Inverness Forest District

Strategic Plan

(revised 2006)

Executive summary

Contents

Section 1: Planning framework

1.1 Introduction

This Plan provides the link between the Scottish Forestry Strategy (revised in 2006) and the sustainable forest management practices that are delivered in the District through a number of local plans.

1.2 Forest policy context

Sustainable forest management recognises the need to link the social, economic and environmental values of forestry, based on good evidence and through effective engagement with people. At its simplest, it means making sure that today's woodlands are still here, with the same or better benefits, for future generations.

Since devolution in 1999, a wide range of policy and strategy documents has been produced that impact on Scotland. Forestry's role is now very broad and can contribute to issues as diverse as sustainable development; rural development; community development; health; education and lifelong learning; renewable energy; planning; natural heritage; landscape; water; access and transport.

The general principles of Scotland's needs can be summarised as:

- People should not be disadvantaged by who they are or where they live ('social justice');
- People should not have to live in degraded surroundings with a poor quality of life ('environmental justice');
- Everyone should have the same opportunity to enjoy a good quality of life and access to appropriate services ('closing the opportunity gap' and 'social inclusion').

The over-arching principles for the Scottish Forestry Strategy are sustainability and social inclusion. Scottish forestry must contribute positively to sustainable development, and meet internationally agreed standards of sustainable forest management. Those standards are set out in the UK Forestry Standard. Scottish forestry must also help to combat social exclusion by promoting opportunities for people to participate in forestry, helping to tackle barriers to inclusion, helping young people and children to get the best possible start in life, and helping to strengthen communities and regenerate excluded communities.

Forestry is the responsibility of Scottish Ministers. Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) acts as the Scottish Government's Forestry Department. Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) is an executive agency with the role of managing the national forest estate under the direction of FCS. Inverness Forest District is one of 14 districts that manage and maintain Scotland's woods and forests.

The UK Forestry Strategy and the Scottish Forestry Strategy are the principle policy drivers for District strategic plans.

Meeting the requirements of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard is central to our policy of commitment to sustainable forest management and independent third part certification.

1.3 Vision and outcomes

The Scottish Forestry Strategy sets out a vision (where we would like forestry to be in 2025 and beyond) and defines outcomes that we will aim to achieve in support of the vision.

Our Vision for 2025 and beyond

"Scotland's trees, woodlands and forests are a central part of our culture, environment and economy. People are benefiting widely from them, actively engaging with and looking after the resource for the use and enjoyment of generations to come."

Outcomes:

Scotland's trees, woodlands and forests contribute to:

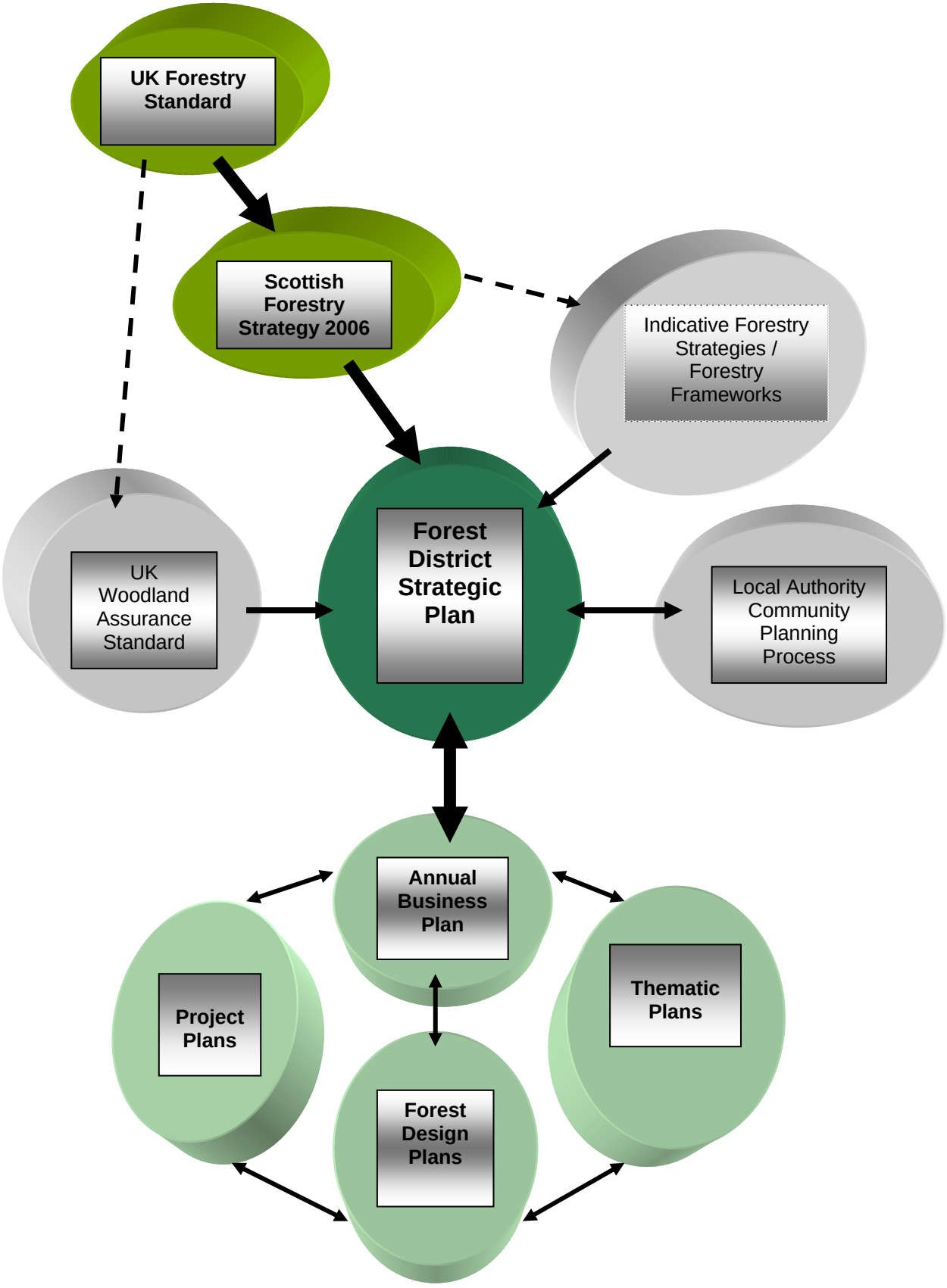
- improved health and well being of people and their communities;
- competitive and innovative businesses contributing to the growth of the Scottish economy;
- high quality, robust and adaptable environment.

The purpose of this plan is to translate the national vision and outcomes to local delivery in the District, and to deliver them through this Plan. This will be achieved through a series of local long-term management plans, including the 28 forest design plans that cover the District (Appendix 1.1), and other project plans and thematic plans (Appendix 2).

The emphasis put on each of the objectives will depend on the priorities that are driving the allocation of resources and opportunities in the District at any particular time. Maintaining an up to date knowledge of priorities for resource allocation will require regular and meaningful engagement with stakeholders. Contact with the local Forestry Forum will remain very important in this respect.

This Plan will apply for 10 years (2007-2017) and will be reviewed in 2012.

1.4 District Strategic Plan: planning framework



Section 2: Description of the District

2.1 Introduction

Inverness Forest District is situated in the Highland Council area in the North of Scotland. It extents north from Strathmashie in the heart of the central Highlands to Lael near Ullapool in the north west Highlands, and spans the breadth of northern Scotland from Loch Maree in the west to Ferness near to the eastern boundary with Moray Forest District. In total it incorporates around 70 different woodlands, which together with the management of open land and water, covers a total area of around 34,300ha (see map, Appendix 1). These forests are managed by a team of 12 professional, four administrative and 22 field staff.

Most of the District (90%) is situated within 15 miles of the A9, the main arterial route to the north, and other trunk roads. These roads bisect the District providing the backbone of the area's good transport infrastructure. Consequently, most of the forests lie within the economic haul distance of the existing timber markets, easing crop management decisions (with the exception of the forests most distant from the markets or of the poorest timber quality).

The city of Inverness is the main population centre, but the majority of the outlying sections of the District are very sparsely populated. This, combined with the good transport links and a strong tourism industry in the Cairngorms, means that there is a strong demand for recreational access to many of the forests, both for day visitors and people staying overnight.

2.2 Physical environment

2.2.1 Climate

Forests in the west of the District, e.g. Slattadale, Lael, and Strathmashie, but also some of the more central woodlands such as Garbat, have a comparatively warm and humid climate with higher rainfall. This is more akin to the climate influenced by the Gulf stream along the western seaboard of Scotland:

- mean July max = 18°C
- mean January min = 1°C
- annual rainfall = 2278 mm

The Black Isle and the woodlands to the east of the District have a much lower rainfall, but average temperatures are similar:

- mean July max = 19°C
- mean January min = 1°C
- annual rainfall = 624 mm

Strathspey can fall between the two areas. The influence of the Cairngorm massif ensures that summers can record the highest temperatures throughout Scotland and, paradoxically, winters are wet and cold:

- mean July max = 18°C
- mean January min = -2°C
- annual rainfall = 913 mm

2.2.2 Water

Water quality management in the forest environment is outlined in FCS forest and water guidelines. In general, the adoption of this recommended guidance for operations, coupled with the naturalisation of watercourses, will protect and improve water quality and ensure compliance with the EU water framework directive.

Current guidance also recognises the potential effects of acidification on surface waters. Reduction in emissions has been the main method of solving acidification issues, but large scale conifer afforestation - and its consequent capture of acidic pollutants - is a potential threat to the recovery of acidified waters, particularly in areas with acidic geology.

A critical load approach has been developed to assess the risk from forestry (the maximum load of pollutant a given ecosystem can tolerate), with areas at risk shown on 10km² grid squares. In the District, Glenmore and Lael forests are in or adjacent to critical load squares, and the forest planning process in these areas will contain an assessment of the impacts of operations on water.

Significant water bodies in the District include the River Blackwater, River Spey, Loch Maree, Loch Achilty and Loch Morlich.

Water-related issues that influence forest management and planning operations include:

- Protection of water quality, e.g. using FCS forest and water guidelines;
- Flood management: management of areas subject to flooding and contributing to landscape-scale flood management;
- Landscape and recreation: several woodlands adjoin lochs used for recreation, e.g. Loch Morlich, Loch Achilty, Loch Maree;
- Water supply: many rural properties draw domestic water supplies from wooded catchment areas;
- Critical loading: at Glenmore and Lael.

Many of the rivers and lochs in the District are important for conservation in their own right or as habitats. This is expanded in paragraph 2.4 below.

2.2.3 Landform

The landform of the District encompasses nearly all the types present in Scotland, from rolling mixed lowland farmland in the east to the fjord-like setting of the Lael block near Ullapool on the west coast.

The south of the District is dominated by the heavily glaciated Cairngorm and Monadh Liath ranges, with the River Spey rising near to Strathmashie forest and flowing north and east through a broad u-shaped valley to the Moray Firth. Inshriach Forest lies on gently-rounded morainic deposits between the floodplain of the Spey and the lower slopes of the Cairngorms. Glenmore forest nestles at much higher elevation in a large ‘kettle hole’ on the middle slopes of the mountain range.

The centre of the District, around Inverness, has gently-rounded rolling ridges running from west to east, following the direction of the Nairn and Findhorn river systems.

The Black Isle is a long broad promontory with gentle slopes rising to its highest point at Mount Eagle in the forest block that straddles the central ridge for most of its length.

To the north and west, the landform becomes more mountainous with the Torrachilty and Garve blocks lying on the lower slopes of the Ben Wyvis massif.

The two most westerly blocks, at Slattadale and Lael, are in the areas that possess arguably the highest scenic value in the District. Slattadale has the backdrop of the exposed ancient Torridonian sandstone mountains surrounding Loch Maree, and Lael has the classic glaciated features of steep valley sides and a wide strath leading down to Loch Broom.

2.2.4 Geology

The most prominent geological feature of the District is the Great Glen Fault that runs diagonally across the district from south-west to north-east.

To the south, lies the Dalradian sediments and volcanics laid down during the Precambrian and Cambrian periods between 700 and 600 million years ago. The Dalradian supergroup of rocks subsequently underwent massive deformation and metamorphism during the Caledonian Orogeny when the Laurentian and Scandinavian landmasses collided. The sandstones were transformed into the quartzites that underlie the region today.

The subsequent erosion and then glacial action have much reduced the height of the mountain ranges, thought to have peaks higher than the Himalayas. The Cairngorm massif remains the highest mountain range in Britain containing nine summits over 4,000 metres.

Similar events occurred to the north of the fault, but the underlying rock material in the north-west is much older, with the Lewisian gneisses dating back 3,000 million years. Torridian sandstones were deposited on these rocks by river systems over 1000 million years ago, followed subsequent depositions in places of mud and beach sands during the Cambrian and Ordovician times. The erosion of these rocks during the Devonian period formed the middle old red sandstone deposits that underlay the Black Isle and Moray coast.

The geology of the entire Highland region is very heavily influenced by the effects of glaciation and possesses some of the finest examples in Scotland.

2.2.5 Soils

The soils in the District are almost all derived from glacial till. One of the main constraints on tree growth is the presence, or not, of an indurated layer caused by the glacial action. This hard compressed layer is not penetrated by tree roots, restricting both rooting depth and nutrient availability, and presenting an obstacle to drainage.

The usual influences of the weather affect the soils in the District, with peat depth increasing with altitude and with the increasing rainfall to the west of the District.

The most prevalent soil type in the District is a peaty gley characterised by low to medium fertility. Combined with the climatic conditions, this impacts on the choice of tree species in large tracts of the District.

2.2.6 Landscape setting

The District has a very diverse landscape, with forests adjacent to both the western and eastern seaboards, straddling the upper end of the Great Glen fault, and in the foothills of the Cairngorm Mountain range. These help sub-divide the woodlands into six distinct types:

- West Highlands: characterised by their high rainfall, steep slopes or waterlogged sites;
- East Coast heath pine areas: larger woodlands on poor (indurated) soils with predominately Scots pine crops;
- Intermediate areas: woodlands lying close to the climatic divide between the wetter west and the dryer east;
- Strathspey: major woodlands in the Cairngorms with a high proportion of native conifer species;
- Urban small woods: on the fringes of Inverness and inner Moray Firth towns and villages, with comparatively high levels of recreational access;
- Rural small woods: forests set in largely agricultural landscapes with a mixture of soil types and land forms.

Glenmore, Inshriach and Strathmashie forests are in the Cairngorms National Park (Glenmore and Inshriach are in the Cairngorm Mountains national scenic area, NSA); Slattadale is in the Wester Ross national scenic area and Lael is in Highland Council's area of regional scenic importance.

2.3 Forest resource

2.3.1 The afforested area of the District covers around 24,700ha.

2.3.2 Tree species choice throughout the District is based on soil types. This has led to Scots pine being the commonest species, covering around 46% of the afforested area, of which 15% is in native pinewood areas (around a third of the pine in the District). On wetter sites and on poorer soils, Sitka spruce (19%) and lodgepole pine (17%) have been widely used, both in pure stands and more recently as an intimate mixture. Larch (6%), Douglas fir (2%) and Norway spruce (2%) are the other main conifers. Minor conifers can be found in around 1% of the forest, e.g. western hemlock, Lawson's cypress, grand fir, Corsican and mountain pine.

Broadleaves make up around 5% of the forest area and are dominated by birch woodlands (3%). Oak is present in small (<1%) but significant quantities, including several oak regeneration projects on ancient woodland sites. Other broadleaved species include rowan, beech, sycamore, aspen, ash, hazel and willow.
The highest yield class in the District is YC 26 found in Sitka spruce in Clash Wood and Douglas fir in Lael Forest. But the forests are dominated by YC 10-14, reflecting the dominance of slower-growing Scots pine.

In total, some 2,397ha (10% of the forest area) is currently managed as a natural reserve (area of woodland where biodiversity is the prime objective) in line with UKWAS and a further 3,920ha (16%) is currently managed with low impact silvicultural systems (see Appendix 4).

2.3.3 The oldest trees in the District are over 200 years old and around 3% of the total forest area is over 100 years old. These areas are largely remnants of ancient semi-natural woods, including significant areas of native pinewoods in Strathspey. Around 10% of the forests were planted between 1906 and 1945, but the post-war years saw major expansion of forests when around 61% of the forest was planted. Today, 12% is classed as thicket stage (aged between 15-30 years), 8% pre-thicket (5-15 years) and 5% establishment, most of which is second rotation forest.

The high proportion of Scots pine on reasonably well-drained soils is conducive to thinning, and proximity to markets means that around 40% of the forest is included in the thinning cycle. During 2000-2006, production from thinnings has been around 25,000-30,000 m^3.

Timber production in the District is rising in line with the increasing age of the forest. Windblow is an ongoing issue as forests are restructured, but a major storm in January 2005 impacted significantly on production levels in the following two years.

Year	Production (km^3)
2002/03	138
2003/04	126
2004/05	140
2005/06	132
2006/07	176
	Forecast production (km^3 pa)
2007/11	160
2012/16	175

2.4 Economic contribution

Timber production generates a significant number of jobs across the District, particularly in rural areas. This includes jobs in the forest such as planting trees, fencing and felling, through to timber haulage and processors such as sawmills and fibreboard factories.

The major markets supplied by the District are:

- Norbord, Dalcross, Inverness (chipwood)
- R Gordon & Son, Nairn (sawlogs)
- BSW Timber, Boat of Garten and Kilmallie (sawlogs)
- James Jones & Son, Mosstodlich and Aboyne (pallet logs)
- Munros, Dingwall (slats)
- Tullochs, Nairn (sawlogs and pallet)

Timber is also supplied for fencing and other markets to sawmills in Dunrobin, Dundonnell, Muir of Ord, Nairn, Novar, Newtonmore, Kirriemuir, Carrbridge and Raddery. Some material is exported to processors in continental Europe.

Other natural resources in the District that make a contribution to the local economy and FCS finances include:

- the hard rock quarry at Daviot that has been the major source of stone for the expansion of Inverness;
- two mini-hydro schemes, at Slattadale and Torrachility, that feed into the national grid;
- access for the construction of the Farr windfarm was provided through the national forest estate, minimising disturbance to local communities and providing a timber haul route.

Other sites for renewable energy at Glenkirk (windfarm) and Lael and Garbat (mini-hydro) are at the planning stage. Non-timber income in 2006/07 amounted to 21% of District income.

The national forest estate in the District also has the capacity to absorb large numbers of people at any one time. Locations such as Glenmore Forest Park which welcomes some 350,000 visitors/year, make a major contribution to the tourism industry.

The District is also an attractive location for major events, such the annual Scottish Mountain Bike Cross Country Championships, world orienteering events, etc. In Strathspey, a number of outdoor centres operate in the forest, including Glenmore Lodge, which also use the woodlands for training courses.

These examples help to illustrate the economic opportunities being exploited by the individuals and businesses that benefit directly from use of the national forest estate.

2.5 Nature conservation

Nature conservation is implemented by following good practice in the wider forest and using a range of plans for special sites such as special areas of conservation (SACs), special protection areas (SPAs) and sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs). The plans include:

- habitat action plans (HAPs)
- local biodiversity action plans (LBAPs)
- species action plans (SAPs)

The District aims to promote the conservation of habitats and species in accordance with the strategic direction outlined in the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and the Scottish Forestry Strategy.

Within these overarching aims, several habitats and species have been identified as particularly important in this area. In most cases, these are covered by the UK biodiversity action plan (UKBAP), Natura 2000 processes or have been identified in local biodiversity action plans (LBAPs).

2.5.1 Biodiversity action plans

The District supports a wide range of important biodiversity. It has a varied mixture of habitats that support an even more diverse range of species (see Appendix 6).

There are a total of 11 UK priority habitats in the District, of which the remnants of native pinewoods and wet woodlands are the most significant in a national context. One local priority habitat, aspen woodland, is also found in the District, in Strathspey and at Achilty.

The very wide range of priority species found in the District range from fairly common locally (e.g. red squirrel) to extremely rare nationally (e.g. green shield moss). The range comprises nine plants (including juniper and twinflower), two lichens, a moss, six fungi, a bivalve, a fish, seven mammals, two reptiles, two amphibians, 13 birds (including capercaillie and black grouse), a spider and 17 insects (including narrow-headed and Scottish wood-ants, and pearl-bordered fritillary) (see Appendix 6).

Several other BAP species are widespread throughout the District, e.g. skylark, linnet, spotted flycatcher, bullfinch and song thrush. These have not been specifically listed and will not require action other than meeting normal forest management objectives.

Associated national action plans for each of the above species and habitats can be found at http://www.ukbap.org.uk/GenPageText.aspx?id=54

The District's work on habitats and species also contributes to the Cairngorms, Inverness & Nairn, Easter Ross and Wester Ross local biodiversity action plans.

2.5.2 Designated sites

In the District, there are 13 sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs), four special protection areas (SPAs), nine special areas of conservation (SACs), two Ramsar sites and three national nature reserves (NNRs). A number of these designations are for the same pieces of land (see Appendix 7).

Each SSSI is managed in accordance with a plan agreed with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and included as part of the appropriate forest design plans: around 92% of the features of interest in these designated sites are judged to be in 'favourable', or 'unfavourable – recovering' condition.

2.5.3 Native woodland

The District includes significant areas of native woodland of natural and cultural heritage importance. It has 2,162ha of ancient woodland of semi-natural origin, shown as woodland on all available map sources from 1750 onwards and as semi-natural woodland on the 1750 ‘Roy’ maps. These include the important remnants of native pinewood at Glenmore (3,440ha) and other sites at Inshriach and Slattadale that have survived as a consequence of a combination of their ownership patterns and remote locations.

There are also 2,688ha of long-established woodland of semi-natural origin, 6,283ha of long-established woodlands of plantation origin and 756ha of other woodlands on ‘Roy’ woodland sites.

Survey work has established that there are 4,190ha of plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) on 417 sites in 22 forests in the District.

2.5.4 The wider forest

Outside designated sites, the District works at habitat scale to maintain, restore or enhance priority habitats. This generally means that conditions for most important species are also improved, but if necessary special projects aimed at single species are also undertaken, e.g. building artificial eyries for osprey and urgent conservation management for capercaillie.

2.6 Social environment

2.6.1 Historical context

Social factors that have helped shaped the District are typical for much of the Scottish Highlands:

Deforestation by people began as long ago as 6,000 years, with much of the natural woodland destroyed by the Iron Age and only about 5% tree cover left by 1500 AD. This was associated with development of agriculture that supported a rural population at relatively high densities for most of the last 500 years. The development of the estate system, building on land grants to the aristocracy from the Scottish Crown, led in many locations to rapid rural depopulation in the 18th and 19th centuries. Sheep farming was introduced at the same time, then later, sporting was developed based on deer stalking and grouse shooting.

Expansion of plantation forests began in the 18th and 19th centuries, and forest area increased rapidly in the 20th century due to planting by the Forestry Commission from 1919 and in recent decades by private forest owners.

During the 20th century, increased leisure time, an improving economy and personal transport moved recreation and tourism to the fore.

In the District, these historical factors have resulted in a mixed rural economy of farmland, forest, moorland and mountain that underpins the Highland economy, as well as giving the area its landscape appeal.

2.6.2 Heritage interest

There are 14 scheduled ancient monuments (SAMs) and two listed buildings in the District, all managed in line with plans agreed with Historic Scotland (Appendix 2).

There are also 320 unscheduled ancient monuments (UAMs) and the District has assisted in the discovery of further heritage sites by funding full archaeological surveys of Glenmore and Strathmashie forests.

2.6.3 Pattern of settlement

Inverness, regarded as the capital of the Highlands', had a population of 51,000 in 2001, while the Highlands as a whole has a population of 320,000 spread over an area the size of Wales or Belgium.

Inverness and the surrounding area is developing rapidly, with many new houses being built and further expansion planned between Inverness and Nairn. This economic growth is impacting on the District in a wide variety of ways:

- development pressure on existing woodlands;
- pressure for additional recreational facilities;
- additional traffic with impacts on timber haulage;
- despite additional housing, a shortage of affordable housing.

Woodlands that are managed close to settlements and provide facilities for the local population are: Contin, Blackmuir Wood, Clash Wood, Culbokie, Munlochy, Ord Hill, Reelig Glen, Craig Phadrig, Culloden Wood, Daviot wood, Littlemill and Strathmashie. Some of these are designated by FCS as woodlands in and around towns (WIAT), but given the rate of urban expansion, designation of such woods need regular re-appraisal.

2.6.4 Recreation

The District is a major provider of recreation opportunities in the North of Scotland. Certain locations have a long history, dating back to the Victorian era when leisure time started to increase, people found that they had more disposable income, and travel became more widely available. The use of the national forest estate for recreation has mirrored this expansion, with the creation of Glenmore Forest Park in 1948. The development of a skiing industry on Cairngorm mountain and Aviemore in the 1960s provided the single biggest influence on the increase in the number of tourists to the area.

FCS has had an open access policy in place for a number of years, which has been strengthened by the introduction of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (2004).

The District provides for two distinct groups of visitors: day visits by the local resident population and visits by made by tourists staying overnight in the area. The 2006 Forest Tourism Initiative all forest survey indicates that there are around two million recreational visits/year to the national forest estate in the District, with around half of these being made by local residents.

These visitors use the wide range of facilities provided by FCS, including 50 forest walks, 29 car-parks, 12 cycle routes, 12 picnic areas, two mountain bike centres, etc (see District recreation plan for full inventory). The District team to manage these facilities has grown

significantly in the last 10 years. The team also provides a full events programme and assists in rural education initiatives.

The District also operates 10 recreation leases to assist and to stimulate the tourism industry and rural development, including the Cairngorm Reindeer Centre, watersports on Loch Morlich, mountain bike and paintball facilities. These are managed to ensure that visitors safely enjoy their stay, without significantly impacting on the environment. The campsite at Glenmore Forest Park was leased to Forest Holidays, a joint venture company between the Forestry Commission and the Camping and Caravan Club in 2006.

Permission for major events, (e.g. Snowman motor rally and Husky sleddog racing) provides further support for tourism, rural development and local organisations, Despite the introduction of access legislation that reduces the need for formal permissions, there has been an increase in requests for large events. District staff have to ensure that forest operations are conducted safely and do not unduly impede recreation, and that events do not adversely impact on any conservation features in the forest.

2.6.5 Communities

The District has been active in the developing field of community partnerships for around 10 years. These partnerships are very varied in nature depending on the community, the issues and the forests involved.

The forests at Strathmashie are managed under a 25-year partnership agreement with the Laggan Forest Trust, and in early 2007 the Trust purchased three parcels of land totalling 19 ha to further their community objectives.

Successful single-issue partnerships with the Highland Mountain Biking Association have been used to assist in the development of mountain bike facilities. While at Glenmore, FCS has been a partner in the widely constituted Cairngorm, Rothiemurchus and Glenmore Group (CRAGG), which involves the local community, government bodies and local and national conservation and recreation bodies. CRAGG seeks to facilitate collaborative management of this important area.

A series of smaller, and sometimes informal and time-bound, partnerships have also developed with geographical and single-interest communities.

Section 3: Evaluation of the 2000 District Strategic Plan

3.1 Reporting on achievements

It is good practice to review all plans and strategies on a regular basis. The conclusions from these evaluation exercises will have a direct impact on our management by:

- measuring the extent to which stated objectives and outcomes have been delivered;
- identifying areas of under (or over) performance and focusing the attention of managers on these so that an appropriate response can be planned and the necessary resources allocated;
- providing the raw material for transparent reporting to stakeholders.

During 2006, a full review was undertaken of the 2000 District Strategic Plan, following a cursory refreshment in 2005. An evaluation of the District's performance against targets is reported in the following table.

3.1 Reporting on 2000 Strategic Plan performance targets

SFS Priority for Action 1: To maximise the value of the wood resource			
Target description and planned achievement date	**Target achieved (yes/no/partial)?**	**Comments**	**Should this target be updated and carried forward in to 2006 District Strategic Plan?**
Produce an updated periodic forecast of timber production (implied).	Yes	Produced annually.	Yes
Annual harvesting programme to be within +/-5% of production forecast/sales plan forecast (implied).	Yes	Disrupted in 2005 by catastrophic windblow	Yes
Aim to meet customer requirements in terms of timing of sales and the quality of the product produced (implied).	Yes	Disrupted in 2005 by catastrophic windblow	Yes

SFS Priority for Action 2: To create a diverse forest resource for the future			
Target description and planned achievement date	**Target achieved (yes/no/partial)?**	**Comments**	**Should this target be updated and carried forward in to 2006 District Strategic Plan?**
FES is committed to achieving 100% coverage with approved forest design plans by 2010.	Partial	Ongoing at this stage. Forest design plan coverage was 78% by area in 2000, and is 84% by area in March 2006.	Yes. Change wording to; 'ensure every forest has an approved forest plan by 07/08'.
Deliver target dates for clearfelling identified in forest plans to realise proposed improvements to age class diversity (implied).	Partial	Virtually all clearfelled coupes were completed in prescribed timescales. The programme was disrupted in 2005 due to windblow.	Yes
Develop rationale and planning processes for identifying thinning programme (implied).	Yes	Thinning plan has been produced.	Yes
Undertake a review of non-native conifers in the Black Isle main block.	Yes	A new forest design plan was completed during 2003 taking into account this review requirement.	No. A specific target now subsumed in the forest design plan.
A re-distribution of planned open space is required to ensure that its impact is more sensibly directed to meet management, conservation and landscape needs.	Partial	Via forest design planning process.	Yes
For all areas where forest design plans exist, but management prescriptions are incomplete or unclear, all broadleaf areas will be retrospectively reassessed and objectives with a vision statement will be drafted and agreed with the FC by 31 December 2000.	Partial	Via forest design planning process.	No
A systematic survey of all broadleaf areas, both naturally regenerated and planted, will be undertaken with a view to ensuring that all currently planted and naturally regenerated areas as indicated in the forest design plan are retrospectively assessed by 31 December 2001.	Partial	Via forest design planning process.	No

Sites for the development of alternatives to clearfelling (ATC) have been and will be selected during the preparation of forest design plans. Sites will be selected where they have soils, crops and access which means that ATC has a reasonable prospect of success.	Yes	Via forest design planning process. Individual conversion plans have been produced in ha/woodlands. Scope remains limited in the District.	Yes. To cover sites that may not be picked up at microsite level in forest design plans, where most ATC areas are indicated.
Inshriach may be developed as part of a national series of test sites for ATCs.	Yes	Inshriach is now such a site and this is recorded in the forest design plan.	No
Brief management plans will be developed for each of the ATC areas in the District	Partial		Yes
Genetically improved planting stock for Sitka spruce and Scots pine should be used whenever available	Yes	Genetically improved material requested annually as a matter of course.	No. This is a policy decision, and relies on PSSB available supply.
Use of Scots pine should be concentrated on ironpans and podsols, although in areas of Caledonian Forest Reserve it will be appropriate to also develop Scots pine on other site types	Yes	Via forest design planning process.	Yes

SFS Priority for Action 3: To make a positive contribution to the environment			
Target description and planned achievement date	**Target achieved (yes/no/partial)?**	**Comments**	**Should this target be updated and carried forward in to 2006 District Strategic Plan?**
Prepare action plans for SAMs in collaboration with Historic Scotland colleagues. Continue to identify and protect unscheduled features on the national forest estate (implied).	Yes	One new SAM to be scheduled (Meallmore Wades Bridge).	Yes
FES staff will consult regularly with SNH staff regarding the delivery of SSSI and SAC plans and will seek appropriate legal consent where this is required.	Yes	The District continues to maintain a good working relationship with SNH on all aspects of our management.	Yes
On European designated sites, FES will work with SNH to establish and conduct monitoring regimes to meet the requirements of both organisations.	Yes	In agreement with SNH, which monitors a large number of its own.	Yes
FES will work with other organisations to manage and conserve species (including woodland grouse, red kite, badgers, and wood ants) using best practice.	Yes	Good relationships are maintained with agencies and special interest bodies.	Yes.
The deer management strategy will be reviewed annually by the Chief Ranger, and endorsed by the District Forester and management as part of the District resumption system.	Yes	Ongoing	Yes. Now DMO, WRM responsibility.
The District will implement the programme of surveys and restoration of PAWS sites required by UKWAS through its strategic and design planning process.	Partial	Ongoing	Yes
A detailed assessment of PAWS sites is expected to be completed during 2000.	Yes	Sites were prioritised., and management requirements built into plans.	Yes
Natural reserves (area of woodland where there will be minimum management intervention) will be established in each forest zone, except for urban small woods.	Partial	Via the forest design planning process	No. Physical forest zones will not feature in the new Strategic Plan.
Areas of both Caledonian pinewoods and native broadleaves will be preserved. There is also an opportunity to increase the areas of broadleaf in the forest. This will be concentrated around watercourses and in areas of greater public use.	Partial	Ongoing	Yes

SFS Priority for Action 4: To create opportunities for more people to enjoy trees, woods and forests			
Target description and planned achievement date	**Target achieved (yes/no/partial)?**	**Comments**	**Should this target be updated and carried forward in to 2006 District Strategic Plan?**
Provide information about major events and forest operations (implied).	Yes	Full events programme; on-site signage plus press releases used to inform public of operations.	Yes
Further recreation work will be included in the revised District recreation plan being developed later in 2000	Partial	Move towards 'interpretation plans' being primed by a still-awaited national version. Some local IP's have been produced in draft form.	Yes
New opportunities for funding recreation projects will be pursued, e.g. Landfill Tax, EU funding and other sources.	Yes	Many examples of EU, LEC, and other agency partnerships are available.	No. Finance should not deter strategic thinking and/or planning.
Undertake a programme of archaeological surveys, e.g. Beglan, Drum an Aird.	Partial		Yes
Provide interpretation on significant natural and cultural history at popular sites (implied).	Yes	Including an annual refurbishment at Glenmore VC of at least one exhibit.	Yes
Provide new recreation facilities in response to demand (implied).	Yes	Includes Laggan Wolftrax, Learnie Red Rock Trails, Clootie Well car park and paths, Ben Wyvis car park, Clashwood car park, Laggan Pony Paths, etc..	Yes
Meet requests for educational visits and be pro-active in contacting schools (implied).	Yes	Demand for educational visits always exceeds capacity to deliver. Two recreation rangers have been employed to assist with delivery to schools. Forest School has been set up at Smithton. Two after-school nature clubs have also been set up in Strathspey.	Yes

SFS Priority for Action 5: To help communities benefit from woods and forests			
Target description and planned achievement date	**Target achieved (yes/no/partial)?**	**Comments**	**Should this target be updated and carried forward in to 2006 District Strategic Plan?**
The District is working progressively to introduce all of the policies contained in *Working with Communities in Scotland: Our Commitment* and *Working with Communities in Britain: How to get involved.* Full implementation by 2003.	Partial	Many District examples.	Yes. Targets should be more SMART and refer to WIAT.
Respond to the increasing public interest in FCS activities (implied).	Yes	Forests for Real and participatory appraisals have been carried out on the Black Isle and for the forests around Inverness city. Communities are invited to scope forest plans.	Yes
Promote opportunities for other activities on national forest estate (implied).	Yes	Many examples, including two mountain bike centres that have provided on- and off-site opportunities (including a new café at Laggan) and two paintball centres that have been set up.	Yes

6: Maintain an efficient and effective organisation			
Target description and planned achievement date	**Target achieved (yes/no/partial?)**	**Comments**	**Should this target be updated and carried forward in to 2006 District Strategic Plan?**
Ensure that delivery complies with UKWAS standards to maintain certification of sustainable forest management (implied).	Yes	The District continues to improve relevant local processes and performances in areas identified for corrective actions. The District was externally audited in 1999 and 2005, with generally positive feedback.	Yes
Detailed tables of descriptions, implications and management proposals for all District forest zones to be developed.	Partial		No. Physical forest zones will not feature in the new Strategic Plan.
FES is working to achieve Investors in People status and unify its employee base during 1998-2002.	Yes		No. Reviews on these subjects will be carried out at national level.
Local health and safety policy is updated annually.	Yes		Yes
District will introduce staff reporting for all staff during 2000.	Yes	As part of staff unification process.	Yes, merely as an appendix.
Information from the conservation database will be transferred to the District GIS in the next few years.	Yes	Along with 'Mapmate' for recording sightings.	No. Target achieved and the system is integrated into routine.
Action will be taken during the next five years to amalgamate the smaller District forest design plans with adjoining areas in the same forest zone. This will reduce forest design plans to fewer than 40.	Yes	The District has 28 forest design plans in March 2006.	No. Physical forest zones will not feature in the new Strategic Plan.
Monitoring programme will be fully identified, prioritised, resourced and carried out on time (implied).	Partial	A number of monitoring programmes are carried out by external sources and colleagues on the ground.	Yes

Section 4: Analysis and identification of issues

The issues identified below are arranged under the seven key national themes of the Scottish Forestry Strategy (SFS), with analysis and evaluation of their local context. The SFS is broken into three outcomes, 12 headline objectives and 69 detailed objectives. To reflect the strategic nature of this Plan, only the most relevant SFS objective and main local issues have been included.

In identifying issues, we seek to identify key things we can influence. This requires an analysis of our operating environment, with consideration of problems and limiting factors. Appropriate analysis will be summarised in the Plan. For example, in considering our operating environment for timber we include mention of the international trade in timber as a limiting factor because this may not be obvious to a lay audience. In contrast we do not mention the details of silvicultural improvement when identifying thinning as an issue as we feel these will be assumed intuitively, i.e. thinning improves crops.

National theme: **Climate change**	
Most relevant SFS action	**Priority issues** for Inverness Forest District
Adapting to climate change	Climate change is a large, complex issue and primarily a national research issue, but we need to consider how we respond and adapt our practices to evolving research guidance. Although recent guidance suggests that there may be limited impact on our forests with regard to **species choice** of our principal productive species (see Appendix 1.4), there may be implications for provenance selection and the prevention of pests and diseases. Scots pine, the principal species in the District, is believed to be more resilient to temperature increases, and the increasing use of **low impact silvicultural systems** (continuous cover) is also believed to be the best way of guarding against the effects of increasing storminess of the climate. In certain locations in the District, the opportunity to allow forests to migrate uphill in response to climate change will be encouraged.
Mitigating climate change	The District is well placed to contribute towards meeting existing and future **renewable energy** targets, primarily due to the prevailing windy climate and a productive forest environment. The District is currently involved with a number of renewable energy schemes, primarily hydro (existing plants at Slattadale and Torrachilty, and possible plants at Lael and Garbat) and wind (possible site at Glenkirk). We will continue to make appropriate sites available for renewable energy projects and work positively with developers, but in view of the number of designated sites in the District these may be limited. The District will support the developing woodfuel market, and in particular will help guarantee supply to the proposed Balcas plant at Invergordon.
Mitigating climate change	The District manages a key site at the confluence of the rivers Spey and Feshie where careful management will be required to assist with **flood and catchment management**.
Mitigating climate change	The District will continue to work with local partners on **timber transport** to reduce timber-road miles and develop opportunities for sea and rail timber transport where appropriate. The District also seeks to ensure that it practises **sustainable management** across a wide range of activities.
Increasing carbon sequestration and retention	Carbon sequestration can be increased by adopting low impact silvicultural systems (**continuous cover forestry**). These are being developed in the District leading to a greater use of natural regeneration and longer rotations. There is also potential for acquiring land in parts of the District where carbon gains from **new woodland** can be made.

National theme: **Timber**	
Most relevant SFS action	**Priority issues** for Inverness Forest District
Promoting predictable and stable supplies	The current production forecasting system is fairly reliable for predicting **timber supply** from clearfelling, but less accurate for thinning, particularly in areas designated for continuous cover forest management. Only a proportion of the existing forests in the District are on sites that can produce good quality timber (see Appendix 5.11), but the range of species and options for management reduce from the best quality ground to poorest ground (see Appendix 1.3). Many of the forests have been thinned and now produce quality products, but only some of the upland forests produce high quality spruce timber. There are extensive areas where planting pioneer species, e.g. lodgepole pine, on marginal sites has resulted in poor quality crops. Difficult market conditions in recent years have also made it difficult to sustain the thinning programme. It is critical to ensure that the correct species and seed origins are used in re-stocking or natural regeneration systems, and they are established at appropriate densities. High-quality **deer management** is also critical to ensure future **timber quality**.
Increase timber supply chain efficiency.	Timber imports dominate the British market (over 80%) and the main market for Scottish timber is England, which is a very competitive market. A critical factor that helps us combat this competition is that, in a Highland context, most of the forests are relatively close to our customers, e.g. there are a number of sawmills in the District as is the Norbord plant at Dalcross (see Appendix 5.10). Woodfuel is a potential growth area, which will also help tackle climate change, and the market is establishing. The costs of the supply chain represent a significant **timber supply** issue; but many of these costs are national issues, such as the price of diesel.
Developing the hardwood sector	Broadleaves are a very minor component of the District, as Scots pine dominates the native woodlands. Mature beech avenues are a feature of parts of the Black Isle and some young beech is found in the woods around the inner Moray Firth. Where a decision is taken to fell some of these, the opportunity will be taken to make them available to the hardwood sector. Opportunities for increasing the proportion of broadleaves will be considered during **species choice** in forest design plan preparation and some sites will be developed for timber production rather than habitat creation.

National theme: **Business development**	
Most relevant SFS action	**Priority issues** for Inverness Forest District
Tourism	The whole area is popular with both day-visitors and people who stay overnight, and the revenue generated from **tourism** is the mainstay of the local economy over a significant part of the District. There are a number of major attractions in the area (see Appendix 5.12), including Glenmore Forest Park. But one of the main reasons that visitors come is because of the scenery, and the opportunities for quiet enjoyment and outdoor recreation. The forests we manage are a significant part of the scenery and provide many recreation facilities. The challenges will be to maintain and improve the quality of the recreation facilities, to improve the customer care provided by FCS, and to work constructively with tourism partners to maximise the benefits.
Tourism	Tourism is the principal industry in the Cairngorms National Park: the District will work with the National Park Authority and local tourism bodies, such as Aviemore & Cairngorm Destination Management Ltd, with a view to delivering sustainable tourism within the **national park aims**.
Contributing to rural development	We can provide business opportunities, but where there is potential for competition, we have to ensure that there is a transparent process for developing these opportunities. There are some very successful existing examples in the tourism sector, e.g. Cairngorm Reindeer Company, Loch Morlich Watersports, BaseCamp mountain bike centre and many other tourism operators derive benefits from recreational visits to in the forests. There are also a number of smaller (often local) timber customers who provide niche market opportunities, such as larch for boat construction, firewood merchants and permissions for gleaning firewood. But there is potential for further **support for local businesses**.
Contributing to rural development	The District does not provide direct support to rural businesses, but will endeavour to consider and provide opportunities that will assist businesses and the local economy (**support for local businesses**), working with the Highlands and Islands Enterprise network local enterprise company where appropriate. The District needs to continue to diversify its income base. A number of existing examples, e.g. radio masts and mining, that can provide up to 10% of the District's income. These are important **alternative sources of income** to timber and help offset investments in recreation and conservation when timber prices are low. The national forest estate has been built up over a long period under different policy drivers. Some forests will need substantial adjustment to meet anticipated future needs or may be considered as opportunities for sale to recycle resources to new areas. A **portfolio analysis** will be carried out to determine the relevant current values of the forests.
Skills	There is a continuing need to develop **staff and contractor skills** to meet new challenges or improve performance in current activities. The District will seek to continue to offer opportunities for Modern Apprenticeships and work closely with Inverness College to provide access to forests for learning.

National theme: **Community development**	
Most relevant SFS action	**Priority issues** for Inverness Forest District
Contributing to quality of life	A number of areas in the District have shortages of **affordable housing** and a number of potential projects are being progressed under the National Forest Land Scheme.
Education and lifelong learning	The **education** sector's resources dwarf ours so our role has to focus on facilitating how the education sector can utilise the national forest estate. Increasing efforts have been made to engage with the schools, colleges and teachers, which has resulted in developing work on the Scottish Qualifications Authority's rural skills programme, fostering a Forest School, the establishment of several after school clubs and working with the Forest Education Initiative (FEI) cluster.
Enhancing engagement with communities	Communities are all different and their needs vary enormously. There is a general interest in their local forests and some communities have become very active (see Appendix 5.4). But at present, much of our **community engagement** reflects the common desire to be informed of current events and have an opportunity to influence long-term management decisions. There are also communities of interest, e.g. mountain bikers, that may operate over a range of forests and it is important that their views are accommodated as well. A number of communities, e.g. Laggan Forest Trust, have been at the forefront of being more actively involved in the management of their local forests. The District role in these **partnerships** varies between community groups and the partnerships can build and deliver additional benefits for which funding is currently limited.
Encouraging community ownership and management	Since the advent of the National Forest Land Scheme there have been a number of enquiries for new **community facilities** and these are being progressed. These issues require sensitive handling and a lot of facilitation to help move them forward.

National theme: **Access and health**	
Most relevant SFS action	**Priority issues** for Inverness Forest District
Enabling people to enjoy woodlands	FCS has operated a policy of open **access** for walkers, riders and cyclists for many years, and this has now become enshrined in Scottish legislation. The District provides a wide range of opportunities for more specialist activities, e.g. orienteering and paintball that are operated with permissions. Many forests have recreation facilities (a total of 29 car parks, 50 way-marked walks, 12 way-marked cycle routes, two mountain bike centres, 12 picnic areas, 12 viewpoints, three toilet blocks, and a visitor centre) and **interpretation** through the District ranger service, which runs a full events programme based in Strathspey and Inverness. Many of the forests are normally accessed by car. There has been some engagement with the health authorities to identify opportunities for greater use of the forests in improving health. A significant part of the problem is that the forests are far from many urban communities or from areas of the greatest social deprivation (see Appendix 5.1), where health tends to be poorer.
Enabling people to enjoy woodlands	**Mountain biking** has grown rapidly in the Highlands and has provided an excellent opportunity for engagement with this community and to provide an expansion of active exercise to improve **health**. This rapid growth has provided a number of key challenges, including the appearance of unregulated and, in some places, unsafe facilities; a demand for facilities in areas of high environmental value; the range of needs of this niche market; and competing demands for resources.
Helping to improve the nation's health	Although there are relatively few areas of deprivation in the District (see Appendix 1.2), many visitors (including tourists) use the **access** opportunities provided by District's forests for active recreation. Links are developing with health service providers in the Inverness area (Step it up Highland) to provide specific opportunities to improve health, e.g. Nordic walking training events.
Making access easier	The District receives around two million visits throughout the year across the wide range of forest types. Maintaining or improving the quality of access facilities and delivering appropriate customer care will be important objectives to ensure that all visitors are welcomed and benefit from their visits to the national forest estate. In addition to the promoted routes, there are many other paths and tracks that may be considered for the **core path networks**, although care may be required to ensure that such designation does not present an unreasonable burden on forest roads required for essential operational purposes. Few of the visitor facilities are suitable for disabled **access**. The District has been working with Highland Disabled Ramblers to remove some of the obvious barriers to disabled access, e.g. poorly-designed gates, bridges, etc and the District will continue its programme of improvement at key sites.

National theme: **Environmental quality**	
Most relevant SFS action	**Priority issues** for Inverness Forest District
Protecting water, soil and air resources	Many of the forest soils are vulnerable to erosion, compaction or loss of nutrients (see 2.2.4 and 2.2.5), but soil quality will not be compromised if consistently good operational practice is applied. Our main issue is the **water quality** emanating from, or downstream of, the forests where the water is important for domestic supplies (private water supplies to neighbouring properties), conservation (e.g. River Spey and its tributaries is a SAC for a range of species), recreation (e.g. water sports on Loch Morlich) or acidification (e.g. adjoining areas of granite – see Appendix 5.9).
Contributing to Scotland's landscapes	Around a quarter of the District is in the Cairngorms and FCS will contribute to the **national park aims**. Other forests are in national scenic areas and areas of local landscape value (see Appendix 5.5). In most cases they are a key component of these areas, but not all parts of the forest make a positive contribution to **landscape quality** (e.g. on the slopes of Ben Wyvis), although many help create the sense of place (e.g. at Glenmore and Rogie Falls). In many forests, the use of **low impact silvicultural systems** (continuous cover) will help minimise the impact of harvesting on key landscapes (e.g. Inshriach).
Managing the historic environment	There is a rich heritage of archaeological features across the District, including 14 scheduled ancient monuments (SAMs), e.g. Dun da Lamh at Strathmashie, and designed landscapes, e.g. Castle Leod adjoining Torrachilty (see 2.6.2 and Appendix 5.3). The Highlands also has a long tradition of forest management, and the District has several key sites that hosted Canadian lumberjacks during the 20th century war years. This is leading to a growing awareness of the **cultural value** of forestry.

National theme: **Biodiversity**	
Most relevant SFS action	**Priority issues** for Inverness Forest District
Reverse biodiversity decline by targeted action/ Reverse biodiversity decline by broader actions	The District manages a wide range of **designated sites**, including nine special areas of conservation (SACs) and four special protection areas (SPAs) (see 2.5.2) that are of international importance (see Appendix 5.6). There are a further two sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs), e.g. Littlemill, that are of national importance. There is a significant area of ancient woodland sites in the District (see Appendix 5.6) and major restoration projects have improved the condition of some key sites. There are still a few sites that have been planted over with conifers where surveys to assess their biodiversity value have indicated their restoration is of a lower priority. Other **priority habitats** (as identified in national and local biodiversity action plans, see 2.5.1), such as bogs, need to be protected and enhanced. Invasive species are recognised as a national threat to natural habitats. Fortunately, this is not a major issue in the District, although there is a small control programme for rhododendron and Japanese knotweed.
Reverse biodiversity decline by targeted action	The District has a number of **priority species** identified in national species action plans (SAPs), including red squirrel, capercaillie, black grouse, pearl-bordered fritillary, juniper, Scottish wood ant and twinflower. These need protection and enhancement of the conditions they require, but this is considered as part of the forest planning process. Balancing the competing needs of habitat restoration with those of individual species can provide local issues for resolution.
Reverse biodiversity decline by broader actions	Much of the national forest estate will form critical elements of creating large-scale **habitat networks**, particularly in Badenoch and Strathspey where the existing network of forests is well established (see Appendix 5.7). In some locations they will be the dominant feature of local networks, e.g. Torrachilty. Some forests already make a positive contribution, e.g. in Strathnairn, while some will need altered to provide critical linkages, e.g. Slattadale. Management of habitat networks will incorporate the District's ongoing restoration of plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS). Part of this process will be to increase diversity of forest habitat, while protecting/restoring important open habitat, such as bogs. Habitat networks are thought to be vital to the survival of species that will need to migrate to survive the potential impact of climate change.
Increase awareness	Glenmore Forest Park Visitor Centre receives over 100,000 visitors/year and has provided the District with a site for detailed **interpretation** of native woodland and other species and habitat projects. Interpretation is an important management tool that will be further developed in the District.

Section 5: Response to the issues, implementation and monitoring

Needs more figures and links to local plans, etc (plus check all maps are referred to).

National theme 1: **Climate change**			
Key local issues	**Proposed response**	**Monitoring**	**Aspiration**
Renewable energy	We will support proposals for renewable energy projects on the national forest estate, sifting out those that would have adverse impacts on designated areas. The District contains a large number of designated sites and this limits the opportunity for large-scale windfarms, but there is some potential for smaller-scale windfarm projects (particularly those with opportunities for local community investment) and small-scale hydro schemes. Further opportunities for these in the District will be explored. Where proposals are identified, we will expect developers to engage and take account of stakeholder interest. Provided this occurs, we will allow proposals with objectors to go through the public planning process to ensure a process that is fair to developers and transparent to stakeholders. Land acquisition for biomass production will be considered, subject to the availability of suitable land at an affordable price.	kWH of power generated.	All suitable opportunities are identified and developed.

Species choice	It is extremely difficult to evaluate the impact of climate change on the future growth and health of tree species at a national level, let alone a local level (see Appendix 1.4). Until clear guidance emerges, we will adopt a precautionary principle on maintaining and enhancing diversity of tree species and forest structure when long-term forest plans are prepared. Larch and Douglas Fir will continue to be used where site conditions allow to assist future supply of construction timber. There is also a need to increase the proportion of native broadleaf woodland in the District. This will be followed through on detailed site plans, replanting operations and areas of natural regeneration (all supported by more detailed FCS guidance on species selection and native trees and shrubs). The future of lodgepole pine crops will carefully assessed. In some locations they will be replaced by native woodlands, in others by timber producing Sitka spruce crop (in mixtures if necessary) or, where conditions are appropriate, the ground will be restored to open habitats. The District will use advice from Forest Research on the effects of climate change on species choice and will continue to provide sites for experimental work.	Cumulative impact of proposed species percentages, annual checks on proposed site plans and surveys of natural regeneration areas.	Native species will be increased over time. Maintain at least 6% larch and 3% Douglas fir.
Flood and catchment management	The confluence of the River Feshie and River Spey is a key site (managed by FCS) in the flood management of a large area of Badenoch. Previous mismanagement of this area led to severe flooding. A plan to deliver the hydrological and conservation objectives of this area in being developed in conjunction with neighbouring landowners. The District will work with the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) in relation to any other sites where flooding problems are identified. We will also pursue opportunities for **new woodland** in the floodplains to help mitigate flooding risk and contribute to habitat network development.	Delivery of the Feshie – Spey confluence management plan	Flood damage is minimised.

New woodland	New acquisitions will be actively sought in the lowland parts of the District on better quality soils. Wherever possible, these will also deliver on other important objectives such as providing increased access opportunities, enhancing local habitat networks and increasing floodplain woodland. These sites will also provide opportunities for growing quality hardwood timber to bolster our existing resource, e.g. Craig Phadrig and Reelig Glen. At present, support is available to take this acquisition programme forward via funding for carbon sequestration and the FCS woodlands in and around town initiative (WIAT).	Area of land acquired, location and type of forest planted.	An improved network of woodlands developed around Inverness and the inner Moray Firth delivering a range of benefits and improved habitat links into the uplands.
Sustainable management	Our sustainable forest management is based on implementation of a range of important standards and best practice national guidelines, such as FCS forest and water guidelines and legislation, such as the Health and Safety Act in our daily work. Our performance is externally audited against the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) approved UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) standards. Our FSC certification provides third party confirmation that FCS forests are well-managed. We are firmly committed to retaining the high standards required by UKWAS. We will adopt the practices identified in the evolving FC sustainability initiative, Greenerways, in all buildings, operations and travel. The new District office will be used as an exemplar of a sustainable timber building.	Audits for UKWAS certification.	Adoption of best practice in sustainable management.

National theme 2: **Timber**			
Key local issues	**Proposed response**	**Monitoring**	**Aspiration**
Timber supply	We will publish a forecast of timber production every five years and match those predictions (currently at 160,000m3/year) in subsequent marketing plans. We have to work co-operatively with other parts of the supply chain to achieve market placement for our products and maintain margins for everyone in the chain. Good progress has been made with long-term harvesting and timber supply contracts that have provided some security in a turbulent period. As a result, although some local contractors have left the industry, many have still continued to re-invest in their businesses. We will continue with processes such as long-term contracts and competent contractor status to provide security while regularly testing the market rate through open tenders. Timber marketing is led at a national level and there are some key customers on long-term contracts in the District (e.g. Gordons, BSW, Norbord and Dingwall sawmill) and we also supply small, local niche markets (see 'Support for local Businesses'). The woodfuel market is developing and the District will help facilitate market growth and emerging woodfuel entrepreneurs where existing commitments allow (e.g. to guarantee supply to the proposed Balcas mill).	Published production forecast, local thinning spreadsheet and annual sales plan. Volume of certified timber produced. Percentage of harvesting work and timber marketed under long-term contracts. Contracts of supply to new markets.	A sustained level of production. The target volumes of timber are harvested and marketed, with an increasing margin for the primary producer.

Timber quality	Distribution of species and selection of correct origins (including improved stock) will follow sound silvicultural practice to provide a quality growing stock to take advantage of our favourable climatic conditions. Densities will be established in line with national guidance at 2,500 stems/ha by five years. Pruning and cleaning will be used appropriately to improve quality in natural regeneration areas. There is presently a small provision for this in our District business plan and we will seek to increase it as the need grows. Maintain and seek opportunities to increase current target thinning volume of 27,000m^3 obs/year (obs = over-bark standing, further detail in the District thinning plan) and validate volume and location targets through use of GIS map layers and improved local estimating of programme.	Stocking density assessments and natural regeneration surveys. Spreadsheet to predict and monitor volume outturn and GIS thinning map layer to show what has been thinned and when.	The District will have a reputation for producing quality timber. All suitable areas are thinned.
Timber transport	We will continue to work with customers and the Timber Transport Group to further reduce the cost and environmental impacts of timber transport. Opportunities for rail transport in the District are limited by the short-haul distances to the existing markets.	Number of timber-road miles travelled.	Number of timber-road miles progressively declines.

National theme 3: **Business development**			
Key local issues	**Proposed response**	**Monitoring**	**Aspiration**
Support for local businesses	We will be open to new business ideas. We also need to become less risk-averse while still retaining robust procedures to protect the public interest.	Number of businesses involved and value of business.	A host of local enterprises gain all or part of their income from the national forest estate.
Portfolio analysis	The existing national forest estate has been analysed against a range of economic and non-market benefits utilising a national scoring system (see Appendix 5). During the period of this Plan, forests with low scores (e.g. Strathconon, Strathbran) will be assessed for re-positioning to either improve their non-market and/or economic performance. If they are suitable candidates this will be incorporated at the next amendment of the relevant forest plans. If not, they will be considered for sale to realise money for recycling to other key work areas, including land acquisition for **new woodland**.	Forest plan revision. Area of land sold. Area of land acquired.	The make-up of the national forest estate gradually evolves to increase the potential for meeting future demands.
Non-timber sources of income	Diversification of income is vital to protect programme development in other activities, and opportunities should be identified and tested. This requires engagement with stakeholders to ensure that proposals are well thought through and that long-term relationships are not damaged (e.g. increased car-parking revenues, new renewable energy projects). The District will follow national guidance on the appropriate sorts of businesses, the nature of the development (lease or FCS operated) and ensure that maintenance issues are addressed.	Proportion of income generated from sources other than timber sales.	Over 25% of the income in the District is generated from sources other than timber production.

Tourism	Tourism is a very important business and, together with other local partners (e.g. Aviemore & Cairngorms Destination Management), it is vital to provide a quality of experience that exceeds the expectation of the visitor and encourages growth in tourism revenues. Current facilities, information provision, and practices should be continuously reviewed to ensure that sites provide a high quality visitor experience. Resources are in place to upgrade interpretation in Glenmore Forest Park to remain contemporary. Ongoing attempts will be made to secure resources to upgrade and enhance other facilities in the District.	Visitor monitoring programme.	The forests are recognised and supported as an integral part of the tourism product for the area.
Staff and contractor skills	We will identify skill shortages and organise suitable training to improve delivery of our work. At present the key areas we need to invest in are silviculture, community engagement, tourism and IT skills. Opportunities to continue and extend the Modern Apprenticeship will be explored.	District training plan. Number of Modern Apprentices trained.	A multi-skilled and motivated District staff and contractor resource.

National theme 4: **Community development**			
Key local issues	**Proposed response**	**Monitoring**	**Aspiration**
Education	Maintain links with the education sector. Our existing resource is being targeted at primary schools and helping to develop the vocational sector in secondary schools. Efforts will be made to further develop the Forest School programme in the District. If more resources become available, we would like to engage with those local bodies working with other sectors of the community. The District will continue to provide opportunities for tertiary education, particularly at Glenmore Forest Park, and for the Scottish School of Forestry to use woodlands for training, to visit FCS operations and to learn direct from District staff.	Number of schools, colleges and pupils involved. Number of vocational courses provided for.	The forests are seen as a valuable education resource.
Community engagement	We will continue to work with and encourage communities to become more involved in the management of, and outputs from, their local forest (further detail contained in FCS local guidance on community involvement and stakeholder consultation) and to deliver on the existing partnerships in the District. Where communities increase their involvement in a forest, we may also have to increase our input to ensure that successful and sustainable partnerships are developed. This may result in some communities reaching the level where they wish to purchase under the National Forest Land Scheme. We will also encourage an understanding of the contribution that forestry could make to community planning partnerships and to the cultural value of the area. Most staff have adapted to these new roles, but we would all benefit from further training (see **staff and contractor skills** issue).	Periodic review of the levels of engagement and staff training (District training plan).	All communities involved with local forests feel that they are delivering the outputs that they need.
Partnerships	The District is committed to a range of different partnerships that deliver a variety of public benefits. Staff will continue to contribute to these partnerships where they provide benefits. Staff will also work to ensure that adequate long-term funding is in place to ensure successful delivery where appropriate opportunities for new projects in existing partnerships, or new partnerships develop.	Number of community partnerships involved in owning or managing woodland. Independent satisfaction rating of community partnerships on the national forest estate.	A range of different partnerships operating providing a wide range of benefits to partners and the District.

Community ownership and management	Community approaches for sites for facilities or for purchase of land will be positively received and, provided they fit the criteria published in the National Forest Land Scheme, we will process them as quickly as possible. The District will respond positively to requests from registered social landlords to try to find sites suitable for affordable housing that do not impact significantly on the other objectives of management of the forest.	Number and area of land parcels sold or leased under the National Forest Land Scheme. Number of affordable housing units built on former FCS land.	A range of community opportunities is realised. The national forest estate makes a contribution to the availability of affordable housing in rural areas.

National theme **5: Access and health**			
Key local issues	**Proposed response**	**Monitoring**	**Aspiration**
Access	Further investment will be sought to maintain and enhance the quality of current facilities (further detail will be included in District recreation plan). As mentioned under the issue of **new woodland**, we will try to acquire land closer to expanding urban areas (e.g. Inverness, Nairn) to bring forests closer to the people and improve access opportunities for those communities. We will also seek additional resources to facilitate engagement with the health sector to encourage greater use of the forests (particularly around Inverness) and, where necessary, greater use of public transport to get there. Continued interaction with the disabled community to identify and remove barriers to access will be fostered.	Number of visits to national forest estate (through Forest Tourism Initiative all forest survey). Percentage satisfaction with woodland recreation provision (through public opinion survey). Improved facilities for disabled people at key sites.	Increased usage of their local woodlands by a wide range of the community and a network of new forests developed in around Inverness delivering a range of benefits.
Interpretation	The District will develop interpretive strategies (initially for Glenmore Forest Park) that will be used to drive forward all interpretation (print, electronic, visitor centre, trails, and guided events). These will be used as a management tool to help deliver on a variety of objectives and will provide the opportunity for the District to integrate with the aims of the Cairngorms National Park.	Interpretive strategy proposals.	The national forest estate's contribution to the natural and cultural heritage of Scotland is increasingly understood.
Core path network	The District will work collaboratively with the access authorities in developing core path networks that add value to the local access infrastructure, while seeking to ensure that there is no significant burden on key forest roads required for operational purposes.	Number and length of core paths in woodland.	A core path network that adds value to the access provision, but does not add a significant operational burden.
Health	Links will be maintained with health service providers in the Inverness area (Step it up Highland) to help develop further use of the forests. Facilities for active enjoyment of the forest (paths, cycle routes, etc.) will be positively maintained. A programme of ranger-led ‘activity’ events will be provided to encourage families to use the forests.	Number of participants to FCS-led activity events and Forest Schools.	Forests will be recognised as having a valuable role in maintaining and improving the community’s health.

Mountain biking	The District will work collaboratively with the mountain biking community to ensure that a range of facilities is available that meet appropriate safety and environmental standards. Unauthorised construction will be actively managed.	Number of trails, usage and condition.	The number of mountain biking trails is consolidated and that they cater for a wider range of users.

National theme 6: **Environmental quality**			
Key local issues	**Proposed response**	**Monitoring**	**Aspiration**
Water quality	Adherence to the FCS water guidelines. Close liaison with the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) will be required during the period when the EU water framework directive is introduced. Site planning and consultation with key stakeholders has provided better information on site and downstream issues for inclusion in the planning of operations. Other improvements will continue to be made to reduce risks of sedimentation or acidification, e.g. tighter control on harvesting in sensitive areas, keeping conifer planting back from streamsides, and quarrying better roadstone to reduce impact of haulage. Progressive introduction of the lengthened fallow periods between felling and replanting to reduce the need for insecticides to protect young trees.	Length of rivers in forested catchments for which ecological quality is maintained or enhanced Number of adverse incidents and complaints (District complaints register).	Forestry is seen as part of the solution to these issues, rather than part of the problem.
Landscape quality	We will continue to include landscape as a major consideration in long-term forest planning and gradually resolve issues, e.g. hard edges in Moy, upper margins around Ben Wyvis. Most of this can be delivered through conventional operations, but we will pursue additional resources where site or access conditions demand high-cost solutions.	Percentage of woodlands covered by approved forest plans in areas designated for their landscape. Delivery of forest plans.	The forests in the area are seen as a valued part of the landscape.
Cultural heritage	There has been a growing awareness of cultural issues and staff have become good at identifying archaeological features when planning work activities and inviting expert opinion. This has resulted in monuments being scheduled by Historic Scotland, e.g. Carn na Buaile. There are opportunities to raise awareness of cultural features at Glenmore and Strathmashie, and in a sculpture collection at Feshiebridge. We will work with partners to continue to develop these and increase community involvement (see **community engagement** issue).	Number of and progress on agreed management plans for scheduled ancient monuments (SAMs).	Forests and woodlands are valued by local communities as part of their historical and contemporary culture.

Low impact silvicultural systems	Currently, 16% of the District is committed to this type of silvicultural practice. This will be increased where crops, sites and circumstances permit. There is an ongoing need to improve our skills in managing these areas (see **staff and contractor skills**). Individual forest design plan reviews will be used to confirm whether there is an opportunity to increase the area managed by these silvicultural practices.	Percentage of woodland area managed under low impact silvicultural systems	Continuous cover forestry practice in the District matches that in continental Europe and operates over a third the area of the District.
Cairngorms National Park aims	The District has three large forests in the Cairngorms National Park and is already helping to deliver the four aims of the Park in a variety of ways. The District will seek to assist in the delivery of the Priorities for Action 2007-2011 in the new national park plan as resources dictate.	Contributions to the Priorities for Action in the national park plan.	FCS seen as a major contributor to all the aims of the national park.

National theme 7: **Biodiversity**			
Key local issues	**Proposed response**	**Monitoring**	**Aspiration**
Designated sites	All designated sites have management plans agreed with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). Influence over neighbouring designated sites is now included in forest planning.	Percentage of woodland SSSIs in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition. Progress on SSSI management plans.	All designated sites are in favourable condition.
Priority habitats	We will continue to improve and expand the important native pinewoods in the District through thinning of plantations in the buffer zones, removal of non-native regeneration, expansion of treeline woodlands and deer management. Further work to restore the bog woodlands at Inshriach will be progressed. It is proposed to restore around 50% of the plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) in the District, enhance around 20% and maintain the condition of around 30% to progressively improve the biodiversity, environmental and cultural value of the sites. These proposals, in some areas, take into account other factors, e.g. the value to red squirrels of mature Norway spruce stands. We will also carry out a survey of all habitats in the District to influence the future development of forest plans (see also **portfolio analysis** issue). The small programme of rhododendron removal will be continued at key sites such as Slattadale.	Area of native woodland. Regeneration and expansion of native pinewoods. Progress against PAWS restoration plan.	The native woodland area is expanded and all forests contain a diverse range of habitats.

Priority species	The future forest structure will be designed to enhance the prospects for the priority species covered by species action plans (SAPs) (red squirrel, capercaillie, black grouse, twinflower, juniper, pearl-bordered fritillary, Scottish and narrow-headed wood ants). This will normally be carried out by adjusting operational practice. Additional inputs are also identified (further details will be contained in the District conservation plan) and resources sought, e.g. funding for predator management in core Strathspey forests for capercaillie. A host of other species will also benefit from this work. Operational practices will be modified to ensure that all protected species are recognised during the planning process and disturbance minimised.	Forest plan proposals. Progress against programmes in district conservation plan.	The national forest estate is a haven and reservoir for these priority species.
Habitat networks	Work is being carried out to determine the potential for habitat networks across the District and this will influence long-term forest planning decisions. This will be an ongoing process for many years and will require collaboration with neighbouring landowners and colleagues in Highland Conservancy. This will operate at both the landscape and the local scale and the forest planning process will be used to implement change (e.g. network link development in the Slattadale Forest Plan) such as expansion of native woodland, identification of old growth areas and provision of open ground habitat. The Badenoch and Strathspey area has a large core area of woodland that is reasonably linked to form a habitat network on a national scale. We will consider opportunities for woodland expansion in this area where these provide vital links for improving this network and for creating new opportunities, such as treeline forest development.	Forest plan proposals. Area of woodland converted to priority open ground habitat	The national forest estate is a key component of habitat networks – both in the uplands and the lowlands – and native species make up 50% of the tree cover.

Deer management	Through the forest planning and other processes, neighbours should be engaged in collaborative deer management to secure effective woodland re-establishment and biodiversity objectives. The District will contribute to the work of five deer management groups. The District will utilise a combination of directly employed and contract labour as well as culling leases and cull helpers to effectively control the deer populations in the increasingly diverse woodlands.	Area of woodland with active, approved deer management plans Deer utilisation assessments Damage assessments	Damage to main stand tree species and other habitats remains at an acceptable level.

In a number of areas, projects or programmes have been identified as not currently resourced. Before external funding is pursued or internal resources are re-allocated, these will be subject to a project planning process for approval by the FES Management Board. Part of this process is to measure the project of programme against national priorities and to identify the funding for initiation and construction, and issues such as future funding for maintenance.

In addition to the key issues identified above, there is a large amount of baseline work associated with the delivery of sustainable forest management on the national forest estate. This requires the embedding of a whole raft of national guidelines (FCS forest and water guidelines) and legislation (Health and Safety Act) in our daily work practices. This is externally monitored by auditors appointed to test our practices against the United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS).

From the key issues listed above there are four key areas that, due to the opportunities in this area, we would like to become regarded as having made a significant contribution to the national delivery against the Scottish Forestry Strategy:

- **Native woodland management** through the continued management of the important native pinewood areas, and continued restoration of PAWS sites;
- **Quality recreation provision** (for day visitors and tourists) through management of key sites in the Cairngorms National Park and around the city of Inverness;
- **Community development** through continued involvement in existing community projects and responses to developing demand;
- **Underpinning timber processing (large and small scale) industrial development** through the marketing of timber at both the large and small scale in the Moray Firth marketing region.

Key issues cross-referenced to SFS themes

	Climate change	Timber	Business development	Community development	Access and health	Environmental quality	Biodiversity
Renewable energy	4		4				
Species choice	4	4			4	4	4
Flood and catchment management	4					4	4
New woodland	4	4			4	4	4
Sustainable management	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Timber supply		4	4				
Timber quality		4	4				
Timber transport		4	4				
Hardwood timber		4	4	4			
Support for local businesses			4	4			
Portfolio analysis	4	4		4	4	4	4
Non-timber sources of income			4	4	4		
Tourism			4	4	4	4	4
Staff and contractor skills	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Education				4	4	4	4
Community engagement			4	4	4		
Partnerships	4		4	4	4	4	4
Community ownership and management				4			
Access			4	4	4		
Interpretation	4		4		4	4	4
Core path networks				4	4		4
Health				4	4		

Water quality						4	
Landscape quality			4	4	4	4	4
Cultural heritage				4		4	
Low impact silvicultural systems	4	4				4	4
National Park aims	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Designated sites							4
Priority habitats				4		4	4
Priority species				4		4	4
Forest habitat networks	4					4	4
Deer management		4					4

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Maps

1.1	Forest design plans
1.2	Areas of multiple deprivation
1.3	LCF – Land quality
1.4	Climate change map

Appendix 2 List of supporting plans

- Forest Design Plans
- SSSI Management Plans
- Recreation Strategy & Interpretation Plans
- Deer Management Strategy & Deer Management Unit Plans
- SAM Plans
- Fire Plan
- Waste Management & Pollution Control Plan
- Safety Policy Statement
- Thinning Plan
- Roads Plan
- Sales Plan
- Business Plan
- Chemical Reduction Plan
- Conservation/Biodiversity Plan

Appendix 3 List of local guidance documents

- Selection & Treatment of Natural Reserves
- Dealing with Wind blow
- Complaints Register
- Non-Timber products
- Illegal/Unauthorised use of the Forest
- Low Impact Silviculture
- Community Involvement/Stakeholder Consultation
- Deadwood
- Species Selection
- Whole Tree Harvesting
- Fencing
- Surveys
- Monitoring
- Planning and Managing Open Space

Appendix 4 Key Environmental commitments

Total District area:	34,399						
	Current (Ha)	%	Committed (Ha)	%	Aspiration (Ha)	%	Guidance for completion
Native woodland	1,259	4	1,259	4	1,300	4	UK HAP definition for native woodland priority habitats.
Ancient semi-natural woodland	11,889	35					SNH antiquity layer which have ASNW on the ground and any other sites which District knows to be ASNW from field knowledge
LISS	6,317	18	8,500	25	9,000	26	UKWAS definition. For current please do not include stands where thinning has yet to start.
Total area of PAWS	4,191						Current total area of PAWS
PAWS restoration	1566	37	3,519	84	3,519	84	Restored when site has 20% canopy cover and 50% site native species.
Native species	12,471	36	12,727	37	13,400	39	
Non native species	11,519	33	11,696	34	10,000	29	
Conifer	22,618	66	20,295	59	20,000	58	
Broadleaf	1,371	4	2,752	8	3,400	10	
Long-term retentions	577	2	577	2	600	2	UKWAS definition. For current please include only those crops that are currently at least 20 years beyond economic felling age.
Natural reserves	2,397	7	2,397	7	2,500	7	UKWAS definition.
Open space	10,410	30	9,976	33	11,000	32	
Definitions							
Current	What is actually happening on the ground as of April 2007.						
Committed	Intentions as laid out in existing forest plans.						
Aspiration	Where strategic plans will guide subsequent reviews of forest plans.						

Appendix 5 Portfolio analysis

Forest block	Economic					Non-market									
	H+M	Est & Maint	Roads	Oth income	Total score	Cons. Designation	BAP spp	Native tree spp	WIAT	Commy	Rec	FHN	Land-scape	Thin	Total score
Achilty	6	2	7	0		1	8	10	0	1	3	2	1	2	
Aigas	6	2	5	1	14	0	3	6	0	3	2	2	0	2	18
Assich, Laiken and Ferness	10	4	10	1	25	0	8	6	0	1	2	2	0	5	24
Muir of Ord Woods	10	4	10	0	24	0	3	10	2	1	5	2	1	5	29
Black Isle Main Block	10	2	10	1	23	1	8	10	0	5	8	5	1	5	43
Black Isle West	10	4	10	1	25	10	8	10	0	1	5	2	1	5	42
Blackmuir	6	4	10	0	20	0	3	6	4	1	3	2	1	3	23
Boblainy and Battan	6	2	7	0	15	3	10	10	0	1	2	2	0	5	33
Craig Phadrig	6	4	10	0	20	0	3	6	10	1	10	2	5	5	42
Culloden	10	4	10	0	24	0	8	6	10	3	10	0	1	5	43
Daviot	10	2	10	3	25	0	3	10	10	1	5	2	0	5	36
Farr	10	2	10	1	23	0	6	6	0	1	1	2	0	5	21
Glenkirk	0	2	0	6	8	1	3	6	0	1	1	0	0	2	14
Glenmore	10	2	10	6	28	10	10	10	0	3	10	5	10	5	63
Inshriach	6	0	7	1	14	10	10	10	0	5	8	5	10	5	63
Lael	3	0	7	0	10	1	0	4	0	1	5	2	1	0	14
Longart and Garbat	3	0	10	1	14	1	8	4	0	1	2	3	0	2	21
Meallmore, Inverarnie and Littlemill	6	4	10	2	22	10	8	6	0	3	3	3	0	2	35
Moorfield and Durnamuck	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moy	10	2	10	0	22	0	3	6	0	1	2	2	0	5	19
Ord Hill	6	4	10	0	20	0	3	6	4	1	5	2	5	5	31
Reelig	6	2	7	0	15	3	6	6	0	5	3	2	0	5	30
Slattadale	3	0	10	2	15	4	1	4	0	5	3	3	8	2	30
Strathbran	6	0	5	0	11	1	8	4	0	1	0	3	0	2	19
Strathconon	3	0	5	0	8	0	1	6	0	1	2	3	0	2	15
Strathgarve, Corriemoillie and Loch Luichart	3	0	7	0	10	1	6	10	0	1	2	3	0	3	26
Strathmashie	6	0	5	2	13	1	8	6	0	5	3	2	3	2	30

Torrachilty	6	2	5	1	14	1	8	6	0	5	8	5	1	3	37

Appendix 6 – Biodiversity action plans - habitats and species

Habitat	Legislative context	Where found in District
Mesotrophic lakes	UK Priority Habitat	Loch Battan
River gorges	UK Priority Habitat	Moniack Gorge, Lael forest
Native pinewood	UK Priority Habitat	Strathspey, Black Isle, Loch Maree
Juniper scrub	UK Priority Habitat	Strathspey, Glenkirk, Black Isle, Inverness
Upland oakwood	UK Priority Habitat	Talladale, Bruach Burn, Shantullich, Achilty, Strathbran
Wet woodland	UK Priority Habitat	Inshriach, Monadh mor, Black Isle
Upland birch	UK Priority Habitat	Loch Garve, Strathmashie, Inshriach
Aspen woodland	Local Priority Habitat	Strathspey, Achilty
Montane scrub	UK Priority Habitat	Strathspey
Lowland raised bog	UK Priority Habitat	Monadh Mor
Lowland heathland	UK Priority Habitat	Belmaduthy
Riparian woodland	UK Priority Habitat	Strathspey, Torrachilty

Species	Legislative context	Where found in District
Great crested newt (Triturus cristatus)	UKBAP	Small ponds
Palmate newt (Triturus helvetica)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Small ponds
Narrow headed wood ant (Formica exsecta)	UKBAP	Pinewoods, native woods, heathland.
Scottish wood ant (Formica aquilonia)	UKBAP	Pinewoods
Hairy wood ant (Formica lugubris)	UKBAP	Pinewoods
Jumping weevil (Rhynchaenus testaceus)	UKBAP	Wet woodland
Slavonian grebe (Podiceps auritus)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Small reed fringed lochans.
Goshawk (Accipiter gentillis)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Mature conifer woodland.
Goldeneye (Bucephala clangula)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Strathspey.
Scottish crossbill (Loxia scotica)	UKBAP	Conifer woodlands
Common crossbill (Loxia curvirostra)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Conifer Woodlands
Parrot Crossbill (Loxia pytryopsittacus)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Conifer woodlands
Red kite (Milvus milvis)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Ross-shire

Osprey (Pandion Haliaetus)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Fairly open woodland with adjacent lochs and rivers
Crested tit (Parus cristatus)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Pinewoods with large diameter deadwood
Honey buzzard (Pernis apivorus)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Woodlands
Black grouse (Tetrao tetrix)	UKBAP	Woodland edge, pre-thicket areas, native woodlands.
Merlin (Falco columbarius)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Moorland and forest edge.
Capercaillie (Tetrao urogallus)	UKBAP	Woodlands with vaccinium.
Mason bee (Osmia uncinata)	UKBAP	Easter Ross where Scots pine and birdsfoot trefoil exist.
Northern brown argus (Aricia artaxerxes)	UKBAP	Areas with common rockrose (Strathspey)
Pearl bordered fritillary (Boloria euphrosyne)	UKBAP	Open grazed woodland
Small Blue (Cupido minimus)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Areas with kidney vetch
Speckled wood (Pararge aegeria)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Woodlands
Atlantic salmon (Salmo salar)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Major rivers and tributaries, Loch Morlich
Northern damselfly (Coenagrion hastulatum)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Bogs
Marsh clubmoss (Lycopodiella inundata	UKBAP	Loch Morlich? Possibly extinct
Drab tooth fungus (Bankera fuligineoalba)	UKBAP	
Blue corky spine fungus (Hydnellum caeuleum)	UKBAP	
Reddish-brown corky spine fungus (Hydnellum ferrugineum)	UKBAP	
Brown corky spine fungus (Hydnellum peckii)	UKBAP	
Green footed spine cap fungus (Sarcodon glaucopus)	UKBAP	
Scaly tooth fungus (Sarcodon squamosus)	UKBAP	
Wildcat (Felix sylvestris)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Farmland, woodland and uplands
Pine marten (Martes martes)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Conifer woods

Water vole (Arvicola terrestris)	UKBAP	Small burns and bogs
Otter (Lutra lutra)	UKBAP	Lochs, burns and rivers
Badger (Meles meles)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Woodlands, farmland
Pipistrelle bat (Pipistrellus pipistrellus)	UKBAP	Widespread
Red squirrel (Scirius vulgaris)	UKBAP	Woodlands
Freshwater pearl mussel (Margaritifera margaritifera)	UKBAP	Rivers and burns with salmon
Witch's hair lichen (Alectoria ochroleuca)	UKBAP	Cairngorms
Pine stump lichen (Cladonia botrytes)	UKBAP	Cairngorms
Green shield-moss (Buxbaumia viridis)	UKBAP	Moniack gorge
Kentish glory (Endromis versicolora)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Birch woodland and moorland, Strathspey
Argent and sable (Rheumaptera hastata)	UKBAP	Open birch woods, bogs.
Dark-bordered beauty (Epione parallelaria)	UKBAP	Aspen
Square-spotted clay (Xestia rhomboidea)	UKBAP	Broadleaved woodland with sparse undergrowth
Cousin german moth (Paradiarsia sobrina)	UKBAP	Blaeberry and heather with low young scrubby birch
Aspen hoverfly (Hammerschmidtia ferruginea)	UKBAP	Aspen deadwood Achilty
Pine Hoverfly (Blera fallax)	UKBAP	Scots pine, Cairngorms
Spider (Clubonia subsultans)	UKBAP	Pine woods
Slow worm (Anguis fragillis)	UKBAP	Heathland
Common lizard (Lacerta vivipara)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Woodland, heathland
Adder (Vipera berus)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Open woodland
Coralroot orchid (Corallorhiza trifida)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Pinewoods
Bluebell (Hyacinthoides non-scripta)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Ancient or long established woodland

Twinflower (Linnaea borealis)	UKBAP	Pinewoods
Small cow wheat (Mwlampyrum sylvaticum)	UKBAP	Native woodlands
One-flowered wintergreen (Moneses uniflora)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Native pinewood
Aspen (Populus tremula)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Achilty
Whitebeam (Sorbus aria)	UK species of conservation concern. Locally important species.	Native woodlands

Appendix 7 Protected sites in the District

SSSI name	SSSI plan	Date approved	Expiry date	Area (ha) on national forest estate	
Littlemill	Littlemill	01/01/03	31/12/12	145	Geomorphological
Monadh Mor	Monadh Mor	01/03/98	28/02/03	24	Biological
Allt Mor (Glenmore)	Allt Mor	01/04/02	31/03/12	41	Geomorphological
Loch Battan	Loch Battan	01/01/03	31/12/12	20	Biological
Loch Maree Islands	Loch Maree Islands	01/01/02	31/03/12	43	Biological
Loch Maree	Loch Maree	01/01/02	31/03/12	3	Biological
Belmaduthy Dam	Belmaduthy Dam	01/01/01	31/12/05	19	Biological
River Feshie	River Feshie	01/04/02	31/03/07	70	Geomorphological
Moniack Gorge	Moniack Gorge	01/01/02	31/12/06	31	Biological
North Rothiemurchus (Glenmore)	Glenmore	01/04/04	31/03/13	3	Biological
Glenmore Forest	Glenmore	01/04/04	31/03/13	1,395	Biological
Northern Corries (Glenmore)	Glenmore	01/04/04	31/03/13	668	Biological
River Spey					

Designation	Name	Area (ha) on national forest estate
National Park	Cairngorms	8,586
NNR	Loch Maree Islands	42
NNR	Ben Wyvis	58
NNR	Invereshie and Inshriach	3,476
NNR	Glenmore	2,100
SPA	Abernethy Forest	<1
SPA	Cairngorms	2,092
SPA	Loch Maree	45
SPA	River Spey Insh Marshes	3
SAC	Beinn Dearg	1
SAC	Ben Wyvis	4
SAC	Cairngorms	2,234
SAC	Dam Wood	18
SAC	Insh Marshes	3
SAC	Loch Maree Complex	45
SAC	Monadh Mor	110
SAC	Moniack Gorge	30
SAC	River Spey	204
RAMSAR	Loch Maree	45
RAMSAR	River Spey Insh Marshes	3

SAC SPA outside boundary – Moray Firth

Scheduled ancient monument	Feature	Location	Grid ref
Balnaguie	Cairn		
Carn na Buaile	Fort	Contin	
Culnacraigh	Hut circle	Black Isle	
Carn Mor	Dun	Culbokie	
Woodhead	Long cairn	Black Isle	
James temple	Dun	Drumderfit	
Callachy Hill	Cairn	Flowerburn	
Wester Brae	Long cairn	Black Isle	
Dun-da-Lamh	Fort	Laggan	
Cnoc na Craiseag	Cairn	Black Isle	
Chraig Phadrig	Fort	Craig Phadrig	
Ord Hill	Fort	Ord Hill, N Kessock	
Little Garve Bridge	Bridge	Garve	
Knock Farril	Fort	Fodderty	