

POST-ADOPTION SEA STATEMENT – COVER NOTE

COVER NOTE - SECTION 1

To: SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

or

SEA Gateway Manager
SEA Gateway
Scottish Executive
Area 1 H (Bridge)
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ

COVER NOTE - SECTION 2

A Post Adoption Statement is attached for the Forest Enterprise Scotland National Forest Estate Strategic Plan

The Responsible Authority is The Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS).

COVER NOTE - SECTION 3

Contact name:	Nicol Sinclair
Job Title:	Planning Manager
Contact address:	Forest Enterprise Scotland,
Contact tel no:	01786 222141
Contact email:	Nicol.Sinclair@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

Post-Adoption SEA Statement for Forest Enterprise Scotland National Forest Estate Strategic Plan, 2009

Adopted on: 1 December 2009

Responsible Authority: **Forestry Commission Scotland.**

2. INTRODUCTION

This document (referred to here as the Post-Adoption SEA Statement) has been prepared in accordance with Section 18 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

3. AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS

The full Strategy as adopted, along with the Environmental Report and Post-Adoption SEA Statement are available on the Responsible Authority's website at: www.forestry.gov.uk

The National Strategic Plan, as adopted, along with the Environmental Report and this Post-Adoption SEA Statement may also be inspected free of charge at the principal office of the Responsible Authority:

Forestry Commission Scotland, Silvan House, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh, EH12 7AT.

Times at which the documents may be inspected or a copy obtained:

Monday to Friday 0900hrs to 1700hrs.

To minimise delays for those wishing to view the documents we would be grateful if you could let us know when you would like to visit. Please telephone: 0131 314 6156 or e-mail: fcscotland@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

4. KEY FACTS

Name of Responsible Authority: Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS)

Title of Plan/Programme: National Forest Estate Strategic Plan 2009

Plan purpose: The National Forest Estate Strategic Plan describes how Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS), through its operating arm, Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES), will implement the Scottish Forestry Strategy on the national forest estate. The strategic plan will also provide direction for implementing a repositioning policy that will ensure that the nature and distribution of the national forest estate better reflects its role and purpose.

What prompted the plan (e.g. - a legislative, regulatory or administrative provision?): The National Forest Estate Strategic Plan has been prepared within the context of the 2006 Scottish Forestry Strategy to provide national direction for 10 Forest District Strategic Plans.

Plan topic (e.g. transport): Forestry

Period covered by Plan: Focused on 2009-2013 but with long term strategic aims for the century.

Frequency of Plan updates: The need for review will be considered after four years and subsequently in line with reviews of the Scottish Forestry Strategy, currently every 5 years.

Plan area: Scotland

Summary of nature/ content of plan: The National Forest Estate Strategic Plan describes how Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS), through its operating arm, Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES), will implement the Scottish Forestry Strategy on the national forest estate.

Date adopted: 1 December 2009

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Planning Manager
Forest Enterprise Scotland,
01786 222141
Nicol.Sinclair@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

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5. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The National Forest Estate Strategic Plan 2009 has been subject to a process of strategic environmental assessment (SEA), as required under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. This has included the following activities:

- Taking into account the views of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Ministers (Historic Scotland) regarding the scope and level of detail that was appropriate for the environmental report.
- Preparing an Environmental Report on the likely significant effects on the environment of the draft National Forest Estate Strategic Plan which included consideration of:
 - the baseline data relating to the current state of the environment of Scotland;
 - links between the plan and other relevant policies, plans, programmes and environmental objectives;
 - existing environmental problems and issues affecting the plan;
 - the plan's likely significant effects on the environment (positive and negative);
 - the mitigation and enhancement measures envisaged;
 - an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternative chosen;
 - monitoring measures to ensure that any unforeseen environmental effects will be identified allowing for appropriate remedial action to be taken.

Consultation on the Environmental Report was undertaken in parallel with the consultation on the content of the draft National Forest Estate Strategic Plan itself. Both the Strategic Plan and the accompanying Environmental Report were made available online and at the premises of the Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS). The consultation period ran from April to June 2008.

Following the consultation period, the Environmental Report and the results of consultation on it were taken into account and used to guide the final decisions regarding the content and scope of the National Forest Estate Strategic Plan.

The final version includes a commitment to monitoring the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the National Forest Estate Strategic Plan to identify any unforeseen adverse significant environmental effects and to take appropriate remedial action. This has been integrated with plans for monitoring the progress made to delivering the National Forest Estate Strategic Plan and the 10 Forest District Strategic Plans.

6. How environmental considerations have been integrated into the National Forest Estate Strategic Plan and how the Environmental Report has been taken into account

The SEA of the draft **National Forest Estate Strategic Plan** raised a number of environment issues that could be addressed by amending the content of the Plan as it evolved. Some recommendations were also made on mitigation and enhancement and these were built into the SFS as it was drafted and finalised. Many have been addressed through more explicit cross references to other Forestry Commission Scotland or Forest Enterprise Scotland policies which will apply to implementation of the National Forest Estate Strategic Plan and the 10 Forest District Strategic Plans.

Table 6.1 below sets out the key findings raised in the Environmental Report, and explains how they were integrated into the National Forest Estate Strategic Plan.

Table 6.1 Environmental considerations raised in Environmental Report, and response taken in finalised National Forest Estate Strategic Plan

Draft component	ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS AND FINDINGS FROM ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT	INTEGRATED INTO THE PLAN?	HOW INTEGRATED/TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT OR REASON FOR NOT BEING TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT
	<p>The NFESP supports the development of off-road timber haulage as a means of reducing impacts on the public road network and communities through which it passes. It also indicates that use of vehicles with low pressure tyres will be encouraged. Depending on the increase in off-road movements, and the design and management of tracks, there is potential for adverse effects on the water and soil environment.</p> <p>The NFESP includes a commitment to comply with the Forest Guidelines on water and soil, meaning that safeguards should be in place. The NFESP could, however, quantify the extent of any anticipated increases in off-road haulage and provide for monitoring and research of its specific effects on water and soils.</p>	No	<p>Timber production is flattening out therefore FES anticipates that there will be no net increase in off road haulage.</p> <p>Any increased run off that does occur will be managed in accordance with the guidelines. The principal area of concern is in relation to steep slopes which FES has addressed more fully in the finalised National Forest Estate Strategic Plan.</p>
Climate Change / Environmental Quality	<p>Potential for off-road timber haulage to be less fuel efficient than existing transport</p> <p>The NFESP could include a commitment to monitor fuel efficiency of transport</p>	Partially addressed by existing initiatives	Under an FC wide policy to improve the sustainability of the FC, called Greenerways, all business units, including FES, monitor fuel efficiency and estimate emissions of all vehicles used within FC. Improved methods for monitoring are currently being developed which will be developed across the whole organisation.

Draft component	ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS AND FINDINGS FROM ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT	INTEGRATED INTO THE PLAN?	HOW INTEGRATED/TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT OR REASON FOR NOT BEING TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT
	options		<p>Monitoring fuel efficiency of the whole sector would be something that should be considered by FCS as the lead on policy for the forestry sector. This is outwith the remit of FES.</p> <p>The Strategic Timber Transport Scheme is a grant awarding process, managed by FCS, for which grants are assessed and awarded from the Fund to capital or start up projects, which through investment in rural transport infrastructure are expected to meet the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Community and Social benefits. Improvements to the forest transport network will help to reduce disruption to fragile rural communities and generate benefits for groups other than the timber transport industry, e.g. the tourism industry, agriculture and fisheries sectors. * Environmental benefits. It is expected that investments would normally seek to reduce the number of lorry miles per tonne of timber transported to market on the public road network compared to present levels e.g. because of more efficient routing and/or the development of non-road transport modes such as rail and water, or from re-routing of lorries to avoid communities. * Reduced damage and disruption. Projects will reduce damage and disruption to public roads not built for sustained use by heavy transport. A secondary objective of the Scheme is to enable improved access to landlocked forests, whilst at the same time delivering the key objectives above. <p>The Fund also supports TimberLINK, which is a public service contract that provides subsidy to a maximum of £1M per annum for a shipping operation that removes up to one million lorry miles from the fragile and busy roads between Argyll and Ayrshire.</p>

Draft component	ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS AND FINDINGS FROM ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT	INTEGRATED INTO THE PLAN?	HOW INTEGRATED/TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT OR REASON FOR NOT BEING TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT
Biodiversity / Environmental Quality etc	<p>While the NFESP policies include environmental safeguards for renewable energy developments, other forms of non-timber activity (which are not covered by Forest Guidelines) could also have adverse effects, depending on their nature and location</p> <p>Recommended that the NFESP should extend the environmental safeguards that are currently provided to forestry activities via the Forest Guidelines to all forms of non-forestry activities carried out on the Forest Estate. This is likely to become increasingly important as NFESP aims to increase the proportion of its income derived from non-forestry activities. It would help identify and avoid potential adverse effects early in the process rather than once projects enter the planning system</p>	Partially	<p>With respect to tourism development: Reference to review of Scottish Tourism Framework for Change which includes consideration of sustainability issues associated with recreation and tourism.</p> <p>With respect to renewable energy development – new text added: <i>‘Following best practice guidance, with specific consideration of the impacts of potential site development on landscape, habitat networks, conservation designations, species actions plans, native tree species and soil and water quality will help minimise any possible negative environmental impacts such as (amongst other aspects) biodiversity, impact on drainage and watercourses, site instability and CO2 release during the construction phase of renewable energy projects’.</i></p> <p>Other forms of development, including disposal of land for development – FES decides whether or not to sell land based on the public benefit which is scored around social and environmental considerations. This is the basis of many planning decisions and would also be addressed under the local authorities planning procedures.</p> <p>Other non-forestry activities judged by FES to be small scale and therefore unlikely to raise significant concerns.</p>

SECTION 7 HOW OPINIONS EXPRESSED DURING CONSULTATION HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

Table 7.1 below summarises the comments received on the Environmental Report, and sets out how they were taken into account in finalising the National Forest Estate Strategic Plan.

Some of the comments related to the content of the Environmental Report, as opposed to advising on its implications for finalising the National Forest Estate Strategic Plan. These have been noted and also fed into the Plan as appropriate.

Table 7.1 Consultation responses and consequent amendments to the Environmental Report

CONSULTEE / RESPONDENT	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS	HOW THE COMMENT WAS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN MAKING THE DECISION TO ADOPT THE FINAL PLAN/PROGRAMME
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<p>SNH</p>	<p>Recognise role as carbon stores (see also Environmental Quality section)</p> <p>ER should also acknowledge role of soils as carbon sinks and flux – suggest incorporation in decision-making framework for planting/restocking on organic soils</p>	<p>Modification of text to include words ‘above and below ground’</p> <p>In addition, FCS Woodland Removal Policy states that approval for woodland removal should be conditional on achieving significant net public benefit, this taking account of the current and future benefits/disbenefits of the existing woodland. Where possible this should include a broad assessment of the impact on carbon and relevant greenhouse gases. Specific site operations will generally be required to achieve the subsequent public benefits and should be clearly defined as part of the approval process.</p> <p>Also woodland removal policy also states: ‘In Scotland’s Climate Change Programme, forests and woodlands are recognised as carbon sinks, and the role of wood and timber products has also been recognised as a way of substituting for energy intensive building materials and fossil fuels. The Programme sets targets for annual carbon savings from the forestry sector.</p> <p>Also: The UK and Scottish Climate Change Bills both propose carbon budgets that will set the direction to achieve the target emissions reductions.</p> <p>Climate change action plan notes the balance to be struck in carbon storage for woodlands.</p> <p>Woodland expansion rationale notes value of forests as carbon sinks. It states: In Scotland, efforts to reduce emissions are the highest priority. Nonetheless, forestry is a significant carbon sink for Scotland, with the equivalent of 10 million tonnes of CO₂ accumulated annually as carbon in growing trees, deadwood and organic matter, and by incorporation into forest soils. Further it states: To harness the benefits of trees for carbon sequestration, woodland creation is best focused away from the deeper peat soils. Low carbon agricultural soils offer the best carbon gains, but these are increasingly unlikely to become available for woodland creation given their importance for food production. Hence, woodland creation is likely to be focused on lower quality agricultural land that still offers a significant net carbon sequestration potential from woodland. Research is underway to better understand the carbon dynamics of soils and woodland creation.</p> <p>Also: An established production forecasting system provides regularly updated predictions of potential wood availability in Scotland, and annual production surveys provide data on actual wood production and the uses to which this wood is put. Work is underway to build on the production forecasting process as a tool for monitoring woodland biomass, and hence carbon capture, and links with national CO₂ monitoring protocols for ‘land use, land use change and forestry’ (LULUCF) are being explored. Consideration is already being given to more sophisticated mechanisms for monitoring land use carbon balance and management, including the enormously important, but complex, issue of soil carbon. And monitoring of the outcomes desired from woodland expansion is principally through the Scottish Forestry Strategy indicator set, though links to FES monitoring.</p>
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SNH	Add a clearer statement to theme regarding working with natural processes in adapting to climate change (e.g. floodplain restoration)	New text on flooding and catchment management, also in relation to slope stability
SEPA	Further consideration should be given to the potential of development or afforestation affecting peatlands to release stored carbon	<p>Forest expansion rationale states:</p> <p>Development of woodland establishment techniques in the 1960s allowed deep peats to be drained and ploughed for afforestation, leading to a phase of planting on blanket bogs, notably in the Flow Country, and on lowland raised mires. By the 1980s, the value and international importance of these habitats was becoming more apparent and new afforestation on these site types ceased, with attention turning instead to restoration of the bogs.</p> <p>Climate change adds a further dimension in relation to afforestation of deep peats and other soils with particularly high carbon content. Tree establishment tends to result in initial release of carbon from soils due to the associated cultivation and aeration. This is offset by the carbon accumulated in the growing trees and associated deadwood and organic matter. To harness the benefits of trees for carbon sequestration, woodland creation is best focused away from the deeper peat soils. Low carbon agricultural soils offer the best carbon gains, but these are increasingly unlikely to become available for woodland creation given their importance for food production. Hence, woodland creation is likely to be focused on lower quality agricultural land that still offers a significant net carbon sequestration potential from woodland. Research is underway to better understand the carbon dynamics of soils and woodland creation.</p>
SNH	Need for more rigorously planned approach to wind energy development on the NFE (highlighting need for capacity studies etc.)	Following best practice guidance, with specific consideration of the impacts of potential site development on landscape, habitat networks, conservation designations, species actions plans, native tree species and soil and water quality will help minimise any possible negative environmental impacts such as (amongst other aspects) biodiversity, impact on drainage and watercourses, site instability and CO2 release during the construction phase of renewable energy projects.
SNH	ER should advocate adoption of a 'lifecycle analysis' approach to woodland planning	Work is underway in production forecast process to monitor woodland biomass and hence carbon capture. Underway by FC, not appropriate to refer to in process work within plan led by another part of the organisation

<p>SNH</p>	<p>ER should acknowledge the potential for negative effects on human health and air quality from biomass combustion – particularly in relation to fine particulate emissions.</p>	<p>Biomass action plan states: Maintaining the high quality of our environment is an important element in the development of a sustainable biomass industry, with potential impacts on soil and water quality, air quality, biodiversity, landscape and GHG emissions. Impacts on the environment from the development of the raw material and use of biomass for energy will be mitigated through applying best practice in land management, meeting air quality standards and implementing planning regulations.</p> <p>And in environmental quality section of that report: Maintaining the high quality of our environment is an important element in the development of a sustainable biomass industry. There are a number of potential environmental impacts associated with the development of the raw materials and use of biomass for energy. How significant these impacts are will depend on a number of factors, which can be mitigated against in many cases through the use of best practice in land management and adherence to air quality standards and planning regulations. Some of the general principles are touched on below. Those issues relating to natural heritage are also developed in more detail in Scottish Natural Heritage’s “Biomass Energy & The Natural Heritage” Policy Statement, due to be published shortly.</p> <p>Government approved biomass technology is listed on the Energy Technology List (www.eca.gov.uk), which meets the minimum emissions standards. In Smoke Control Areas, installation must also comply with the exempt appliance list (www.smokecontrolareas.co.uk). The number of appliances is currently limited and equipment suppliers should be encouraged to register their equipment.</p> <p>9.19 Existing measures to ensure the continued high quality of our environment include the Air Quality Strategy, the Smoke Control Regime and regulation by SEPA of plants over 0.4 MW or which plan to utilise waste as a feedstock. Future measures include regular reviews of the Air Quality Strategy and Smoke Control Regimes, including lists of approved appliances.</p> <p>SEPA has now issued clear guidance entitled “Is it waste – understanding the definition of waste” (www.sepa.org.uk/pdf/guidance/waste/is_it_waste v2.pdf). The guidance advises that biofuel from timber and other crops is not waste, nor are forestry residues or material produced by the timber processing industry from virgin timber likely to be considered waste. The guidance provides clear advice on a range of biomass sources and the key message is that the concept of waste can not be interpreted restrictively, but must ensure that the environment and human health are safeguarded.</p>
<p>SNH</p>	<p>Set a more ambitious target for productive broadleaves (or include a more rigorous explanation of current 1% target)</p>	<p>Increased to 5%</p>

SNH	Expect to see a larger area devoted to producing quality timber to aid development in the sector and diversify crop types to assist in climate change adaptation	No change, but: Action 2.14: improve the forecasting of timber products from hardwood stands by publishing a sales plan of hardwoods and niche market conifers by 2010/11. Action 2.05 continue to assist forest research in improving tree breeding of species required for timber production. Action 2.03: plant improved stock on appropriate sites to maximise production of quality sawlogs. Action 1.06: decision support tools will be commissioned from FR to aid in the review of species selection at the national level. Not larger area for quality hardwood specifically but improved quality throughout including Action 2.04 trial incorporation of log quality predictions into production forecast system. Intended to aid development of the sector.
SNH	FSP should offer clearer support, particularly in relation to rural development and diversification potential of equestrian business (see access and health, below)	New supporting text linking FES work to wider rural economy – though not specific to equestrian activity.
SEPA	Tourism / eco-tourism could have negative effects on soil & water, material assets and air objectives due to increases in visitor numbers, the amount of travel involved and the amount of waste generated	FCS considers the Scottish Tourism Framework for Change (2006) in its decision making. This is currently under review and undergoing a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Sustainability is a key part of the framework. The SFS mentions this and commits the FCS to it. On the national forest estate itself FES seek opportunities to utilise public transport and this predominantly will affect WIAT woods. The other mitigating factor is that by nature of the more rural tourism service provision by FES we are encouraging people to contribute to fragile rural economies with a dependence on tourism. FES itself is unlikely to increase tourism numbers to Scotland but is making an important contribution in terms of producing guidance and information about more sustainable approaches to tourism.
SEPA	FSP should incorporate mitigation measures from SEA ER in relation to non-timber sources of income – national issue and should be dealt with in national-level policy	new text added: <i>'Following best practice guidance, with specific consideration of the impacts of potential site development on landscape, habitat networks, conservation designations, species actions plans, native tree species and soil and water quality will help minimise any possible negative environmental impacts such as (amongst other aspects) biodiversity, impact on drainage and watercourses, site instability and CO2 release during the construction phase of renewable energy projects'.</i>
SEPA	Release of land for development could have potential negative impacts on soil and water objectives – mitigation ensuring sensitive location and sufficient infrastructure (e.g. sewerage) provision	This is specifically in relation to release of land and FES considers it cannot be held responsible for the plans of a third party once they have purchased the land. FCS decides whether or not to sell based on the public benefit which is scored around social and environmental considerations.

SEPA	FSP should incorporate mitigation measures from SEA ER in relation to non-timber sources of income – national issue and should be dealt with in national-level policy	<p>With respect to tourism development: Reference to review of Scottish Tourism Framework for Change which includes consideration of sustainability issues associated with recreation and tourism.</p> <p>With respect to renewable energy development – new text added: <i>‘Following best practice guidance, with specific consideration of the impacts of potential site development on landscape, habitat networks, conservation designations, species actions plans, native tree species and soil and water quality will help minimise any possible negative environmental impacts such as (amongst other aspects) biodiversity, impact on drainage and watercourses, site instability and CO2 release during the construction phase of renewable energy projects’.</i></p> <p>Other forms of development, including disposal of land for development – FES decides whether or not to sell land based on the public benefit which is scored around social and environmental considerations. This is the basis of many planning decisions and would also be addressed under the local authorities planning procedures.</p> <p>Other non-forestry activities judged by FES to be small scale and therefore unlikely to raise significant concerns.</p>
SNH	Should include a recognition of need for varied access provision to suit differing requirements of the population (challenging as well as shorter, more convenient routes)	Addressed by new text on health and expanded policies on access and new policies on health
SNH	Need more active promotion of Core Paths, the SOAC and the wider access network, in conjunction with local authorities	Access policies expanded and modified
SNH	Should include a commitment to safeguard paths where possible	Note that the recreation framework specifically states that FES will maintain all FES infrastructure to a baseline standard across the estate
SNH	Should include references to equestrian activities – important economic and recreational activity.	Text not amended but note that this issue gets specific mention in the recreation framework
SNH	Plan should refer to the role of forestry in acid deposition	Addressed explicitly in supporting text, implicitly in action plan
SNH	Should contain references to the importance of soil for biodiversity – both within the soil itself and its wider influence	The ‘woods for nature our biodiversity programme’ policy refers to soils in relation to habitats and management impacts of improving woodland condition.

SNH	Remove implication that European Soil Framework Directive has been adopted (Thematic Strategy adopted in 2006, but proposed Directive rejected in December 2007)	Text amended
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<p>SNH</p>	<p>Need to acknowledge the importance of soils as carbon sinks AND a potential source of GHGs.</p>	<p>Climate Change Action Plan states:</p> <p>Carbon accumulating in forest biomass and soils is liberated through organic matter decomposition and, in some instances, by burning. As forests develop they tend to be net accumulators of carbon.</p> <p>Also suggests management options to maintain including LISS which is mentioned in the FES SP with a target. Plan also notes FCS will publish forests and soils guidelines which FES will follow as stated in operating principles and assist Scottish government is developing a Scottish soils framework.</p> <p>Modification of text to include words ‘above and below ground’ In addition, FCS Woodland Removal Policy states that approval for woodland removal should be conditional on achieving significant net benefits/disbenefits of the existing woodland. Where possible this should include a broad assessment of the impact on carbon and relevant greenhouse gases. Specific site operations will generally be required to achieve the subsequent public benefits and should be clearly defined as part of the approval process.</p> <p>Also woodland removal policy also states: ‘In Scotland’s Climate Change Programme, forests and woodlands are recognised as carbon sinks, and the role of wood and timber products has also been recognised as a way of substituting for energy intensive building materials and fossil fuels. The Programme sets targets for annual carbon savings from the forestry sector.</p> <p>Also: The UK and Scottish Climate Change Bills both propose carbon budgets that will set the direction to achieve the target emissions reductions.</p> <p>Climate change action plan notes the balance to be struck in carbon storage for woodlands.</p> <p>Woodland expansion rationale notes value of forests as carbon sinks. It states: In Scotland, efforts to reduce emissions are the highest priority. Nonetheless, forestry is a significant carbon sink for Scotland, with the equivalent of 10 million tonnes of CO₂ accumulated annually as carbon in growing trees, deadwood and organic matter, and by incorporation into forest soils. Further it states: To harness the benefits of trees for carbon sequestration, woodland creation is best focused away from the deeper peat soils. Low carbon agricultural soils offer the best carbon gains, but these are increasingly unlikely to become available for woodland creation given their importance for food production. Hence, woodland creation is likely to be focused on lower quality agricultural land that still offers a significant net carbon sequestration potential from woodland. Research is underway to better understand the carbon dynamics of soils and woodland creation.</p> <p>Also: An established production forecasting system provides regularly updated predictions of potential wood availability in Scotland, and annual production surveys provide data on actual wood production and the uses to which this wood is put. Work is underway to build on the production forecasting process as a tool for monitoring woodland biomass, and hence carbon capture, and links with national CO₂ monitoring protocols for ‘land use, land use change and forestry’ (LULUCF) are being explored.</p>
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		Consideration is already being given to more sophisticated mechanisms for monitoring land use carbon balance and management, including the enormously important, but complex, issue of soil carbon. And monitoring of the outcomes desired from woodland expansion is principally through the Scottish Forestry Strategy indicator set, though links to FES monitoring.
SNH	Cultural heritage section focuses on built heritage, but should also include references to 'living cultural heritage' e.g. veteran trees, anthropogenic vegetation patterns (e.g. wood pasture, coppice) relating to ancient patterns of woodland and landscape management	This is covered in 'Scotland's woodlands and the historic environment' publication.
SEPA	Further consideration should be given to environmental protection objectives set at international, EU and member state level – should include main Directives and national statutory instruments which implement them	Text amended

SEPA	Inclusion of a soil protection policy is vital (as per ER recommendations), as stipulating adherence to Soils and Water guidelines is insufficient mitigation.	<p>Note climate change action plan mentions that the woodland expansion rationale sets out that FES should move away from peat based soils for woodland expansion. climate action plan makes various references to protecting soil through management activities and areas of concern that warrant more attention.</p> <p>Note also that the guidelines are being revised to develop a more updated series.</p> <p>With respect to renewable energy development – new text added: <i>‘Following best practice guidance, with specific consideration of the impacts of potential site development on landscape, habitat networks, conservation designations, species actions plans, native tree species and soil and water quality will help minimise any possible negative environmental impacts such as (amongst other aspects) biodiversity, impact on drainage and watercourses, site instability and CO2 release during the construction phase of renewable energy projects’.</i></p> <p>Other forms of development, including disposal of land for development – FES decides whether or not to sell land based on the public benefit which is scored around social and environmental considerations. This is the basis of many planning decisions and would also be addressed under the local authorities planning procedures.</p> <p>Other non-forestry activities judged by FES to be small scale and therefore unlikely to raise significant concerns.</p>
SNH	Should acknowledge the importance of transition habitats between woodland and open spaces (e.g. scrub, wood pasture, mosaic – these areas are also important in terms of cultural heritage)	New text and modified policy
SNH	No clear objectives are given for native woodlands that are not AW, PAWS or designated sites. Important as components of habitat networks and often in poor condition	New and modified policies relating to native woodland

SNH	Discussion of deer limited to mitigating their negative effects on biodiversity. Should highlight that sustainable grazing should be an essential part of maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity in woodlands – requires active management rather than just prevention of damaging impacts.	Action 7.06 Review the role and potential of grazing to maintain and enhance woodland and open habitats on the national forest estate. FES also exploring the use of grazing to improve ecology on the Forest Estate, for example building on experience of projects such as the Glen Garry cattle grazing project.
SNH	Should expand actions on deer management to include development of local grazing management schemes, including other species, to provide the correct level, type and pattern of grazing	Action 7.06 Review the role and potential of grazing to maintain and enhance woodland and open habitats on the national forest estate. FES also exploring the use of grazing to improve ecology on the Forest Estate, for example building on experience of projects such as the Glen Garry cattle grazing project
SNH	Theme should be expanded to include geodiversity, as many sites are designated for their geological, as well as ecological, significance. Should also include Geological Conservation Review sites Plan should then deal with maintaining and enhancing geodiversity through access interpretation and promotion. Use Forest Design Plans to develop best practice for geological site management	New text and policy
SNH	FES to develop a geodiversity audit and action plan for the National Forest Estate	Action 7.18 states FES will identify important geodiversity sites on the national forest estate and maintain and enhance through the forest plan process
SNH	Need to monitor habitat fragmentation / connectivity (despite obvious difficulties)	Increased emphasis on habitat networks in policy and text, though no commitment to monitoring (though extensive biodiversity monitoring points).

Changes to the National Forest Estate Strategic Plan arising from wider consultation

Table 7.2 below summarises the main comments received on the draft National Forest Estate Strategic Plan, and sets out how they were taken into account in finalising the Strategy. Individual responses can be viewed, on request at the address shown in section 3 of this Post-adoption Statement.

Table 7.2 Main consultation comments about the draft National Forest Estate Strategic Plan and Forestry Enterprise Scotland’s response.

CONSULTATION COMMENT	RESPONSE
There is a need to provide more detail on implementation	FES accepts that there should be a greater use of SMART targets in the final documents. Progress will be monitored annually and a fuller section on implementation has been included
Concerns on windfarm development:	FES is sensitive to the concerns that many stakeholders have about large scale windfarm development. FES will ensure community, environmental and planning considerations are given full priority wherever development opportunities are identified. FES has included a section on planning processes to explain this.
The methodology for disposal	FES will make it clearer how it intends to notify stakeholders of the intention to sell woodlands and the criteria for making such a decision.
The potential impact of the repositioning programme	A clearer account will be given on what FES sees the strategic impact of repositioning will be.
The need for greater focus on commercial conifer forestry	One of the tensions FES has to manage is the balance between conifers and broadleaf woodlands on the NFE. The consultations responses have signalled a very strong desire to see a greater commercialisation of the broadleaf resource but that broadleaves should cover a greater proportion of the NFE than the current 8%. This is also strongly echoed in the SFS.
The need for an improved biodiversity strategy and implementation plan	Noted and this document is in draft
A perceived disengagement on community issues	This is a misplaced perception. FES remains strongly committed to engaging with communities. It has revised the wording of the document to remove this perception and reinforce our commitment to partnership working.
Promoting equality of opportunity	FCS and FES strive to ensure that equal opportunities are available to all. The Equality Impact Assessment undertaken in preparing the strategic plan describes how this has been considered and how minority groups have been consulted
The importance of partnership working	Partnership is a key part of the working of FES and will continue to be so as it delivers so many of the organisation’s objectives. The Forestry Commission Scotland publication ‘ <u>Working in Partnership – our commitment</u> ’ provides further detail. 5
Climate Change	
Caution urged in developing wind farms:	FES is sensitive to the concerns that many stakeholders have about large scale windfarm development. It will ensure community, environmental and planning considerations are given full priority wherever development opportunities are identified. Through its Renewable Energy Business Unit FES has invested in a GIS (Geographic Information System) tool from which it has assessed the suitability of all of the forest estate for windfarm development. FES is

CONSULTATION COMMENT	RESPONSE
	<p>in the process of refining these results.</p> <p>Forestry Commission Scotland has recently published a “Policy on the Control of Woodland Removal” and detailed guidance is currently being worked up alongside Scottish Government. This will ensure overall woodland cover in Scotland is not compromised by this kind of development.</p>
A range of views expressed on biomass	FES welcomes the support received for its commitment to establish exemplar pilot sites for short-rotation coppice and short-rotation forestry for the production of biomass.
Renewable energy opportunities identified	FES are keen to maximise small scale renewable energy opportunities where identified as suitable and welcome the support received for this. This includes small scale wind and hydro schemes.
Importance of improving forest habitat networks	<p>This is recognised by FES and is considered throughout the national strategic plan. This area is further explained in Key Theme 7 – Biodiversity. Extensive work is underway by Forestry Commission Scotland and Forest Research in this area of which the following links provide detail of:</p> <p>FCS Native Woodland Targets and Habitat Networks in Scotland Forest Research - Habitat networks - planning woodland management and expansion to conserve forest biodiversity Forest Research - Adapting Scotland's forests to a future climate</p>
Climate change adaptation strategies needed for priority species	This is something that the FCS Policy Unit and Forest Research are taking the lead on rather than FES. Both FCS and FR have been undertaking significant work on Scotland wide and regional habitat networks and the impact of climate change & adaptation to climate change. The information on Forest Habitat Networks and climate change can be found on the FC web site with links as above.
Concept of flexibility in markets needs additional development	It needs to be recognised that although FES have published forecasts that need to be honoured there are on occasions exceptional circumstance which may force production plans to be revisited at short notice. FES will work with FR colleagues to ensure that the latest threats from pests and pathogens are known and understood and monitored. FES will continue to improve modelling on windthrow probability and ensure felling and thinning decisions are based on the best information available. However when catastrophic events happen FES has to be able to react and move resources quickly to where they are most needed.
Forest management and impacts on fishing	The Forests & Water Guidelines recognise the importance of fisheries interests and take a precautionary approach when to influence the design and management operations through the catchment based critical loads assessments. The Forests and Water Guidelines are undergoing a comprehensive review in 2009 to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and that sound forest management practices continue to aid the chemical and biological recovery of water bodies impacted by acidification.
Forest management and impacts on flooding	<p>The revised plan recognises the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Bill and the role of natural flood management techniques such as wetland and floodplain restoration.</p> <p>The Forest Research Forest Hydrology Programme is designed to improve FES understanding of the effects of forests on water to ensure that future benefits can be secured and any negative effects minimised. For more information go to:</p> <p>Forest Research - Forest hydrology Scottish Government - Flooding The Scottish Parliament: - Bills - Current Bills - Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Bill (SP Bill 15)</p>

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	The revised Strategic Plan ensures that links are made to FCS draft climate change action plan and the "Policy on the Control of Woodland Removal"
Concern on expansion of forest area	Forestry Commission Scotland is currently developing a policy on woodland creation.
Need to clarify the justification of forestry in carbon sequestration and climate change/ more research is required on forestry and climate change/ How relevant is climate change to forestry?:	FCS and the Scottish Government believe forestry has an important role to play in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Extensive work is underway with Forest Research to quantify carbon balances of various forest management options. This is a rapidly changing area of work and FES will strive to identify new opportunities as they arise.
Innovative management of difficult sites proposed	FES has identified all of the steep slopes to be harvested over the next twenty years and agree that a sensible development of this work should be to identify how or if these sites should be restocked. This will take into consideration habitat networks, landscape value and slope stability which is linked to climate change considerations. This will be covered in the strategic plan under the theme of climate change – flood and catchment management.
Timber	
Greater emphasis on commercial conifer forestry needed	FES believes that the strategic plan illustrates its commitment to the wood using the forestry sector in key theme 2. FES has to balance the needs of all stakeholders. It is committed to commercial conifer forestry but in future it will cover a smaller proportion of the NFE. The reasons for this are primarily to do with the requirements for modern forest design, but also because earlier plantings were dominated with conifer species. There has been widespread support for more broadleaf planting and a range of stakeholders have said they would like to see more of this planting having a strong commercial dimension. The SFS makes the commitment to increase the overall woodland cover in Scotland and FES has been asked to contribute to this through a programme of Acquisition and Disposal. To date this initiative has in hand around 5,000 hectares of land on which new woodland will be created.
Accurate forecasting is needed	FES will produce a production forecast for the national forest estate every 5 years (next forecast 2011) supplemented by annual marketing plans, for incorporation in the FCS published National Production Forecast for the forestry sector. The new forecasting tool will use the restocking layer from the GIS to predict future harvests giving much better accuracy on long term trends for timber supply. FES will maintain timber production from the national forest estate at a level of between 3.3. and 3.5 million cubic metres (standing volume) per annum.
FE as a cause of market distortion	The requirement for state forestry was subject to a review in 2004. The Scottish Forestry Strategy (pages 57& 58) summarises the outcome of that review and outlines the six main priorities identified in managing the national forest estate
Commercial Broadleaf targets are too low	FES accepts this and has revised this target to 5% with ongoing review as it revises Forest Design Plans. Increase in broadleaf woodlands form part of its native woodland expansion plans.
Broadleaf woodland and hardwood production needs developing	FES recognises the productive potential of good quality broadleaves. Work is on going through the Scottish Forestry Strategy Implementation Plan, developing and practising broadleaf plantings leading to high quality timber. FES is training staff, responding to

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	niche markets and has exemplar plots on the national forest estate.
Alternative commercial species need to be developed	Accepted and covered in Key Theme 2 – Timber
Open financial accounting and monitoring is required	The Strategic Plan defines how Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) will implement the Scottish Forestry Strategy on the national forest estate. FES' accounts along with Forestry Commission Scotland's accounts are publicly available and can be downloaded from the Forestry Commission Website .
Timber Transport needs more emphasis	Accepted and the strategic plan, Key Theme 2 has been redrafted to incorporate this.
Specific recommendations on forest management	FES work to the UK Forestry Standard and are audited against the UKWAS standard. FES is investing in a suite of training courses to better equip staff to deploy a greater range of Silvicultural practices.
Business Development	
More emphasis needed on Forest Enterprise's role in the rural economy	FES is committed to assisting in developing rural local economies and the strategic plan has been edited to better reflect this. More detail will be picked up within the Forest District Strategic Plans.
Opportunities identified for education and training	FES is committed to supporting education and training as detailed in the strategic plan. FES will continue to build on this in future.
Other business development opportunities identified	The Strategic Plan for the national forest estate shows FES's commitment to business development. Due to the vast array of opportunities that exist, not all have been identified within the strategic plan but will be picked up locally by forest district strategic plans. FES recognises that forestry can bring much needed economic activity and employment to fragile and remote rural areas.
Community Development	
Document suggests only a limited commitment to community development	The Scottish Forestry Strategy's Community Development theme outlines the continued commitment to involving communities in the management and ownership of forests in Scotland. This is reflected in the 100 or more community partnerships currently active on the national forest estate. These partnerships were evaluated in 2006 with the study finding that there was a 70% satisfaction rating with how they were operating. A more recent study into the value of community woodland projects and their role in developing community capacity building identified 138 active community woodland groups in Scotland managing approximately 2% of the forest area with around 13,000 active participants. This clearly demonstrates a sector that is continuing to grow and demonstrate the opportunities for locally driven rural development. The option of acquiring land for the purpose of establishing woodland crofts was added to the National Forest Land Scheme (NFLS) in May 2008. Further information and on the different aspects of creating woodland crofts is available on the FCS website. In addition, a Woodland Crofts Project Officer has been employed, in partnership with the Community Land Unit, to work with interested community organisations to develop their ideas and proposals.
Care is needed in delivering affordable housing	FCS will be working with local authorities and Scottish Government departments to review the potential for national forest land to be used for affordable housing. The exercise undertaken in 2005 that reviewed these opportunities with the then Communities Scotland will be repeated
Repositioning needs to be integrated with the NFLS and Land Fund	FCS has been tasked by Scottish Minister's to reposition the national forest estate to deliver its commitments under the Climate Change and Woods In and Around Towns Programmes. Permission has

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	<p>been granted to recycle the income from sales into the acquisition of land to deliver these programmes. Funding for other organisations to create and manage woodland is available under the SRDP. FCS is continuously working with stakeholders and the NFLS Evaluation Panel to identify and improve areas of perceived inconsistency. The <u>NFLS Community Acquisition process</u> was reviewed in 2007 with both applicants and FCS staff believing it to be effective. However, a number of recommendations for improvements were made and adopted in the revised guidance issued in May 2008 that improve the opportunities for communities interested in acquiring land. The Strategic Plan has been amended to include more detail about the repositioning process.</p>
Outdoor learning - priorities and suggestions	Support for FES's commitment to education is welcomed and FES will seek to build on this in future
Access and Health	
Widespread support for the document	Support for the document in this area is welcomed and FES will seek to build on this
The link between accessibility and location is questioned	<p>Improving access is part of the WIAT programme. Community engagement is a key aspect of forest design planning A programme of developing new woodlands is to some extent based on opportunities, which arise to acquire land. Acquisition of land and development of new woodlands close to towns is only one part of a wider strategy to increase woodland cover. The acquisition and management of urban woodland will be in accordance with the Woodlands In and Around Towns (WIAT) programme. Achieving multiple objectives, including improved accessibility, is desirable through targeting appropriate local areas.</p> <p>Evidence of the benefits of accessible woodland in urban areas has emerged in the past decade but further research is needed and this is being pursued by FC and others.</p>
Cost of access should not be borne by forestry:	Support welcomed. Access, recreation, tourism, community woodland and educational activities are all legitimate activities, which take place on the national forest estate. They bring a range of public benefits including in some instances economic development. They are supported by the public purse and where-ever possible in the interests of transparency accounted for separately from forest operational activities.
Important to consider play	This is noted and has been incorporated in the revised strategic plan
Strategy on core paths needs further development	<p>Core path planning is a matter for the Access Authorities. FES, making use of its expertise and experience in access management, has actively and constructively engaged in the consultation process associated with planning the network. FES has participated in local path partnerships and will continue to do so where these can be demonstrated to be robust and enduring arrangements. 'Paths for All' is the lead organisation and champion for promoting path networks. FES works closely with Paths for All, access authorities and others in the development and management of long distance routes e.g. West Highland Way, Southern Upland Way, Great Glen Way, Speyside Way, Kintyre Way, Cowal Way.</p>
More access and health opportunities are identified	FES does not consider itself to be a lead sports development organisation but it does welcome approaches from sport and recreational interests. This is most beneficial when undertaken in a structured manner e.g. through a club or governing body, which will take the lead in development and securing the necessary expertise, resources and management of the sport activity or event

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Environmental Quality	
Strategy on water quality needs to be further developed	Useful comments on diffuse pollution, fisheries and river basin management planning issues which were used to develop the strategic plan in this area
Strategy on soil quality needs to be further developed	FES agrees and responses have been taken on board in redrafting the strategic plans
Strategy on landscape needs to be further developed	FES agreed and this has been incorporated in the revised draft.
Strategy on cultural heritage needs to be further developed	The FCS publication " <u>Scotland's Woodlands and the Historic Environment</u> " sets the policy context for the delivery of the historic environment objectives within Scotland's private and national forest estate woodlands. Forest Districts will be producing Forest District Cultural & Historic Environment Plans with the help of the FCS Archaeologist.
Other features of the historic environment need to be considered	All historic environment features will be recorded and considered as part of the Forest District historic environment database that the FCS Archaeologist is working on with Forest Districts. See also The FCS publication " <u>Scotland's Woodlands and the Historic Environment</u> "
Living cultural heritage needs to be considered:	This is closely linked with Theme 7 on biodiversity, where ancient woodland and wood pasture have been covered. See also the FCS publication " <u>Scotland's Woodlands and the Historic Environment</u> ".
Support for Lower Impact Silvicultural Systems (LISS)	Through the FES SP an aspiration has been outlined to have approximately 20% of the NFE managed under some kind of LISS. This is supported by Operational Guidance Booklet 7 (OGB7), which provides practical advice on these systems. Further to this a series of seminars and training courses are being undertaken throughout 2008, 2009 & 2010 to ensure staff understand how to implement these kind of silvicultural systems effectively on the national forest estate.
Undesignated sites need greater recognition	The strategic plan acknowledges the support also received for the inclusion of measures to capture and protect unscheduled monuments within the plan. Three actions in the revised Strategic Plan for the national forest estate cover unscheduled ancient monuments specifically and a further one addresses training that will also cover unscheduled monuments
Biodiversity	
A strategic approach is needed <i>Feedback during the consultation also raised related points demonstrating divergent views on the acceptability of the strategy relating to biodiversity and concerns on a lack of targets and of delivery</i>	The recently published FCS publication " <u>Woods for Nature – Our Biodiversity Programme 2008-2011</u> " along with the <u>FCS Species Action Notes</u> ("Action for black grouse", "Action for capercaillie" & "Action for red squirrel") provides strategic direction on biodiversity for state and public sector woodlands. These contain commitments for the national forest estate. FES will also be producing strategic action plans for individual key habitats such as lowland raised bog, blanket bog, native woodland, etc. In addition a detailed template for new Forest District Biodiversity Plans is being developed and nearing completion and this will contain the detail on programmes and location that some stakeholders are looking for.
Strategy on invasive	Each Forest District Biodiversity Plan will identify the key invasive

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species needs further development	<p>exotic species within the Forest District, identify the time bounded action that is required and prioritise work to ensure that effective use is made of available resources. In addition for widespread species such as Rhododendron a strategic FES plan for Scotland will be developed.</p> <p>Available guidance on the mode of spread and effective control measures for invasive exotic species such as Japanese knotweed will be disseminated to staff and contractors.</p>
Greater emphasis on the importance of edge habitats is needed	Accepted. The revised strategic plan reflects this.
Importance of specific forest management practices is identified:	Accepted. The revised strategic plan reflects this
Forest management is needed focusing at the habitat level	<p>FES agree that woodland and forest ecosystems contain the bulk of the resource of terrestrial wild species and have a key role to play in the retention of viable communities and associations of the broadest range of species including those that are not classed as rare and are not designated.</p> <p>This will be delivered through the management of habitats, through linking species to habitat niches, such as deadwood, old growth, sheltered glades, wet areas, clear fell areas, thinned sites, etc and ensuring that these habitat niches are perpetuated. Normal forestry practice and implementation of the FC Biodiversity Guidelines (in draft) and FC Forest & Water Guidelines will deliver this through the Forest Plan & Work Plan processes.</p> <p>The strategic plan has been amended to reflect this</p>
Management should target specific species	<p>Agreed and this is planned for with specific Species Actions Notes. Actions on the national forest estate for capercaillie, black grouse and red squirrel have been published in the FCS Species Action Notes in August 2008. FCS Species Action notes will be published for chequered skipper, pearl bordered fritillary and juniper in 2009. Forest District Strategic Plans will highlight other locally important species and Forest District Biodiversity Plans will describe in more detail the action that is required and planned for individual locally important species, such as nightjar and white-tailed eagle.</p>
Site condition monitoring results need to be addressed	<p>Forest Districts are working closely with local SNH staff to instigate management that will achieve the Scottish Government target of having 95% of notified features on designated sites in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition by 2010. However factors other than site management may be impacting on the condition of features, such as climate change or species not returning after migration. The national forest estate may only form a small part of a designated site. The condition of the feature on the national forest estate may have been improved but the overall condition of the feature cannot be changed in the SNH database because work has still to be instigated on the rest of the designated site.</p>
Greater emphasis of the management of non designated sites is needed	<p>Significant emphasis is put on non designated sites through the delivery of UKBAP priority habitat targets for wooded and other habitats, the implementation of the UK Forestry Standard, the FC guidelines on conservation, biodiversity (in draft) & water and UKWAS requirements. The delivery of the UKBAP targets includes the maintenance, improvement and expansion of native woodlands as well as targets for ASNW and the restoration of PAWS.</p>

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More emphasis on the management of open ground for biodiversity is needed:	Several of the existing actions cover the management of open ground for biodiversity. These has been clarified further in the revised Strategic Plan. Further action on grazing will be added with a view to maintaining and enhancing woodland and open habitats. The advice received through the consultation comments on how to prioritise open ground restoration work has been noted. The FCS Policy Unit is currently developing guidance on woodland removal for both private forestry and the national forest estate.
Managing habitat networks will assist in delivering against a wide range of biodiversity targets	Agreed. This is a core part of the biodiversity strategies under development and the ecosystem approach is emphasised in the FCS publication " <u>Woods for Nature – Our Biodiversity Programme 2008-2011</u> ".
Stronger links to other strategy and policy documents are needed	Reference to Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) will be contained within Forest District Strategic and Biodiversity Plans.
Risk to biodiversity of forest expansion	Prior to acquiring and planting land careful analysis of the presence and importance of existing habitats takes place. The EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) process is designed to identify any serious issues and to consider the impact. The potential for carbon loss is taken into consideration and soils with a peat depth of greater than 40cm would not be considered for new planting.
More effort required on implementing Lower Impact Silvicultural Systems (LISS):	This is covered under the environmental quality theme in the revised Strategic Plan for the national forest estate. The FES aim is to double the area under LISS from the current 10% to around 20%.
More emphasis on the control of Grey Squirrels	Commitment is contained within the <u>FCS Species Action Note</u> published in August 2008 on red squirrels. FES has contracted 4 new posts for targeted control of grey squirrels within the squirrel pox area. The strategic plan has been revised to clarify these developments.
More to be done on native woodland strategy	As a minimum FES will meet the SFS vision of 35% of the total forest areas comprising native trees species and FES will seek to extend this when it has completed further analysis on the impacts of climate change using EMIS (Establishment Management Information System). FES will have to better understand what effect climatic changes will have on indigenous pests and pathogens and provide a robust and adaptable woodland resource.
Landscape scale restoration work strategy needs more development:	The Consultation mentions Glen Affric and Loch Katrine as landscape scale restoration projects and that FCS should be an exemplar in the delivery of landscape scale restoration projects on the national forest estate. One of the actions in the revised Strategic Plan covers landscape scale restoration projects: "Survey open and wooded land to identify UKBAP priority habitats and use this data to identify potential landscape scale restoration projects." Individual Forest District Strategic Plans will state existing and potential landscape scale restoration projects and the proposed Forest District Biodiversity Plans will provide further detail. The proposed overarching FES Biodiversity Plan will collate and list all existing and potential landscape scale restoration projects and will identify gaps.
Geodiversity should be included:	Accepted. The strategic plan has been amended to include an action on geodiversity.

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Strategy on deer management needs developing:	<p><u>'Scotland's Wild Deer – A National Approach'</u>, the Scottish Government's strategy for Deer has recently been published with FES/FCS committed to its delivery.</p> <p>Each individual Forest District Strategy for the Management of Deer (which have been in place for the last five years) have been reviewed in light of the above publication.</p>

FES concluded that no significant changes were made between the draft and finalised versions of the National Forest Estate Strategic Plan that would lead to a requirement to produce a revised Environmental Report.

SECTION 8 REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE SCOTTISH FORESTRY STRATEGY AS ADOPTED, IN THE LIGHT OF OTHER REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES

The consideration of alternatives undertaken during the SEA and the preparation of the National Forest Estate Strategic Plan, including feedback from the first consultation, influenced the shape of the final policy document. In response to the second public consultation feedback, the draft Plan was revised in a number of ways to strengthen and clarify policy aims and objectives and to ensure an appropriate social, economic and environmental balance was struck.

With regard to the specific alternatives explored during the SEA process, it was concluded that the finalised National Forest Estate Strategic Plan represents each of the potential policy 'drivers' as far as possible, and in a sustainable way. As demonstrated in Table 7.2 above, the consultation process also allowed for competing priorities to be rigorously discussed and tested in relation to one another. FCS proposes that the finalised National Forest Estate Strategic Plan therefore strikes as sustainable a balance as possible between environmental, social, economic and community priorities and aspirations.

SECTION 9 MEASURES THAT ARE TO BE TAKEN TO MONITOR FOR ANY UNFORESEEN ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS SO THAT APPROPRIATE REMEDIAL ACTION MAY BE TAKEN

The primary mechanism for monitoring the impacts of the National Forest Estate Strategic Plan will be through the suite of indicators identified in the Plan document. However, it should be noted that the Plan is linked to a range of national policy and guidance documents, many of which have their own monitoring frameworks and will be implemented through Forest District Strategic Plans which will also have established monitoring mechanisms.

SECTION 10 CONCLUSION

We believe the SEA process has assisted in developing a balanced National Forest Estate Strategic Plan. This, in turn, will ensure that forestry in Scotland will emerge as an exemplar of sustainable development, benefiting the people of Scotland and protecting and enhancing the environment during the era of climate change.