

Appendix 7 - Land Assessment Criteria

As part of the Climate & Ecological Strategy, the matrix has been developed to assess sites:

- For consideration for acquisition for either carbon sequestration or ecological enhancement; OR
- Before disposal of existing DCC sites.

Only property that is exclusively or partly within the county of Denbighshire will be considered.

Property that is classed in the following LDP classifications will not be considered:

- BSC1 Housing Allocation or Housing Commitment
- PSE2 Employment Areas

The matrix is to be used as a guide only – not the definitive mechanism for deciding whether or not a particular property should be acquired, as other factors outside the matrix criteria may have a bearing on the suitability of a property for purchase (e.g. value of the site for curlew habitat). The matrix tries to achieve a reasonable balance between the following factors in relation to identified properties:

1. The potential to sequester carbon – to meet our Net Carbon Zero target;
2. The potential to enhance biodiversity – to meet our Ecologically Positive target;
3. The potential to reduce flooding through planting or different management regimes;

4. The potential to be manageable e.g. proximity to existing DCC sites, building liabilities, etc.
5. The occurrence of key risks/ issues e.g. presence of ash trees, ability to attract external funding, etc.

	Criteria	Scores 0	Scores 1	Scores 2	Scores 3	Scores 4	Scores 5
1	Site Size	Less than 0.5 acres	0.5 to 1 acres	1 to 50 acres	50 - 200 acres	200 - 1,000 acres	More than 1,000 acres
2	Agricultural Classification	Grade 1- Excellent, Grade 2- Very Good, Grade 3a - Good	Grade 3b - Moderate	Grade 4 – Poor	Grade 5 – Very Poor	No agricultural designation	Brownfield site
3	Carbon sequestration value (current)	Less than 20% existing tree crown cover. Less than 2 meters' height and not the	Less than 20% existing tree crown cover. Less than 2 meters' height but with the	Less than 20% existing tree crown cover. 2 meters' height.	Less than 20% existing tree crown cover. At least 2 meters' height with under 50%	20% + existing tree crown cover. At least 2 meters' height with under 50% being examples	20%+ existing cover. At least 2 meters' height with 50%+ being examples of older trees.

	Criteria	Scores 0	Scores 1	Scores 2	Scores 3	Scores 4	Scores 5
		potential to achieve it	potential to achieve it		being examples of older trees.	of older trees. Under 50% Broadleaved or Yew specimens.	50% + Broadleaved or Yew specimens.
4	Carbon sequestration (potential)	Unsuitable for tree planting	No potential for natural regeneration. Significant tree planting required.	Potential for some natural regeneration with significant additional planting.	Potential for natural regeneration with limited additional planting.	Potential for natural regeneration without planting. Some non-native rectification required.	Potential for natural regeneration without planting or non-native rectification.
5	Habitat potential (connections)	Connected forestland of	Connected forestland – 0.5 to 1 acres	Connected forestland – 1 to 50 acres	Connected forestland – 50 to 20 acres	Connected forestland –	Connected forestland of

	Criteria	Scores 0	Scores 1	Scores 2	Scores 3	Scores 4	Scores 5
		less than 0.5 acres				200 to 1,000 acres	more than 1,000 acres
6	Habitat potential (water)	No watercourses or water bodies. Land unsuitable to create water bodies	No watercourses or water bodies. Land suitable to create water bodies	No watercourses. Water bodies present.	Watercourses present. No water bodies.	Watercourses and water bodies present. Low density/ Low quality	Watercourses and water bodies present. High density/ High quality
7	Habitat potential (biodiversity enhancement potential)	Species/habitats of conservation concern present, on or adjacent to site, which would be harmed by	No species or habitats of conservation concern present on or adjacent to site.	Species or habitats of conservation concern present on site. No species or habitats of conservation	No species or habitats of conservation concern present on site. Species or habitats of conservation	Species or habitats of conservation concern present on and adjacent to site (poor condition)	Species or habitats of conservation concern present on and adjacent to site (good condition)

	Criteria	Scores 0	Scores 1	Scores 2	Scores 3	Scores 4	Scores 5
		creation of “forestland”		concern adjacent to site.	concern adjacent to site.		
8	Flood Management Potential	No potential	Very poor potential	Poor potential	Good potential	Very Good potential	Excellent potential
9	Manageability – Buildings	Multiple buildings on the site which present immediate maintenance liabilities	Single building on site which presents immediate maintenance liabilities	Buildings on site but low confidence of productive use or straightforward disposal	Buildings on site but medium confidence of productive use or straightforward disposal	Buildings on site but high confidence of productive use or straightforward disposal	No buildings on the site
10	Manageability – adjacent sites	No existing DCC “countryside”	Within 3 to 10 miles of existing DCC	Within 3 miles of existing DCC	Connects to existing DCC “countryside”	Connects to existing DCC “countryside”	Connects two or more “countryside” sites currently

	Criteria	Scores 0	Scores 1	Scores 2	Scores 3	Scores 4	Scores 5
		site within 10 miles	“countryside” site	“countryside” site	sites of less than 5 acres	sites of more than 5 acres	in DCC ownership
11	Manageability - use of naturalistic grazing animals as the primary management tool	No access from the roadside to load/unload livestock	Difficult access from the roadside to load/unload livestock, no current presence of stock proof fencing/hedging	Difficult access from the roadside to load/unload livestock, there is presence of stock proof fencing/hedging but incomplete and requires attention	Workable access from the roadside to load/unload livestock, there is presence of stock proof fencing/hedging but incomplete or requires attention	Easy access from the roadside to load/unload livestock, stock proof fencing/hedging surrounding site	Adjacent access from the roadside to load/unload livestock, stock proof fencing/hedging surrounding site