



Natural capital

At the moment there is little economic incentive to retain and improve mature woodland and encourage the preservation of **carbon sinks**. There are grants to cover part of the cost of tree planting but no return can be expected from woodland until it is felled and much of the carbon value is lost.

My idea is for the setting up of a **Carbon Bank** to help realign the economic value of land with its real world value to people and the environment. Landowners would be encouraged to register their land with the Bank, and it would be surveyed and given a carbon value rating which would provide a yield to the owner for his or her investment.

It is anticipated that the scheme could ultimately replace many of the current rural subsidies. There would be a new branch of surveying to assign **carbon values**, and these would be recorded using the existing national digital mapping system. The values would have to be re-assessed

regularly and at key events such as sale or clear felling, but owners would be able to carry out maintenance and other activities e.g. recreational uses, that were compatible with the carbon value rating. The maintenance of the carbon value would correspond with the maintenance of the environment and wildlife habitats.

The idea could also be extended further to include other land categories e.g. peat bogs would have a high carbon rating and grouse moors would have a low rating. Possibly the farming sector could also be included to encourage diversity and make the preservation of wildlife habitat an income component for farmers.

For publicly owned land Carbon shares could be offered to communities and small investors.