

POST-ADOPTION SEA STATEMENT – COVER NOTE

PART 1

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

or

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

PART 2

A post-adoption SEA statement is attached for the PPS entitled:

West Argyll Forest District Strategic Plan 2009-2013

The Responsible Authority is:

The Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS)

PART 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

Signature & date 

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1. BACKGROUND

Post-adoption SEA statement for:

West Argyll Forest District Strategic Plan 2009-2013

Adopted on:

?? 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

WEBSITE

The full PPS 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

OFFICE ADDRESS

The PPS, as adopted, along with the Environmental Report and post-adoption SEA Statement may also be inspected free of charge (or a copy obtained for a reasonable charge) at the principal office of the Responsible Authority:

Contact name, address and telephone number

Forestry Commission Scotland, Silvan House, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh, EH 12 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@forestrv.gsi.gov.uk

4. KEY FACTS

Name of Responsible Authority	Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS)
Title of PPS	West Argyll Forest District Strategic Plan (WAFDSP) 2009 – 2013
Purpose of PPS	To deliver the national themes of the Scottish Forestry Strategy (SFS) through actions set out under local key issues.
What prompted the PPS (e.g. a legislative, regulatory or administrative provision)	The West Argyll Forest District Strategic Plan has been prepared in the context of the Scottish Forestry Strategy (2006) and the National Forest Estate Strategic Plan.
Subject (e.g. transport)	Forestry
Period covered	2009-2013
Frequency of updates	Every 5 years.
Area of PPS (e.g. geographical area)	The West Argyll Forest District (including the Kintyre Peninsula, Mid Argyll including Oban and the Isles of Mull, Jura and Islay.
Summary of nature/content of PPS	The WAFDSP outlines how the forests will be managed to deliver the SFS Vision and Outcomes. The plan ensures that local issues are addressed together with national objectives by producing locally-specific policies in response to the seven national themes presented in the SFS.
Date adopted	????
Contact name & job title Address, email, telephone number	Nicol Sinclair Planning Manager Forest Enterprise Scotland 01786 222141 Nicol.sinclair@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
Date	

5. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The West Argyll Forest District Strategic Plan 2009-2013 has been subject to a process of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), as required under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The West Argyll Forest District comprises the original West Argyll FD area and part of the former Lorne Forest District (Oban and Mull). Draft Forest District Strategic Plans were produced for both, and these were subject to comprehensive SEA. The relevant findings and alterations recommended made in the relevant environmental reports have been taken into account in the production of the final plan and are detailed below.

The SEA process 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 PPS which included consideration of:
 - the baseline data relating to the current state of the environment;
 - links between the PPS and other relevant strategies, policies, plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives;
 - existing environmental problems affecting the PPS;
 - the plan's likely significant effects on the environment (positive and negative);
 - measures envisaged for the prevention, reduction and offsetting of any significant adverse effects;
 - an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives chosen;
 - monitoring measures to ensue that any unforeseen environmental effects will be identified allowing for appropriate remedial action to be taken.
- Consulting on the Environmental Report which was undertaken in March 2008 for a period of 8 weeks.
- Taking into account the Environmental Report and the results of consultation in making final decisions regarding the PPS
- Committing to monitoring the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the PPS. This will also identify any unforeseen adverse significant environmental effects and to enable taking appropriate remedial action.

6. HOW ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS HAVE BEEN INTEGRATED INTO THE WEST ARGYLL STRATEGIC PLAN AND HOW THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT HAS BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

Forest District Plans sit within a wider policy framework which includes the Scottish Forestry Strategy, the National Forest Estate Strategic Plan and Forestry Commission guidelines and policies. The WAFDSP states that ‘the National Strategic Plan describes the strategic and operational context, monitoring framework and implementation proposals that guide the district strategic plan’.

This national policy context denotes that Forest District Strategic Plans have been developed within a framework which clearly defines environmental, economic and social priorities for the forest sector and which provides equally clear safeguards to guide environmental management. It therefore follows that while each Forest District has analysed locally significant issues and priorities they have ‘inherited’ national policy priorities and, in implementation, will have a duty to ensure high environmental standards.

The SEA of the Draft WAFDSP took into account this wider framework however several environmental issues were highlighted particularly in relation to non-forestry activities and land disposal and acquisition. As a result it was recommended that wherever practical further safeguards should be reflected in modifications to the FDSP prior to final adoption. Table 6.1 below sets out the key findings raised in the Environmental Report and explains whether they are addressed adequately within the National Forest Estate Strategic Plan (which has also been subject to SEA) or other Forest Enterprise policies and where any additional amendments were made to the WAFDSP to ensure a robust approach to the avoidance of negative environmental impacts.

Table 6.1

SEA issue	Existing problem?	Impact of WAFDSP	Proposed measures for the reduction/prevention and offset of significant adverse effects	Implications of policies contained in FES National Forest Estate Strategic Plan	Modification to the WAFDSP or reason for not having taken this into account
Biodiversity	Overall decline in biodiversity, sensitivity of international, national and locally important nature sites.	Renewable energy and biomass woodfuel policies may have detrimental effects through the disturbance of sensitive species or habitats	<p>The policies should be cross-referenced with environmental protection policies to ensure that non-forestry uses of FE land conform to wider FCS environmental standards</p> <p>The FDSP should state that any renewable energy projects on the Forest Estate will have no negative effects on biodiversity</p>	<p><i>The NFESP provides assurance that environmental issues will be taken into account in relation to renewable energy projects.</i></p>	<p>New text in renewable energy policies which state that projects must have ‘due regard to community, planning and environmental concerns’</p> <p>In addition, any infrastructure and engineering works associated with renewable energy will be subject to planning consent, giving an additional layer of environmental protection. Similarly, planting for biomass should be covered by existing forestry standards.</p>
Biodiversity	Overall decline in biodiversity, sensitivity of international, national and locally important nature sites.	The allocation of Forest Estate land for housing sites could affect biodiversity through habitat loss or disturbance of sensitive species	<p>Policies should be strengthened to ensure that any disposal of forest land for housing will have no negative impacts on biodiversity and that the proposed developments are in keeping with wider FCS social and environmental aims</p> <p>Existing environmental protection policies should be extended to cover any potential use of the Forest Estate, in addition to forest operations</p>	<p><i>It would be beneficial to extend the environmental protection afforded to renewable energy projects to other forms of development or land use change on the Forest Estate.</i></p>	<p>Disposals of land from the forest estate are assessed on the basis of the public interest with potential environmental impact an important consideration. In addition, any proposal for development would be required to comply with local and national planning policy, providing a further check on significant environmental effects.</p>

SEA issue	Existing problem?	Impact of WAFDSP	Proposed measures for the reduction/prevention and offset of significant adverse effects	Implications of policies contained in FES National Forest Estate Strategic Plan	Modification to the WAFDSP or reason for not having taken this into account
Biodiversity	Overall decline in biodiversity, sensitivity of international, national and locally important nature sites.	Business development policies may have context-specific negative impacts, depending on the nature, scale and location of the developments	<p>These policies should be strengthened to state that any business venture on Forest Estate land or explicitly supported by the Forest District should comply with wider FCS social and environmental standards and will have no significant adverse effects on biodiversity.</p> <p>Environmental protection policies should be amended to ensure that any possible use of Forest Estate land is covered</p>	<i>The NFESP provides assurance that environmental issues will be taken into account in relation to renewable energy projects. It would be beneficial to reflect this approach within the finalised FDSP and, given the emphasis on increasing income from non-forest activities, extend this approach to other forms of development or land use change on the Forest Estate.</i>	<i>New Policy WA 3.12 Contribution to Rural Development – ‘Be open to new business ideas that match our wider social and environmental standards’.</i>
Biodiversity	Overall decline in biodiversity, sensitivity of international, national and locally important nature sites.	Access and recreation policies have the potential to cause limited, localised, disturbance to sensitive habitats and species	<p>These policies should be cross-referenced with the environmental protection and biodiversity policies to ensure that no leisure activities have adverse effects on natural heritage.</p> <p>Policies should ensure that leisure and recreation are sustainably promoted and managed to ensure that disturbance is kept to a minimum, particularly during sensitive times of the year (e.g. the black grouse lek in April)</p> <p>Environmental protection policies should be amended to ensure that all potential uses of the Forest Estate are covered</p>	<p>The NFESP includes a commitment to research the effects of recreation on the forest environment.</p> <p>There remains potential to extend standard of environmental stewardship provided in relation to forestry operations to non-forestry activities.</p>	<p>The NFESP covers this issue.</p> <p>In addition the WAFDSP includes robust biodiversity policies for protecting and enhancing sensitive species and habitats through the forest planning process – which would include potential access enhancements.</p>

SEA issue	Existing problem?	Impact of WAFDSP	Proposed measures for the reduction/prevention and offset of significant adverse effects	Implications of policies contained in FES National Forest Estate Strategic Plan	Modification to the WAFDSP or reason for not having taken this into account
Population and human health	Pressure on the public road network and atmospheric emissions	Biomass woodfuel policy may generate additional traffic through the transportation of timber and forest products to processors and end users	<p>The policy should prioritise sustainable transport solutions wherever possible and develop local markets to reduce ‘timber miles.’</p> <p>Transport impacts are likely to depend on the as-yet unknown location of fuel supplies, processors and users</p>	<i>The NFESP commits to utilising sustainable timber transport methods where possible.</i>	New text under ‘Renewable Energy’ key theme relating to biomass/woodfuel to ‘sell as much of our produce near to source as possible and use transport methods that conform to FCS business development programme principles and reduce the amount of fossil fuel consumed...’.
Population and human health	Limiting of access to woods and forests	Renewable energy projects may result in reduced access to important leisure and recreation areas within the forest	<p>This policy should be strengthened to ensure that no loss of amenity results through the development of renewable energy infrastructure or biomass planting.</p> <p>However, such effects are likely to be taken into account in the statutory land use planning process</p>	<i>The NFESP provides assurance that social issues will be taken into account in relation to renewable energy projects.</i>	New text in renewable energy policies which state that projects must have ‘due regard to community, planning and environmental concerns’.
Population and human health	Potential loss of access and negative effects on amenity values	Diversification of the Forest Estate through non-timber sources of income and portfolio analysis may produce negative effects, depending on the type of land use changes proposed	<p>Policies should be strengthened to ensure that any diversification initiative does not limit public access to or harm amenity values of the forest resource. They should state that any initiative proposed will have no negative effect on communities’ quality of life and should be in keeping with wider FCS social and environmental standards</p> <p>Some proposals – such as visitor centres, renewable energy projects or mineral workings – are subject to planning consent, through which community impacts would also be mitigated</p>	<i>The NFESP provides assurance that community and environmental issues will be taken into account in relation to renewable energy projects.</i>	Disposals of land from the forest estate are assessed on the basis of the public interest. Potential environmental impact is therefore an important consideration. Similarly, any proposal for development resulting from land disposal would be required to comply with local and national planning policy, providing a further check on significant environmental effects.

SEA issue	Existing problem?	Impact of WAFDSP	Proposed measures for the reduction/prevention and offset of significant adverse effects	Implications of policies contained in FES National Forest Estate Strategic Plan	Modification to the WAFDSP or reason for not having taken this into account
Water and soil	Damage or disruption of the water and/or soil environments	The development of renewable energy projects is likely to cause localised disruption to the soil environment through engineering works and access road construction	<p>A robust soil protection policy should be added to the FDSP to ensure appropriate safeguarding of this most fundamental resource. It should cover any potential use or development of Forest Estate land</p> <p>Such developments will always have localised effects on soils and drainage, but strengthening the policy should ensure compliance with best practice in soil handling.</p>	<p><i>The NFESP provides assurance that social issues will be taken into account in relation to renewable energy projects. Furthermore, the NFESP also states a requirement to comply with Forestry Commission Soil and Water Guidelines.</i></p>	<p>New text in renewable energy policies which state that projects must have 'due regard to community, planning and environmental concerns'.</p> <p>Renewables projects will require planning consent and this process will confer additional environmental protection, often including EIA</p>
Water and soil	Damage or disruption of the water and/or soil environments	Affordable housing projects will have inevitable effects on the local soil environment and drainage regime. Current environmental protection policies only cover forest operations	<p>The affordable housing policy should be strengthened to state that any such development will have no long term effect on the wider soil environment and drainage regime.</p> <p>A robust soil protection policy should be drafted which ensures appropriate handling and conservation of soils in the course of any operations on the Forest Estate. (The water policy should also be amended to cover non-forest operations)</p>	<p><i>The NFESP states a requirement to comply with Forestry Commission Soil and Water Guidelines.</i></p>	<p>Decisions on land disposal are made in the public interest – environmental protection is therefore an important consideration.</p> <p>An additional level of protection is conveyed by the fact that housing developments require planning consent.</p>
Water and soil	Increased erosion/compaction of the forest path and ride network	Access policies may result in increased public use of the forest resource, with resultant pressure on infrastructure	<p>The policy should be strengthened to ensure that access is promoted and managed sustainably and that infrastructure is progressively upgraded to cope with more intensive use</p> <p>Existing environmental protection policies should be strengthened to cover all potential uses of the Forest Estate</p> <p>A soil protection policy should be added to the FDSP</p>	<p><i>The NFESP states a requirement to comply with Forestry Commission Soil and Water Guidelines and has also committed to carrying out research into the effects of recreation activities on the environment.</i></p>	<p>The NFESP covers this issue.</p>

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Water and soil	Damage to the water and soil environments	Diversification of the Forest Estate through non-timber sources of income and portfolio analysis may produce negative effects, depending on the type of land use changes proposed	<p>A robust soil protection policy should be added to the FDSP</p> <p>All construction projects will have a localised effect on soils and drainage. However, these policies should insist on the highest standards of soil handling practice, and ensure that any proposals are in keeping with wider FCS social and environmental aims</p>	The NFESP includes a commitment to comply with the Forest Guidelines on water and soil	New Policy WA 3.12 Contribution to Rural Development – ‘Be open to new business ideas that match our wider social and environmental standards’.
Air	More private car use in accessing recreation and leisure facilities in the forest	Access promotion policies may result in increased private car use as more people seek to use the forest for recreation	<p>The policies should be strengthened to prioritise public and non-motorised transport wherever possible.</p> <p>Woods close to settlements should be prioritised for leisure and recreation development to reduce the number of people driving to the forest</p>	<i>NFESP commits to carrying out research into the effects of recreation activities on the environment.</i>	Amended Access and Health policies in the FDSP seek to encourage greater use of the forests by local people. New Woodlands In and Around Towns policy under Community Development theme.
Air	Diminishing air quality	The timber supply policy may result in an increase in road haulage of timber, with resultant impacts on air quality	<p>This policy should be cross-referenced with the timber transport policy to ensure that sustainable haulage solutions are prioritised wherever possible.</p> <p>Negative effects may also be mitigated by the expansion of local processing facilities, promoted by the Plan</p>		THE FDSP outlines that creating an appropriately scaled timber processing capacity in the District is a priority.

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Landscape	Potential damage to landscape quality	Measures to deal with flash floods and renewable energy developments may have detrimental effects on landscape values	<p>The upgrading and strengthening of the forest road network should be designed to minimise landscape effects.</p> <p>The landscape quality policy should be extended to cover all potential use of the Forest Estate to ensure that any flood prevention works or renewables development comply with wider standards</p>	<p><i>NFESP states a requirement to take environmental issues into account in relation to renewable energy projects.</i></p>	<p><i>New text in renewable energy policies which states that projects must have 'due regard to community, planning and environmental concerns'.</i></p> <p><i>New text also under 'flood and catchment management' to 'comply with the latest FCS forests and water guidelines..'</i></p> <p>Renewables projects will also be subject to planning consent, and likely EIA, which will take landscape values into account. The FDSP should state, however, that no renewables development will be considered where negative impacts on landscape values will occur</p>
Landscape	Potential damage to landscape quality	Timber policies may have detrimental effects in relation to extending planting into previously un-forested areas such as steeper ground or former agricultural land	<p>Clearly, the impact of these policies will be site-specific. However, the policies should be strengthened to ensure that no damage to landscape values will occur through afforestation and harvesting</p> <p>The adoption of LISS/continuous cover forestry in these areas would, to some extent, mitigate negative effects by creating more naturalistic forest environments</p>	<p><i>The NFESP promotes the use of low impact management systems in areas which are particularly sensitive to landscape change</i></p>	<p><i>The NFESP covers this issue.</i></p>

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Landscape	Potential damage to landscape quality	Disposal or allocation of land for housing sites may also impinge on landscape quality	<p>This policy should be strengthened to ensure that housing projects will not be proposed in areas, or be designed in such a way, that landscape values will be negatively affected</p> <p>The existing landscape policy should also be extended to cover all potential uses of the Forest Estate</p>	<p><i>Whilst the NFESP provides assurance that environmental issues will be taken into account in relation to renewable energy projects, it would be beneficial for this to be extended to cover other forms of development or land use on the Forest Estate.</i></p>	<p>Decisions on land disposal are made in the public interest – environmental protection is therefore an important consideration. Uses that would have significant impact on landscape character would not therefore be considered unless significant public benefits would be generated.</p> <p>The fact that housing developments require planning consent conveys an additional layer of protection</p>
Landscape	Potential damage to landscape quality	Operations to stabilise roads or planting on unstable ground may have a detrimental effect on landscape quality	<p>These works – as forest operations – should be covered by existing guidelines. However, the policy should be strengthened to ensure that no negative effects on landscape values result.</p>		<p>New text committing to good landscape design and interpretation and application of FCS landscape guidelines. New policy WA 6.03 to ensure that unstable ground will be treated especially sensitively. In addition, enhanced landscape policy WA 6.04 to ensure landscape as a major consideration in long term forest planning.</p>

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Landscape	Damage to landscape quality	Renewable energy developments and non-timber sources of income may have a detrimental effect on landscape quality if inappropriately located	<p>The policies should be amended to state that such developments will be steered away from areas of high landscape value and will not be considered where they are likely to have negative effects.</p> <p>Environmental protection policies should be strengthened to ensure that all possible uses of Forest Estate land are covered</p>	<i>The NFESP provides assurance that environmental issues will be taken into account in relation to renewable energy projects.</i>	<p>New text in renewable energy policies which state that projects must have 'due regard to community, planning and environmental concerns.</p> <p>New Policy WA 3.12 Contribution to Rural Development – 'Be open to new business ideas that match our wider social and environmental standards'.</p> <p>Renewables projects (wind turbines, biomass or hydroelectric generator etc.) are subject to planning consent, and landscape impact will be considered in the planning process, often through EIA</p>
Landscape	Damage to landscape quality	Business development policies may have detrimental effects on the landscape, depending on the location, nature and scale of the enterprise proposed	<p>These policies should be strengthened by stating that any enterprise on Forest Estate land, or explicitly supported by the Forest District, should conform to wider FCS social and environmental standards.</p> <p>The landscape quality policy should be enhanced to ensure that all potential uses of FE are covered</p>	<i>The NFESP provides assurance that environmental issues will be taken into account in relation to renewable energy projects. It would be beneficial to reflect this approach within the finalised FDSP and, given the emphasis on increasing income from non-forest activities, extend this approach to other forms of development or land use change on the Forest Estate. The NFESP also includes a number of other policies designed to protect important or valued landscapes.</i>	<p>New Policy WA 3.12 Contribution to Rural Development – 'Be open to new business ideas that match our wider social and environmental standards'.</p>

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Landscape	Damage to landscape quality	The community ownership and management policy could result in detrimental effects on the landscape through unsympathetic land use change	<p>Disposals of land under the National Forest Land Scheme should be contingent on proposals meeting wider FCS social and environmental standards.</p> <p>The development of affordable housing or community facilities also present opportunities for the use of local timber in the design and construction of high quality, sympathetic, structures</p> <p>Environmental protection policies should be amended to ensure that all potential uses of Forest Estate land are covered by stringent standards.</p>	<p><i>The NFESP provides assurance that environmental issues will be taken into account in relation to renewable energy projects</i></p> <p><i>The NFESP also includes a number of other policies designed to protect important or valued landscapes and provides additional guidance on criteria for disposal of land</i></p>	<p>Decisions on land disposal are made in the public interest – environmental protection is therefore an important consideration. Uses that would have significant impact on landscape character would not therefore be considered unless significant public benefits would be generated.</p> <p>Developments such as community-scale renewables or affordable housing will be subject to planning consent. This provide an additional layer of landscape protection.</p>
Landscape	Damage to landscape quality	The development of recreation facilities may have negative impacts on areas of high landscape value	<p>The policy should state that any built facilities (such as visitor and interpretation centres) should meet the highest standards of design, incorporate sympathetic materials and enhance landscape values.</p> <p>Paths, rides and trails should be planned, constructed and maintained so as to blend in with existing landscape features and be of an appropriate scale for projected visitor traffic</p> <p>The landscape quality policy should be strengthened to cover any potential use of the Forest Estate to ensure that recreation facilities and infrastructure conform to existing environmental standards</p> <p>The development of visitor centres will be subject to planning permission, conveying an additional layer of protection to the quality of the environment</p>	<p><i>The NFESP includes a commitment to research the impacts of recreation on the forest environment.</i></p> <p><i>The NFESP also includes a number of other policies designed to protect important or valued landscapes.</i></p>	<p>The NFESP covers this issue.</p>

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Historic environment	Damage to the fabric or setting of cultural heritage sites and historic landscapes	Renewable energy, biomass and housing developments may come into conflict with cultural heritage sites or affect their setting	Planting for woodfuel production should follow the 'Forests and Archaeology' guidelines. However, the cultural value policy should be extended to require full, professional, archaeological survey in advance of any new planting to ensure the forest design respects sites and their settings Renewable energy and housing developments are subject to planning consent and should as such take archaeology into account. The plan should, however, insist that any such developments are steered away from areas of known heritage significance	<i>The NFESP contains a suite of policies which address the issue of impacts on the historic environment.</i>	Addition to the cultural heritage policy WA 6.06 to state that cultural heritage issues are adequately addressed in any proposed developments (including the acquisition of bare land) Impacts on the historic environment are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. They are routinely dealt with through EIA and mitigation and monitoring conditions.
Historic environment	Damage to the fabric or setting of cultural heritage sites and historic landscapes	Timber policies, especially where new planting is required, may potentially come into conflict with cultural heritage sites	Adherence to the 'Forests and Archaeology' guidelines is assumed. The cultural value policy should insist on full, professional, archaeological survey in the planning stage of any afforestation programme.	<i>The NFESP contains a suite of policies which address the issue of impacts on the historic environment.</i>	New text in Cultural Heritage policy to ensure that 'cultural heritage issues are adequately addressed in any proposed developments'. (WA 6.06)
Historic environment	Damage to the fabric or setting of cultural heritage sites and historic landscapes	Increased public use of the forest resource as a result of access policies may result in damage to sites and monuments through unmanaged recreation	Policies should be amended to ensure the sustainable promotion and management of access, leisure and recreation activities on the Forest Estate. Understanding and enjoyment of sites and monuments should be encouraged, but managed so as to limit the erosive effects of visitors The cultural value policy should be strengthened to ensure that archaeological sites are protected from all potential uses of the Forest Estate	<i>A comprehensive suite of policies are contained within the NFESP which address the issue of impacts on the historic environment.</i>	The NFESP covers this issue. Also, new text in the Cultural Heritage policy to ensure that 'cultural heritage issues are adequately addressed in any proposed developments'. (WA 6.06)

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Historic environment	Damage to the fabric or setting of cultural heritage sites	Renewable energy developments may have direct impacts through engineering works, or indirect effects on the landscape setting of monuments	<p>The policy should be revised to state that such developments will be steered away from areas of high cultural heritage value.</p> <p>The cultural heritage policy should be strengthened to cover all potential uses of Forest Estate land.</p> <p>Planting/harvesting for biomass should comply with the 'Forests and Archaeology' guidelines, however a full archaeological survey should be required in advance of any significant forest operations of this nature</p>	<i>The NFESP provides assurance that environmental issues will be taken into account in relation to renewable energy projects. It also includes a suite of policies covering conservation and management of the historic environment.</i>	<p>New text in renewable energy policies which state that projects must have 'due regard to community, planning and environmental concerns'.</p> <p>New text in Cultural Heritage policy to ensure that 'cultural heritage issues are adequately addressed in any proposed developments'. (WA 6.06)</p> <p>In addition Impacts on the historic environment are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. They are routinely dealt with through EIA and mitigation and monitoring conditions.</p>
Historic environment	Damage to the fabric or setting of cultural heritage sites	Afforestation as a result of the new woodland, flood and catchment management, habitat network and timber supply policies will result in conflict with cultural heritage sites	<p>(Adherence to the 'Forests and Archaeology' guidelines is assumed in the course of any forest operations)</p> <p>The cultural heritage policy should be strengthened through the requirement for full, professional, archaeological survey in the planning stage of afforestation initiatives, to ensure sites are effectively incorporated into forest designs (e.g. in planned open space to facilitate access and management)</p> <p>These policies should be amended to ensure that any new planting will respect and enhance the historic environment, and be cross-referenced with the cultural heritage policy to limit potential conflicts and, ultimately, improve the efficiency of forest operations</p>	The NFESP includes a suite of historic environment policies which should address these concerns.	<p>The policy 'Scotland's woodlands and the historic environment' includes a policy to manage the historic environment sensitively.</p> <p>New text in Cultural Heritage policy to ensure that 'cultural heritage issues are adequately addressed in any proposed developments'. (WA 6.06)</p>

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Historic environment	Damage to the fabric or setting of cultural heritage sites	The community ownership and management policy could result in detrimental effects on the historic environment through land use change and construction projects	<p>Disposals of land under the National Forest Land Scheme should be contingent on proposals meeting wider FCS social and environmental standards.</p> <p>The cultural heritage policy should be amended to ensure that all potential uses of Forest Estate land are covered by stringent standards.</p> <p>Developments such as community-scale renewables or affordable housing will be subject to planning consent. This will convey an additional layer of protection to cultural heritage sites</p>	The NFESP includes a suite of historic environment policies which should address these concerns.	New text within the Cultural Heritage policy WA 6.06 to state ensure that 'cultural heritage issues are adequately addressed in any proposed developments'.
Historic environment	Damage to the fabric or setting of cultural heritage sites	Business development and recreation policies could create negative impacts, depending on the nature, scale and location of developments	<p>These policies should be strengthened to ensure that income diversification and rural development initiatives do not negatively affect sites and monuments.</p> <p>The cultural heritage policy should be strengthened to cover any potential use of Forest Estate land, and to steer inappropriate development away from areas of high cultural heritage value. It should also ensure that access and leisure use of sites is sustainably managed</p> <p>Many types of development will require planning permission.</p>	The NFESP includes a suite of historic environment policies which should address these concerns.	<p>New text within the Cultural Heritage policy WA 6.06 to state ensure that 'cultural heritage issues are adequately addressed in any proposed developments'.</p> <p>Impacts on the historic environment are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. They are routinely dealt with through EIA and mitigation and monitoring conditions.</p>

7. How opinions expressed during the consultation have been taken into account

The sections below detail the comments received during the SEA process from the consultation authorities (Table 7.1) and those from the general consultation on the Consultative Draft of the WAFDSP (Table 7.2). In Table 7.1, where relevant, the issues raised in the SEA of the National Forest Estate Strategic Plan and the SEAs of other forest district strategic plans have also been included.

TABLE 7.1 –LISTS CONSULTATION AUTHORITY RESPONSES AND SETS OUT HOW THEY HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

CONSULTEE / RESPONDENT (ALPHA ORDER BEGINNING WITH THE CONSULTATION AUTHORITIES)	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS	HOW THE COMMENT WAS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN MAKING THE DECISION TO ADOPT THE FINAL PPS
Scottish Environment Protection Agency	General comment on All FDSPs: 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	WAFDSP Amendments: Commitment at 6.02 to Water Framework Directive. NFESP Amendments: Text amended
	Inclusion of a soil protection policy is vital (as per ER recommendations), as stipulating adherence to Soils and Water guidelines is insufficient mitigation.	WAFDSP Amendments: New policy at 6.03 to in relation to slope stability and adherence and exceedence of guidance. New text under theme 6:Environmental Quality on the use of continuous cover forestry to ensure a lower impact on soils. NFESP Amendments: 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. Note also that the guidelines are being revised to develop a more updated series.
The Scottish Ministers (Historic Scotland)	No substantive comments	
Scottish Natural Heritage	West Argyll specific	
	The policy relating to planting and stabilising roads on unstable ground should be strengthened to minimise the potential for negative effects on landscape quality.	The steep ground policy as outlined in the former Lorne FDSP is not included in the new WAFDSP.
SNH comments on National Theme	SNH comments on National Forest Estate Strategic Plan which are also relevant to West Argyll Forest District Comment	West Argyll FDSP Amendments

Climate change	Recognise the role of soils as carbon stores	The role of soils as carbon stores is comprehensively covered within the NFESP.
	Add a clearer statement to theme regarding working with natural processes in adapting to climate change (e.g. flood plain restoration)	Text on the role of forests in flood and catchment management.
Business Development	The potential social effects of non-forestry developments on the National Forest Estate should be minimised through more explicit social criteria for such projects	New Policy WA 3.12 Contribution to Rural Development – ‘Be open to new business ideas that match our wider social and environmental standards’.
Access and Health	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)	New text on the Disability Discrimination Act and the use of the Countryside for All Good Practice Guide under Access and Health Theme. Also new text on resolving any actual or perceived user group conflict.
	Need more active promotion of Core Paths, the SOAC and the wider access network, in conjunction with local authorities	Existing text on working with local access officers in relation to the core path network on the national forest estate.
	Should include a commitment to safeguard paths where possible	New policy 5.06 to ‘protect public rights of way’.
Environmental Quality	Plan should refer to the role of forestry in acid deposition	This is covered within the NFESP. The WAFDSP includes the implementation of catchment management plans which will address acidification.
	Need to acknowledge the importance of soils as carbon sinks AND a potential source of Green House Gases.	The carbon storage role of soils is comprehensively covered within the NFESP.
	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	The Introductory section of the WAFDSP notes that the heritage interest of the district includes important native/ancient woodland sites and historic trees and woods. The relevant policy relating to this is covered within the ‘Scotland’s woodlands and the historic environment’ publication.
Biodiversity	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 recognising the importance of ‘edge zones’ under Key Theme 7 section on ‘landscapes and ecosystems’.
	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 policy text under ‘designated sites’ for the improvement of all existing native woodlands with a target aspiration for restoration.

	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.	New text and policy on Geodiversity
	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	
	Need to monitor habitat fragmentation / connectivity (despite obvious difficulties)	Existing text on habitat networks.

Changes to the WAFDSP arising from wider consultation

The Consultative Draft Forest District Strategic for West Argyll was subject to a period of consultation during which a number of comments were gained from a variety of organisations and individuals. Table 7.2 below summarises the most substantive comments received on the consultative draft **WAFDSP** and the Lorne Forest District and sets out how they were taken into account in finalising the Plan. Individual responses can be viewed, on request, at the address shown in Section 3 of this Post Adoption Statement.

In addition, a summary of responses has been prepared and is available on the Forestry Commission website www.forestry.gov.uk/fesplans

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

TABLE 7.2 SUBSTANTIVE COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT WAFDSP AND FES RESPONSE

Consultation Comment	Response	Amendment made to the Plan?
General		
Too many non forestry matters covered in the plan	The balance in the plan reflects the SFS which was fully publicly consulted and endorsed by Scottish Ministers as policy. We try to strike a balance between the economic, social and environmental benefits that can be delivered by forest in West Argyll and our FDP's reflect this based on the SFS and the NFESP.	No changes to text
Need to take more of an overview on future balance of non-market benefits and the financial arguments associated with this.	Largely determined by national policy and local priorities. Quite a wide ranging response to address.	Text checked and amended where necessary
SNH looking for clearer measurable targets and commitments	Hopefully this concern will be addressed by the implementation plans once they are finalised	None
Request for brief summary at start of each	Standard format, but point	None

section	noted	
Wants to see targets for implementation and results made public	These targets will be made public. Still discussing what form the implementation plan will take and how this information will be made available. Being dealt with at a national level, but will have to be taken forward at a district level.	No change to text
Plan needs to mention Argyll and Bute Indicative Forest Strategy	Noted	None
Not enough credit taken for positive impact of restructuring on future windblow	Noted	None
Consider producing films that focus on wildlife to help promote state forests in Argyll.	Largely outwith our remit to produce films directly but always try to have a flexible and co-operative attitude when approached by others wanting to use NFE for filming opportunity e.g. wildlife footage on Mull, Time Team, Springwatch, etc	No change to text
Need to work more closely with neighbours to try and influence them towards a more wide-scale, integrated, holistic approach that works with FC aspirations.	Noted	Text amended to reflect this
Look at more proactive integration of grazing opportunity in the forest by working with neighbouring farmers	An area we are actively pursuing just now using the services of our newly appointed grazing advisor and working with SNH and FWAG. Project progressing at Glasdrum and in Knapdale, with likely opportunity for other projects.	Text checked – satisfactory
Non economic benefits in Knapdale forest should be paid for with commercial revenue from other forests	We have to take a wider view than this and although non-economic work is partly subsidised by timber income we cannot make a direct relation to one geographic area like this.	None
Sustainable drainage systems should be implemented for new tracks or track upgrades and water crossings should be minimised.	We already minimise water crossings due to cost and potential environmental impact. All drainage is to Forests and Water Guidelines, which ensures such drainage is created and maintained in a sustainable way.	No change to text
Climate Change		
Climate change should not be a national theme – timber and trees should be the priority.	Climate Change is a priority for both the Scottish Government and the Forestry Commission. Forestry is well placed to deliver many benefits or mitigation's that help with carbon sequestration or to reduce the effects of climate change. Producing timber and trees is still very much a priority but so is	No changes to text

	mitigation of climate change. The two are not mutually exclusive and growing quality timber is one way to mitigate climate change if correctly done.	
Increased chemical/pesticide use might help with carbon sequestration, and could be important in relation to increased future emphasis on timber productivity	Current emphasis very much on chemical reduction that maintains productive output. Maybe reflected in RS strategies being developed at a local level.	Noted
Mitigation for climate change from wind farm management or new woodland creation should not have adverse impact on important biodiversity	Covered in wording under theme 1	Rewording to emphasis this
Concern that NFE seen as development area for windfarms and housing at the expense of biodiversity or other SFS considerations.	All developments are examined to ensure they confirm to all the themes outlined in the SFS. Windfarm text quite robust.	Windfarm text adjusted
Biomass energy projects should be managed to maximise biodiversity and key species management	Covered for windfarms and hydro power but text a bit weaker on biomass	Slight change to text to cover this
New acquisitions for carbon sequestration must be undertaken to ensure important species or habitats are impacted	A standard part of the process involving consultation with the local and head office conservation advisors.	No change to text
Can any expansion in thinnings be used to help with wood energy production?	No specifically covered since thinning marketed same way as clear fell areas. Due to higher percentage of small roundwood, wood energy sector will benefit proportionately	No change to text
Need more clarity on marketing of roundwood, particularly in relation to small scale and biofuel users.	See comments above	
Give more emphasis to forest habitat links in relation to climate change	Area of growing importance	Text amended to reflect this
Concerns about increases in open ground and loss of economic production and carbon sequestration potential	Using Future Forests analysis to get a better handle on this issue and quantify reduction in productive area in future PF predictions. More work on analysis associated with production of bespoke restock strategy for the district may help mitigate this concern.	Minor text changes to reflect this.
Urging some caution in adoption of CCF (Continuous Cover Forestry) and the additional costs complexities in relation to the benefits	Aware of some of the downsides and complexities associated with CCF and using these to help chose practicable and sensible locations for CCF through the FDP process. Accept that we still have much to learn in this area.	Text checked and slightly adjusted for realism
Concerns raised that inadequate staff resource to deliver the aspiration to increase area of CCF or stronger emphasis on traditional or site matched silviculture	Important aspiration, but we must have a strategy to deliver on the ground	Text reworted to reflect this
Need to mention supply and demand in relation to growth of woodfuel demand	Hopefully the balance of the plan reflects this	Text checked to ensure point reflected

Concern about effect of increased large-scale bio-wood demand on smaller scale traditional users and how they cope and lack of statement on this in FDSP.	Concerns noted	None
Timber		
There should be more emphasis on growing quality hardwoods.	We are increasingly moving in this direction, especially with greater emphasis on PAWS site restoration and we anticipate an increase in production of productive broadleaves on appropriate sites.	FDSP text checked and slightly altered
Growing of forests should be the key objective.	Most of our work is targeted at growing forest whether this be conifer plantation or native woodland. We then have to balance this with the objectives set in the SFS.	Already part of our FDSP
Disagree that attracting local processing of timber should be key objective of the FDSP.	Comment noted and it is acknowledged that others also share this view in relation to larger scale processing. We feel that small scale processing in the area is appropriate for rural development, creating jobs and fostering a more integrated industry with a lower carbon footprint.	No change to text
SRC must avoid areas important for biodiversity and involve early consultation with environmental bodies	Noted – all new planting will be subject to full environmental survey	No change to text at present, review for next FDSP revision
Want to see an increase in broadleaf woodland and self-seeding Sitka cut back.	Being covered through 35% target in national strategy. Forest Futures info available in 2010 will help us assess where we are in this process.	No change to this version, but needed for next revision
Consider planting Sitka on better peatland areas instead of native broadleaves where within scope of UKWAS	Generally avoiding planting of Sitka on anything other than shallow peat due to greater value of peatland as an open habitat.	No text change
Consideration needed in relation to planting of productive broadleaves in relation to achieving critical mass in the areas where there are potential end users and not a scatter gun approach.	Not specifically mentioned in text, but a fair point and to be considered as part of FDP process and PAWS strategy and in consultation with end user groups.	No change to text at present
Don't be afraid of making good use of sycamore or beech or more adventurous mixtures	FDP's include these species where compatible with ASNW objectives, FDP also containing more flexibility in relation to mixtures and use of minor species	Text reworded to reflect this
Try to mitigate productive conifer removal in peaty areas with compensatory gains in other less restricted areas.	Covered via FDP process and analysis being done through Future Forests	Noted for future FDSP revision
Business Development		
Looking for increased emphasis on practical opportunity e.g. apprenticeships, school links, etc	The district is already at the forefront of pioneering and developing the forest apprenticeship scheme and in	No change to text at present

	providing work experience for school children around Lochgilphead. We are actively looking for opportunity to grow this further.	
Partnership working in tourism needed to raise benefits of wildlife tourism	Eagle watch on Mull is a good example of this working successfully and in the Dalriada Project. Acknowledge that there will be scope to go further with this as time and resources allow	Text checked and slight adjustment made to reflect this
More proactive approach may be needed from FES in relation to identifying and developing housing opportunity on NFE.	Proactive approach already taken in finding and bringing forward prospective sites for affordable housing and in response to specific requests on Mull. If the consultation comments refer to non-affordable housing then this area is a lower priority unless it is full compatible with other SFS objectives.	No change to text
Importance of FC workforce on Mull to the local economy and need to retain this importance.	No plan to change this	Noted
Access and Health		
Investment is needed to maintain and enhance current recreation facilities.	Agree with this comment. All our recreation work has to be completed with a limited available budget and work carried out each year is prioritised from the resources available. We are always seeking investment in projects identified as priority but have to be realistic about what we can achieve, bearing in mind the need to maintain consistent standards as expected by our customers.	Already reflected in FDSP text.
Want more mention of paths in relation to promoting healthy lifestyles.	Fair point, an important area and on that we need to push further up the agenda	Text amended to cover this point
Although welcoming focus on Dalriada project area – strategic objectives should focus on a wider area of the forest district.	Dalriada is a specific area related project that attracted funds on this basis. The work undertaken has not been at the expense of other areas although the direct outputs relate to the geographic boundary of the Dalriada project.	No change to text
Welcomes reference to improvement mountain access	Still working at resolving Ben Lui access issues	No change to text
Needs to mention maintenance of existing path network and SOAC in relation to forest operations	There is no absolute commitment to maintaining all of the existing path network – maintenance depends on availability of resources, prioritisation and liaison with community groups. SOAC	No change to text

	comment noted	
Need more mention of active lifestyle/access strategies such as Paths for Health	Already covered under key theme 5	None
FES should be proactive in providing suitable core path candidates as part of consultation. Could look at core path mountain access linkages. Better links to core path network	FC co-operated in process of identifying core path candidate and in working with Argyll and Bute Council during consultation process. Dalriada Project helping improve links to core paths and acknowledge that scope to make improvements in other areas as resources allow	No change covered under key theme 5
The strategy does not focus enough on the needs of more diverse user groups such as canoeists, orienteers and other outdoor sports	Already covered but acknowledge wording could be more proactive in this area	None at present
More reference should be made to access legislation and the guidance set out in the SOAC	Acknowledged for future revisions and in production of other district documents e.g. recreation plan	None at present
Request for better horse access and more horse facilities on Mull	Topic passed on to recreation ranger to see what can be achieved within available resources	Noted
FC path networks should be linked with other existing path networks by crossing other open ground and should promote this to other landowners	Aspiration shared by FC, but a lot of work needed to establish better collaboration in this area – being well covered in Dalriada Project area	Text re-jigged to reflect this
Environmental Quality		
Need to improve visual impact of felled sites close to public roads and the poor appearance of retained broadleaves left on site.	We are aware that this can be an area of concern and often set higher standards close to public roads or recreation areas. The basic nature of felling can look messy and the costs of any above normal enhancement measures can be very expensive and are not practical in many situations, especially where the sites fairly rapidly green up and the visual impacts fade with time. Retained broadleaves may not always look attractive and are usually left as a seed source for natural regeneration which is an important element of improving habitats in areas not scheduled for replanting with conifers. Each site is considered on its own merits, likely alternative seed sources and priority for regeneration of native broadleaves.	Text checked and slightly amended
Need to emphasis proper control over contractors, particularly in relation to good practice and protection of riparian zones. Strong approach to active site monitoring recommended. Need to consider flash flood mitigation measures.	All contract work is controlled to a strictly enforced set of procedures including risk assessments, site safety rules and regular monitoring by FC staff. We are always working at trying to improve standards	Noted, no text change

	and ensure that contractors are properly trained and complete all work to Forest and Water guideline standards. Any breaches or concerns are always acted on rapidly as are complaints from the public. We are fully aware this is an area where we must not be complacent. Point noted	
There is inadequate access or protection for some of the less prominent archaeology features such as kailyards and worked land.	All known archaeology features are included on our GIS layer and any new discoveries are added promptly. This is then used as part of the design plan process and to inform the felling and replanting of coupes. We can never guarantee all features will be discovered or listed on the GIS layer, though we can ensure the ones we know about are protected or seek archaeological advice when it is unclear if a feature might need protected e.g. lazybeds or worked land, etc.	Text checked and adjusted
Reference should be made to joint working arrangements between FCS/DCS/SNH in relation to collaborative deer management.	Acknowledged	None
Scope to make more of cultural heritage, think about interpretation and guided walks	Emphasis increased during amalgamation of Lorne and previous WAFD SP's	Combined text reflects this
Biodiversity		
Extensive survey and research should be used to define the extent of BAP habitats and species in relation to development of habitat networks.	Already starting to undertake much of this work using in house conservation experts and advisors. Will have much more complete information to include in the next revision of the FDSP.	None
How will the district respond to opportunity to incorporate priority habitats and species contained within the revised UKBAP list and new Scottish list? The plan lacks a statement that suggests the revised lists will be accessed or analysed to identify opportunity for habitat or species protection.	Comments noted for future SP revision and to inform the production of the district conservation plan.	Noted
Suggest that 100% of PAWS should be under restoration and that native woodland target of 30% by 2055	Current target is to restore 85% of PAWS with enhancement of the remaining 15%. This is a national target, though we may eventually exceed the 85% at a local level. The national target for native woodland is 20% on a national scale and the balance of this may vary from area to area.	No change
Needs to take account of revised UKBAP list and to find the extent of priority species and habitats from the revised list and develop new plans for these.	Covered in other internal documents such as the conservation plan – used to inform the FDP process	No change to FDSP at present

The District should develop management opportunity for woodland dependant species as well as for red squirrel, wood ants and black grouse as covered in UKBAP and Scottish list	Being covered more thoroughly in other documents such as the conservation plan	Minor text revision
Survey and research should be used to find out the extent of BAP habitats and species in relation to development of forest habitat networks.	To be covered in other conservation specific documents such as the conservation plan.	No change to text
Large scale landscape projects or LBAP areas projects should include plantation areas as well as open ground, keen on Black Grouse Officer covering all Argyll. Want a full list of priority species and actions.	Comments noted to inform revision of conservation plan.	None
Reference should be made to the Species Action Framework and Argyll Invasive Species Forum in relation to rhododendron control. Suggestion that rhododendron area statement may be inaccurate.	Referred to in other documents and plans specifically related to conservation. Rhododendron statement re-jigged to make more accurate	Rhododendron area statement removed
Open ground habitat as well as woodland habitat networks need to be considered in relation to climate change. Priority species should also be considered. Need an action on developing and implementing climate change adaptation strategies for priority species.	Partially covered in biodiversity section, to be considered in more detail as part of FDP process. More specific action to be worked up for next FDSP revision.	Text slightly reworded
Need to emphasis why important habitats are such in relation to plantation forestry areas.	Largely covered in the FDP process and very much reflected in the latest generation of FDSP's.	None
Could use temperate rainforest branding to help with profile of such woodlands in Argyll.	Interesting suggestion	No change to text this time
Need to be stronger on more proactive management of open ground areas	Agreed, needs more emphasis in text	Text amended to reflect this
Concern about increased amounts of open ground in future projections and effect on future economic timber production.	Concerns shared by some staff and being looked at in more detail by FC based on more comprehensive data capture becoming available	Noted for future FDSP revision

8. Reasons for choosing the WAFDSP, in the light of other reasonable alternatives

Together with the assessment of the WAFDSP, nine alternative scenarios were developed and evaluated. These were:

- The ‘do-nothing’ option of continued implementation of the 1999-2006 Forest District Strategic Plan. This option would not reflect the new SFS and progress that had been made since this time on certain key issues;
- Direct implementation of the Scottish Forestry Strategy at a District level. This option would not reflect local key issues and opportunities;
- Pursuing only one of the seven Scottish Forestry Strategy themes as a policy priority (e.g. implementing only climate change policies to the exclusion of all other objectives). This option would result in an imbalanced policy approach.

These alternative approaches highlighted the importance of balance in the Strategic Plan, as the effects of prioritising one policy area generally produced less positive results than a more rounded plan. Similarly, the 2007 plan demonstrated significant progress over the 1999-2006 version and presented a more realistic and pragmatic solution than the local application of the Scottish Forestry Strategy. The WAFDSP also provided a more integrated and balanced approach than alternatives which prioritised one policy theme over the others.

9. Measures that are to be taken to monitor significant environmental effects of the implementation of the PPS

The National Forest Estate Strategic Plan identifies a suite of indicators under each of the seven topic areas (with data source, reporting intervals etc). It is proposed that progress towards these National Forest Estate Strategic Plan indicators will provide a monitoring outline for the Forest District Plan (as outlined within the Environmental Report). Although this monitoring will be undertaken at a national level it will reflect local trends and district issues. It is likely that these indicators will be reviewed every 10 years in line with the National Plan.

We also have to monitor against the indicators identified in Forest Enterprise Scotland’s framework strategic plan for the national forest estate. These will then be amalgamated across all ten forest districts to determine collective progress in delivering against the Scottish Forestry Strategy. These results will be published annually at national level.

10. Conclusion

We believe that the SEA process has assisted in developing a balanced WAFDSP. The District Plan itself, together with the wider policy framework of national strategy and guidelines will ensure that forestry in Scotland will contribute to sustainable development, benefiting the people of Scotland and protecting and enhancing the environment during the era of climate change.