

Scottish Borders Forest District

Strategic Plan 2007 - 2017

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1: Planning framework

1.1 Introduction

Forestry in Scotland is the responsibility of Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Government. 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. Scottish Borders Forest District is part of FES.

The aim of this strategic plan is to describe how the District will deliver its part of the Scottish Forestry Strategy (SFS 2006), which is the forest policy of the Scottish Government. The strategy articulates a vision for forestry in Scotland, to be met by 2025.

Scottish Forestry Strategy 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 over-arching principles for the SFS 2006 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.

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.

The role of Forestry is now very broad and contributes to issues as diverse as:

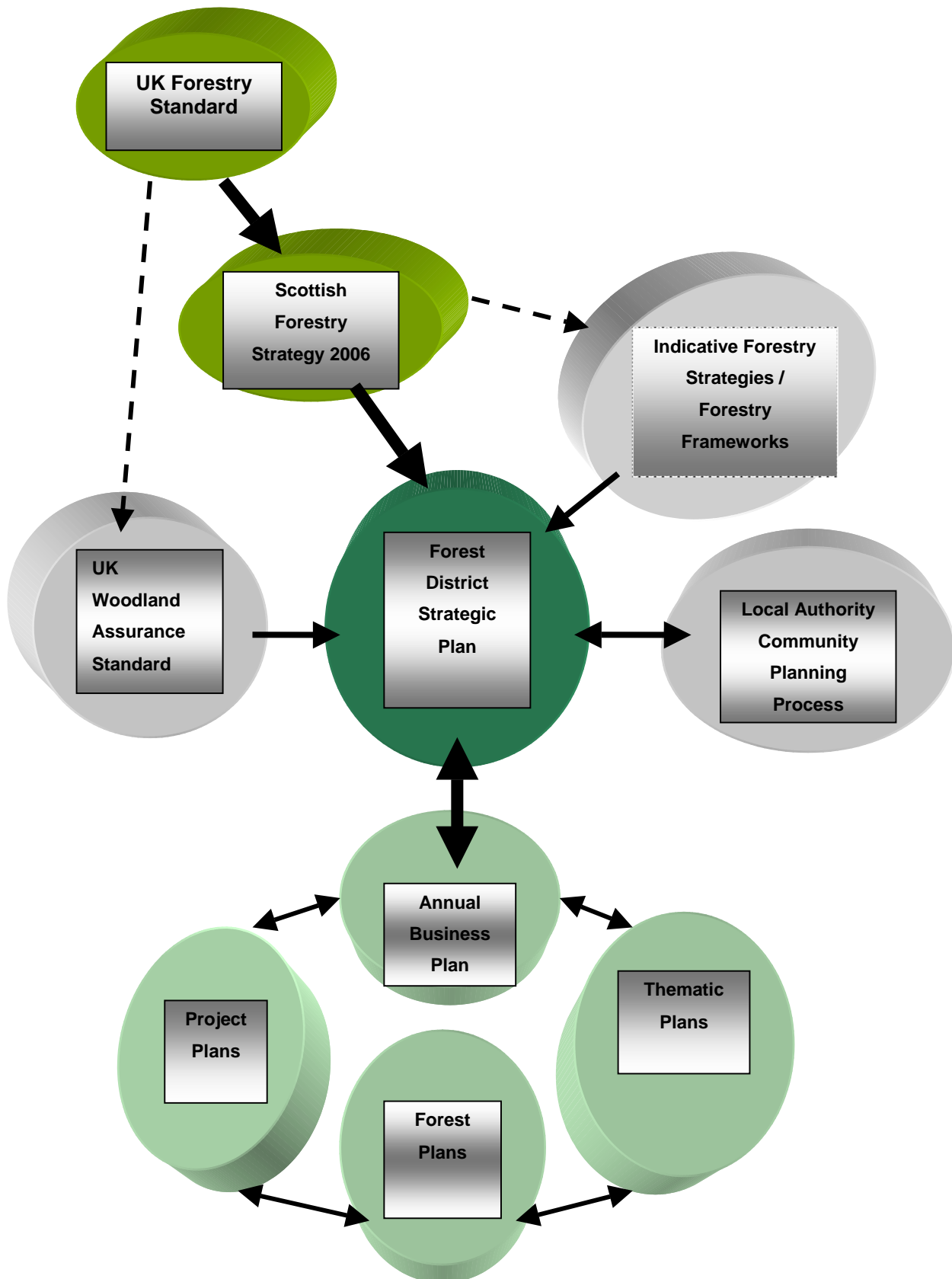
access	community development	education
health	heritage	landscape
lifelong learning	nature	recreation
renewable energy	rural development	sustainable development
timber production	tourism	transport
water	wildlife	

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. In essence, we seek to increase the benefits of our activities to society as a whole, and to do this more fairly than has been achieved in the past. This is in keeping with Scottish Government guidance on the general principles of Scotland's needs.

The general principles of Scotland's needs

- 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').

1.2 District planning framework



2. Description of the District

2.1 Introduction

Scottish Borders Forest District, in the south east of Scotland, derives much of its ecological and cultural cohesion from the River Tweed, with 75% of the District in the river's catchment.

The forests, covering 26,400ha, form three distinct areas, Wauchope and Newcastleton, Craik, and the Tweed Valley Forest Park.

Wauchope and Newcastleton lie along the English Border and are continuous with the forests of Kielder. Craik forms part of Eskdalemuir, with mixed public and private forests on the border with Dumfries and Galloway.

These two areas are part of the great Border Spruce forests. They are characterised by imperfectly drained soils, but with relatively straightforward and large-scale harvesting operations. Restructuring is transforming the 20th century plantations into the multi-purpose forests of the 21st century.

These forests have a high strategic timber value, being dominated by spruce and lying relatively close to the mills of North England and South Scotland. Timber transport generates issues here as elsewhere, but generally the forests are adequately served. Scottish Borders Council works closely with the industry.

The soils in the Tweed Valley Forest Park are generally freely drained, but the silviculture is more challenging with steep slopes, dramatic scenery and high visibility. The Park, in the north of the District, is close to Edinburgh and attracts over 300,000 visitors a year, with a correspondingly high demand for recreation facilities.

The opportunities for recreation and the contribution the forest landscape makes to tourism are being increasingly recognised in the area. The District is involved in a number of partnerships to deliver enhanced visitor facilities and environmental improvements. Glentress and Newcastleton are both centres in the 7stanes project that has helped to establish Scotland as one of the world's top five mountain biking destinations.

The administrative centre for the District is Selkirk, with forest depots at Glentress (Tweed valley), Craik, Bonchester Bridge (Wauchope) and Newcastleton. (See map 1, Scottish Borders Forest District.)

2.2 Natural environment

2.2.1 Climate

The Tweed valley climate ranges from warm moist lowland to cool wet upland, and even montane in the upper Manor valley. General rainfall is 800 -1,100mm/year. The valley is relatively sheltered, with 78% WHC3, 19%WHC4 and only 3% WHC5. The planting line for productive forests is around 500m.

Wauchope, Craik and Newcastleton have a cool, wet upland climate, with rainfall 900-1,800mm/year. These forests are more exposed, with only 8% WHC3, 30% WHC4 and 62% WHC5 and above.

Winter conditions have traditionally been cold with regular snow, but recent years have seen milder weather.

Climate-related issues that influence forest management and planning include:

- **Moisture:** Relatively low rainfall and the free-draining nature of most areas reduces erosion risk;
- **Silviculture:** Climate is a factor in determining the types of tree that grow best at any site; and which silvicultural systems are feasible;
- **Harvesting:** Exposure determines the likelihood of wind damage in plantations and can determine at what age upland plantations are felled.

2.2.2 Water

The District is dominated by the Tweed, with 75% of the forest area in the river's catchment. The forests of Liddesdale (Newcastleton, Tinnisburn, Peel and Whitrope) lie in the Border Esk catchment and flow to the west and the Solway. The rivers are an important feature to the economy of Scottish Borders, including:

- **Fisheries:** The Tweed is one of Scotland's leading salmon rivers. Its waters are naturally rich in nutrients from the catchment's base rich rocks and accounts for 15% of all the spawning water available to Atlantic salmon in Scotland. It has a 10 month fishing season, due to the spring salmon runs on the Ettrick. Salmon, trout and coarse fishing is important on many of the rivers and lochs;
- **Tourism:** The rivers are important features of the landscape and act as a focus for tourism;
- **Flooding:** The Tweed and its tributaries are occasionally prone to serious flooding following heavy rain.

The Tweed Forum has prepared a catchment management plan to identify, co-ordinate and, where possible, integrate work to protect and manage the Tweed.

There are relatively few semi-natural water bodies in the Borders or on the national forest estate. There is a complex of lochs in or adjacent to Craik forest important for conservation (Crooked, Windylaw, Goose and Kingside).

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

- **Protection of water quality:** e.g. through FCS forest and water guidelines. Any river works must be agreed with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) water framework directive and the Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003 ;
- **Water supply:** Many rural properties draw domestic water supplies from forested catchments. Some reservoirs occur in forested catchments (e.g. Dollar in the upper Tweed, part of Craik in the catchment of Alemoor). Contribution to sustainable flood management schemes;
- **Recreation and tourism:** Canoeing and kayaking on the lower Tweed;
- **Acid-sensitive catchments¹:** A small part of Gair falls in the Eskdalemuir critical load square (CLSq), with the whole Craik forest in the adjacent squares. (NB: the Gair area is a different catchment to the principle one impacted by the CLSq). Lethem, Hyndlee and Peel lie in the

¹¹ Silvicultural systems are different ways of felling and replanting forests, e.g. clearfelling, group felling or shelterwood

² Acid sensitive catchment is a water catchment where acid bedrock lies under the soils.

Keilder CLSq, and the whole of Wauchope forest is covered by the adjacent squares.. But in both areas, the geology appears to be sufficiently well buffered to protect the water quality.

- **Conservation:** The rivers in the District are very important for species and habitat conservation (The Tweed is a SAC site). The qualifying interests of the Tweed are Atlantic salmon; river, brook and sea lamprey; and otter.

2.2.3 Geology and landform

The geology of the Tweed valley is almost exclusively Silurian mudstones and shales, 420 million years old, with notable hard rock intrusions at Innerleithen.

In the south of the District, the dominant geology (either directly or via the impact on glacial drift composition) is the mudstones and shales of the Silurian and Carboniferous periods.

Lava and ash covered the Keilderhead and Newcastleton area 360 million years ago. Volcanic activity 280 million years ago was responsible for the Cheviots and the Eildons. Igneous intrusions in the forest area are highly localised.

Glacification left the typical Borders upland massifs, with gently rounded plateaux and convex summits dissected by deeply incised valleys and cleuchs. The solid geology is overlain in most areas by glacial deposits i.e. usually a mixed layer of sands, gravels and rock.

The main geology-related issues that affect forest management and planning are:

- **Soil development:** The geology of an area has a strong influence on the fertility of soils;
- **Geological features:** Safeguarding unusual geological outcrops, e.g. Palmers Cutting site of special scientific interest (SSSI);
- **Mineral development:** There is no mineral working in the vicinity of the forests, other than some road stone quarries, e.g. Altarstone;
- **Silviculture:** Different types of rock influence which tree species will grow best and what fertiliser requirements they have;
- **Forest roads:** The glacial deposits make good material for building forest roads, but schist-derived rocks are very weak. Quarries of harder rock have to be created in those areas. These sources of hardstone are very localised and several forests have no good sources, e.g. Craik.

2.2.4 Soils

In most forests, the soil types vary in complex patterns. Detailed soil maps from site survey exist for all main forest blocks.

Table 1 Main forest soils

Underlying geology, glaciation and climate all influence the formation of different soil types. The main forest soils in the District are:

Soil	Characteristics	Location	Occurrence
Mineral soils, well aerated sub-soil			
Brown earths Suitable for a wide variety of tree spp, e.g. Douglas fir, larch, oak, sycamore and beech	Very fertile Dry - freely drained Strong weed growth	Tweed valley South of District	Lowlands and lower slopes up to 350m. Steeper ground less affected by glacial deposition, e.g. Gamescleuch
Peaty podsols e.g. Scots pine, Sitka spruce, birch	Medium - low fertility Mod - dry moisture, freely drained.	Tweed valley	Mid slopes and hill tops.
Very shallow soils/exposed scree	Very little rooting depth.	Tweed valley	Steeper slopes.
Mineral soils, poorly aerated sub-soil			
Surface water gleys e.g. Norway spruce, oak and birch on more mineral; Sitka spruce, birch and alder on more peaty.	Medium - very fertile. Wet - indurated at c30cm. Poorly oxygenated and susceptible to compaction. Weed growth, esp grasses.	Tweed valley South of District South of District	Beside watercourses and in flushes on lower slopes. Pearly - dominant of the mid slopes. Mineral - on lower slopes.
Peat (>45cm depth)			
Flushed and basin e.g. Sitka spruce	Medium fertility. Wet. Purple moor grass.	South of District	Hollows and flatter ground in uplands.
Raised and blanket e.g. Sitka spruce and lodgepole pine	Low fertility. Wet. Heather, spagnum, deer grass, bog cotton	South of District	Hollows and flatter ground in the uplands.

In most forests, the soil types vary in complex patterns. There are detailed soil maps from site survey for all main forest areas (except Newcastleton) and for some smaller woodlands.

Soils-related issues that influence forest management and planning include:

- **Protection of soils:** Forest practices are carefully planned to minimise damage to soils, e.g. by erosion or compaction (e.g. FCS forest soil conservation guidelines);
- **Protection of water courses:** Some of the District soils are prone to erosion. In the south, fine textured clay soils enter suspension when they come into contact with water;
- **Silviculture:** Soil characteristics, rooting depth, aeration, indurated layer and fertility all determine which tree species grow best, which cultivation techniques are appropriate and what fertilisers are required. They are also an important factor in determining wind damage to plantations (trees uproot more easily on wet soils);
- **Harvesting:** Soil type influences the choice of harvesting machinery and timing of operations.

2.2.5 Landscape setting

The landscape is diverse and a product of the intimate relationship between people and the natural resources:

- topography determines transport routes and location of settlements;
- local soils determine the use of the land;
- local stone determines the character of the settlements.

Forests in the District occur in the following types²:

Upland types

- **Dissected plateau moorland** (1) - an upland plateau landscape characterised by level topped hills of heather and coarse grassland, dissected by distinct steep-sided valleys, e.g. Glentress, Caberston, Thornylee
- **Plateau outliers** (3) - an upland plateau landscape characterised by hills and ridges, covered by a mosaic of coarse grassland heather and forestry, clearly separated from adjoining types by major river valleys, e.g. Cloich, Lady Urd, Stobo, Altarstone;
- **Southern upland-type with scattered forest** (4) - an upland landscape characterised by large-scale, rolling, heather and grassland covered hills, e.g. Yair, Elibank and Traquair, Cardronna, Dollar, Hallmanor;
- **Cheviot foothills** (7) - an upland landscape of strongly rolling, grass-covered hills, with occasional rock outcrops, e.g. Falside, Mervinslaw;
- **Southern uplands-type forest covered** (5) - a distinct variant of the Southern uplands landscape type, dominated by forest cover, e.g. Craik, Warchope, Newcastleton;
- **Upland fringe valley with settlements** (27) - a dense settle, well-ordered landscape of arable land, pasture and woods in an enclosed valley setting, e.g. Lindinny part of Yair;

River valley types (forest edges)

- **Upland valley with woodland** (25) - an enclosed valley landscape with significant woodland cover, e.g. lower slopes of Tweed Valley Forest Park;
- **Upland valley with pastoral floor** (22) - a landscape characterised by flat valley bottom pasture, strongly enclosed by steep valley sides merging with heather and forest covered uplands; e.g. part of Cademuir and lower areas of Tinnisburn.

These areas vary according to factors such as physical scale, the main types of woodland and agriculture, settlement patterns, building and historic features and natural heritage.

The main landscape designation is the Tweeddale national scenic area (NSA). The forests (Hallmanor, Altarstone and Stobo) are not well designed in the landscape. In addition, Dollar, Ladyurd, Cademuir and Yair all fall in areas of great landscape value (AGLVs). Altarstone forms part of the designed landscape of Stobo castle. The designed landscapes of Traquair and Kalzie are a significant feature in the forest landscape of the Tweed valley.

Trees and forests are very important features in the general landscape.

² see Scottish Borders Landscape Character Assessment, SNH Review

The main landscape-related issues that influence forest management and planning are:

- **Forest design:** The good landscape design of forests, especially in designated areas and other visually sensitive sites (e.g. FCS landscape guidelines);
- **Interpretation:** Helping visitors to appreciate and understand wooded landscapes;
- **Landscape:** The landscape in the District is of high appeal for both local people and visitors. This asset supports the tourist industry and contributes to the quality of life for local residents. Forests are key components of some of the landscapes, in particular the Tweed valley. Some past plantings under different national priorities do require amendment to integrate with the surrounding land. The forests of the Tweed valley, in particular, are sensitive to change - scale and rate, silvicultural systems, shape and scale of the landform.

2.2.6 Biodiversity

The District is largely defined by the natural catchment of the River Tweed.

Table 2 Designated sites

Name	Area (ha)	Type	Condition
Tweed		River	
Glenkinnon burn	8.0	Upland mixed and ash woodland	Unfavourable recovering
Plora wood	2.5	Semi-natural woodland	Unfavourable recovering
Palmer's Hill cutting	1.2 (2.5)	Non-marine Devonian geological	Favourable maintained
Keilderhead	1086 (4345)	Upland dwarf shrub heath and bog	Favourable maintained

Native woodlands are poorly represented in the District as a result of a long history of sheep grazing and border warfare. Only 1% of the woodland is designated as an area of semi-natural woodland (ASNW). The District has fewer than 100ha of plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

Large-scale conifer forests give rise to a developing conifer ecosystem and biodiversity interest, particularly forest species such as red squirrel and goshawk. Red squirrel, black grouse and juniper are included in the FCS biodiversity strategy. There are a number of small, but significant remnant habitats in the District (see Table 3).

Table 3 Overview of conservation (SSSI = site of special scientific interest, SAC = special area of conservation, SWT = Scottish Wildlife Trust, UK BAP = UK biodiversity action plan)

Habitat/species (identified in biodiversity action plan (BAP))	Examples	Conservation designations
Upland oak woodland	Plora, Caddonbank, Gatescleugh, Cardronna	SSSI, PAWS
Wet woodland	Hells Hole, Lethem, Newcastleton, Tinnisburn, Gamescleugh, Elibank	
Upland mixed ashwood	Glenkinnon, Newcastleton, Elibank	SSSI, UK BAP
Juniper	Mervinslaw, Kielderhead, Gamescleugh, Elibank and Yair	SSSI
River and fisheries	Tweed, Craik and Warchope (fishery monitoring, Ettrick (spring salmon))	SSSI, SAC
Mesotrophic lochs	Ettrick Lochs	
Blanket bogs, upland raised mires	Kielderhead, Newcastleton	SSSI, SAC(England)
Upland heathland	Kielderhead, Elibank, Caberston	SSSI
Lowland calcareous and dry acid grasslands	Thornilee	
Water meadow	Yair, Ettrick Marshes	
Scree areas	The Pirn, Caberston	SWT
Red squirrel (reintroduced in C18th)	Warchope, Craik, Newcastleton	UK BAP

Bats	Throughout	
Otter	Throughout, increasing	UK BAP
Water vole	None found in current survey	
Black grouse	Forest edges - occur throughout the District in low numbers. Strongest populations around Hallmanor and Dollar, Elibank and Caberston.	UK BAP
Bullfinch and Song thrush	Throughout	UK BAP
Great crested newt	Yair (probably under-recorded)	UK BAP
Atlantic salmon	Tweed and tributaries	UK BAP
Lampreys	Tweed and tributaries	SSSI, SAC
Butterflies - northern brown argus (UK BAP) and Scotch argus; small pearl bordered fritillary, small skipper, dark green fritillary and commas	Thornilee and Yair etc	

Conservation is implemented using a range of plans for special sites and by following good conservation in the forest in general. Plans include SSSI management plans, habitat action plans (HAPs), species action plans (SAPs) and local biodiversity action plans (LBAPs). Conservation management often involves partnership working with other agencies and owners. Deer populations in the forests are managed by the wildlife ranger team to a level that permits the natural regeneration of native trees. Roe deer are present throughout the District, with a slowly expanding population of sika deer in the western Tweed valley.

The main conservation-related issues that influence forest management and planning include:

- **Designated sites:** Protection and enhancement of conservation value;
- **Locally important sites:** Identifying areas of forest of high conservation value and instituting proper management (e.g. SWT listed sites);
- **Ancient woodlands:** Restoration and management of remnant ancient (native) woodland;
- **Native woodlands:** expansion
- **Conifer forest species:** Red squirrel, forest raptors, black grouse;
- **Deer populations:** Restrict the spread of sika deer to the west, where there is a population of native red deer. Maintain the population levels to allow natural regeneration of native trees and vegetation.

Threats:

- Reduction in traditional land management practices and intensive production methods;
- Inappropriate tree planting and land use changes;
- Water course engineering;
- Pollution and air quality changes
- Exotic species, e.g. grey squirrel, sika deer.

2.3 Cultural environment

The frontier land of bogs and hills dividing England and Scotland was only tamed with the end of border warfare between the nations, the introduction of turnpike roads and large-scale drainage in the 18th century. The landscape and, at times, harsh climate have contributed to the independent and distinctive culture.

2.3.1 Historical context

The historical factors that have shaped the forests of the District are typical for much of Scotland:

- Deforestation by people starting in the uplands 5,000 years ago, with large areas of the forest cleared by Roman times for cereal growing;
- Climate change, with an increase in rainfall leading to an expansion of blanket bog and further clearance for agriculture;
- Sheep were introduced early into the Scottish Borders through the large monastic orders and much of the tree cover would have been lost by 1500 AD;
- Royal forest with laws to protect the landscape indicate an already restricted area of woodland;
- Border warfare from the 13th- 17th centuries and reiving along with continuing sheep husbandry prevented re-growth of the woods. By 1900, only 5% of the original forest cover remained;
- Development of agriculture that has 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. Designed landscapes were laid out. Rapid rural depopulation occurred in the 18th and 19th centuries;
- Drainage of fens and marshland gathered pace late in the 18th century;
- Upland heathland management for grouse shooting has been undertaken for over 100 years;
- Some expansion of plantation forests began in the 17th and 18th centuries, with Buccleuch estates in the forefront. The major expansion of the forests occurred in the 20th century, with planting by the Forestry Commission and, in recent decades, by private forest owners;
- Recreation and tourism became important during the later 20th century.

This development has resulted in a mixed rural economy of farmland, forest and moorland that underpins the economy as well as the landscape appeal of the area.

2.3.2 Heritage interest

Heritage interest in the District encompasses historic settlements, past land use and the trees and woodlands themselves. Examples include:

- Scheduled ancient monuments (SAMs): A total of 31, including a stone circle, Iron Age hill forts, Roman road and Border towers;
- Unscheduled ancient monuments (UAMs): A total of 95 known sites, ranging from ancient burial sites and old settlements to more recent farm ruins and monuments;
- Listed features along the old Waverly railway line, including a tunnel, bridge and culverts;
- Native/ancient woodland: This would once have occupied most of the land below 700m, but was removed, largely as a result of grazing, and now constitutes only 2-3% of the land area;
- Ancient, legendary or historic trees and woods: e.g. Glenkinnon oak.

Heritage-related issues that influence forest management and planning include:

- **Ancient/native woodland:** These are now being actively protected and restored;
- **Protection of ancient monuments:** Sites are protected and any new sites are reported to Historic Scotland and local authority archaeologists to determine their historical significance. Management requirements for the site are identified following advice. This process has included the scheduling of some of these new sites in recent years;
- **Interpretation:** Opportunities.

2.3.3 Pattern of settlement

The District is a predominantly rural area, with small to medium market towns. The population of around 110,000 is concentrated mainly in the river valleys and the Merse to the east (25 people/km² compared to 65/km² for Scotland as a whole). The towns are all relatively small. Hawick, the largest, has a population of around 16,000. The area lies immediately to the south of Edinburgh and the Tweed valley in particular is very accessible. The urban population views the forests mainly as a recreational resource, but there is a substantial, widely scattered rural population that also sees them as part of the rural economy.

Table 4 Settlement populations (over 2000)

Settlement	Population
Hawick	15,812
Galashiels	13,753
Peebles	7,065
Kelso	5,989
Selkirk	5,922
Jedburgh	4,118
Innerleithen	2,515
Melrose	2,270

The population of the District is relatively stable, but there is a projected 5% reduction in the working population over the next 10 years and a gradually ageing population. Compared to the Scotland averages, the District has higher levels of employment, but more women and part time jobs in the workplace. There is a greater reliance on the traditional employment in the primary industries and manufacturing, with less than half the Scottish average in finance and business services. Small businesses (<10 people) tend to dominate, with 30% of the jobs. Earnings are 8% below the Scottish average. There are no areas of significant social deprivation (See map 2, Multiple deprivation).

Pattern of settlement issues that relate to forest management and planning include:

- **Planning:** Aspects of forest planning need to be integrated with wider planning issues using local authority plans (e.g. local plans);
- **Local community impact and involvement:** Small, scattered communities with significant interest in the forests, e.g. Upper Borthwick. Impact of forest activities on local communities, e.g. timber haulage. Consultation and information distribution has to reflect the types of neighbouring communities and/or complexity of user groups. Woodlands in and around towns (WIAT), e.g. Peebles and Innerleithen/Walkerburn (see below);
- **Edinburgh:** Proximity to Edinburgh and demand for leisure activity;
- **Public road infrastructure:** Rural road network not always well-suited to timber haulage, requiring careful management and liaison with local authority.

2.3.4 People's relationship with the forests

Initially, the forests of the 20th century were to provide a reserve of timber, with employment in forest management, haulage and timber processing an important factor. Timber has remained a key function of the forests, but there is now wider use of the forests and associated land to promote

healthy lifestyles, social inclusion and wellbeing of communities, rural development and diversification. Tourism is now a key driver.

Community woodlands

The District has been in the forefront of community woodland initiatives, with the establishment of one of the first community owned woodlands in 1987. There are now around 20 community woodlands, with most supported in some way by Borders Forest Trust (established in 1996). There are community woodlands associated with all the main settlements (Hawick, Jedburgh, Kelso, Eyemouth, Galashiels, Melrose/Darnyk, Lauder/Earlston, Selkirk, Peebles and Walkerburn/Innerleithen). The latter two include areas of the national forest estate. There is scope for more community woodlands in terms of area, other communities and greater involvement by the community.

Recreational use of forests has continually expanded from Victorian times, with the Tweed experiencing high usage because of its proximity to Edinburgh. The estimated visitor numbers for Glentress Forest alone have risen from around 100,000 in 1999 to over 250,000 in 2005.

Table 5 Population in different drive times of Glentress

Drive time	Population
½ hour	44,300
1 hour	1,018,000
1½ hours	3,172,000
2 hours	4,148,000
2½ hours	4,750,000
3 hours	6,570,000

Significant numbers of tourists from overseas also visit the area. FCS has had an open access policy for walkers for several decades, and more recently for cyclists and horse-riders. Newcastleton is only 30 minutes from Carlisle and involved in cross-border tourism with Kielder Forest and the North England market. As one of the 7stanes sites, it is becoming increasingly popular as a mountain bike destination..

The main recreational issues that relate to forest management and planning are:

- **Provision of recreational facilities:** Facilities include 14 car parks, 40 way-marked forest walks, 20 way-marked cycle routes, downhill mountain bike courses including two 7stanes centres, 21 picnic areas, five viewpoints, four toilet blocks, a youth campsite and a wildlife viewing centre. There is open access for horse-riding (including two trails) and cycling in most forests. Fishing is let to local angling clubs. There are facilities for more specialised recreation (e.g. field archery) and a full events programme. Access for all;
- **Forest design:** Identifying areas of forest of high recreation value and instituting appropriate management;
- **Management operations:** Carrying out forest operations in ways that impede recreation as little as possible, while maintaining safety;
- **Partnership working:** Contributing to projects with other agencies/owners to improve recreational provision, e.g. joint publication of events programme, Tweed Trails and Tweed Valley Heritage Lottery Fund project;
- **Social and health agendas.** Ability of the forests to contribute to social inclusion and health and wellbeing policies.

2.4. Forest resource

2.4.1. Extent and distribution

Woodland and forest in the Scottish Borders cover 87,435ha, 19% of the land area (the national average is 17%). They are important as a major primary industry, contributing both economically and socially. The District manages 26,000ha of land, with 23,900ha of forest and woodland.

The forest area of the District is concentrated into three main areas: Tweed valley, west of Selkirk; Craik forest in the uplands to the west (part of the larger forest of Eskdalemuir); and the extensive Warchope and Newcastleton forests along the English Border.

The pattern of afforestation is typical of Scotland as a whole, with the earliest FC acquisitions on the lower ground with better soils e.g. Glentress (1922) and Newcastleton (1921), allowing a greater variety of conifer species. As land availability changed and afforestation techniques developed, planting moved up the hill onto the poorer soils e.g. Wauchope and Caberston, and was dominated by Sitka spruce. These forests are now well into their second rotation and are being diversified, both in species and structure, to balance timber production with other objectives e.g. biodiversity and recreation.

The forests all grow on land suitable for forestry i.e. F6 or better (see map 3). Almost 80% of the Tweed valley forests are WHC3 or better, allowing a wider choice of silvicultural systems. There is less flexibility to the south and in Craik, with over 60% WHC5 or worse.

Ownership: 30% of the forest area is in public ownership, with the remaining being privately owned (similar to the national average).

Table 6 Ownership of woodlands

Woodland	%
National forest estate (managed by FCS)	30
Personal (estates and private investors)	43
Private business	24
Local authority and other public body	1
Charity	2
TOTAL	100

Table 7 Types of forest and tree species

	Tweed valley	South of Selkirk	Total
Current breakdown of the forest area (excl hilltop/agric)	8,800ha	17,000ha	
Sitka spruce	52%	70%	73%
Larch	14%	3%	8%
Douglas fir	5%	-	2%
Scots pine	5%	-	3%
Lodgepole pine	4%	3%	3%
Norway spruce	4%	4%	4%
Other conifer	1%	2%	2%

Total conifers	84%	83%	
Mixed broadleaved	3%	3%	
Open space	12%	14%	
Average yield class for Sitka spruce	12	16	
Average yield class for other conifer	6 (except Douglas fir)	Larch and Scots pine 10; Norway spruce 12	

Species	Planting years (hectares)				Totals by species
	Pre 1950	1950-69	1970-89	1990-2005	
Broadleaves	87	70	172	663	992ha (5%)
Scots pine	222	187	97	210	716ha (3%)
Sitka spruce	157	3,343	7,986	3,739	15,225ha (73%)
Norway spruce	218	364	187	231	1,000ha (5%)
Larches	130	889	326	332	1,677ha (8%)
Douglas fir	30	274	72	108	484ha (2%)
All other conifers	11	463	190	249	913ha (4%)
Total	855ha (4%)	5,590ha (27%)	9,030ha (43%)	5,532ha(26%)	21,007ha (100%)

Conifer make up over 95% of the planted area, with Sitka spruce the dominant species planted for timber production objectives. Less than 1% of forest area is native broadleaves, reflecting the very low level of this resource in the District (1% of woodland area)

2.4.2 Age

Some 43% of the forest has been established between 1970 and 1989. A proportion of this will be second rotation. The 26% established since 1990 is virtually all second rotation.

Age-related issues that influence forest management and planning include:

- Smoothing production;
- Species choice to deliver multiple benefits, including meeting the market demand for timber;
- Timber quality from past practices, e.g. form of Sitka spruce is of variable straightness and 1970s - 80s crops are often coarse branched due to suboptimal stocking;
- Meeting UK Forest Standards (restructuring of age classes, broadleaf and other conifer percentages).

2.4.3 Economic contribution

Local government, the traditional industries of agriculture, forestry and textiles, and tourism are the mainstay of the rural economy. Only tourism is increasing in terms of turnover and employment. The 1997-98 baseline survey estimated that there were 600-700 full-time equivalent jobs in forestry-related activities. Many of these are in rural areas and associated with small businesses of fewer than 10 people. This includes jobs in the forest, such as planting, felling and forest management through timber haulage to processing destinations, such as sawmills and pulp mills. Around 40,000m³ of softwood timber is processed in small mills in the Scottish Borders for fencing and pallets. All the large timber processing mills lie outwith the area, but virtually all the forest lies in a 50km radius of major processing centres. There is considerable interest in biomass and woodfuel and renewable energies.

Table 8 FCS timber production forecast (km³)

	2007 - 11	2012 - 16	2017 - 21
Clearfell	209	222	227
Thinning	28	20	27
Total	237	241	254

Woodschool, the trading arm of Borders Forest Trust, was set up in 1997 to combine the talents of furniture designers with undervalued low-grade hardwood from Borders woodland, and produces high-quality niche products.

The 1997-98 baseline survey estimated that the forest sector contributed £24m turnover to the local economy.

Table 9 Forest sector contribution to local economy

Sector	%
Log exports	50
Primary processing	14
Secondary processing	11
Forest mgt, contracting, haulage	21
Woodland-based tourism	4

The forests also provide a large resource for informal recreation and organised events that help to bring people to the area (e.g. Merida Cycling event). The key is encouraging paying visitors into the area to spend with local businesses. Mountain biking in the Tweed valley has seen exponential growth over the past five years and Glentress is now the major visitor attraction in the Scottish Borders, with over 300,000 visitors/year. These visits generate expenditure and help sustain local jobs directly (e.g. the Hub in the Forest) or indirectly (shops, accommodation providers). The value of tourism to the Scottish Borders economy was estimated to be around £42m/year in 1997, with woodland based tourism contributing around £1m.

Roads

As with other rural-based industries, forestry relies on the public road network to transport the raw material (timber) from the forest to the processing site.

The forest industry and local authority are working through the Borders Timber Transport Group to an 'agreed routes map' that identifies the most suitable routes for timber to be hauled from the forest.

3 Evaluation of 1999 - 2005 District Strategic Plan

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 new District Strategic Plan?
Produce an updated periodic forecast of timber production.	Yes	<p>Revised annually, indicating modest rise in production in 2017-21 and then a fall of around 25%</p> <p>The smoothed forecast indicates a sustained yield from felling of approximately 220,000m³(standing)/year.</p> <p>The original thinning forecast was constrained by economic issues. In keeping with a national initiative, the thinning forecast is being revised and supported by extensive field work. A higher forecast is anticipated.</p>	Yes
Annual harvesting programme to be within +/-5% of production forecast/sales plan forecast.	Yes	<p>Achieved overall, but with some over-cutting on clearfell to balance the budget. This has now been recovered in the present forecast.</p> <p>Achieved in all years</p>	Yes
Meet customer requirements in terms of timing of sales and quality of product.	Yes	<p>Supply contracts met in all years, with a good record on timing through the year. Product quality has been appropriate to contracts. Worked with customer to provide specific requirements e.g. log poles, and to develop new ways of working e.g. dry weight, end product working, mixed clearfell and thinning contracts. Significant proportion of harvesting contracts (60% overall, 90% of roadside sales) are long-term, allowing customer relations to build.</p> <p>On the whole, the volume and timing of sales have matched the marketing plan,</p>	Yes

		although some parcels were pulled from sales events due to unforeseen circumstances.	
Move a lower proportion of timber by public road.	Limited opportunity	<p>Worked with Borders Timber Transport Group to identify agreed routes and timber flows. Some scope for using internal forest roads as alternative routes to public roads, e.g. Wauchope. Feasibility study currently looking at scope in Craik forest.</p> <p>Some timber is shipped from Berwick, which alters the direction of timber flow and reduces the volume of traffic on some routes.</p> <p>There are no rail options in the Scottish Borders at present.</p>	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 new District Strategic Plan?
Ensure every forest is part of an approved forest plan by 2007.	Yes	The District has full coverage of forest design plans approved by the Conservator, and subject to local consultation.	Yes
Improve age class diversity through staggering dates of clearfell, to achieve minimum 2m height difference between adjacent coupes.	Partial, ongoing	<p>There is a current argument in favour of extending the fallow period between felling and re-stocking as a means to reduce pesticides use against pine weevil (Hylobius). If this argument were accepted, it would have implications for achievement of this target at felling times, although still achievable using delayed re-stocking.</p> <p>Virtually all clearfells completed within prescribed timescales. Prescription to extend rather than shorten rotations has been successful in the Tweed valley. Some localised issues with windthrow particularly on the wetter soils of the south of the District</p> <p>Some premature felling did occur in Elibank and Traquair in anticipation of a windfarm development (still awaiting final planning approval).</p>	Yes
Ensure quality timber crops are created for the future by achieving target re-stocking densities (OGB4) at establishment by planting suitable species and provenances.	Partial	<p>Target stocking density improved through the period of review. We are now achieving the demanding OGB4 standards for our timber producing conifers.</p> <p>Concern over spacing of mounding has now been rectified.</p> <p>Policy defining areas suitable for using improved Sitka spruce planting stock has been introduced to improve productivity and quality of timber crop. Achievement has been limited by availability of stock.</p>	Yes

Protect trees from damage by mammals, insects and fungi.	Yes	<p>Deer populations managed to allow establishment of all species. Establishment achieved without fencing and regeneration is occurring in alternative to clearfell (ATC) areas.</p> <p>Challenge of containing sika deer to the upper Tweed valley has only been partially successful with spread continuing to the east. Relies on several different land owners with different management objectives.</p> <p>Pine weevil (Hylobius) strategy under review to see if there is scope for using five- year fallow and roundworm (nematodes) to reduce reliance on chemicals.</p> <p>Application of organic fertiliser (urea) has been reviewed and decision taken to continue to use urea as a precaution in the Tweed valley. In the south urea will continue to be used on most coupes. Peat areas are generally too small to be easily excluded.</p>	Yes
Develop rationale and planning processes for thinning programme.	Partial	Thinning plan revision near completion. Improved accuracy based on extensive field work. Also increased the thinnable area. Challenge faced by steep ground and poor access in Caberston.	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 new District Strategic Plan?
Maintain action plans for sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) and special areas of conservation (SACs in agreement with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).	Yes	All SSSI plans in place and agreed with SNH, and subject to periodic review. Progress made in clearing conifers from Glenkinnon burn. Increase in broadleaf area at Flora wood. Ongoing progress at Kielderhead with a programme of work and monitoring in conjunction with Kielder FD. Palmers Hill Cutting has been on a care and maintenance basis.	Yes
Convert appropriate sites back to ancient woodlands and other natural habitats.	Partial, ongoing	<p>Some plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) have management plans in place. Priority has been given to SSSIs.</p> <p>Progressive forest design plan reviews continue to increase the target area of woodlands for restoration to native species. From low start of 3%, broadleaves to 8% by 2040</p> <p>Survey of all potential semi-natural habitat sites started in 2005.</p> <p>Etrick Marches flood plain restoration project with Borders Forest Trust at Gamescleuch.</p> <p>Small raised mire at Stell Knowe, Newcastleton cleared with Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT) as a pilot. No further work has been undertaken.</p> <p>Hyndlee burn in Wauchope has been used as a demonstration site for enhanced riparian management as part of a Heritage Lottery Fund project.</p>	Yes

<p>Improve forest landscape, particularly in national scenic area (NSA) and Tweed Valley Forest Park.</p>	<p>Partial, ongoing</p>	<p>Good progress has been made in delivering much improved forest design throughout the District. The Tweed valley is highly visible and more sensitive to the rate and scale of change than the more rolling topography of the south. Coupe size is generally smaller in the Tweed valley and there is a greater use of ATC systems.</p> <p>A strategic landscape design plan has been prepared for the Tweed valley to bring a unity to forest plans, but at the same time highlight the distinctiveness of each of the seven forests.</p> <p>Particular attention has been paid to improving roadsides and threshold areas.</p> <p>Long-term retention of conifers (over 600ha) to increase the age diversity has been more successful in the Tweed valley where crops are more stable.</p> <p>Edge improvements have been undertaken as part of the Caberston forest design plan.</p> <p>Little work has been carried out to date to improve the appearance of the three forest areas in the NSA due to age of the forests and access.</p> <p>More progress has been made on the ground with the forests in the areas of great landscape value (AGLVs).</p> <p>Some progress has been made in ameliorating upper margins, but this is proving more challenging due to terrain and access difficulties and low returns.</p> <p>Management of the steep slopes in Tweed valley is under review. Advances in technology are allowing tracked machines to increase their range of slope working, but this has consequences for re-stocking.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Prepare action plans for scheduled ancient monuments (SAMs).</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>All plans renewed to agreed timescales with Historic Scotland. Most on a care and maintenance basis with an annual inspection to identify any remedial work required (mostly removal of natural regeneration).</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Identify and protect unscheduled monuments (UAMs) and historically important trees (individuals or groups) on the national forest estate.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Pre-harvesting surveys identify previously unknown structures and engineered landforms and steps are taken to prevent them from damage.</p> <p>Glenkinnon oak, on Border Forest Trust (BFT) list of heritage trees, has been cleared of underplanted conifer</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Protect the quality of water in Tweed SAC	Yes	<p>Although part of the District is in or adjacent to a critical load exceedance square, the geology provides adequate buffering and acidification of water is not an issue.</p> <p>Strict adherence to FCS forest and water guidelines during operations has minimised the movement of silt into water courses. The riparian areas in the Tweed valley are being increased through implementation of forest design plans to provide additional protection.</p>	Yes
Increase the area committed to low impact silviculture and improve management techniques.	Yes	<p>The area designated as alternative to clearfell (ATC) has been raised from virtually zero to nearly 10% of the forest over the period. There are silvicultural, technical and resource implications to reducing coupe size. In the Tweed valley, the challenges are the fertility of the soil and the steepness of the slope. In the south, the lack of thinned crops and the wetter soils present different challenges. Work is ongoing to finalise the areas and to develop management plans.</p> <p>University of Edinburgh has managed 120ha of Glentress forest since 1950 in a long running transformation trial. This has a further 15 years before completion and is yielding valuable inventory data as well as creating an attractive forest environment.</p>	Yes
Maintain and update accurate and relevant environmental data.	Yes	<p>3 year agreement with Scottish Borders biological records centre to collate and manage District biodiversity data.</p> <p>Worked with individuals and groups to increase knowledge of species present e.g. red squirrel, bat, raptor and butterfly groups.</p>	Yes
Protect and manage for key species in the District.	Partial, ongoing	<p>Osprey - successful breeding pairs established.</p> <p>Eagle breeding continues to be affected by casual disturbance.</p> <p>Black grouse populations declining in the Borders. Some edge management has been carried out through forest design plans.</p> <p>Established priority woods where habitat management is for red squirrel conservation. Squirrel pox has entered the District from the south and trapping is being undertaken in the Newcastleton area. More work is needed on modelling impact of restructuring on population viability.</p>	

		Butterfly conservation areas have been developed in Yair and Thornilee. Butterflies new to the Borders have been recorded. Great crested newt found in Yair.	
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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 new District Strategic Plan?
Promote outdoor recreation and tourism.	Partial	<p>Tweed Valley Forest Park launched in 2002. Management plan in preparation to develop it further. Significant rise in visitors to Glentress from 100,000 in 1999 to 250,000 in 2005.</p> <p>New TVFP walks leaflet prepared in 2006.</p> <p>Tweed valley is now a major centre for mountain biking, with an extensive network of trails in Glentress and downhill course at Innerleithen.</p> <p>7stanes project has added to Glentress and developed Newcastleton for mountain biking in particular.</p> <p>The District is an active member of Tweed Valley Development group and Tweeddale Tourism Consortium aiming to promote the area for tourism and to build opportunities for local economic benefit.</p>	Yes
Provide information about major events and forest operations.	Partial	<p>Neighbours notified of key forest operations, but there is a need for better information to communities. Also a need for maps, dates, etc about specific forest operations. This approach is currently being developed.</p> <p>Joint events programme created for Scottish Borders. Programme of events held in Tweed valley under the auspices of Treefest.</p>	Yes

Provide interpretation on significant natural and cultural history at popular sites.	Yes	<p>Events programme and schools educational programme have improved delivery of interpretation.</p> <p>Funding secured for renewing interpretation in the Tweed valley through the Heritage Lottery Fund.</p> <p>Osprey and wildlife viewing at Glentress in partnership with Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), SNH, Kalzie and others provides an opportunity for visitors to see live CCTV of the nest. The new Glentress Peel will provide a wide range of interpretation including an enhanced wildlife viewing centre.</p>	Yes
Provide new recreational facilities in response to demand.	Yes	<p>The 7stanes development in South Scotland is now recognised as one of the world's best mountain biking facilities. Tweed valley and Newcastleton are both 7stanes centres. Some further development of easier more family trails is planned for both sites.</p> <p>Mountain biking has been the major area of investment over the period with a new centre at Newcastleton. New trails, free ride and skills area, and downhill course have all been added.</p> <p>The District has taken part in the Tweed Trails programme, increasing the number of way-marked multi-user paths throughout the Borders.</p> <p>The level of demand has been such at Glentress that FCS is developing a new visitor services centre at Glentress Peel. The Peel will be a showcase of quality recreation and sustainable development.</p> <p>Car park charging was introduced in the Tweed valley. The challenge is to increase revenue from recreation activities to reinvest in maintenance and development.</p>	Yes
Meet requests for educational visits.	Yes	Demand has been low over most of the period and we have been reactive rather than proactive due to limited resources. Partnership working with BFT and others in the Forest Education Initiative (FEI) cluster has enabled a more ambitious programme to be achieved.	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 new District Strategic Plan?
Help communities benefit from their national forests:	Partial	<p>25-year agreement with BFT to manage some Tweed valley woods as community woods for biodiversity.</p> <p>Upper Borthwick and Newcastleton and to a lesser extent Bonchester Bridge are involved in a red squirrel feeding and monitoring programme.</p> <p>Volunteering opportunities through Friends of Tweed Valley Forest Park, including the Osprey watch, the Green team and the trail fairies. A group is developing and managing the mountain bike trails at Newcastleton.</p>	Yes
Respond to increasing public interest in our activities.	Yes	<p>The Environment Panel (sometimes called Forest Panel) brings together individuals from a range of local organisations, including community councils to advise on FCS plans, in particular forest design plans.</p> <p>A community meeting is held for each forest design plan to allow the local community an opportunity to influence the design of the forest and to raise issues of concern.</p> <p>Individual consultation exercises have been held on specific projects e.g. for the Glentress Peel development.</p> <p>The Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) partnership has been beneficial in providing real work opportunities in the forest for people recovering from mental illness. This will change in emphasis in the future as SAMH restructures its programmes</p>	Yes

<p>Promote opportunities for other activities on forest land.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Over the plan period, mountain biking has been introduced and developed as a significant outdoor activity in Scottish Borders.</p> <p>The District is an active member of the Tweeddale Consortium, which aims to promote the area for visitors.</p> <p>A number of business have used the Forest Park as a backdrop or resource for their businesses, e.g. The Hub mountain bike hire, The Rush, Progravity.</p> <p>The District organises events and assist others to organise events, especially in the Forest Park, e.g. forest festival in Tweed valley and other Treefest events.</p> <p>The Ospreys' 50th partnership with RSPB and Kalzie Gardens, near Peebles celebrates 50 years since the return of the osprey to Scotland as a breeding bird.</p> <p>In keeping with Scottish Government policies on renewable energy, the District has assisted windfarm developers to progress proposals to the local planning authority. To date, only one large windfarm is in prospect (at Minch Moor).</p> <p>The has been a myriad of other events that allow people to enjoy their forests and bring money to the local economy, e.g. Merida hill challenge, King of the Holm, national downhill mountain biking events (Scottish Downhill Association series), car rally stages in Newcastleton, orienteering events, field archery events, endurance riding, etc.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
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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 new District Strategic Plan?
Manage impact (positive and negative) of information technology.	Yes	<p>Computer infrastructure and staff capability has been greatly enhanced since 1999.</p> <p>Specialist training has been made available for key staff.</p> <p>Number of GIS users needs to increase to improve knowledge of a system that is becoming increasingly integral to our decision-making and operational processes.</p> <p>Basic training provided on Microsoft programmes for all relevant staff.</p>	Yes
Ensure that delivery complies with standards identified in UKWAS to maintain certification of sustainable forest management.	Yes	<p>Improvements in planning, delivery and monitoring have been made in keeping with national corrective action requests (e.g. thinning) Continual improvement to relevant local processes and performance in areas identified for national corrective actions. District externally audited in 2001, with generally positive feedback from the auditors.</p>	Yes
Consult with stakeholders and communities	Partial	<p>Improved communications have been successful in adding value to our work through listening to advice from stakeholders, e.g. working with Scottish Enterprise Borders to identify opportunities to increase the local economic benefits of Tweed Valley Forest Park. There is scope for more work in this area with local businesses through the new Tweed Valley Development Group.</p> <p>Working with tourism organisations to promote the area.</p>	Yes

		There is a need to refocus the Environment Panel on strategic development issues, rather than simply advising on forest design plans.	
Monitoring programme will be fully identified, prioritised, resourced and carried out on time.	Partial	The programme has been identified, and work has begun to develop a comprehensive database for resuming monitoring projects.	Yes

4 Identification and analysis 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 achieve the SFS vision, activities will be focused on the seven key themes. To reflect the strategic nature of this Plan, only the most relevant SFS actions and main local issues have been included.

National theme: Climate change	
Most relevant SFS action	Priority issues for Scottish Borders Forest District
Increasing awareness of the forestry sector's contribution	Opportunity for inclusion in the new interpretation at Glentress Peel and in education programmes.
Adapting to climate change	<p>This is a complex subject and best practice is still evolving as research develops. We need to be aware of the latest research and consider the practical implications at local level.</p> <p>At present, these appear to be in terms of changes in seasonal temperatures, rainfall and wind intensity and distribution. Increasing frequency of storm events brings the risk of increased windthrow and localised flooding. Flood and catchment management will become increasingly important factors in forest planning, along with contingency planning.</p> <p>Species choice will need to be kept under review. Climatic changes may also have an impact on the health and growth potential of different tree species and provenance, and in pathology and disease. Models showing the potential impact on suitability for Sitka spruce and Scots pine on the current national forest estate suggests that there will generally be an increase or no change in the suitability of the forests to support the growth of these two species (see maps 4 and 5). Different silvicultural systems may be appropriate to adapt to changes in moisture and wind patterns.</p> <p>Different climatic conditions may bring about changes in biodiversity, both losses and gains, but also the risk of local extinction of some less adaptable species. Forest habitat networks and other semi-permanent features in the forest design can help to create a more stable and robust environment for plants and animals.</p>
Mitigating climate change	<p>Glentress Peel is providing an opportunity to promote practical action to mitigate climate change through the use of sustainable-produced timber in construction, energy and resource conservation.</p> <p>Sustainable management in all aspects of the District's business. It is necessary to support sustainable forest practices with increased sustainability of management practices in the offices, in procurement policy and in travelling.</p> <p>The District and Scottish Borders Council are actively pursuing the opportunities for renewable energy in the area. Woodfuel is a potential growth area that will also</p>

	<p>help tackle climate change. Although the market is not yet well established, the Council is actively investigating opportunities in the Scottish Borders, including a biomass plant for power generation.</p> <p>There are issues around the availability of raw material for biomass and woodfuel given existing contractual commitments. The use of brash and fuel poles recovered from harvesting sites is an option, but must be sustainable both in terms of soil fertility and economics to the grower. Short rotation coppice is unlikely to feature on the current national forest estate.</p> <p>There are possibilities of windfarms on the higher, more exposed land although these will be subject to planning and environmental safeguards. There may be less scope for hydro schemes given the river Tweed's status as a special area of conservation (SAC).</p> <p>Promotion of local markets to reduce the lorry road miles in timber transport needs to be considered, but at present the scope is limited in the area as alternatives to road haulage do not exist. Both sea and rail heads, located just outside the region, have been used for onward transport of Border's timber.</p>
<p>Increasing carbon sequestration and retention</p>	<p>Carbon sequestration can be increased by adopting lower impact silvicultural systems (LISS). Areas have been identified in the District as potentially suitable for these systems</p> <p>Potential acquisitions for new woodland establishment on the better soils of the lowlands would have the greatest potential for carbon sequestration. This would link more readily to other social and environmental objectives such as community woodland development and forest habitat networks.</p>

National theme: Timber	
Most relevant SFS actions	Priority issues for Scottish Borders Forest District
Promoting predictable and stable timber supplies	<p>The District has long-term felling plans for all its forests that, together with the current models, means that the production forecasting system is fairly reliable for predicting timber supply from clearfelling. It is less accurate for thinning and also for areas designated for lower impact silvicultural systems. Work is also needed to improve predictions of timber quality. These are national issues.</p> <p>Restructuring of the forest will lead to an increase in open space and broadleaves for conservation. The reduction in productive conifer area, and potentially in supply, is compensated for by improved establishment techniques and the use of improved growing stock.</p> <p>Most of the existing forests in the District are on sites that are suitable for forestry F6 or better, and 60% are WHC 4 or better, allowing a range of management options and species choice.</p> <p>There are examples of poor species and provenance choice (e.g. lodgepole pine), planting being extended onto unsuitable sites (e.g. high elevation) and poor establishment resulting in understocked stands of lower grade timber. A small proportion of the District is regarded as economically marginal, but this tends to occur as localised areas within larger forests. The most significant are the scree slopes of the Tweed valley, which are also sensitive to harvesting operations. Thinning has been variable in the District, with many of the crops in the Tweed valley being well-thinned and now yielding quality products. There has been less thinning undertaken in the south of the District, nevertheless the largely Sitka spruce crops are still producing some quality wood. The market conditions of recent years have also made it difficult to sustain the thinning programme. These factors will have an impact on future timber quality.</p>
Encouraging more use of timber	<p>This is a national issue, but also one adopted by Scottish Borders Council in its woodland strategy and through its project to promote construction and sustainable development using local timber. There are opportunities to showcase timber in construction in the national recreation facility planned at Glentress.</p> <p>Species choice for both the site and end products, together with and attention to quality establishment and thinning, are essential to producing a quality resource for future use.</p>
Increasing timber supply chain efficiency	<p>Timber imports dominate the British market (over 80%) and it is the International market that sets the value of timber. To remain profitable, the industry has to focus on minimising costs and maximising efficiency, while retaining or increasing market share. In the District, the forests are relatively close to our customers, e.g. all our forests are within 55km of a major processor. Despite the proximity of the markets, the costs of the supply chain are still a significant issue. Many of factors are derived from national issues, such as the high cost of diesel and shortage of skilled labour. Increasing efficiency and a more equitable share of the profits in the chain remains a high priority at a national level.</p>

	<p>South Scotland Forest Industries Cluster provides a forum for the different elements of the industry to meet and a co-ordinating role to promote closer partnerships.</p> <p>Unfortunately, all the main processors are outside the District. There are a number of small sawmills using soft wood in the area, with a combined demand of around 40,000 m³ year.</p> <p>Timber haulage is a major cost in the supply chain and in terms of the impact it has on forest and public road maintenance, and on communities on the key routes. The Borders Timber Transport Group brings together the industry and the local authority to work together to minimise these impacts. The Agreed Routes Map is one of the tools used. Reducing timber miles is also a target as part of climate mitigation.</p>
<p>Develop the hardwood sector</p>	<p>Woodschool, the trading arm of Borders Forest Trust, although a small user of timber, produces high-quality niche products that promote hardwood timber from sustainable sources.</p> <p>There is some opportunity to establish quality, productive broadleaves on the lower more fertile areas of the forest, but this needs careful planning as more intensive management is required.</p> <p>Establishing areas of quality broadleaves should be considered on any new woodland opportunities on better quality land.</p>

National theme: Business development	
Most relevant SFS action	Priority issues for Scottish Borders Forest District
Realising economic potential	<p>The national forest estate has been built up over 80 years under a range of 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. We have carried out a portfolio analysis to determine the current value of the forests and their potential (see Appendix 1).</p> <p>Timber production is a key objective and accounts for 90% of our income, underpinning the economic benefits and contributing to other social and environmental benefits. There are opportunities to diversify our income base and seek non-timber sources of income.</p> <p>Revenue generated from car parks and other visitor services yields around 5%.</p> <p>There is a need for sustainable sources of income to underpin the major investments being made in recreation facilities and services, and to realise the conservation potential of the forests. The market for leisure activities is very competitive and there needs to be a programme of continuous improvement in the quality of our provision.</p> <p>Leases for masts, properties, shooting and grazing lets, and the sale of venison and Christmas trees provide the remaining 5% of the District's income. Renewable energy projects, windfarms and biomass plants are currently the most likely sources of significant additional revenue for the national forest estate.</p> <p>There are no commercial mineral resources in the estate in the District.</p>
Contributing to rural development	<p>The management of the forest for timber production underpins jobs in forest establishment and maintenance, harvesting and haulage. A significant number of jobs are also supported through the downstream processing, although most of this is outwith the Scottish Borders. The market for small-scale local timber products, woodfuel and for non-timber forest products is modest at present, but there is potential for further development provided these are environmentally sustainable.</p> <p>The national forest estate can provide a location for various enterprises. Realising this potential requires maintaining the profile of the forests with local decision-makers, especially in economic and social terms. The Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy, and the subsequent projects taking forward some of the main recommendations, recognise the value of the Borders woodlands. Promoting local co-operation and working in partnership, e.g. through South Scotland Forest Industries Cluster, are also key issues.</p> <p>We can provide direct business opportunities that are in accordance with FCS objectives. Where there is potential for competition, we have to ensure that there is fair and open process for developing these opportunities e.g. mountain biking businesses in the forest.</p> <p>We also make a significant indirect contribution to the rural economy. Many local businesses derive benefits from visitors to the forests, in particular mountain biking. We need to endeavour to manage recreation facilities and services to sustain the</p>

	<p>level of visitors, to provide opportunities and support for local businesses.</p> <p>Well-managed woods and forests provide an attractive setting in which to live, work and play, and can contribute to business decisions on location.</p>
Tourism	<p>The Tweed valley has long been a popular destination for day visitors from Edinburgh and for tourists. With the decline of the textile industry in the Scottish Borders, the revenue generated from tourism has become a mainstay of the local economy, and the only industry with increasing turnover and employment. The landscape and recreation opportunities continue to be a major factor in people's choice to visit the Scottish Borders. The forests we manage are a significant part of the scenery and provide many recreation facilities. In a competitive market, the challenge is to work with other partners e.g. Tweeddale Tourism Consortium, to realise the benefits in a sustainable way, to capture some of the direct revenue for reinvestment into the forests and to maintain and enhance the visitor experience.</p> <p>In recent years, mountain biking has become the major outdoor activity of the area. Scottish Enterprise Borders has identified adventure or active sports as one of the key development areas for the Scottish Borders, building on the success of Glentress and Innerleithen as one of Scotland's top mountain biking destinations. The Tweed sites, along with Newcastleton, are also part of the South Scotland-wide 7stanes project to promote forest-based recreation, especially mountain biking</p> <p>The Southern Upland Way passes through Elibank and Yair forests</p> <p>There has been some conflict between different user groups, particularly where mountain biking has displaced other forest users.</p> <p>The Making Tracks project, developed in 2001 following the eradication of foot and mouth disease, gave a boost to the development of nature based tourism in South Scotland. The Osprey watch centres at Kalzie and Glentress started as part of this project and have since expanded the range of species and partners involved.</p>
Skills	<p>There is a continuing need to develop existing staff and contractor skills to sustain the current programmes, meet new challenges and improve performance in current activities.</p> <p>The average age of the present District team is 48, with only seven of the 44 employees under 40. This is reflected in the wider forest industry in the Scottish Borders. We need to encourage and retain younger people into forestry through schemes such as work experience placement and the forestry apprenticeship scheme.</p> <p>There is a skills shortage, particularly for skilled people in chainsaw work and establishment.</p> <p>New challenges, such as the development of mountain biking and the increase in social inclusion ideas, requires more specialist skills. This is bringing people with a wider range of experiences and expertise into the forests.</p>

National theme: Community development	
Most relevant SFS action	Priority issues for Scottish Borders Forest District
Contributing to quality of life	<p>Well-managed and attractive forests are a source of pride for those who work in them and the communities who live by them. Forests contribute to the quality of life when they provide attractive settings to workplaces, travel routes and homes, and when they are readily accessible for rest and recreation. We need to continue to explore opportunities of ways that the national forest estate can add local value. The main mechanism is through consultation on the forest design plans, but there is also a need to engage on a more regular basis with community members and others in management and delivery for the estate.</p> <p>We have had an open access policy for many years to all our forest for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders, and provide additional recreation facilities in forests closer to communities. Areas designated by FCS as woodlands in and around towns (WIAT woods within 1km of a settlement >2000 people) on the national forest estate are at Venlaw, Cademuir, Glentress and west part of Caberston. Proposals for a core path network, linking communities and providing access, makes use of the forest in some areas.</p>
Education and lifelong learning	<p>Forest provide a wide range of education opportunities in subjects ranging from ecology and countryside skills through to alternative approaches to maths. They also provide a different environment in which to learning can take place. This will become increasingly relevant as outdoor learning becomes more mainstream in the education system.</p> <p>Our resources for education are currently very limited and we react to requests for engagement rather than actively seek it. We increase the impact of our involvement by working with others e.g. BFT and the local Forest Education Initiative (FEI) cluster. There is scope for facilitating groups to self lead. The education sector's requirements are driven by the national curriculum and we rely on assistance from others to ensure that our provision meets the need. Much more could be done, particularly with the nine schools within 1km walking distance of a forest.</p> <p>Through FEI and national policy, engagement with secondary schools is likely to become more vocationally focused. Some local outdoor activity centres make use of the forest for some of their activities, and increasingly groups from central Scotland are being attracted to the Tweed valley for mountain biking.</p> <p>The District has had a long association with the University of Edinburgh through the trial area at Glentress, and continues to support visits and research projects.</p> <p>Our volunteering programmes provides opportunities for people to undertake practical conservation or recreation tasks, develop new skills in countryside management and increase their knowledge of the environment e.g. the Green Team, the mountain bike patrol. There is scope to increase the role of volunteering as a route back into paid employment.</p> <p>Given its proximity to Edinburgh, the Tweed valley in particular hosts a variety of professional and overseas visits each year.</p>

<p>Engaging with communities</p>	<p>Communities associated with the national forest estate in the District have different aspirations and resources. All have a general interest in their local forests, some are interested primarily in access, and others in the possibility of generating economic benefit for their community from recreation or forest products and services.</p> <p>Our community engagement occurs on a number of levels. Communities share a common desire to be informed of what is going on and to have an opportunity to influence long-term management decisions, e.g. forest design plan consultation. We host an annual meeting of the Forest/Environment Panel that offers a venue for dissemination of information and valuable comment on forest design plans in particular. The Panel could contribute more to the management of the District given support and scope.</p> <p>General areas of local concern are the impacts of transport of timber through communities and change in the landscape through harvesting of timber. Specific issues often initiate the community engagement e.g. the cabin development by MDL, a private developer at Craik and suspension of the mountain bike uplift service at Innerleithen.</p> <p>We have an active programme of conservation projects involving communities across the District, e.g. red squirrel monitoring, butterflies monitoring and habitat improvement, osprey watch volunteers and water vole survey.</p> <p>There are also communities of interest, e.g. mountain bikers, which may operate over a range of forests. It is important that their views are accommodated, although it can be difficult to engage with a representative group.</p> <p>A partnership approach allows the community to work with us and other organisations and groups to plan, develop and deliver their aspirations and support a wide range of woodland uses. The community wildlife ranger is supported by a partnership of Tweed Forum, RSPB, Kalzie and FCS and through provision of transport is able to bring groups into the forest who might otherwise find access difficult.</p>
<p>Encouraging community ownership and management</p>	<p>Since the advent of the National Forest Land Scheme there have been a few enquiries for community ownership and management, none of which are currently being progressed under NFLS. Leadburn was recently sold to the local community under the previous scheme. An approach by the Houndwood community over the management of Greenwood and Renton is complicated by the leasehold, but is being progressed.</p> <p>The District's volunteering programme has enabled some communities to become more involved in aspects of the management of the woods, e.g. red squirrels at Newcastleton, Craik and Bonchester Bridge. Volunteering can develop a pride in the local forest and sense of ownership of the project, as well as providing the District with feedback on issues arising in the forest.</p> <p>We have responded to informal approaches from communities interested in developing the economic potential of both Craik and Newcastleton, although these have not yet been taken forward.</p>

National theme: Access and health	
Most relevant SFS actions	Priority issues for Scottish Borders Forest District
Making access easier	<p>FCS has operated a policy of open access for walkers, riders and cyclists for many years. This has now become enshrined in Scottish access legislation as a right of responsible access. As part of the legislation, core path networks provide links between communities and greater access to walking and cycling routes for all. Where appropriate, we support the designation of core paths through the forests. There are some trails for less able visitors, but scope for more routes given resources although many of the forests, particularly in the Tweed valley, are on relatively steep valley sides.</p> <p>We have been involved in the Scottish Borders-wide Tweed Trails project that has greatly increased the access opportunities in the region, and we participate in the local access forum.</p> <p>Information on access and facilities is available in leaflet form and also to some degree on the internet. There is scope for more use of modern technology in providing this type of information.</p> <p>We have begun a programme of managing thresholds area of the forests to make them more welcoming to the public. The ongoing issue with unauthorised motor bike access is also being approached with the help of the police.</p> <p>There are forests in the Tweed valley in walking distance of Peebles, Innerleithen and Walkerburn, but most forests in the District are distant from the main populations and normally only accessed by car. This distribution reflects past policies and land availability.</p> <p>Development priority should be given to communities that currently do not have ready access to woodland, either on foot, bicycle or by public transport, when considering possible new woodland acquisitions for community woodland.</p>
Helping improve the nations health	<p>There are real opportunities to encourage healthy outdoor pursuits in the forest areas. Walking is one of the easiest activities for people to engage in and it has traditionally been the main recreational activity. There has been some engagement with the health authorities to identify opportunities for greater use of the forests in improving health. We have been actively engaged with Paths2Health through events and promoting Forests for Health. There is scope for significantly more development for supporting improvements in both mental and physical health, given adequate resources.</p> <p>We have been working in partnership to deliver some aspects of health improvement. The Scottish Association for Mental Health has, for a number of years, operated a work programme for people recovering from mental illness at Glentress. The present programme has finished and discussions are underway to develop a new programme to continue to use the forest for improving mental health.</p> <p>Mountain biking has seen a three-fold increase in the number of visitors to the Tweed valley, including many people who would not have used the woods in the past. The initial trails tended to be more demanding, reflecting the nature of the</p>

	<p>sport's growth. There is now a move to increase the number of easier grade and family trails, and to promote mountain biking to a wider audience. 7stanes are leading in this area. Locally, Scottish Borders Council has lead on the "On yer bike" project to encourage people and especially young people to take up and enjoy mountain biking safely.</p> <p>We run a volunteering programme (Green Team) to encourage people to become actively involved in working in the forest. This can bring physical, mental health and social benefits</p>
<p>Enabling people to enjoy woodlands</p>	<p>Many forests have formal recreation facilities, such as waymarked trails. These are generally adequate to meet the demand. There is a major new development planned for Glentress (Glentress Peel) to be a gateway visitor service centre for the Tweed Valley Forest Park.</p> <p>We also provide a wide range of opportunities for more specialist activities, e.g. orienteering and field archery (run through a permissions system). The downhill course at Innerleithen has a national reputation at the top end of mountain biking. It is a niche market and does raise management issues for FCS. A long-term sustainable solution to the management of this facility is needed. An annual events programme ('Outdoor Diary') is run in conjunction with other Borders organisations e.g. Scottish Borders Council, Borders Forest Trust and SNH, and included a successful Tweed Valley Forest Festival in 2006.</p> <p>Continuing maintenance and improvement of the quality of provision are essential for visitors' enjoyment of the woods and user satisfaction of the recreation provision. We also need to be constantly improving safety standards as the number of visitors increase, but doing so in a way that does not impact on people's enjoyment of their chosen activity.</p> <p>The interpretation of the natural and cultural environment has been undertaken in various ways over the years. These need to be refreshed on a continuous basis, with an increasing move from traditional panels to more interactive or art-based forms.</p>

National theme: Environmental quality	
Most relevant SFS actions	Priority issues for Scottish Borders Forest District
Sustainable forest management	<p>Over-arching all the themes is sustainable development underpinned by sustainable forest management and social inclusion. UK Forest Standards define the minimum standard for sustainable management of Britain's forests. The national forest estate is also managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) standards and certified by Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)</p>
Protecting water, soil and air resources	<p>Many of the forest soils are vulnerable to erosion, compaction or loss of nutrients. If we consistently apply good operational practice (e.g. FCS forest and water, and soil conservation guidelines) soil quality will not be compromised.</p> <p>The afforested scree slopes of the Tweed valley are only a small proportion of the forest estate, but occupy a sensitive zone highly visible and close to the River Tweed. They require specific measures to ensure long-term stability, whether as woodland, mixed or open habitat.</p> <p>The nationally important Border Mires of Kielderhead are designated a site of special scientific interest (SSSI) and protected through the SSSI management plan.</p> <p>The Tweed and its tributaries define much of the Scottish Borders and 75% of the District forests lie in its catchment. The balance of the forests are in the Border Esk catchment. The Tweed is both a SSSI and a special area of conservation (SAC). The EU water framework directive sets out demanding targets for improving and maintaining water in good ecological condition. Delivery of the targets requires the involvement and co-operation of all landowners and water users in the catchment. The directive requires the preparation of a river basin management plan covering the Tweed and the Solway by 2008. There is currently a Tweed catchment management plan, prepared by Tweed Forum and supported by a wide range of agencies and landowners, to co-ordinate and where possible integrate work to protect and manage the river.</p> <p>We also protect water quality on the national forest estate by adhering to forest and water guidelines in all our operations, and by working with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) in the implementation of the water framework directive.</p> <p>A number of domestic water supplies have their catchments wholly or partially in the forests, ranging from individual supplies to the town supplies of Alemoor reservoir.</p> <p>The Tweed, the Border Esk and their tributaries are major salmon fishing rivers and used for other recreation such as canoeing.</p> <p>Forests can have a role in the management, protection and enhancement of water resources, e.g. through the creation of flood plain woodland and as part of sustainable flood alleviation measures to protect vulnerable settlements. A pilot study on sustainable flood management is underway in the Craik area, lead by Scottish Borders Council.</p>

	<p>There are also areas where the forests may have a detrimental effect on the water through shading banks and increasing the risk of erosion. These areas are being addressed through increasing the width of riparian zones at the time of re-stocking and by re-establishing native trees and vegetation. These areas are also important in developing forest habitat networks.</p> <p>The forest was cleared from the Ettrick marshes as part of a partnership with Borders Forest Trust to allow the restoration of the floodplain.</p> <p>Two critical load squares affect the District, at Craik and Wauchope, but the underlying geology and soils effectively buffer the impact. Further decreases in acid deposition are expected as improved control of emissions at source is implemented.</p>
<p>Contributing to Scotland's landscapes</p>	<p>Although the District's forests are relatively recent, they are a significant feature in the landscape. Each landscape has its own characteristics although in the past, forests have not always been planted and managed in sympathy with that character. These forests are being restructured as they mature, with all felling and replanting through the forest planning process. The process seeks to address the poorer aspects of edge design, but can be constrained by land ownership, site operating conditions and the management of windthrow. Treatment of the margins of the forest to improve integration with the surrounding land use and habitat and is another aspect of the redesign of the maturing forests.</p> <p>The Tweed valley is particularly sensitive to change and forms a backdrop to communities and tourist activities. A strategic landscape analysis of the forests of the Forest Park has been prepared to guide the preparation of individual plans and to increase harmony between them. This is one of the main areas where the use of lower impact silviculture systems will help minimise impact of harvesting on key landscapes.</p> <p>Some of the forests of Tweeddale are in designated sites, (national scenic areas, NSAs and areas of great landscape value, AGLVs). In some cases they are a key component of these areas, e.g. Yair, but they do not all make a positive contribution to landscape quality, e.g. Hallmanor and Dollar.</p>
<p>Managing the historic environment</p>	<p>There is a rich heritage of historical and cultural heritage in the District's forests, including 31 scheduled ancient monuments (SAMs), almost 100 known unscheduled sites (UAMs) and three listed buildings. Some of these have a special cultural significance in the Scottish Borders e.g. towers and the former Waverley railway line. Many of the forests are in areas associated with the stories and ballads of the Borders. These sites are safeguarded and there has been some interpretation, but there is scope for more, particularly in partnership with local communities and interest groups. Borders Forest Trust has helped to raise local awareness of the value of the remnant woodlands and heritage trees in the Scottish Borders.</p>

National theme: Biodiversity	
Most relevant SFS actions	Priority issues for Scottish Borders Forest District
Reversing biodiversity decline by targeted action	<p>The national forest estate does not contain any large area of special habitat, other than part of the Kielderhead SSSI. It does have fragments of a range of different priority habitats and there is scope for expansion of some of this to increase the forest diversity, as well as to support the local and national biodiversity action plan process (LBAPs, UKBAPs).</p> <p>We have a responsibility for parts of four designated sites (Glenkinnon Burn, Plora wood, Kielderhead and Palmers Hill) and manage these areas in accordance with plans agreed with SNH. The aim is to maintain or achieve favourable condition for all these areas. The Tweed does not have a specific management plan, but its protection and enhancement is covered by the catchment management plan (see above) and by adhering to FCS forest and water guidelines.</p> <p>The remnant broadleaf woodland in the District is very limited and fragmented. This makes even the small fragments on the national forest estate a valuable resource. We manage a small proportion of two SSSI woodlands. We have been expanding this resource through planting, particularly in riparian areas and through the ongoing partial restoration of plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).</p> <p>Scottish Borders Council has commissioned a strategic planning tool for wetland biodiversity conservation, the Borders Wetland Vision. This will be investigated as an aid to forest design planning and for options for restoring or recreating wetland. The Ettrick marshes have been cleared of forest trees and form a key part of the Ettrick floodplain restoration project.</p> <p>The Yair water meadow and the Thornielee grassland mosaic are small but important semi-natural habitats in the Tweed valley. On the hill tops, areas of upland heath link to the larger moorland areas outside the forest boundary.</p> <p>The District has three priority species as identified in the FCS biodiversity plan) (red squirrel, black grouse and juniper) and the species' requirements are considered as part of the forest planning process. The southern forests of Craik, Newcastleton and Wauchope are all priority forests in South Scotland for red squirrel. Management for red squirrel is a priority, but becoming increasingly challenging as the restructuring of these even-aged forests continues. Grey squirrels infected with squirrel pox have reached the edge of the District. Juniper has been collected and propagated locally and planted to increase the density of existing areas, e.g. Falside and to restore areas that formerly held juniper, e.g. Elibank. Black grouse are in decline in the Scottish Borders. SNH and RSPB are trying to reverse this trend and have funded a new project officer.</p> <p>A number of other protected species also use the forest. Records of locations and pre-operational checks are essential to ensuring protection of the species and adherence to the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act, Wildlife and Countryside Act and other legislation.</p> <p>Targeted work is also undertaken on some locally important species, e.g. goshawk, osprey, great crested newt, bats and barn owls.</p>

<p>Reversing biodiversity decline by broader actions</p>	<p>The conifer forests form large-scale habitats and as these mature and the process of restructuring advances they are becoming more developed as ecosystems in their own right.</p> <p>The restoration and creation of other habitats in the District, e.g. native woodland, upper margins, wetland and riparian corridors all takes place in the context of the wider conifer forest system.</p> <p>More work is needed to manage these new habitats, e.g. removal of conifer regeneration and to further enhance the value of the conifer forests, e.g. management of deadwood.</p> <p>Red squirrel is dependent on the large-scale conifer forests for its survival chances against the immigration of grey squirrels. The forests also host a number of raptor species, e.g. goshawks and osprey. These present a challenge to manage in harmony with forest operations.</p> <p>Deer management is undertaken in the absence of natural predators to reduce and maintain the deer populations in the District and allow the natural regeneration and establishment of trees without protection. The cull for roe is now a maintenance cull. There is a sika deer population in the area around Dawyck. This population ranges over a number of different ownerships and despite joint efforts the population is gradually spreading with the risk of interbreeding with resident red deer populations in Galloway. Population levels in the forests around Dawyck are causing damage to standing crops.</p> <p>Invasive plant species are recognised as a national threat to natural habitats. We have carried out small control programmes for rhododendron, salmon berry and Japanese knotweed. Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed have been the subject of major projects on the Tweed. In open areas of the forest and broadleaf woodland, the regeneration of conifers is undesirable and removal may be necessary to protect the interest of the site. Invasive animals include grey squirrel, sika deer, mink and signal crayfish.</p> <p>We are part of the LBAP steering group and there is work ongoing with local priority habitats, e.g. the Yair water meadows and species ,including barn owl, great crested newt, adder, bat and butterfly species.</p> <p>Work has been undertaken in the past on small raised bogs. This needs to be reviewed for Newcastleton and Hyndlee, in particular.</p>
<p>Increasing awareness</p>	<p>The natural world is frequently the theme for primary schools visits to the forest. Events on aspects of wildlife and habitat management are popular in the “outdoor diary” programme and with the Green Team volunteers. Volunteers also staff the osprey centres at Glentress and Kalzie, helping visitors to understand and appreciate the wildlife on view.</p>
<p>Improve knowledge for better decision-making</p>	<p>Biodiversity is a key issue in all forest design plans and is becoming integrated into all our decision-making. We had an agreement and exchange information with the Scottish Borders Biological Records Centre as our primary knowledge source.</p> <p>There are gaps in our knowledge of what occurs on the national forest estate and in baseline data on condition and populations. We need to address these through working with our own staff who know the ground and with local experts. Open</p>

ground habitat survey work is currently underway.

There is also a need to increase the level and targeting of species and habitats monitoring.

Models such as the Forest Research biodiversity decision-support tool BEETLE or the Borders wetland vision are not yet used in our decision-making processes.

5. Response to the issues, implementation and monitoring

National theme: Climate change			
Key local issues	Proposed response (including implementation)	Monitoring	Aspiration
Renewable energy	<p>We will support proposals for renewable energy projects on the national forest estate where these are compatible with other objectives. Where proposals are identified and developers selected, we will expect them to engage and take account of stakeholder interest. Provided this occurs, we will allow proposals with objections to go through the public planning process to ensure a process that is fair to developers and transparent to stakeholders.</p> <p>Support the work of Scottish Borders Council in the development of options for appropriately-scaled woodfuel and biomass for energy generation. Actively support initiatives associated with widening the market and resource for biomass and woodfuel, where existing commitments allow.</p>	Amount of wood delivered to biomass energy users	<p>All suitable opportunities for renewable energy are identified and developed.</p> <p>Woodfuel forms part of the local timber market in the Scottish Borders.</p>
Species choice	<p>Species will be selected that are suitable for the site conditions and meet the objectives of the forest (see District local policy guidelines).</p> <p>A precautionary principle on maintaining and enhancing diversity of tree species, forest structure and habitats will be adopted with respect to the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>This approach will also be the best available to mitigate in changes in pest species and behaviour, and to allow more scope for native flora and fauna to adapt.</p>	Changes in % species over time in forest design plans	Species diversity will be increased over time.

<p>Flood and catchment management</p>	<p>We will support Scottish Borders Council in sustainable flood management projects where our forest lie in suitable areas of the catchment.</p> <p>We will contribute to the planning and delivery of the EU water framework directive catchment management plan for the Solway Tweed river basin.</p> <p>Restructuring and rides designed to increase the number of potentially windfirm boundaries.</p>	<p>In conjunction with SBC Windthrow monitoring and recording</p>	<p>Forestry is seen as part of the solution to improved catchment management and flood alleviation.</p> <p>Windblow is contained by the network of windfirm boundaries.</p>
<p>New woodland</p>	<p>New acquisitions for carbon sequestration (100ha+) will be considered in the lowland parts of the District on better quality soils and account taken of preferred areas in the Scottish Borders woodland strategy (SBWS). Acquisitions should deliver on at least one other objectives, e.g. be close to communities providing increased access opportunities or enhancing local habitat networks. At present, support is available to take this acquisition programme forward via funding for carbon sequestration and the FCS initiative, woodlands in and around town Initiative (WIAT).</p>	<p>Area of land acquired, location and type of forest planted. (Scottish Forest Strategy, SFS)</p>	<p>New woodlands provide a valuable community resource and make a contribution to the forest habitat network aspirations of SBWS.</p>

National theme: Timber			
Key local issues	Proposed response (including implementation)	Monitoring	Aspiration
Timber supply	<p>We will produce a forecast of timber production and match those predictions (currently at 230,000 m³/yr) in subsequent marketing plans.</p> <p>We will 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.</p> <p>We will continue with processes such as long-term harvesting and timber supply contracts and competent contractor status to provide security, while regularly testing the market rate through open tenders. Make available short- and long-term contracts and contracts of different volumes for different markets.</p>	<p>Published production forecast, local thinning plan and annual sales plan.</p>	<p>A sustainable level of production.</p> <p>The target volumes of timber are harvested and marketed, with an increasing margin for the primary producer.</p>
Timber quality	<p>Sitka spruce will continue to be our main timber species, but other species will be established where these continue to meet our objectives. Location 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 (see District local policy guidelines).</p> <p>Establishment at densities in line with national guidance outlined in OGB4, e.g. 2500/ha for Sitka spruce at year 5 for future timber quality.</p> <p>Maximise the forest area thinned according to best practice to improve the future quality of the crop and appearance of the forest.</p>	<p>Stocking density assessments</p> <p>% improved stock (SFS).</p> <p>Volume of certified timber (SFS).</p> <p>Thinning plan and coupe record system.</p>	<p>The District will have a reputation for producing quality timber.</p> <p>All suitable areas are thinned.</p>

Timber transport	We will continue to work with the members of the Borders Timber Transport Group and with customers and hauliers on improving the cost effectiveness of timber transport, and on reducing maintenance costs of forest roads and the environmental and social impacts.	Index of roundwood road miles (SFS).	Decrease in timber road miles.
Timber in construction	<p>The planned design for Glentress Peel will include timber in different uses in the buildings and their surroundings, e.g. timber beams, external cladding, decking and bridges.</p> <p>Procurement and use of local timber where possible and to favour timber where appropriate in preference to alternative materials.</p> <p>The District will work with Forest Civil Engineering (FCE) in the development and use of timber for bridges in the forest.</p>	Glentress Peel plans.	Timber is the material of choice in all relevant constructions.
Hardwood timber	<p>We will continue to work with Borders Forest Trust in the management of the community woods of the Tweed valley, where most of the hardwood is situated. Thinnings and timber from these is used in the production of small wooden items at the Woodschool.</p> <p>Establish small-scale productive broadleaf areas in the District to diversify the broadleaf woodland resource.</p>	<p>Volume of hardwood supplied to Woodschool.</p> <p>Area of productive hardwood trials (SFS).</p>	Sustainable management of the broadleaf woodlands of Tweed valley with timber as one of the outputs.

National theme: Business development			
Key local issues	Proposed response (including implementation)	Monitoring	Aspiration
Support for local businesses	<p>Ongoing opportunities for timber and haulage industry from the steady supply of timber.</p> <p>We continue to provide direct business opportunities. We will promote woodland as locations for various enterprises and be open to new business ideas that are compatible with FCS objectives and local interests and needs. We will raise awareness among decision-makers e.g. Scottish Borders Council, Scottish Enterprise Borders, of the opportunities and promote local co-operation.</p> <p>As a public organisation, we will normally have to ensure that the business opportunities we provide are either non-exclusive or made available through competition.</p> <p>We need to provide regular and up to date information to tourist service providers on the forest opportunities and on any temporary restrictions to access.</p>	<p>Number of businesses involved and value of business.</p> <p>Number of partnerships using the forest as base for enterprises.</p> <p>Number of businesses receiving regular information of forest opportunities.</p> <p>Forest design plans.</p>	<p>The forests are seen as an asset to the Scottish Borders.</p> <p>A host of local enterprises gain all or part of their income from the national forest estate.</p>
Portfolio analysis	<p>The existing national forest estate has been analysed against a range of economic and non-market benefits using a national scoring system. During the period of this Plan, forests with low scores will be reviewed to improve their non-market and/or economic performance, or they will be considered for sale to release capital for reinvesting in other key work areas, including new acquisitions.</p>	<p>Forest plan revision.</p> <p>Change in District land holding.</p>	<p>The national forest estate portfolio continually evolves to increase the potential for meeting future demands.</p>

<p>Non-timber sources of income</p>	<p>Any development of the use of the estate (e.g. windfarm or waste disposal) requires engagement with stakeholders to ensure that proposals are well thought through and that long-term relationships are not damaged.</p> <p>There are opportunities for increasing the revenue from forest recreation users, but this also needs to be well thought through to avoid conflict with other objectives such as access and health.</p>	<p>Proportion of income generated from sources other than timber sales.</p>	<p>Over 10% of the income in the District is generated from sources other than timber production.</p>
<p>Tourism</p>	<p>We will undertake a full revision of our recreation and tourism strategy for the District.</p> <p>Work with others, e.g. Tweed Valley Development Group (TVDG) and Tweeddale Tourism Consortium, to deliver and develop forest-based tourism, staying ahead in a competitive market, and encouraging visitors to stay longer in the area and spend more. Build on existing initiatives, e.g. 7stanes</p> <p>Need for continuous improvement in quality of provision on which many tourist businesses depend.</p> <p>Glentress and the Tweed valley is the top tourist destination in the Scottish Borders and draws visitors into the region. Glentress Peel is a major investment in visitor facilities designed to serve the whole of the Tweed valley and is due to open by Easter 2009.</p> <p>We will continue to host and support major sporting events where these can be safely accommodated and work with others, e.g. Scottish Borders Council events team to maximise the benefits to the local economy.</p> <p>Adventure tourism. Work with others in TVDG to develop and implement a long-term sustainable solution to the management and operation of the downhill course at</p>	<p>Visitor monitoring programme.</p> <p>Visitor satisfaction surveys.</p> <p>Feedback from tourism businesses and VisitScotland.</p> <p>Successful partnerships with tourism groups.</p> <p>New centre opened by Easter 2009.</p>	<p>The forests are regarded and supported as an integral part of the tourism product for the area.</p> <p>An effective cluster of attractions to generate short break packages</p> <p>Glentress Peel becomes a focal point for outdoor active recreation and wildlife viewing in the Tweed valley and increases the benefit visitors bring to the local area.</p>

	<p>Innerleithen to allow the sport to develop, users to enjoy the course safely and the community to gain economic benefit.</p> <p>Developing nature-based tourism: includes further development of the flagship osprey watch centres and wildlife viewing. Further packages and partnerships with other organisations, providers and local communities.</p>		
Staff and contractor skills	<p>Continuous development of staff skills to match developing policies and demands. We will identify skill shortages in direct employees and organise suitable training to improve delivery of our work. At present, the key areas we need to invest in are community engagement, tourism, partnership working for business development and GIS skills</p> <p>We will only use contractors with competent contractor status.</p> <p>We will investigate the opportunities for support and participation in the Modern Apprentice scheme and in developing a programme of work experience days for school pupils.</p>	<p>District training plan and number of learning days.</p> <p>All contracts documentation.</p> <p>Employment supported by forestry related sector (SFS).</p> <p>Staff turnover (SFS).</p>	<p>A multi-skilled and motivated District staff and wide contractor resource, up to date on industry standards and new directions.</p>

National theme: Community development			
Key local issues	Proposed response (including implementation)	Monitoring	Aspiration
Education	<p>A more proactive engagement with local schools and local bodies working with other sectors of the community would be desirable if more resources became available. An early task would be the preparation and agreement of an education strategy. The focus is mainly on primary schools, but there may be opportunity for engaging with secondary schools if the work of the Dumfries and Galloway Forest Education Initiative (FEI) is rolled out to Scottish Borders. This is likely to be more career and work experience orientated. There would be a need for additional resources and training.</p> <p>Priority to local schools in walking distance of a forest that are keen to have on ongoing commitment.</p>	<p>Number of schools and pupils involved in woodland based learning activities (SFS).</p> <p>% adults who attend organised learning activities or events linked to woodland/year (SFS).</p> <p>Student placements.</p> <p>Skills gained by volunteers.</p>	<p>The forests are seen as a valuable education resource both for the learning environment and for the range of subjects.</p>
Community engagement	<p>Community and stakeholder engagement strategy to be able to focus resources where required. We need to become more proactive in engaging with communities to resolve issues and develop opportunities. We also need to improve the information on forest operations and activities provided to communities and neighbours.</p> <p>We will continue to attend a number of local shows each year to support the local area and to be available to a wider section of the community.</p> <p>We support the community planning process through the Conservancy.</p> <p>We need to involve as many stakeholders as possible in the forest planning process. We need to review and expand the role of the District forest panel. We need to increase the use</p>	<p>During audit of operations, check the level and nature of information provided to neighbours and communities.</p> <p>Annual review of the levels of engagement with communities.</p> <p>Number of community groups involved in managing woodlands (SFS).</p>	<p>All communities involved with local forests. Forests are delivering the outputs that the community needs.</p> <p>The District is known as an organisation that listens and responds where possible and appropriate.</p>

	<p>of the media and participatory events for consultation on major initiatives, as well as forest design plans.</p> <p>We will work with communities that want to become more actively involved in the management of, and outputs from, their local forest to facilitate and support their involvement. Our current resources are limited and as communities increase their involvement in a forest, we may also have to increase our input to ensure that successful and sustainable partnerships that support communities are developed.</p>		
Partnerships	<p>Continue to provide real volunteering opportunities to suit different abilities and interests for practical work in the forest or in adding value to visitors' experience. Provide training for volunteers to gain skills. Range of opportunities.</p>	<p>Number of volunteer days involved with woodland activities (SFS).</p>	<p>Volunteers make a real contribution to the delivery of District objectives and continue to participate over many years.</p>
Community ownership and management	<p>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.</p>	<p>Feedback from community groups on how they have been dealt with.</p>	<p>A range of community opportunities are realised.</p>

National theme: Access and health			
Key local issues	Proposed response (including implementation)	Monitoring	Aspiration
Access	<p>Catering for range of activities from quiet walking to adventure sports.</p> <p>The priority is to increase the resources to maintain and enhance the current facilities and forest thresholds throughout the District. There is also a need to provide an increased level of service to visitors all year round, including management of conflict between users.</p> <p>Make the forests more welcoming by providing information, reviewing the signage, addressing the appearance of thresholds and car parks, managing access to discourage unauthorised motorised access.</p> <p>New facilities may be developed with partners where these can demonstrate a significant local economic benefit and can be managed into the future without relying on FCS for funding. New facilities should widen the base and encourage more people to visit the forest for recreation.</p>	<p>Visitor monitoring and surveys.</p> <p>Number and quality of facilities.</p> <p>% population with accessible woods i.e.</p> <p>>2ha within 500m of home</p> <p>>20ha within 4km of home (SFS).</p>	<p>Increased use of their local woodlands by a wide range of people and communities.</p> <p>The District is known for the high quality of the recreation facilities and experience.</p>
Core path network	<p>Support and promote the Scottish Outdoor Access Code with Scottish Borders Council and Scottish Natural Heritage.</p> <p>Work with access forum to identify the core path network and add value where appropriate.</p>	<p>Number and length of core paths in woodlands.</p>	<p>More people will be able to walk of cycle from their homes or holiday accommodation into the national forest estate.</p>

Health	<p>We will work with others e.g. health authority, local council, access groups, SAMH, to increase the resources and skills available to encourage a greater use of the forests by a wider range of people.</p> <p>Continue to encourage young people to visit the forest through mountain biking initiatives, e.g. “on yer bike” project.</p>	<p>Number of facilities for all abilities.</p>	<p>Health sector identifies District as a partner in providing healthy exercise options.</p>
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National theme: Environmental quality			
Key local issues	Proposed response (including implementation)	Monitoring	Aspiration
Sustainable management	<p>In addition to the key issues identified in this section, our sustainable forest management is based on the implementation of a range of important standards and best practice guidelines (e.g. FCS forest and water guidelines) and legislation (e.g. the Health and Safety Act) in our daily work. We are firmly committed to retaining the high standards required by UKWAS.</p> <p>We will adopt best practice guidance of FCS sustainability programmes, Greenerways, in all offices, forest operations, procurement and travel.</p>	Baseline audit and then annual audit targets for energy, waste and carbon management.	Adoption of best practice in sustainable management.
Water quality	<p>Forest and water guidelines followed during all operations. Forest design plan will continue to expand and link riparian areas.</p> <p>We will support Scottish Borders Council in the development of sustainable flood management projects where appropriate.</p> <p>We are supporting SEPA and Tweed Forum in the development of the Solway Tweed river basin district management plan.</p>	<p>Number of adverse incidents and complaints (District complaints register).</p> <p>Length of rivers in forested catchments for which ecological quality is maintained or enhanced (SFS).</p>	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. unsympathetic forest edges. Most of this can be delivered through conventional operations, but we will pursue additional resources where site or access conditions demand high-cost solutions.	Delivery of forest plans.	Forests in the area are seen as a valued part of the landscape.

	Upper Tweeddale is designated a natural scenic area (NSA) and area of great landscape value (AGLV) and the forests require further assessment and design work to improve their contribution to the landscape.		
Cultural heritage	<p>The 31 scheduled ancient monuments (SAMs) in the District all have agreed five- year management plans and are annually inspected to ensure their protection.</p> <p>Forest design plans identify and protect known and recorded cultural sites in the national monument register for Scotland through design of open space.</p> <p>There is more opportunity for the District's resources to be made available and interpreted in new ways, e.g. carving of Muckle Mouthed Meg. This should be through community and other local groups.</p>	Number of agreed SAM management plans (SFS).	The historical and cultural resources of the forest are accessible and interpreted in their context.
Lower impact silvicultural systems (LISS)	The area of LISS will be increased where crops, sites and resources permit. There is an ongoing need to improve our skills in managing these areas. The long-running University of Edinburgh transformation trial in Glentress will continue to form the core of the alternative to clearfell (ATC) areas in the District, and the information gained from the trial collated and disseminated by Forest Research.	% of woodland area managed under LISS (SFS).	Widest use possible of lower impact silvicultural systems where practical and appropriate to meet District objectives.
Steep and scree slopes	Review of the extent and management options for these sites and incorporate the results into forest design plans and operational planning.	Successful economic and environmental management of sites.	The scree and steep slopes of the Tweed valley are sustainably managed and become a valuable feature of the forest.
Designated sites	All designated sites have management plans agreed with Scottish Natural Heritage. Manage to achieve favourable site condition status for biodiversity. Impact on neighbouring designated sites is also included in forest planning.	Monitoring of site condition - % of woodland SSSI in favourable/unfavourable, but recovering condition (SFS).	All designated sites on national forest estate are maintained in favourable condition.

National theme: Biodiversity			
Key local issues	Proposed response (including implementation)	Monitoring	Aspiration
Priority habitats	<p>Survey work has identified the species present, extent of ancient woodland indicators and setting in relation to wider habitat networks. Restoration proposals are being drawn up for the 70ha of surveyed plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) with the presumption of all retained areas being restored over time at a rate appropriate to their conservation interest. Other remnant woodlands have been identified and form the core of the broadleaf woodland expansion in the District through the forest planning process.</p> <p>We are carrying out a survey of all non-woodland habitats in the District to understand their extent and distribution. Expansion areas will be identified in the forest design plans and where appropriate specific management actions identified to be undertaken at time of clearfell and re-stocking or, more exceptionally, early intervention and fell to recycle, e.g. high elevation.</p>	<p>Area of PAWS with commitment to restoration (SFS).</p> <p>Area of native woodland (SFS).</p> <p>Progress against HAPs native woodland for restoration, condition and expansion (SFS).</p> <p>Area converted to priority open ground habitat (SFS).</p>	<p>The native woodland area is expanded and all forests contain a diverse range of habitats.</p> <p>All PAWS restored to native woodland.</p>

<p>Priority species</p>	<p>The future forest structure will be designed to enhance the prospects for the priority species, (red squirrel, black grouse, juniper). This will normally be carried out by adjusting operational practice. Additional inputs are also identified (further details contained in the biodiversity and species plans) and resources are sought, e.g. for monitoring</p> <p>We will work closely with local experts to increase our understanding of key species and habitat requirements. The forest design process will remain the primary mechanism to draw together the knowledge and to identify opportunities to expand and enhance habitats.</p>	<p>Number of woodland-related UKWAS spp and habitats in stable, increasing/recovering, favourable condition (SFS).</p>	<p>The national forest estate is a haven and reservoir for these priority species.</p> <p>Information and knowledge is readily available to inform operations and specific habitat and species requirements.</p>
<p>Forest habitat network</p>	<p>Forest design plans are the main vehicle for the development of the conifer forest ecosystem, identifying opportunities to diversify habitats and forest structure.</p>	<p>Forest plan proposals.</p>	<p>The conifer forests are a valued habitat in their own right and a key component of habitat networks.</p>
<p>Deer Management</p>	<p>We will continue to manage deer populations to a level that allows trees to be established without protection and natural regeneration to occur successfully. Culls based on damage assessment of crops and habitats. We will work with others including the local deer management groups (Eskdalemuir, Border, Upper Tweed) and Deer Commission Scotland to manage both sika and roe deer populations.</p>	<p>Damage assessments.</p> <p>Areas with active approved deer management plans (SFS).</p>	<p>Deer populations are in harmony with forest and habitat management.</p>

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 (e.g. 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 three 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 (*what we can deliver best from circumstances or national centres of excellence*):

Production of timber (fit for markets)

Recreation (for local provision, day visitors and tourism - active and nature based)

Conifer forest landscapes and diversity (for increasing the broad biodiversity and enjoyment of forests *i.e. continue as conifer woodland becoming increasingly diverse*)