species, including Nordmann, Noble and Fraser firs, Omorika and blue spruce. Some species are more site demanding than others, but all need to be grown on reasonable soils with fair drainage and good access: the lower sections of Broadford North Wood might be suitable.

Whilst large-scale commercial Christmas tree growing is an industrial, mechanised business there is still scope for a less intensive approach, and a number of community woodlands sell Christmas trees and this could be a profitable business opportunity for BSCC (assuming there isn't already a local business).

7.8 Green burials

Green, or natural, burial is the interment of a person's body in a manner that allows the body to recycle naturally, and has become an increasingly popular alternative to other contemporary Western burial methods in recent decades, as a response to both the environmental impact and the cost of conventional funeral care. There is no single definition of what constitutes a green burial, but key components are usually:

- The site serves a conservation purpose.
- Sustainable materials are used for the coffin or shroud.
- There is limited or no demarcation or personalisation of the grave.

Whilst the idea of being buried amongst mature trees may seem attractive, for practical reasons most "woodland" burial grounds are either new woodland sites or clearfelled areas with stump removal and landscaping taking place prior to restocking.

There are around 300 dedicated natural burial grounds the UK, including over 20 in Scotland. The Findhorn Hinterland Trust (FHT)[107] has operated a green burial site at Wilkie's Wood for ~10 years and several other groups are actively developing green burial projects, to meet a range of objectives:

- as a commercial operation to support the community management of the woodland
- to create or support a part-time job
- to deliver a service for the community, particularly in those areas with limited or no alternative burial provision
- to develop a deeper sense of connection between the community and the woodland.

Proposals to establish new burial grounds are assessed by Local Authorities and SEPA; any new burial site is a material change of use and will require full planning permission. The Local Authority roads department[108] determines the access infrastructure required: this can be the biggest cost. The potential for the cemetery to impact on groundwater will be assessed by SEPA, whose officials work to cemeteries guidance.[109] Key considerations are the depth of unsaturated soil available:

- The soil cover above the coffin or shroud should not be less than 1m.
- The base of the grave should be 1m above bedrock or the seasonal high groundwater level.
- The distance from watercourses - SEPA recommends that burials should not be:
    - within 250 metres of any groundwater abstraction; namely any spring, well or borehole used as a source of drinking water
    - Within 50 metres of any other spring, well or borehole or any watercourse

[107] https://www.findhornhinterland.org/green-burial/
[108] Some local authorities expect access to be at the standard necessary for emergency vehicles and tend to default to local authority adoptable standard, although this is not a legal requirement.
[109] http://www.sepa.org.uk/media/143364/lups-gu32-guidance-on-assessing-the-impacts-of-cemetries-on-groundwater.pdf

- Within 10 metres of a field drain.

These constraints might present significant challenges to the establishment of a burial site at Broadford North or Broadford Community Woodland.

7.8.1 Ashes

Given the constraints to burial noted above, it might be preferable to focus on cremation burials, which are considered to present a lesser risk to the water environment, and subsequently face fewer restrictions on soil depth. Cremated remains should not be interred below the water table, and it is considered preferable, but not essential, to maintain >1m between the planned depth of the buried cremated remains and the annual maximum water table.

An average spacing of at least 0.5m between individual cremated remains is recommended. At the discretion of the Local Authority the burial depth may be less than a metre. However, standoff requirements from water features (as above) should be maintained. If urns are used, SEPA recommended they are composed of either inert (e.g. ceramic) or biodegradable (e.g. wood) materials.

7.8.2 Commemorative trees

A further, related alternative is the development of a business selling commemorative trees (with or without interment of ashes).

There are two main models: BSCC could simply invite contributions to more general tree planting activity. This model has been adopted by both Trees for Life[110] and the Woodland Trust[111] but its viability depends on having high brand recognition, an effective marketing and processing infrastructure and a large and ongoing volume of tree planting work for customers to contribute to, none of which apply to BSCC.

A more promising option for BSCC might be to concentrate on the high value sales of planting identifiable individual trees. There are higher costs involved as this requires a (reasonably) accessible area, bigger trees, which could be grown on by the tree nursery, plus systems for recording / identifying (and replacing if necessary) individual trees. It would require a specific area to be set aside: for various reasons it wouldn't work to do this in an area being grant aided for restocking.[112]

7.8.3 Development and management

Depending on the site there can be significant set-up costs in site clearance and access provision, and then on-going management costs: whilst green burial sites are expected to be rather more "natural" than highly manicured municipal burial grounds, some site maintenance is required to ensure that it does not become overgrown.

There are also costs in business management and promotion. The Findhorn Hinterland Trust engages a specialist funeral co-ordinator, whose role includes liaison with funeral directors, family and all other requirements for an individual's funeral such as supply of coffin, etc.

Potential customers will need to be assured that arrangements for the management of the site are secured in perpetuity, and if taking advance payment for services, such as the long term care of the plot then bonds or insurance to protect the customers' investment will be required. Funerals typically involve services of other businesses: funeral directors as well as florists, catering, venues: there are opportunities to develop partnerships with local suppliers.

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[110] https://treesforlife.org.uk/support/plant-a-tree/

[111] https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/support-us/give/dedications/

[112] The grant aided restocking must be complete by a specific date (rather than spread out over several years), and be at a higher density than would be appropriate for commemorative trees.

Charges[113] for green burials vary, with some sites charging a premium for more scenic locations, whilst others are benchmarked to Local Authority rates. Fees have several components, notably reservation of the lair, the interment itself and the long term maintenance of the site, some of which may be payable in advance. In 2013 FHT introduced a "Pay now, die later" scheme which brought in considerable income through reservations.

7.9 Wind turbine

Camping Skye has proved successful but rising energy costs are a concern. One potential solution would be install a wind turbine to both provide electricity for the campsite (and possibly other community buildings) and as a revenue generator for BSCC through export (the campsite is closed for 4-5 months each year).

The 2024 Development Plan provided some basic estimates of installation costs, annual generation and rate of return, but noted that a much more detailed feasibility study would be required before any project could be progressed. There are already three small wind turbines at the water treatment works, which suggests at least that the site is suitably windy, however there are a great number of issues that have to be addressed, not least grid connection, before a turbine could be erected, and many apparently viable schemes have stalled or been abandoned.

Wind turbines can be controversial within local communities, however a small scale, community led scheme may provoke less opposition, and it is worth noting that this idea had a fairly positive response in the 2024 consultation.

There might be marginally higher wind speeds at the highest point of Broadford North Wood than adjacent to the campsite, but there seems no obvious reason why this project could not be taken forward on the land already in BSCC ownership.

7.10 Woodland skills and training

The acquisition of the extended area of woodland provides an opportunity to develop skills-based learning initiatives.

In the short term BSCC could utilise existing infrastructure at the Growers Hub (e.g. the meeting room in the Office) and focus on developing and servicing the local hobby and tourist markets, rather than attempting to develop new facilities and provide skills for employment.

Topics offered could involve both guided walks and talks: tree ID, bat walks, etc., and practical skills: green woodworking, including pole lathes, and craftwork; although the programme will be dependent on identifying suitable leaders and trainers.

7.11 Health and wellbeing

The Growers Hub already hosts the Flourish Together horticultural therapy programme and the Men's Shed, but there is scope to enhance BSCC's health and wellbeing work, e.g. by developing a Branching Out programme.[114] Branching Out is a woodland-based therapeutic programme designed to enhance users' mental health and well-being, getting participants of the house, socialising (if desired), and taking part in activities either alone or as part of a group.

Originally developed in conjunction with Forestry Commission Scotland, it is now community led, with established Branching Out groups at Abriachan, Dunnet, North Sutherland, etc.

Activities are adapted to suit the client group, site and time of year, and generally include:

- physical activity such as health walks and tai chi

[113] See https://www.findhornhinterland.org/green-burial/burial-costs/ for a schedule of charges

[114] https://www.forestry.gov.scot/forests-people/health-strategy/branching-out

- conservation activities such as rhododendron clearance and bird box construction
- bushcraft such as fire lighting and shelter building
- environmental art such as photography and willow sculptures.

7.12 Staffing and infrastructure

Some of the potential projects listed above could be taken forward entirely by external contractors, with BSCC staff and / or Directors taking an oversight role, however, many projects will require "hands-on" management from BSCC, and there is not currently anyone in the staff team with responsibility for the community woodland.

If these projects are to be taken forward it seems necessary for BSCC to employ[115] a community woodland manager with specific responsibility for the woodlands and the delivery of these projects. Several Scottish community woodland groups, particularly those with larger woods or more ambitious plans, employ community woodland managers; this has various advantages:

- creating local employment (increasing the economic benefit of the woodland is often an objective of the group)
- buying in skills and experience which aren't available within the Board or membership
- increasing the capacity of the group to deliver benefits and achieve outcomes and reducing the workload on a volunteer Board and membership
- representing the organisation to funders and regulators who may be reassured that the community body has experienced and qualified staff in place
- as a tangible sign of community ownership and an effective link between woodland users and the community woodland group.

The community woodland manager role usually covers a very wide job description and often includes elements of what might in other circumstances be three separate jobs:

- Forester: concerned with forest and land management, they may do some "hands-on" forestry as well as managing contractors and processing forestry grants.
- Business Manager: concerned with the future business development of the community company, developing projects (crofts, housing, renewables), bringing in investment etc.
- Community Ranger: focussing on community engagement, working with local community, schools, visitors, user groups with specific needs.

The balance between these components will vary according to local context, but also over time as the needs of the community group and the woodland evolve. At BSCC the job description of the role will reflect the balance of projects to be taken forward but will likely cover both the Forest Manager and Community Ranger aspects: larger scale business development projects may be managed by other staff. Additional infrastructure may be necessary at the Growers Hub to host the community woodland manager and the various projects being undertaken:

- Office space and equipment for the community forest manager
- Storage spaces for tools and equipment
- Sheltered briefing / lunch space for volunteers.

7.13 Analysis

There are a considerable number of woodland development projects which could be taken forward by BSCC. Most could be delivered in either Broadford Community Woodland or Broadford North Wood, and many may be more appropriate in the existing community woodland.

[115] This could be a direct employee or a self-employed contractor

The existing infrastructure at the Growers Hub is a logical base for many developments. Whilst few options are completely dependent on the acquisition of Broadford North Wood, the scope and potential of many options will be enhanced by the acquisition, as demonstrated in the table below.

Project	Feasibility	Location	Dependent on acquiring BNW?
Sawmill	Low	Either	Yes, but project has low feasibility even with BNW acquisition
Niche woodproducts	Moderate	Growers Hub	No
Woodfuel	Moderate/high	Growers Hub	No, but BNW increases potential feedstock
Woodland crofts	Moderate/high	BNW, probably	Yes, probably
Glamping pods	Moderate	BCW, probably	No
Link path	High	Both	Yes
Other recreation infrastructure	High	Both	No, but acquiring BNW would increase scope
Play area	Moderate/High	Growers Hub	No
Volunteers	High	Both	No, but acquiring BNW would increase opportunities and scope
Peatland/wetland	High	Mostly BCW	No
Xmas trees	Moderate/high	Either	No, but acquiring BNW would increase potential
Burials	Low	Either	No
Ashes	Moderate	Either	No, but acquiring BNW would increase potential
Wind turbine	Moderate	BCW	No
Woodland skills and training	Moderate/high	Growers Hub	No, but acquiring BNW would increase scope
Health and wellbeing	High	Growers Hub	No, but acquiring BNW would increase scope

Table 12: summary of potential development projects

8 Acquisition process and tenure options

Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 gives eligible community bodies the right to make asset transfer requests (ATR) in relation to purchase, lease or other rights over land owned or managed by Scottish public authorities, including Highland & Islands Enterprise. The Scottish Government has produced guidance for both community bodies[116] and public bodies,[117] whilst HIE has produced its own guidance for community bodies.[118]

Key elements of the provisions are:

- Only an eligible community transfer body can make an ATR. Eligibility requirements differ according to whether the body wishes to use, occupy, lease or own the asset.
- ATRs can be made in relation to any land or building that is owned or leased by the public body.
- When making an ATR the community body must set out the reason for making the request, the benefits of the proposal, and the price it is prepared to pay (thus giving community bodies the opportunity to request a discount against market value, to reflect the additional community benefits that community ownership will deliver).
- Once the public body has received a competent ATR, it is not allowed to transfer the property to anyone else until the ATR process has been completed.

Public bodies must assess ATRs against a specified list of criteria and must agree to the request unless there are reasonable grounds for refusal. The criteria are:

- The reason for the request.
- Whether agreeing to the request will promote or improve:
  - Economic development,
  - Regeneration,
  - Public health,
  - Social wellbeing,
  - Environmental wellbeing.
- Whether agreeing to the request will reduce socio-economic inequalities.
- Benefits that might arise from alternative proposals regarding the asset.
- Any obligations that may prevent, restrict or otherwise affect the public body's ability to agree to the request.

The public body must make its decision within 6 months of the "validation date", which is when it receives a complete application from an eligible community body. In practice, as there is a one-month period for public comments and a similar time for the community body to respond, decisions on asset transfer requests are rarely made before at least 4 months have passed.

HIE has not developed a bespoke asset transfer scheme or application form, but uses the model provided by the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government has produced step by step guidance for community bodies.[119]

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[116] https://www.gov.scot/publications/asset-transfer-under-community-empowerment-scotland-act-2015-guidance-community/

[117] https://www.gov.scot/publications/asset-transfer-under-community-empowerment-scotland-act-2015-guidance-relevant/

[118] https://www.hie.co.uk/media/5110/assetplustransferplusrequestsplus-plusguidance-1.pdf

[119] https://www.gov.scot/publications/asset-transfer-under-community-empowerment-scotland-act-2015-guidance-community-9781786527509/documents/

To date HIE has received and approved one ATR, from Unst Partnership Ltd (UP), to purchase a light industrial unit. In May 2025 HIE received an ATR from Moray Waste Busters to purchase Strathcona House in the Enterprise Business Park in Forres. An asset transfer request to HIE by Dunvegan Community Trust for two small woods at Orbost in NW Skye is currently in progress.

HIE has also sold a number of properties to communities by negotiation (i.e. outwith the formal AT process). It is not mandatory for public bodies to require that community body uses the formal processes set out in the asset transfer provisions: transfers of land (or rights to land) can take place by negotiation if both parties are willing. Such negotiated sales can allow transfers to be expedited compared to the statutory timetables, although they do not provide the opportunity for community bodies to request a discount or lodge an appeal.

8.1 Valuation

A "Red Book" valuation of the Broadford North Wood was commissioned jointly by BSCC and HIE. This was carried out in May 2025 by Dr Ben Lennon of Bowlts. The market value[120] of the woodland was assessed as "in the region of £31,000."

8.2 Funding for acquisition

The primary funding source for acquisition will be the Scottish Land Fund (SLF),[121] which supports communities to become more resilient and sustainable through the ownership and management of land and land assets.

SLF can fund capital and some revenue costs associated with the acquisition of assets. The indicative minimum amount for stage 2 SLF acquisition grants is £5,000, and the maximum grant is £1,000,000. SLF will also fund reasonable professional, title mapping and legal fees associated with the purchase.

"Capital costs" means a grant towards the value of the land, land assets and buildings as determined by an independent open market valuation, which must be current, i.e. less than 6 months old. The purchase price may be higher than this. SLF can contribute up to 95% of the market value, so a minimum of 5% of the funding must come from other sources: this could include other funders, community shares, a negotiated discount on the valuation, or the community's own fundraising.

Communities can usually also request a small amount of initial post-acquisition revenue funding, but the scope for doing so in this case is limited by the impending closure of the Scottish Land Fund in March 2026. It might however be possible to apply for support for the costs of a forestry professional to help prepare a felling licence if this could be delivered under contract (and perhaps paid up front).

8.2.1 Discount

The asset transfer provisions in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act give community bodies such as BSCC the opportunity to request a discount against the market value, to reflect the additional community benefits that community ownership will deliver. The Act does not prescribe the methodology by which such discounts are calculated, nor the basis on which public bodies agree or refuse discount requests.

Since the introduction of the asset transfer provision in 2017, community bodies have used a wide variety of arguments for discount when acquiring woods from public bodies: primarily Forestry Commission Scotland / Forestry and Land Scotland and Local Authorities, but also HIE and Scottish Natural Heritage.

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[120] "the estimated amount for which an asset or liability should exchange on the valuation date between a willing buyer and a willing seller in an arm's length transaction after proper marketing and where the parties had each acted knowledgeably, prudently and without compulsion"

[121] https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/scottish-land-fund

The usual methodology is to calculate the "cash value" of the additional benefits over the first five years of community ownership, and subtract this from the market value; i.e., if the agreed value of benefits is £50,000, the discount will be £50,000 regardless of whether the market value is £100,000 or £200,000.

8.3 Alternative tenure options

The asset transfer provisions cover purchase, lease and other rights over land owned or managed by Scottish public authorities.

The most appropriate option for community bodies will generally reflect their objectives and aspirations for the land: some projects demand ownership, others can be delivered effectively under alternative tenure models.

Community ownership brings more rights and responsibilities and is often essential to secure support from funders and investors, but in some situations it may be preferable for the community not to take on the full liability of ownership.

8.3.1 Lease

BSCC could make an asset transfer request to lease the woodland from HIE. This might be appropriate if the community's intentions were to use the site for recreation and amenity, but the need to fell and restock the existing stands, and invest in access for timber haulage, makes ownership a more suitable option.

8.3.2 Management agreement

Likewise, BSCC could make an asset transfer request to occupy the woodland under a management agreement with HIE, but as with a lease this would be unsatisfactory for both parties, for much the same reasons.

9 Acquisition

There are two potential acquisition processes: an asset transfer request or a negotiated sale, as described in sections 9.1 and 9.2 below.

9.1 Asset transfer request

Acquisition of the wood from Highlands and Islands Enterprise was initially expected to take place under the asset transfer provisions of Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

The market value of the woodland was assessed as £31,000. HIE have opted to tax the supply of land so the gross price will be £37,200.

BSCC will seek to acquire an additional small plot, to the south of the property, to facilitate access (option 3): no additional cost has been included for this plot.

An asset transfer request (ATR) must state the price that the Community Body is offering to pay for the asset, this can be at market value as assessed by an independent valuer or at a lower amount, with the discount requested being justified in terms of the additional public benefit to be delivered.

BSCC intend to request a discount of £17,280 (details in 9.1.2 below) based on the levels of public benefit expected to accrue from the employment of a community woodland manager and the work of volunteers: the ATR will therefore state a price of £19,920.

BSCC's legal costs are estimated at £6,000, inclusive of VAT.[122]

9.1.1 Funding for acquisition

BSCC will apply for £25,920, to the Scottish Land Fund (SLF), to cover the net purchase price and legal fees, as tabulated below.

Item		**£**
Acquisition costs	Market valuation (£31k + VAT)	37,200
	Additional area for access	-
	Discount	- 17,280
Subtotal		19,920
Legal fees		6,000
Total		**25,920**
Scottish Land Fund	100%	25,920
Total		**25,920**

Table 13: Acquisition costs and income.

9.1.2 Calculation of discount

Community acquisition, management and development of Broadford North Wood will deliver wide-ranging public benefits, however, whilst it is easier to list these benefits than to attribute an economic value to them: some are subjective and / or intangible, others are indirect and thus hard to quantify.

Accordingly, a very conservative approach has been taken here, with the public benefit from only two areas of activity quantified. Additionally, only the first five years of benefit for each area of activity has been calculated. Given this conservative approach and for simplicity, future values have not been discounted; it is not considered that this makes a substantial impact on the calculations.

BSCC intend to request a discount of £17,280 on the market value, based on the following two areas of activity: employment of a Community Woodland Manager and the value of volunteering.

[122] Based on indicative quotes

Item	year 1	year 2	year 3	year 4	year 5	Total
CWM employment	2,191	2,259	2,329	2,401	2,475	11,653
Volunteers	1,282	1,282	1,282	1,282	1,282	6,410
Total						**18,063**

Table 14: Discount calculations.

Employment of Community Woodland Manager

BSCC will employ a Community Woodland Manager: the additional job will have a positive local economic effect. Whilst the majority of the funding for this role will come from public funds, BSCC will make a contribution 10% to salary, pension and ENIC costs from its own funds.

Over 5 years the direct value of this investment in the local economy is £11,653, with an additional indirect contribution through multiplier effects.

Volunteering

Volunteering delivers a range of benefits, to the individual, to the beneficiary/host, and to society at large e.g. through the reduced societal costs arising from improved mental and physical health and social cohesion.

A monthly work party, with an average attendance of 5, working for 3.5 hours, is 210 person hours per year. Basing the economic value of this on the National Living Wage (NLW)[123] of £12.21 per hour, the net value of the outputs would be £2,564 per year, or in excess of £12,800 over 5 years. Taking a very conservative view that the value of outputs would only be 50% of the NLW, the economic value would be £6,410 over five years

Summary

The total direct value of these two elements is in excess of £18,000 over five years. The discount request has been rounded down to £17,280, which equates to 40% of the total acquisition cost.

9.2 Negotiated sale

There is an alternative acquisition process by which HIE and BSCC negotiate a sale without using the formal Asset Transfer mechanism. HIE would sell the wood to BSCC at market value, but provide grant aid in lieu of a discount: this obviates the need for BSCC to submit an asset transfer request to obtain a discount, which could expedite the transfer.

The table below shows the funding model for this alternative acquisition process: the gross costs are the same as table 13 above, as is the grant request of £25,920 to SLF, but the discount of £17,280 is replaced by grant aid from HIE to the same value.

Item		£
Acquisition costs	Market valuation (£31k + VAT)	37,200
	Additional area for access	
Legal fees		6,000
Total		**43,200**
Scottish Land Fund	60%	25,920
HIE grant	40%	17,280
Total		**43,200**

Table 15: Alternative funding model for acquisition

[123] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-national-minimum-wage-in-2024

10 Woodland Management Proposals

10.1 Management and governance

Post-acquisition, overall responsibility for management of Broadford North Wood and Broadford Community Woodland will be vested in the Board of BSCC, which will establish a woodland sub-group focusing on the delivery of the woodland management plan.

Directors will be identified to fill two key roles

- Line Manager for the Community Woodland Manager (see below)
- Safety officer, responsible for ensuring appropriate insurances are maintained, oversight of risk assessments for activities in the woodland and compliance with relevant Health and Safety legislation.

BSCC will seek appropriate professional assistance to support the Board and Community Woodland Manager as required. BSCC is a member of the Community Woodlands Association (CWA)[124] which provides advice, assistance and information, and organises training and networking events on a range of topics to community woodland groups across Scotland. In addition to support delivered "in-house", CWA operates a "mentor" scheme by which private sector foresters are available to give practical advice and support to CWA member groups on an ad-hoc basis.

10.1.1 Immediate post-acquisition project management

The BSCC Community Co-ordinators will have overall responsibility for managing the asset transfer and fundraising processes, and for the immediate post-acquisition actions, including funding applications, land registration and insurance.

BSCC will engage the services of a forestry consultant to provide professional advice and support to the Community Co-ordinators and the BSCC Board in the period immediately pre- and post-acquisition: broadly from November 2025 to May 2026.

The key elements of the role will be:

- Land registration: the consultant will advise Community Coordinator on registration of BNW and BCW with SGRPID.
- Work planning: the consultant will advise on priorities / work to be undertaken in the period before Community Woodland Manager can be recruited.
- Funding application support: the consultant will provide expert input and advice, based on information in the Feasibility Study, to support the long term funding package for the woodlands.
- Woodland Management Plan: the consultant will advise on the development and prepare a draft Woodland Management Plan covering both BCW and BNW, and liaise with Scottish Forestry to ensure the plan meets SF's requirement
- Felling permission: the consultant will advise on the application for felling permission and (if necessary) any application for planning consent.

The financial plan includes a cost of £4,700 for this role, with £3,700 from an SLF revenue grant and £1,000 from BSCC's own funds.[125]

[124] https://www.communitywoods.org/

[125] SLF revenue funding has to be spent by March 2026 but including a contribution from BSCC should allow the role to continue into the next financial year.

10.2 Community Woodland Manager

BSCC will recruit a part-time (0.6 FTE) Community Woodland Manager (CWM) to manage the woodlands and deliver the BSCC Woodland Management Plan.

This will be a 5-year post, part-funded by the National Lottery Community Action Fund and BSCC's own funds (including any surplus from timber harvesting). It could be offered as a contract role but is more likely, given the length of post, to be a direct employee. The CWM starting salary will be £32,000 pro rata.

A draft job description is included as Appendix 4.

The key responsibilities of the role will include:

- Completion of the Woodland Management Plan if necessary and any associated funding applications, and the implementation of the plan.
- Promoting and coordinating community involvement in the management of the woodland, and developing the woodland as a venue for community volunteering.
- Tendering for and managing timber harvesting and other contractors.
- Developing additional projects e.g. woodfuel, Christmas trees, commemorative trees, to generate income streams to support the long-term sustainability of the community woodlands.

Employment costs for the Community Woodland Manager are shown in the table below

	year 1	year 2	year 3	year 4	year 5
Recruitment	500.00				
Salary	19,200.00	19,776.00	20,369.28	20,980.36	21,609.77
Pension	576.00	593.28	611.08	629.41	648.29
ENIC	2,129.40	2,215.80	2,304.79	2,396.45	2,490.87
Travel & Subsistence	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00
Total	**22,905.40**	**23,085.08**	**23,785.15**	**24,506.22**	**25,248.93**

Table 16: Employment costs for Community Woodland Manager

Assumptions:

- Recruitment advertising in various online listings, e.g. Community Jobs Service[126] and Environmental Job.[127]
- Salary at £32,000 pro-rata (3 days/week) with annual 3% increase.
- Employer Pension contribution at 3% of annual salary.
- Employers National Insurance Contribution calculated at 2025-26 threshold and rates.[128]
- A small T&S budget has been added for necessary journeys in the course of the role.

10.2.1 Office space, set-up and governance costs

BSCC will identify and equip appropriate office space for the Community Woodland Manager. They will initially be hosted in the Growers Hub Office, however BSCC will explore developing additional facilities to provide a dedicated base for the community woodland manager and volunteer groups working in the woodland.

Office set-up costs, consumables and sundry expenses associated with the CWM post are estimated at £1,500 in year 1, £500/annum thereafter.

[126] https://www.countryside-jobs.com/advertise
[127] https://www.environmentjob.co.uk/advertise
[128] https://www.gov.uk/national-insurance-rates-letters

There are other annual recurring costs associated with management and governance of the woodlands, such a contribution to BSCC insurances and annual accounts; the additional governance costs to BSCC of woodland acquisition management are estimated at £500/annum.[129]

Potential cost for an additional building have not been included in the financial plan.

	year 1	year 2	year 3	year 4	year 5
Set-up	1,500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00
BSCC	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00
Total	**2,000.00**	**1,000.00**	**1,000.00**	**1,000.00**	**1,000.00**

Table 17: Set-up and governance costs

10.2.2 Equipment

The work of the Community Woodland Manager would be greatly enhanced by access to an all-terrain vehicle: either a quadbike or a UTV (e.g. Polaris Ranger) and trailer.[130] This would facilitate layout of materials (trees for planting, wood and stone for paths) and the extraction of small volumes of timber/firewood. The vehicle and trailer could be purchased, new or second-hand (if funders agreed), or leased/hired if such an arrangement was feasible. Appropriate insurance and secure storage would be required. The financial plan budgets £15,000 for vehicle, trailer and shipping container for storage, with £1,000 per annum for fuel and insurance. Other tools are included in the volunteering section below.

10.3 Timber harvesting

Various permutations of harvesting, fencing and restocking have been considered, with two main options costed out as follows. (see Map 3)

Option 1

Under this option, Broadford North Wood would be clearfelled, ring-fenced and restocked, but the only immediate felling in Broadford Community Woodland would be the (very small) Block F, which would subsequently be restored to peatland. This option would leave most of the timber stands in BCW in place, giving the greatest opportunity for developing some local use of the wood: i.e. as woodfuel and possibly with small volumes sawn for internal use or sale, however, BCW would not be protected from deer, and additional costs would be incurred in the future if and when BSCC carried out further restructuring works.

Option 2

This option differs from option 1 in that Blocks C & E in Broadford Community Woodland would also be felled and restocked, and a much wider area would be enclosed by deer fencing, which might be able to take advantage of a ring fence around Broadford Forest by FLS. This allows a more rapid transformation of BCW, but reduces the volume of material available for woodfuel. Timber extraction would have to cross the stream which runs between BCW and BNW: a temporary culvert would be required to prevent excessive ground damage, which is reflected in increased access costs.

There are a couple of alternatives with respect to Block C: it could be felled but not extracted, with the stacked timber left for BSCC to process as woodfuel, or it could be omitted from the main felling contract altogether, and felled motor-manually in stages for woodfuel.

[129] Some funders, including National Lottery Community Fund, allow an element of full cost recovery in grant funding
[130] https://www.polarisbritain.com/atv-ranger/ranger.html

The other conifer stands in Broadford Community Woodland will be retained under all three options: Block A is used by Corry Capers, whilst Blocks B & D are younger stands which are growing well: these will be managed for woodfuel in due course.

The following sections contain details of the calculations of costs and income of the various operations, and note of areas of uncertainty, which are substantial in some respects, with table 21 in section 10.3.5 providing a summary.

As discussed in section 6.6, there are several permutations for delivery of the various operations. For the purposes of this section it has been assumed that harvesting, extraction and access construction will be bundled into a single contract, with fencing and ground preparation delivered under separate contracts and restocking carried out by the community woodland manager and volunteers.

10.3.1 Timber sales

Expected timber outturn from Broadford North Wood (BNW) is derived from inventory work as described in chapter 5. Timber outturn from the stands (shown on Map 2) in Broadford Community Woodland (BCW) are based on brief external inspection and aerial photography. The harvesting tonnage for area C is in line with estimates in the BSCC felling licences. Tonnage from other areas is a very crude estimate and these figures are therefore subject to a significant margin of error.

Prices for timber product categories are:

- Sawlogs £40/tonne,
- Short roundwood (SRW) £10/tonne.

These values are marginally lower than those quoted in the 2023 Tilhill report.

Block	Option	Area (ha)	Sawlogs (t)	SRW (t)	Total (t)	£
BNW	1, 2	9.20	1,127	1657	2,784	61,644
BCW C	2	1.75	50	230	280	4,300
BCW E	2	0.80	128	128	250	6,250
BCW F	1, 2	0.20		20	20	200
Total		**11.95**	**1,305**	**2,035**	**3,334**	**72,544**

Table 18: Estimated timber outturn and sale prices

Timber prices fluctuate considerably due to a range of factors: it could well be 12-18 months before BSCC was in a position to fell. If prices fell dramatically BSCC would have the option to delay harvesting until there was a recovery in the market, although such delays bring a risk of crop damage by windblow.

10.3.2 Access

Several access options were considered in section 6.3; the preferred option being the construction of a new access route in the southeast corner of Broadford North Wood connecting with the unadopted road through the industrial estate.[131]

For the purposes of modelling an estimated cost of £25,000 has been used,[132] and it is assumed that grant aid of £7,815 will be available through the Forestry Grant Scheme Forest Infrastructure option.[133] Actual access costs may vary somewhat depending on ground conditions, with a key cost item being the volume of imported roadstone required. Option 3 has an additional sum of £1,000 reflecting the costs of a culvert to cross the stream.

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[131] This is option 3 of the 4 options described in section 6.3.1

[132] Based on 175m forest road @ £100 and 500m^2 turning and loading area @£10m^2 plus £2,500 site clearance.

[133] Based on 175m forest road @ £25.80 and 500m^2 turning and loading area @£6.60m^2

10.3.3 Fencing

Three possible fencing solutions have been considered (see Map 3).

- Option 1: a new deer fence encloses the majority of Broadford North Wood (the southern boundary is already deer-fenced).
- Options 2: a new deer fence runs along the north-east boundary of BNW and continues north-west to meet the FLS ring fence. A second section of new deer fence runs roughly west from the corner of the Growers Hub fence to meet the FLS ring fence.
- Options 2 if no FLS fence: as above, but an additional section of fence will be required along the western boundary of Broadford Community Woodland.[134]

Option	Fence length (m)	£/m	£
1	1,030	15	15,450
2	950	15	14,250
2 if no FLS fence	1,750	15	26,250

Table 19: Estimated costs for fencing solutions

Note that BCW block F will be restored to peatland after harvesting so does not need to be included in the fencing solutions. A standard cost of £15/m has been used for deer fencing.

10.3.4 Restocking

Restocking costs per hectare vary considerably between sites, reflecting ease of access, species choice, planting density, availability of volunteer labour and scale (large schemes and businesses can benefit from lower unit prices, especially for trees).

Up to 20% of the felled area may be left unplanted to preserve small pockets of deep peat and wetland, and to create more internal open space.

A further 20% is expected to be restocked by natural regeneration of Sitka spruce (and possibly other species). This regeneration would be carefully managed to ensure it does not swamp other planted species; this would be easier than uprooting all seedlings to maintain a pure native stand, and will provide some shelter for broadleaves.

The minimum restocking density permitted is 1,600 stems/ha, however, BSCC will seek to plant at a higher density (at least 2,500 stems/ha) where site conditions suggest that longer term timber production is possible.

In higher density areas (estimated at ~30% of the area to be restocked) the main species planted will be sycamore, silver birch, oak and Scots pine.

In the remaining areas, the main species will be downy birch, with rowan on drier sites, and with willows and alder where ground conditions are wetter.

Small quantities of other species, including hazel, aspen and holly, will be planted where ground conditions allow.

Wherever possible, restocking will be undertaken by volunteers, which will reduce costs. The potential scope of volunteer involvement will be increased if Scottish Forestry permit restocking to take place over two planting seasons.

Some planting stock may be sourced from BSCC's community tree nursery, subject to compliance with Forest Reproductive Material Regulations.

[134] Note that if FLS construct a ring fence it will do so on the western side of the footpath; if BSCC have to fence this section it will do so on the eastern side of the path.

Ground preparation will be by mounding.

For the purposes of modelling a cost of £3,200/ha has been used. This covers all ground preparation and planting costs, and post-planting maintenance, with an allowance for beating up (replacing failed trees), and assumes planting input by volunteers.

Grant aid through the Forestry Grant Scheme contributes £550/ha. The grant-aided area can include up to 20% open ground, which is why the area to be restocked is less than the grant aided area.

Option	Felling area (ha)	FGS grant £	Restock area (ha)	Restock cost £
1	9.20	5,060	7.36	23,552
2	11.75	6,463	9.40	30,080

Table 20: Estimated costs and grants for restocking for harvesting options.

10.3.5 Summary

The table below summarises the estimated costs and income of the three harvesting options, with alternate figures for option 2 reflecting uncertainty as to FLS's fencing plans.

Both options generate a significant surplus, but if FLS ring-fence Broadford Forest, then option 2 is clearly more profitable than option 1. If BSCC did pursue Option 1 there would be additional protection costs for Broadford Community Woodland in later years, so option 2 is probably preferable in the long term even without a FLS ring fence.

	Option 1 £	Option 2 £
Access	25,000	26,000
Restocking	23,552	30,080
Fencing	15,450	14,250
Total	**64,002**	**70,330**
Timber	61,644	72,064
Restock grant	5,060	6,463
Road access grant	7,815	7,815
Total	**74,519**	**86,342**
Surplus/deficit	**10,517**	**16,012**
Additional fencing if no FLS fence		12,000
Revised surplus if no FLS fence	**10,517**	**4,012**

Table 21: Estimated costs and income for two harvesting options

10.4 Other Woodland Management Operations

10.4.1 Woodland Management Plan

Post-acquisition, BSCC will compile a new woodland management plan covering both woodlands. This should follow the template provided by Scottish Forestry,[135] and be approved by them: an approved woodland management plan is a prerequisite for most of the funding options available through the Forestry Grant Scheme.

If the "management plan with thinning" template is used then approval will include felling permission for thinning operations, but any clearfelling would require a separate felling permission.[136]

[135] https://www.forestry.gov.scot/support-regulations/forestry-grants/forest-plan-resources
[136] https://www.forestry.gov.scot/support-regulations/felling-permissions

An approved Management Plan and Felling Permission will count as evidence to prove that woodfuel meets Ofgem sustainability requirements.[137] Sustainability requirements may apply if the woodfuel is used in the Renewable Heat Incentive or Renewables Obligation schemes.

10.4.2 Control of Sitka regeneration

As noted in section 4.2, there has been considerable regeneration of Sitka spruce, in several pulses. The older regeneration is now well established, and can be thinned in due course, but there is a more recent, and expanding, area of Sitka regeneration along the central ridge of Broadford Community Woodland, which will be progressively removed and replaced with downy birch, rowan and Scots pine.

The spruce trees are distinctly yellow, showing signs of nutrient deficiencies, as is common for spruce growing amongst heather on relatively poor soils. The trees are below 10cm diameter, so felling does not need formal permission, and small enough that they can be tackled by volunteers with hand tools.

Replacement trees will be planted in small clumps to create a mosaic of trees and open space, rather than seeking to establish a continuous canopy. If a ring fence enclosing most of Broadford Community Woodland has been established then no additional protection will be required, however if this is not the case then it may be most effective to create small temporary fenced exclosures around individual clumps of trees.

10.4.3 Control of invasive species

There are several invasive species present in the woodlands, notably Rhododendron, gorse and fuchsia.

Rhododendron is largely concentrated in the southern portion of Broadford North Wood, but there are scattered small bushes elsewhere in both woods. It will be a priority for removal, given its potential for rapid spread and destruction of woodland ecosystems. The primary control method will be lever and mulch,[138] by volunteers, with stem injection used where necessary.

Gorse is likewise concentrated in the southern part of Broadford North Wood, but is also found elsewhere, and will likewise be controlled by cutting and levering, to inhibit colonisation of the clearfelled area.

Fuchsia is represented by scattered bushes and will be monitored, with action taken if it appears to be spreading. A watching brief will be kept for other invasive species, such as Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam and giant hogweed; and appropriate control action taken if necessary.

10.4.4 Thinning

Blocks B and D will be managed by thinning. The sooner this starts the better, but any thinning operations must be carefully managed, with a low thinning ratio,[139] to minimise the risk of windblow in the remaining trees. There are small volumes of larch in both these blocks, which should be favoured if possible. If possible, timber harvested will be extracted and processed for woodfuel. Methods and costs are discussed in section 11.1.3 below.

10.4.5 Peatland restoration

In addition to small pockets of peatland being left unplanted as parting of the restocking programme, a small area of flat, wet ground at the north-east of the community woodland, to the south of the

[137] https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/environmental-and-social-schemes/non-domestic-renewable-heat-incentive-rhi
[138] https://www.nonnativespecies.org/assets/Lever_and_mulch_rhodo_management_leaflet.pdf
[139] i.e. the proportion of trees felled to those remaining

plantation trees in Block F, where cottongrass is already apparent, will be restored to peatland, with scattered Sitka spruce regeneration removed and any drains blocked if necessary.

10.4.6 Costs and funding

Many of the operations listed in this section will be undertaken by the Community Woodland Manager and volunteers, with additional costs limited to purchase of trees, etc. The financial plan includes an allowance of £500/year for additional tree planting from year 2, and £1,000 for materials for peatland restoration across years 3 & 4.

There is limited specific funding available as operations are generally below minimum thresholds, e.g.: NatureScot's Peatland Action Fund[140] has minimum project size of 10ha, or because the woods are not in priority areas for funding, e.g. Forestry Grant Scheme support for Rhododendron control.[141] However, these operations may attract some funding support as part of an integrated programme of community management and volunteer development.

[140] https://www.nature.scot/doc/peatland-action-guidance-eligibility-criteria
[141] https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/forestry-grant-scheme-capital-items/rhododendron-eradication--manual---light/

11 Development projects

The viability and compatibility of a range of potential development projects and activities have been considered, and BSCC will seek to take forward a number of these, as itemised in the table below. Potential funders are detailed in Appendix 3.

Some projects, such as woodland crofts, glamping pods and a wind turbine, require further investigation, whilst a few, including the production of sawn timber and wood products, and the development of a woodland burial site, are not considered feasible: these are not discussed further.

Project	To be taken forward?
Sawn timber	No
Niche wood products	No
Woodfuel	Yes, but methods to be determined
Woodland crofts	For further investigation
Glamping pods	For further investigation
New paths & recreation infrastructure	Yes
Formal play area	For further investigation
Volunteers	Yes
Christmas trees	Yes, small scale trial
Green burials	No
Ashes	For further investigation
Commemorative trees	Yes, small scale trial
Wind turbine	For further investigation
Woodland skills and training	Yes
Health and wellbeing (Branching Out)	For further investigation

Table 22: prognosis for potential development projects

11.1 Projects to be taken forward

The projects listed below will be initiated in the first five years of community ownership, subject in some cases, to availability of funding.

11.1.1 Volunteering group

Whilst timber harvesting operations in Broadford North Wood will be carried out by appropriately skilled and qualified professional contractors, there is a wide range of activities that can be carried out by volunteers, overseen by the Community Woodland Manager and other individuals with appropriate training and experience.

BSCC will develop and promote a range of opportunities for wider community involvement through volunteering. Opportunities will be designed for volunteers of all ages and abilities: and will include environmental monitoring and survey work, as well as the more usual manual tasks (e.g. path works, tree planting, control of invasives).

Recruiting, developing and managing the volunteer group will be a key element of the Community Woodland Manager's role. All volunteers will be appropriately trained, equipped, managed and

supported. BSCC will acquire appropriate tools and personal protective equipment (PPE) for volunteers and ensure that appropriate insurances are held and risk assessments made.

BSCC will also explore the potential to work in partnership with external organisations such as TCV[142] which offer paid-for volunteering opportunities. There may also be opportunities to develop links with local accommodation providers; alternately, this could present an additional rationale for expanding accommodation provision through glamping pods.

Costs

The financial plan estimates an initial cost of £3,000 for tools, PPE and training, with an on-going annual cost of £600.

Funders

Support may be available as part of an integrated programme of community management funded by the National Lottery Community Action Fund

Other potential funders include:

- Scottish Forestry Community Fund.

11.1.2 Recreation infrastructure

Improving amenity and public access has been a key focus of BSCC, which has led a number of access projects around the village, and the acquisition of Broadford North Wood provides an opportunity to further enhance the local path network.

Paths

Three new footpaths will be established, linking the existing forest path around Cnoc na Cachaille with the Growers Hub and the mast and track to the hospital: indicative routes and approximate lengths are shown on Map 3.

Given the distance from the centre of the village, the woodland context and the number of high quality paths in the area it is not considered necessary to construct new paths to all-abilities standard.

Work on the two paths crossing the HIE woodland area will not take place until after felling and timber extraction work is complete. The table below show indicative delivery years.

The mast link path of approximately 500m will be a simple trench, membrane and unbound stone fill construction, approx. 800 – 1000mm wide.

The two paths leading from the Growers Hub will employ wooden boardwalks where crossing wetlands, and stone infill where grounds conditions require, but will largely be of natural surfaces: the Growers Hub to Forest path route will run through a section of woodland where trees will be brashed.

Two simple bridges (or culverts) will be required where paths cross streams.

Waymarking

Finger posts will be installed at junctions

Benches

Simple benches will be installed along the paths

Interpretation

[142] https://www.tcv.org.uk/

An information board with a path network map will be installed at the Growers Hub entrance to the wood.

Costs

Indicative costs for the paths and other recreation infrastructure are tabulated below. Cost estimates draw on the Paths for All Estimating Price Guide.[143] Paths for All (now Walking Scotland) has also published various guidance documents on the design and construction of path and recreation infrastructure.[144]

Actual costs will vary: one key area of uncertainty is the volume of stone and extent of timber boardwalks required, which will become apparent once detailed planning of the path lines has been completed. Other cost variables are the price of stone and the extent to which work can be carried out by volunteers.

Item	Year	#	units	Unit cost	Cost
Mast link	3 & 4	500	m	30	15,000
Growers Hub to mast	2	375	m	20	7,500
Growers Hub to forest	1	300	m	20	6,000
Bridge/culvert	1	2	no	1000	2,000
Finger posts	1, 2 & 3	4	no	250	1,000
Bench seats	1, 2 & 3	4	no	500	2,000
Map board	3	1	no	1500	1,500
Total					**35,000**

Table 23: costs for paths and recreation infrastructure

The financial plan includes an additional £1,000 for path maintenance from year 5.

Funding

Support may be available as part of an integrated programme of community management funded by the National Lottery Community Action Fund

Other potential funders include:

- Community-Led Local Development Funding
- Charitable Funders
- Windfarm Fund Distributors

11.1.3 Woodfuel

BSCC are keen to optimise the community use and value of the community woodlands, and woodfuel supply is potentially an important component of this. However, it is as yet unclear how best to structure firewood supply given the likely small scale of activity and the challenges of accessing the woods, and further work will be needed post-acquisition to assess the local market and identify the most appropriate solution.

Three options will be considered:

1) BSCC develop an in-house business, investing in machinery (vertical logsplitter) and infrastructure (extraction routes, stacking and processing area), and ensuring that staff and volunteers have appropriate skills and certification. This option requires the greatest commitment and investment, but also offers the most significant returns.

[143] https://walkingscotland.org.uk/resource/path-projects-estimating-price-guide/
[144] https://walkingscotland.org.uk/resource-type/technical-path-advice-guidance/

2) BSCC contract out thinning operations to a local firewood merchant, who takes on all elements of harvesting, extraction and processing. This option requires minimal investment (although there would be a time commitment to oversee the contractors) but offers the lowest returns.
3) A hybrid option, whereby some aspects of the work are contracted, and others delivered in-house.

Given the uncertainty as to how BSCC will proceed, no income and expenditure figures are included in the financial plan.

Woodfuel sales should be profitable, although the margins may be relatively low, especially under option 2, and there is an initial lag between expenditure (purchase of equipment, felling costs) and income from sales a couple of years later once the wood has seasoned.

Some grant aid may be available to support purchase of equipment.

11.1.4 Christmas trees

A suitable area for Christmas tree production will be identified, probably within the lower section of Broadford North Wood.

Site preparation will be necessary to remove ground vegetation and any tree stumps, and provide a suitable surface for planting, with deer (and rabbit) fencing to protect trees from herbivores. Weed control is critical and usually achieved with a pre-planting application of glyphosate.

Provision should be made for a water supply and storage, in case of drought.

It may be advisable to trial several small numbers of species.

Typical spacing for spruces is 1m x 1m (10,000 trees/ha), while Noble and Nordmann Fir are normally planted at 1.2m x 1.2m (6,900 trees/ha).[145]

Costs

Costs will depend on scale of plot and extent of deer fencing required. The financial plan includes an estimated set up cost of £8,000, covering site clearance of 0.2ha, acquisition and planting of 1,000 trees (over several years), 200m deer fencing and some sundry set-up costs.

There are significant labour costs involved in the maintenance of Christmas trees, including weeding, watering, trimming, etc., and whilst it is possible that some of this work could be undertaken by volunteers and/or the community woodland manager, an allowance of £2,000 per year has been included in the financial plan for the engagement of a contractor.

Funding

There is no specific funding through the Forestry Grant Scheme for planting Christmas trees, and National Lottery Community Action cannot fund activities which are expected to be profit-making, so this expenditure would have to be regarded as an investment by BSCC. It will take ~5 years before any income is received, but thereafter should provide a small but steady contribution to the long term management costs of the woods.

11.1.5 Commemorative trees

BSCC will seek to develop a business selling commemorative trees. A suitable area will have to be identified, and a marketing and promotional strategy devised. There is potential for partnership working with the community tree nursery, which could grow on a selection of trees to a suitable size before "sale". The business should be profitable, but the financial plan includes an initial expenditure of £1,000 in years 2 and 3 to cover set-up costs (including promotion).

[145] Note that some land must be left unplanted for management access

11.1.6 Woodland skills and training events

A programme of training events and guided walks will be developed, aimed at locals and tourists. These will use the meeting space in the BSCC office as a base, and should largely be self-financing through event fees, but an allowance of £500 per year is included in the financial plan.

A wide range of topics will be offered, including tree ID, bat walks, etc., and practical skills such as green woodworking, including pole lathes, and craftwork.

Delivery of the programme will be dependent on identifying suitable leaders and trainers.

11.2 Projects for further investigation

The five projects listed below are all seen as feasible and compatible with BSCC's objectives, but require significant additional discussion and development before they can be taken forward. The sections below outline the key issues and financial considerations of each.

11.2.1 Woodland crofts

BSCC will investigate the feasibility of establishing one or more woodland crofts at the Broadford woodlands. Key issues are quantifying demand, identifying potential house sites with suitable access and servicing, and deciding on the preferred development model (i.e. would BSCC offer housing plots for self-build, or build the houses itself or in partnership with others) and the tenure model under which the plots (or houses) are offered, including the tie to the crofts.

Even if BSCC was offering unserviced plots, there can be substantial pre-development costs involved, covering Flood Risk Assessment, Drainage Impact Assessment and peat, tree and habitat surveys. There are cash costs incurred for croft registration, as tabulated below.

Item	Supplier	£ cost
Croft registration fee	Registers of Scotland	90
Croft plan	Contractor	300
Tenancy agreement	Solicitor	600
Tenant registration fee	Registers of Scotland	90
Total		**1,080**

Table 24: estimated registration costs per croft

Additionally, woodland croft creation and registration is a lengthy process and there are significant staff costs. Some of these costs can be recouped through croft entry fees. These are an established feature of crofting, but in recent years have been subject of considerable speculation, with tenancies changing hands for 5 or even 6 figure sums putting them beyond the reach of most. BSCC would not be creating crofts for speculative purposes; the objective is to facilitate affordable access to land. However, there are a number of reasons for charging an appropriate entry fee: as well as helping recoup costs they demonstrate commitment on the part of the tenant and help address the sensitivities that would otherwise arise from giving a lifetime opportunity of real value to someone, 'for nothing'.

Croft rents are typically fairly low, largely because they have not kept pace with inflation over the years. New woodland crofts created by community landowners have rents in the range £60-£100 per hectare per year, with new crofters apparently happy to pay even the higher level. Whatever figure is chosen; an inflationary uplift would be sensibly included in the terms of the lease. As with entry fees, there is an element of setting the rent to reflect what is being received – the figures quoted above are being charged for clearfelled sites where the restocking obligation has been passed on to the crofter.

11.2.2 Glamping pods

BSCC will investigate the potential for additional accommodation provision through the installation of glamping pods, either within the existing campsite area or through an extension into the community woodland.

11.2.3 Ashes burials

BSCC will investigate the market for ashes internment and seek to identify a suitable area within the woodlands for this project.

11.2.4 Wind turbine

BSCC will investigate the installation of a small wind turbine adjacent to the campsite. Significant specific feasibility work is required to assess financial viability: a key issue will be the availability of a grid connection to take electricity when the campsite is closed through the winter.

11.2.5 Health and wellbeing

BSCC will investigate the development of a Branching Out Programme to expand the contribution of the woodland to health and wellbeing.

11.2.6 Formal play area

BSCC will investigate the potential for developing a formal play area within the woodlands: this would be taken forward as a standalone project with specific funding. As noted previously, for access reasons it may be that such a project is better sited within or immediately adjacent to the Growers Hub or campsite.

11.3 Projects not to be taken forward

11.3.1 Sawn timber / niche woodproducts

There is insufficient timber to justify the investment required to develop sawmilling capacity, and in the absence of a skilled practitioner willing to lead such project there is little evidence to suggest that there is scope or demand for niche woodproducts.

11.3.2 Green burials

Site conditions and access constraints mean that the woodlands are not suitable for green burials.

12 Financial Plan

Year	0	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Acquisition	25,920						25,920
Forestry Consultant	4,700						4,700
CWM		22,905	23,085	23,785	24,506	25,249	119,531
Set up and governance		2,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	6,000
Equipment		16,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	20,000
Recreation		9,000	9,000	9,000	8,000	1,000	36,000
Volunteers		3,000	600	600	600	600	5,400
Christmas trees			4,000	4,000	2,000	2,000	12,000
Commemorative trees			1,000	1,000			2,000
Other projects		500	1,000	1,000	1,500	1,500	5,500
	30,620	**53,405**	**40,685**	**41,385**	**38,606**	**32,349**	**237,051**
SLF	29,620						29,620
BSCC	1,000	2,191	7,259	7,329	4,401	4,475	26,653
NL Community Action		50,000	34,000	34,000	34,000	28,000	180,000
SF Community Fund		3,000					3,000
	30,620	**55,191**	**41,259**	**41,329**	**38,401**	**32,475**	**239,273**
annual surplus/deficit	0	1,785	573	-57	-206	126	
cumulative surplus/deficit	0	1,785	2,359	2,302	2,096	2,222	

Table 25: Five-year financial plan

Notes:

Year 0 = acquisition. If HIE grant route chosen instead of ATR, then add £16,000 to acquisition costs and HIE grant of £16,000 to income.

Other projects = additional tree planting, peatland restoration materials, events programme

BSCC contribution comes from Campsite funds and harvesting surplus (estimate: £16,000) and covers £1,000 for the forestry consultant, set-up and maintenance costs for the Christmas tree and commemorative tree projects (which will be profitable in the longer term) and 10% of the annual salary/pension/ENIC costs of the Community Woodland Manager.

For simplicity, other than £3,000 from the Scottish Forestry Community Fund for volunteering set-up costs, has been aggregated into a single five-year National Lottery Community Action project, but in practice some elements may be supported by other funding sources.

Harvesting costs and income have not been explicitly incorporated in the table above, as the profile of income and expenditure will according to which if any elements (e.g. roading, fencing, ground preparation and restocking) BSCC decide to deliver under separate contracts or in-house with volunteer labour.

Under the simplest option, whereby all works are bundled in a single contract, the anticipated £16,000 harvesting surplus is received in a single tranche from a private forest management company in Year 1, and then reinvested in subsequent years to support project development and management.

If BSCC deliver work elements separately, roading costs will be incurred prior to harvest (and thus would require upfront investment), a much larger sum would be received from timber sales after harvesting, with costs for fencing, ground preparation and restocking incurred in subsequent years.

12.1 Longer-term plan

The five-year Community Woodland Manager contract is designed to give sufficient time to deliver the immediate objectives and priorities of BSCC and to establish income streams from Christmas trees, commemorative trees and woodfuel which should contribute towards future management costs

A management role will still be required from year 6, to lead the volunteer group and maintain the wood and facilities but the size and scope of the post will depend on the scale of any additional projects that BSCC wishes to deliver, and what additional funding can be secured.

13 Workplan

Task	When	Who
Submit asset transfer request	August 2025	CC, Board
Submit application to SLF	August 2025	CC, Board
Tender for legal costs		CC, Board
Register BSCC with SGRPID	By March 2026	CC
Complete transfer	By March 2026	HIE, BSCC, lawyers
Update PLI & ELI insurances	On acquisition	CC
Register BCW and BNW with SGRPID	On acquisition	CC
Maintain communications with membership and wider community	Ongoing	CC, Board, CWM
Monitoring and reporting	Ongoing	CWM, Board
Funding application for main development project	Immediately post-acquisition	CC
Recruit for CWM	Once funding secured	Board, CC
Equipment for CWM	Once funding secured	Board, CC, CWM
Prepare and maintain risk assessments	Ongoing	CWM, Safety Director
Prepare Woodland Management Plan	Post-acquisition	Board, CWM
Apply to Scottish Forestry for felling permission	Post-acquisition	Board, CC, CWM
Check with Highland Council wrt road as Permitted Development	Post-acquisition	Board, CC, CWM
Tender for roading / harvesting contracts	Post-acquisition	CWM, Board
FGS grant application for road works	Once WMP complete	CWM
Roading and harvesting works	Year 1	Forest Management Co
Recruit and equip volunteers	Year 1	CWM, Board
Pathworks: Growers Hub to forest path	Year 1	CWM, volunteers
Pathworks: Growers Hub to mast	Year 2	CWM, volunteers
Pathworks: Mast to forest path	Year 3	CWM, volunteers
Benches and signage	Years 1, 2 & 3	CWM, volunteers
Removal of Sitka regen	Years 1 & 2	CWM, volunteers
Restocking of regen area	Years 2 & 3	CWM, volunteers
Rhododendron control	Years 1, 2 & 3	CWM, volunteers, contractor
Woodland event programme	From year 1	CC, CWM
Restocking: ground preparation	Year 3	Contractor
Restocking: fencing	Year 3	Contractor
Restocking: planting	Years 3 & 4	CWM, volunteers
Peatland restoration	Years 4 & 5	CWM, volunteers
Thinning / woodfuel sales	tbc	Contractor (?)
Commemorative trees set-up	Years 2 & 3	CWM, volunteers, contractor
Christmas trees set-up	Years 2 & 3	CWM, volunteers, contractor
Christmas trees maintenance	Years 4 & 5	CWM, contractor

Table 26: Workplan

CC = Community Coordinators

CWM = Community Woodland Manager

13.1 Monitoring and evaluation

BSCC will monitor and evaluate progress in delivering desired outcomes in a variety of ways:

- Reports to funders
- Preparation of annual accounts and report to OSCR[146]
- Recording key outputs from work in the forest.

Key outputs and indicators are presented in the table below.

Output / outcome	Indicators
Acquisition of Broadford North Wood	Yes/No – year 1
Employment of Community Woodland Manager	Yes/No – year 1
Successful delivery of harvesting operations	Yes/No – year 1
Pathworks	m path constructed
Restocking	# trees planted
Volunteer numbers	Monitored annually
Number of events and activities in the wood	Monitored annually

Table 27: Outputs and indicators

Note: "number of visitors to the woodlands" would be a desirable indicator but this would be very difficult to monitor without several people counters given the layout of paths (no single entrance)

BSCC will encourage comments on the organisation's Facebook page and use a range of opportunities such as volunteer days, fundraising events and the AGM to secure feedback and ensure that BSCC's activities and objectives remain aligned with the aspirations of the members and the wider community.

[146] https://www.oscr.org.uk/

14 Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Asset transfer request / negotiated sale refused by HIE	Low	Project cannot proceed	BSCC ensure high quality application and business plan, strong community support etc.
Funding bid to SLF unsuccessful	Low/Medium	Project v unlikely to proceed	High quality application, strong community support
Significant fall in timber prices	Low/Medium	Reduced income for BSCC	Flexibility in harvesting plans, fell when prices increase
NLCA funding bid for Community Woodland Manager is unsuccessful	Low/ Medium	Delay, project unable to proceed, shorter time frame for project	High quality application, alternative funders
Lack of community involvement / volunteers	Low/ Medium	Delays in implementation, lack of community commitment or buy-in	Active communications and promotion of opportunities. Working with external groups that can help liaise with interested volunteers
Lack of capacity within group / loss of key individuals	Low/ Medium	Delays in implementation, management failures	Robust governance systems, wider networking and support. Keep it fun and interesting for directors.
Funding bids for other development projects unsuccessful	Low	Delays, projects unable to proceed	Good quality applications, flexibility, potential resubmission
Phytophthora ramorum identified in larch – Statutory Plant Health Notice issued	Medium	Will require additional felling (extent depends on SPHN details)	Very limited mitigation available other than early felling.
Severe windblow in remaining woodland	Medium	Reduced income, potential impact on amenity and other projects	Careful management, flexibility if needed. Cash in hand to respond in case of emergency.

Table 28: Major risks and mitigations

Appendix 1: Director Biographies and Staff Details

Directors

[redacted]

Staff

[redacted]

Appendix 2: Woodland Crofts

The information in this appendix draws very heavily on a briefing produced by Jamie McIntyre (Woodland Crofts Partnership) and Jon Hollingdale for Dunvegan Community Trust as part of a feasibility study and business plan for the acquisition of woodland at Orbost for the purposes of creating woodland crofts.

A2.1 Introduction

The Woodland Crofts Partnership[147] (WCP) defines a woodland croft as "a registered croft with sufficient tree cover to be considered a woodland under UK forestry policy". While it is useful to be able to distinguish woodland crofts from traditional ones, and indeed from conventional models of forestry, it is important to note that this definition is descriptive rather than legal; in law a woodland croft is simply a croft like any other.

Accordingly, many of the benefits of woodland crofts to both crofters and their communities are similar to the benefits delivered by traditional crofting. For communities, these include retaining population, contributing to sensitive land management, providing economic opportunities and building resilience, including to emerging threats such as pandemics and climate change.

For individual crofters, a croft can provide a place to live and a site for a business, an opportunity to contribute to their household needs in food and fuel, and crucially, security of tenure. Crofting provides a regulated framework which provides certainty as to the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved.

Woodland crofts themselves provide access to woodland for the crofter, to manage in support of their lifestyles and/or livelihoods. This is a significant and rare opportunity, given the concentration of forest ownership in Scotland, in contrast with the situation in most other countries. There are also minimal opportunities to lease woodland, and taken together these factors mean that woodland management is currently a minority, generally professional, activity. As a result, the "forest culture" common in many parts of the world has largely died out here; woodland crofting provides an opportunity to revive it.

Crofting is regulated by the Crofting Commission according to crofting law, which involves a combination of rights and responsibilities for crofters. As well as the security of tenure mentioned already, other rights include the right of succession, the right to a fair rent and the right to compensation for improvements. Key responsibilities include the requirement to reside on or with 32km of the croft, to cultivate the croft or put it to other "purposeful use", and an obligation not to misuse or neglect the croft. Importantly, cultivation is defined to include "the planting of trees and use of the land as woodlands" thereby enabling woodland crofts and other forms of crofter forestry.

The woodland aspects of a woodland croft are regulated by Scottish Forestry, just like any other woodland; there is nothing unique about a woodland croft in this respect. Forestry regulation is based on a system of grants and licences, and includes a presumption against woodland removal; new or existing woodlands cannot generally be converted to another land use. It is use of the land that is important here, not the presence of (mature) trees, so both a newly planted site and a harvested area are both "woodland" despite having no trees on them.

A2.2 Tenure options

Crofting originated as a leasehold system of tenure, but since a right to buy was introduced in 1976 crofters can now be either tenants or owner-occupier crofters. Currently, the majority (a little over

[147] An informal partnership between the Scottish Crofting Federation, the Community Woodlands Association, the Communities Housing Trust and Woodland Trust Scotland which seeks to promote & develop woodland crofting https://woodlandcrofts.org/

70%) of crofters are still tenants, with the remainder owner-occupiers. Previously, there were significant differences in the obligations which applied to each, but more recent legislation has served to equalise the position such that owner-occupiers are generally subject to the same responsibilities as tenants regarding residency, and management of the croft.

This means a community landowner looking to create new crofts can consider either letting them or selling them to owner-occupier crofters, depending on a variety of factors. However, whichever is chosen, community landowners are likely to want to be able to control the occupation and use of the croft, in order to avoid many of the problems which have undermined crofting more generally, such as absenteeism, neglect, and speculation on croft land.

In this respect, letting the croft is perhaps the more straightforward. Although croft tenants have strong rights, it is now possible to withhold or modify some of these from new tenancies, including the right to buy and the right to assign, without needing approval from the Crofting Commission or the Land Court. This means that if a tenancy is surrendered the community can re-allocate it to someone else that meets their criteria, and the public and community investment in the croft is protected. A tenancy is also likely to be more affordable, although payment of an "entry fee" is usual.

Owner-occupied crofts require a different approach to retaining community control of occupancy. The method used in affordable housing is to apply a Rural Housing Burden[148] (RHB) to the house or plot, and it is believed that this approach can also be applied to the whole of the croft, as is being developed for new crofts in Lower Ardochy Forest in Glengarry. The RHB is a title condition giving the rural housing body[149] in whose favour it is a right of pre-emption, meaning that they can buy the property on the event of its resale. Importantly, the Burden can include terms relating to price, which both allows for the introduction of an initial discount on market value, and the maintenance of that discount, preserving affordability.

Generally speaking, a croft tenancy will be the more affordable option of the two and therefore likely to be more accessible to local budgets. It is also the simpler model. Meanwhile even when a discount is offered, the owner-occupied croft will require a purchaser to have a degree of capital behind them and may thus be more appropriate to "external" applicants. From the community perspective, the tenancy will provide a smaller, but annual income, whilst sale of a croft to an owner-occupier will provide a one-off lump sum which may be useful to generate match-funding for the project.

A2.3 Croft Housing

A key consideration in deciding which tenure option(s) to progress is croft housing. The opportunity to live on the croft is a key benefit for the crofter, and the provision of housing on crofts has undoubtedly been an important contributor to the retention of population, sustaining communities. As such both crofter and community landowner will want to see croft housing provided in some way.

Such housing can be delivered in a number of different ways. The traditional model on a tenanted croft was either for the landlord to provide the house as a landlord's improvement, or for the tenant to build their own house, as a tenant's improvement (an "improvement" meaning the house is an integral part of the croft like other infrastructure and cannot be separated from it). In recent times neither route has been employed very often, largely due to the difficulty of raising finance.

[148] https://www.chtrust.co.uk/rural-housing-burden1.html

[149] A Rural Housing Burden can only be in favour of a rural housing body designated by the Scottish Government; if a community landowner does not have or wish to gain this status, it is possible to nominate an existing rural housing body to fulfil this function (with their agreement)

On an owner-occupied croft, responsibility for financing and building the house falls to the crofter. This is much simpler for the community, but can still be a challenge for the crofter in terms of raising finance.

Both tenants and owner-occupier crofters are potentially eligible for the Croft House Grant (CHG)[150]. However, even if secured this does not cover the full costs of construction so crofters will require to source additional finance. If they do not have their own savings, commercial finance may be hard to raise as lenders will generally not fund against land under crofting tenure[151]. The typical solution is to build on non-croft land, either by decrofting the plot or using land which is not part of the croft.

An alternative approach is for the community to develop woodland crofts (without statutory house plots), & separate house plots with the Rural Housing Burden attached. This improves the chances of raising finance for construction. However, it is important to note that *any* constraint on the title – such as a RHB - limits the availability of funding to at most just 2 or 3 lenders, and where the RHB or other agreements serve to tie the house to the croft this may restrict options further.

Providing housing as a landlord's improvement is a particularly simple and powerful way to deliver the required safeguards over occupancy and use. That this approach should currently be unfunded, despite the clear public benefits, is the subject of a report to the Scottish Land Commission being progressed by the Woodland Croft Partnership and the Communities Housing Trust (CHT) which aims to raise the profile of the issue and ultimately secure funding for the model. In addition, the delivery of housing by owner-occupier crofters on a croft subject to a whole-croft RHB is being developed in Glengarry and lessons from this should be available in coming months.

A2.4 Process

The process of creating a new woodland croft is straightforward and involves application to the Crofting Commission by the owner of the land. The application form is relatively simple and asks, amongst other things, for the reason the croft is being created and what "socio-economic or public interest benefits" are anticipated to arise as a result.

It also asks whether the croft will be let according to the statutory conditions listed in the crofting acts. If these have been varied then prior approval from the Land Court may be required, although some changes (such as withholding right to buy) can simply be notified to the Commission (who in any event will require a copy of any proposal to vary the conditions of let).

A map of the proposed holding is required, which is perhaps the most demanding part of the process as it must be drawn to sufficiently high standards that it can form the basis of the registration of the croft by Registers of Scotland (a process which happens in parallel to the croft creation).

Once the croft is approved, it can be let to a tenant or sold to an owner-occupier depending on the new landlord's intentions. The former case will involve another application to the Commission, to approve the let to the tenant who should have been chosen (for community-owned crofts) through an open application process (see 4.6). Once signed, the lease must be registered with Registers of Scotland within 3 months.

Sale to an owner-occupier involves the normal conveyancing process, but the incoming crofter must notify the Commission that they are the new owner-occupier. The restrictions on occupancy and use that may form part of the lease in the case of a tenanted croft, in the latter case will be required to be included in the RHB and associated personal bond, to protect the community interest.

Public notification is an important part of the process with most applications requiring to be publicly advertised to allow the wider crofting community the opportunity to comment.

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[150] https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/croft-house-grant/
[151] https://www.hspc.co.uk/news/How-to-buy-a-Croft.asp

A2.5 Experience to date

Woodland crofts have attracted great interest from both community landowners who see the benefits for their communities, and individuals looking to take on a woodland croft. Although the definition of a woodland croft given in 4.1 could apply to a pre-existing one, the big impetus for new woodland crofts came with the Crofting Reform (Scotland) Act 2007 which introduced the ability for landowners to create new crofts. Coupled with the increasing availability of state-owned forests to purchase by communities via asset transfer, this has led to a number of them exploring the possibility.

To date 25 new woodland crofts have been created, in Dervaig (north-west Mull), Tiroran (south-west Mull), and Tighnabruaich. Land for a further 6 has been acquired by CHT & Glengarry Community Woodlands in Lower Ardochy Forest mentioned earlier, and development there is ongoing. A number of other communities are actively exploring the potential to create new woodland crofts, including in Morvern and Lochalsh.

In some respects, the numbers are not great, particularly considering that demand outstrips supply more than tenfold. However, this is almost entirely the result of the responsibility for woodland crofts delivery having been largely placed on community groups, who have many other demands on their time and resources.

In terms of demand, the WCP maintains a register of interest that currently includes well over 300 names. This is likely to be only a subset of true demand, as many will not be aware of the register's existence. Social media following gives an indication of wider interest: the woodland crofts twitter account currently has over 2,300 followers whilst a grassroots Facebook group set up by woodland crofters (and would-be woodland crofters) themselves has gained nearly 900 members in 2 years.

A2.6 Croft allocation policy[152]

The selection of new crofters is one of the most important, and potentially sensitive, parts of any woodland crofts project. The process needs to be open and transparent, and while there is flexibility for local variation, when public funding is involved there are certain requirements which should be followed. The objective of the selection process will be to choose the most appropriate applicants fairly, whose plans for the croft will most benefit the community and the wider public, as well as themselves. Selection of suitable tenants will go a long way to ensuring that the aims and objectives of a woodland crofts project are met.

It is important that communities follow the principles of equal opportunities, throughout the development and management of their projects, and especially in selecting beneficiaries (i.e. crofters). This is not to say that local needs and priorities cannot be reflected in any criteria set by the community to help in the selection of crofters; after all a successful project will be one that identifies and then meets local need. However, any criteria chosen must be reasonable and justifiable. Furthermore, if the criteria are scored to assist in comparing applicants, any weighting should be balanced so that no one criterion can dominate the others.

Some communities see woodland crofts as primarily an opportunity for their own existing residents, whilst others are keen to attract new families to maintain school rolls etc., and of course some are keen to do both. In the latter case care must be taken in choosing selection criteria, as it is unlikely that the skills & experience of "local" and "external" applicants will be the same. To avoid the risk that one group outcompetes the other and dominates approvals, consideration can be given to ring-fencing allocations, for example by keeping half the crofts for local applicants only, and half for all-comers.

[152] A guidance note on this topic is available on the Woodland Crofts Partnership website at https://woodlandcrofts.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Woodland-crofts-allocation-guidance-February-2015.pdf

Appendix 3: Potential funders for community development projects

There are a number of potential funders for BSCC's proposed forest management and community development projects. This section notes some of the larger or more obvious funders but is not intended to provide comprehensive coverage of a dynamic funding environment. Some funds are on-going, others annual, with relatively limited application windows, so not all are open to new applications at time of writing. The Community Woodlands Association publishes a monthly e-bulletin highlighting new funding opportunities.[153]

Scottish Rural Development Programme: Forestry Grant Scheme

The current Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS)[154] contains three relevant packages of grant aid to support the management of existing woodlands: Sustainable Management of Forests (SMF), Woodland Improvement Grants (WIG) and Forest Infrastructure. The former makes annual recurrent payments for routine management (such as path maintenance) whilst the other two pay one-off capital grants for discrete activity.

Applicant organisations and relevant land must be registered with SGRPID. Applicants for Restructuring Regeneration, Public Access and Forest Infrastructure grants must have a Long Term Forest Plan or approved Woodland Management Plan.

Long Term Forest Plan (WIG)[155]

Funding is currently available under WIG to help pay for the preparation of a long-term forest plan, should BSCC decided to produce one (there is no funding available for the production of a simpler woodland management plan). The grant rate for a new long-term forest plan is £25 per hectare for the first 200 hectares, £5 per hectare thereafter. The grant for 31ha would be £775. After 10 years, a forest plan renewal grant offers £10/ha, i.e. £310.

Restructuring Regeneration (WIG)[156]

This WIG offers £300/ha for replanting UKFS woodlands and £550/ha for more diverse woodland.[157] At Broadford, given the plans for a multi-species woodland, it is likely that the "diverse woodland" rate would be applicable. This allows for a maximum of 60% for any one species across the forest and a minimum of 20% 'other species'.

The restructuring regeneration grant would be applicable for the restocking of stands felled by BSCC, but not for those felled historically by the Forestry Commission. It should be noted that even the £550/ha rate provides only a relatively small contribution towards the actual costs of restocking.

Public Access – Rural Woods (SMF)[158]

This option aims to provide support for the management of rural woodlands for public access. Support is provided to assist with the ongoing maintenance of paths that promote the use of woodlands for health benefits. The grant pays £100/ha/yr to support the costs of tree and path safety

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[153] https://www.communitywoods.org/back-copies-of-the-bulletin

[154] The FGS is being reviewed as part of the post Brexit reform of agricultural support, however, this process has been repeatedly delayed and current indications are that the scheme will continue in its present form until 2027 and potentially beyond, with only minor changes in emphasis.

[155] https://account.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/woodland-improvement-grant/long-term-forest-plan/
https://account.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/woodland-improvement-grant/forest-plan-renewal/

[156] https://account.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant- scheme/woodland-improvement-grant/restructuring-regeneration/

[157] See the relevant FGS webpage for the definitions and eligibility criteria.

[158] https://account.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant- scheme/sustainable-management-of-forests/public-access-rural-woods/

inspections, litter removal and keeping paths, signs and facilities up to an acceptable standard. The area covered by the grant is based on a 25m zone either side of qualifying paths (other than forest roads). The grant is capped at £10,000/land holding/year.

Forest Infrastructure[159]

This option provides support for new access infrastructure that will bring small scale, undermanaged or inaccessible existing woodlands back into active management so as to:

- improve the economic value of forest and woodland through timber production;
- increase the area of woodland in Scotland that is in sustainable management;
- improve the environmental and social benefits of woodland.

It provides capital funding for construction of forest roads, lay-bys, turning areas and loading bays, and bell-mouth junctions

Scottish Rural Development Programme: Agri-Environment Climate Scheme

Improving Public Access[160]
The Improving Public Access option provided capital funding for path creation and other recreation infrastructure, but did not open for applications in 2025: it is unclear whether it will open in future years but if it did it could be a significant potential funder of BSCC's proposed pathworks. Paths must be constructed to a high specification and must be a core path or a link to a core path, or provide access to a feature of interest, or link to other paths at ownership boundaries to part of wider local path networks or of a long distance path.

National Lottery

Awards for All Scotland[161]

Awards for All can provide up to £20,000 for projects that do at least one of:

- bring people together and build strong relationships in and across communities;
- improve the places and spaces that matter to communities;
- help more people to reach their potential, by supporting them at the earliest possible stage;
- support people, communities and organisations facing more demands and challenges because of the cost of living crisis.

Funding can be to deliver a new or existing activity or to support organisations to change and adapt to new and future challenges.

Community Action[162]

The Community Action fund offers up to £250,000 for up to five years for projects that are open, inclusive and led by their community, and which will achieve at least two of the following outcomes:

- build positive relationships
- support people's health or wellbeing
- help people improve their access and connection to nature
- make a positive difference to the environment.

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[159] https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/forest-infrastructure/
[160] https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/agri-environment-climate-scheme/management-options-and-capital-items/improving-public-access/
[161] https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-scotland
[162] https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/community-action

Community Action can fund up to £50,000 of capital costs, and can support indirect project costs such as organisational overheads.

SEPA Scottish Landfill Communities Fund

The Scottish Landfill Communities Fund (SLCF)[163] is a tax credit scheme, linked to Scottish Landfill Tax that encourages landfill site operators to provide contributions to Approved Bodies, who can then pass the funds onto community and environmental projects. There are 6 potential objectives of funding, these include:

Object C: "to provide, maintain or improve a public park or other amenity".

Object C projects are usually only eligible for funding if the project site is within 10 miles of a landfill site or transfer station – the nearest to Broadford is on Raasay, which is just under 10 miles away from the north end of the wood.

Scottish Forestry Community Fund

The Scottish Forestry Community Fund[164] supports groups and organisations that encourage people to use woods more.

Eligible projects include activities associated with woodland-based:

- school care clubs and play schemes
- schemes that promote physical activity such as walking, safe routes to school, natural play and adventure play
- volunteer group establishment and the induction of volunteers
- volunteering facilitation focused on skills training, health improvement and community development
- projects promoting Gaelic

Co-op Local Community Fund

The Co-op Local Community Fund[165] supports projects in its members' communities that provide access to opportunities and resources to help people thrive in one of the following ways:

- enables people to access food
- creates opportunities for young people
- improves people's mental wellbeing
- promotes community cohesion
- builds sustainable futures

Charitable Foundations

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation[166]

Founded in 1961, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation is one of the UK's largest independent funders. In 2024, it provided £48.8m in funding towards a wide range of work in support of its aims: to improve Our Natural World, secure A Fairer Future and nurture Creative, Confident Communities.

The Pebble Trust[167]
Established in 2014, the Pebble Trust is a charity based in the Highlands of Scotland providing grant funding for projects which support its vision for a more sustainable, fair and low-carbon society.

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[163] https://www.sepa.org.uk/data-visualisation/scottish-communities-landfill-fund/
[164] https://www.forestry.gov.scot/forests-people/communities/community-fund
[165] https://causes.coop.co.uk/
[166] https://www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk/
[167] http://www.thepebbletrust.org/

The Robertson Trust https://www.therobertsontrust.org.uk/

The Dulverton Trust: https://www.dulverton.org/

The Weir Charitable Trust: https://weircharitabletrust.com/

The Henry Smith Foundation: https://henrysmith.foundation/

The Mushroom Trust: https://mushroomtrust.com/

Windfarm Distribution funds

The SSE Sustainable Development Fund[168] supports strategic projects in the regions where SSE is operating. Projects across the Highlands are eligible to apply.

In the medium term, it has been projected that the Breakish windfarm will provide a community benefit fund of over £500,000 a year.[169]

Walking Scotland (formerly Paths for all)

Walking Scotland's Ian Findlay Path Fund[170] is now in its fourth and final year, it is not known if there will be a replacement fund.

Community-led Local Development Funding

Community Led Local Development funding is the successor fund for LEADER, which delivered support for rural development through implementing Local Development Strategies and was aimed primarily at small and medium sized community driven projects that are pilot and innovative in nature.

The 2025 iteration of CLLD[171] was delivered by Highlands & Islands Climate Hub, working in partnership with Highland Third Sector Interface and the Highland Council's Community Regeneration Funding.

Highland Council Community Regeneration Funds

Community Regeneration Funding[172] is an umbrella term used to cover multiple community-led external funding programmes, including the Highland Coastal Communities Fund and the Place-based Investment Programme. The funds are not currently open for applications.

[168] https://www.sserenewables.com/communities/sustainable-development-fund/
[169] https://breakishwindfarm.co.uk/community-benefits/
[170] https://walkingscotland.org.uk/our-work/path-funding/
[171] https://hiclimatehub.co.uk/event-listing/clld-fund
[172] https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/283/community_life_and_leisure/1027/community_regeneration_funding

Appendix 4: Community Woodland Manager Draft Job Description

Broadford and Strath Community Company

Community Woodland Manager – Job Description

Broadford and Strath Community Company (BSCC) is a charitable Company Limited by Guarantee with a volunteer Board of Directors elected by a community membership of ~230.

BSCC owns ~31ha of woodland, including 12.4ha recently acquired from Highlands & Islands Enterprise, and are seeking to appoint a Community Woodland Manager to manage the site, implement the BSCC Woodland Managements Plan and develop the long-term sustainability of the woodlands as a community asset.

We require a person with relevant qualifications and demonstrable experience in forest or land management, recruiting and leading volunteers, excellent general organisational and management skills, a good attention to detail and a talent for problem solving. Excellent communication skills and an ability to motivate and inspire others with a commitment to development at a local level are also required.

The key responsibilities of role will include:

- Completion of the Woodland Management Plan and any associated funding applications, and the implementation of the plan.
- Promoting and coordinating community involvement in the management of the woodland, and developing the woodland as a venue for community volunteering.
- Tendering for and managing timber harvesting and other contractors.
- Developing additional projects e.g. woodfuel, Christmas trees, commemorative trees, to generate income streams to support the long-term sustainability of the community woodlands.

Person Specification

Essential:

- Appropriate Forestry or Land management qualifications
- Experience of woodland management planning and forestry operations.
- Experience of working with and leading volunteers
- Experience of developing and submitting funding applications
- Experience of project development and management
- Good communication skills – written and oral.
- Ability to work as part of a team or under own initiative - job requires a willingness to take on responsibilities, challenges and be self-motivated
- Time management - ability to managing own time and the time of others, ensure jobs are completed within specified time frames
- Intermediate IT skills – ability to document & record information in written or electronic formats - maintaining clear and concise team, H&S and site records
- Good record keeping skills
- The post-holder must be motivated, physically fit and able to work hard out of doors in all weathers and be involved in a range of physical tasks.
- Current tetanus vaccination
- Current First Aid or Outdoors First Aid certificate

Preferred

- Experience in working with timber and woodfuel.
- Appropriate certification for outdoor work (chainsaw ticket, etc.)
- Monitoring and controlling site resources.

Desirable attributes

- Passionate about the environment.
- Demonstrable experience in community driven sustainable development.
- Clean driving licence.

Terms and Conditions

- This is a five-year contract, there will be a 6-month probationary period, and performance will be subject to regular review.
- The Community Woodland Manager will be expected to work from the BSCC office at the Growers Hub. On-line computing facilities will be provided. A significant amount of the post holder's time will be spent in the woodland.
- The Community Woodland Manager will be directly responsible to the Board of Directors of BSCC. Line Management will be undertaken by one of the Directors
- The working week comprises a minimum of 22.5 hours per week. The post holder may be required to work flexible hours, where necessary, to meet the demands of the post. Time off in lieu will be given.
- Starting salary £32,000 pro-rata
- The Community Woodland Manager will use his or her car for work related journeys. It is the responsibility of the post holder to ensure that their insurance covers them for this purpose. A mileage allowance based on Inland Revenue recommended mileage rates will be payable monthly in arrears. This will not be payable for the journey to and from work.

BSCC has an equal opportunities policy to ensure all members of staff and all applicants for employment will be given equal opportunity irrespective of sex, marital status, race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, in all aspects of recruitment, employment, promotion and training. BSCC is committed to giving full and fair consideration to people with disabilities applying for this post who possess the relevant skills and experience.