

Creating new woodland to deliver long-term benefits for nature, climate resilience and local communities

PLANET

OUR WOODLAND STRATEGY

Woodlands that work - for nature, for now, for the future



Laying down roots

In 2025, we launched our Woodland Strategy hub - bringing together decades of work to create, manage and enhance woodland across our estate into one clear, accessible platform.

This is more than a new hub. It marks a step change in how we approach woodland; setting a consistent, evidence-led direction for how we manage land, support nature recovery and deliver long-term value for communities.

As the largest landholder in the UK construction materials sector, land stewardship is fundamental to how we operate. For decades, we have been creating and improving woodland as part of our

long-term approach to land management.

At the same time, our role as a minerals operator is essential to delivering the infrastructure the UK depends on. Balancing these responsibilities is critical - but it also creates a unique opportunity that is directly linked to the nature of our business.

Quarrying is a temporary land use. As our sites are restored, we can reshape landscapes at scale - creating new woodland, improving existing habitats, and delivering lasting benefits for nature, climate resilience and local communities.

Rationale for action

The launch of our Woodland Strategy sets a new standard - bringing greater transparency, consistency and ambition.

By formalising and strengthening our commitments, and provides a clear framework; enabling us to demonstrate how we are contributing to national and global priorities around boosting woodland cover, restoring biodiversity and building resilience to climate change.

This includes direct alignment with the UK Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and Environmental Improvement Plan, the Environment Strategy for Scotland and Welsh Assembly's Programme for Government, as well as wider efforts to restore nature and improve environmental quality.

Turning responsibility into opportunity
The hub's launch comes in the context of challenging times for the UK's natural environment. The country faces significant environmental

challenges - from habitat loss and declining woodland condition to the need to increase tree cover and address climate change.

Our Woodland Strategy sets out how we are using our landbank and restoration activities to address these challenges in a practical and measurable way.

Woodland Strategy targets include:

- Achieve favourable or unfavourable recovering conservation condition of all Ancient Woodland Sites and SSSIs woodlands under Tarmac control by 2050
- Have Woodland Management Plans and actively manage our accessible woodlands over 10ha by 2030
- Achieve an average of 18% woodland creation as part of restoration schemes on our mineral sites across the country by 2050
- Use only biodegradable tree shelters in planting schemes by 2030
- Conserve and re-use woodland soils including root fragments in restoration schemes for the establishment of new woodland
- Continue active participation in partnerships and collaborative studies to further knowledge and research into aspects of the woodland ecosystem

Grounded in science, delivering real results

This approach is rooted in robust, science-led decision making.

Our long-standing partnerships with leading academic institutions and environmental organisations ensure that we continually improve how woodland is designed, created and managed. This ensures our actions are based on evidence - and deliver tangible, lasting outcomes.

From soil health and biodiversity to long-term habitat performance, we are building a deeper understanding of what makes woodland successful and applying that learning across our estate.

This combination of scale, expertise and scientific insight ensures our woodland is not only created successfully but continues to thrive and deliver value over time.

A practical framework

At the heart of our Woodland Strategy are four core pillars - providing a clear structure for action and accountability, and ensuring our approach is consistent across our estate.

· Woodland management

Enhancing the value of what we already have

Much of the UK's woodland is not in good ecological condition, with many areas unmanaged. Active management is essential to improve biodiversity, strengthen climate resilience and support long-term woodland health.

We are increasing the amount of woodland under active management across our estate - improving the condition of high-value habitats and supporting long-term ecosystem recovery.

· Woodland establishment

Creating new woodland where it delivers most value

The UK has relatively low woodland cover compared to the rest of Europe, and increasing tree cover is critical to meeting national climate and nature targets.

Through restoration, we are creating new woodland across our estate - using the 'right tree in the right place' approach to support biodiversity, carbon capture and landscape transformation.

· Woodland soils

Strengthening the foundations of woodland success

Healthy woodland depends on healthy soils, which take decades to form. Improving understanding of soil biology - including fungal networks and microorganisms - is key to establishing resilient and biodiverse woodlands.

We are improving how soils are managed and used for woodland restoration, supporting long-term woodland success from the ground up and strengthening the resilience of newly created landscapes.

· Woodland evidence

Using data and research to drive better outcomes

Strong evidence and long-term monitoring are essential to understanding what works.

We are investing in data, research and partnerships to continuously improve how woodland is created, managed and enhanced - and to share this learning across the wider industry.

From strategy to impact

Our Woodland Strategy is not about ambition alone - it is fundamentally about delivering tangible results on the ground.

Across our sites, we are restoring land into thriving woodland landscapes, improving habitat quality and contributing to wider environmental goals.

Our wealth of case studies from across the UK demonstrates how this approach works in practice - and how collaboration with academic partners, environmental organisations and local communities is helping to deliver better outcomes for nature and society.

Creating long-term value

By formalising our Woodland Strategy in this new hub, we are strengthening our role and reputation as a responsible land steward; demonstrating how mineral extraction and nature recovery can work hand in hand.

The result is a more consistent, transparent and impactful approach to land management - one that supports biodiversity, contributes to climate goals and creates lasting value for communities.

You can learn more about our approach on the Woodland Strategy hub.

