



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

**Summary report on the public
consultation on proposals to revise
Woodlands for Wales
the Wales Woodland Strategy**

Consultation period 22 July – 14 October 2008

Summary report on the public consultation on proposals to revise *Woodlands for Wales* the Wales Woodland Strategy

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1 Introduction

Woodlands for Wales sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's (WAG) 50 year plan for trees and woodlands. It was first published in 2001 and since then a number of issues have arisen such as the recognition of the potential impact of climate change and the publication of new WAG policies which have required the strategy to be updated.

The consultation on Proposals to Revise *Woodlands for Wales* was launched by the Minister Elin Jones on 22 July and closed on 14 October 2008. The consultation was managed on behalf of WAG by Forestry Commission Wales (FCW).

It was publicised through features in national newspapers, specialist magazines and on WAG and FCW websites. It was further disseminated via other organisations' websites and publications. Organisations and individuals representing a wide range of interests including the timber industry, communities and the environment were contacted directly to advise them of the consultation. At invitation, FCW staff attended meetings of interested organisations and groups to speak about the consultation and answer any queries.

The consultation paper and the response form were available via the FCW web site. When requested they were e.mailed directly or made available as a hard copy.

2 Consultation Responses

231 responses were received – a list of respondents is found in **Appendix 1**.

127 respondents represented groups and organisations and 104, where they had not identified themselves otherwise, were categorised as "individuals". The table below shows the spread of responses with the groups and organisations being categorised under social, environmental and forestry sectors. The "other" category represents a range of respondents such as Unitary Authorities and Tourism organisations.

Social Sector	Forestry Sector	Environmental Sector	Other	Individual responses
14	67	26	20	104

3 Analysis of the consultation and how it has influenced the content of the revised strategy

The consultation took the form of questions on a series of proposals on how to deliver the updated agenda for woodlands and trees. These were grouped under each of 5 themes which were; **Welsh Woodlands, Responding to Climate Change, Woodlands for People, A Competitive and Integrated Forest Sector** and **Environmental Quality**. There were a series of more general questions which gave the opportunity to raise any issues which had not been included in the questions. They were also given the opportunity to raise any issues and make comments related to the consultation itself.

The responses to each question were evaluated on a quantitative basis. All comments were considered and a summary of the issues raised and comments received for each question is provided on the following pages.

Almost all proposals were supported and where respondents made comments, raised issues or expressed concerns we have been able to use this information, in most instances, to either modify intentions or propose measures to ensure impacts are minimised. In a number of instances concerns raised related to the unclear language used in the consultation; this has influenced to tone and content of the revised strategy and many issues have been clarified.

Two proposals – Questions 1 & 2, received highly polarised responses. These questions related to the proposal to increase diversity of woodlands (Q1) and moving towards Continuous Cover Forestry on the Assembly Estate (Q2). How the main concerns relating to these two questions have been addressed in the revised strategy is summarised below.

There were also a number of comments relating to the consultation paper itself and the consultation process these will have an influence on future public consultations.

4 Consultation Questions

The questions were grouped under the themes of the consultation.

Welsh Woodlands

Q 1. We aim to deal with the uncertain future demands on Welsh woodlands (including climate change) by increasing the diversity of all woodlands in terms of their tree species and provenance, stand structure, type of management, timber products and bio-diversity.

Q 2. We intend to use continuous cover (CCF) as the default management choice on the Assembly woodland estate and encourage, through grants, this approach for other woodlands.

Q 3. We intend to increase net woodland cover in Wales

Q 4. We propose using a tiered grant structure to encourage new woodlands in locations relating to strategy outcomes, but allowing the exact location to be market-led within this framework

Q 5. We intend to weigh up whether a change in woodland type or management would bring greater benefits, before agreeing to permanent deforestation for restoration of other habitats or for landscaping reasons

Responding to Climate Change

Q 6. We propose to encourage timber and woodfuel production within sustainably managed woodlands, as the best way to increase the carbon stored in woodlands and timber products

Q 7. We propose to continue supporting initiatives to promote the use of wood as a way of addressing our low carbon policies

Q 8. We are considering creating a system whereby compensatory planting is required if there is permanent removal of woodland for development

Q 9. We propose that the scope of the strategy will include urban tree planting for climate change mitigation and wider environmental reasons.

Q 10. We are considering supporting new planting of short-rotation forestry or coppice to produce wood fibre for wood fuel, where there is established local demand

Woodlands for People

Q 11. We intend to encourage a more varied approach to involving more communities in woodlands, especially on the Assembly woodland estate

Q 12. We propose broadening the scope of woodlands for learning from its current focus on children and supporting education for children, towards lifelong learning and skills development and training for adults

Q 13. We intend to prioritise the development of woodland recreation opportunities close to where people live – especially in areas of greatest need in terms of health inequalities

Q 14. We propose to support the development of woodland-based small and emerging enterprises

A Competitive Integrated Forest Sector

Q 15 a - f. How important do you think the following are to help the forest sector develop in response to the home-grown woodland resource becoming more diverse?

15 g – How else can we encourage the sector to take advantage of the new opportunities increased diversity will offer?

Q 16. What are the best market “pull” and grant “push” mechanisms, or combinations of both, to get more woodlands into sustainable management and producing usable wood products?

Q 17 a-e What are the best ways to address the skills shortage in the forestry sector, particularly in the light of the new skills that will be needed in future?

Q 17f- In what other ways can we address the skills shortage?

Environmental Quality

Q18. We believe more accurate information on the location of ancient woodlands and veteran trees would enable us to offer them more protection

Q 19. We propose to improve the ecological functionality of the landscape by targeting our efforts around focal (for generalist species) and core (for specialist species) woodland networks

Q 21. We intend to manage all Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites in line with best practice restoration guidance on the Assembly woodland estate and encourage this approach through grants for other woodlands

Q 22. We propose to use appropriate and targeted new woodland planting to help reduce diffuse pollution, soil erosion and flood risk

General Questions

Q 23. a) Within each chapter what impacts or trade-offs do you feel we have overlooked?

Q 23 b) Between the chapters, what impacts or trade-offs do you feel we have overlooked?

Q 24. a) We aim to ensure that where our strategy involves people it is truly inclusive and representative of the population we serve. Can you see any areas where a particular section of the population might be unfairly disadvantaged by our proposals?

Q 24 b) Can you see any areas where a particular section of the population might be unfairly disadvantaged by our proposals? If yes please explain

Q 24 c) How could we amend proposals to be more equitable?

Q 25 Please comment on any other aspect of the proposals that are not already addressed above

Q26. Evaluation of the consultation process itself

5 Results and summary of responses to questions.

Please note each respondent did not necessarily give a rating for all of the proposals in the consultation so no total for any question adds up to 231 (the total number of responses received).

5.1 Welsh Woodlands

Q 1. We aim to deal with the uncertain future demands on Welsh woodlands (including climate change) by increasing the diversity of all woodlands in terms of their tree species and provenance, stand structure, type of management, timber products and bio-diversity.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Number of responses	58	53	47	40	1
%	29%	27%	24%	20%	1%

A highly polarised response to this proposition

Key concerns

- More clarity required for what is actually meant by diversity & mixtures and what “diversity” means for native woodlands.
- Much concern over the potential for reduced productivity & affordability
- Concern about whether the proposal really extends to all woodlands, including native woodlands
- Many comments that an owners management objectives must come first

How these key concerns have been dealt with in the strategy:

- Clarification on the meaning of diversity has been provided.
- It is stated that future timber volumes from the Assembly woodland estate will be broadly maintained over the short to medium term.
- Through the establishment of a clear strategic objective to ensure that the potential for national wood production is maintained in spite of any increased diversity; through increased woodland management and woodland creation
- It is recognised in the strategy that, subject to legislation, the management objectives of individual owners will come first.

Summary of responses

Generally those who agreed with the proposal cited sustainability, bio-diversity, landscape benefits etc. Also the improved resilience to pests and diseases was given as specific reason to diversify.

Concerns were expressed by many about effect on current markets and businesses, which depended on established consistent supplies of conifers.

The value of the timber industry in Wales, alongside the good growing conditions and closeness to markets were cited as reason for maintaining continued timber supplies.

The resilience of conifers to climate change and their anticipated increased growth rates were given as a reason for continuing to grow conifers. Some argue that fast growing exotic species offer more flexibility for adaptation to climate change than slow growing native trees.

The expense and complexity of managing mixtures, leading to reduced profitability was raised.

Some felt there was a lot of diversity in woodlands already.

There is still much to learn about the impacts of climate change. Diversity for diversity sake is perhaps more of a danger than waiting until there is clear evidence. Wait and see – don't compromise productivity too quickly.

Diversity needs to be considered at a landscape level – look at whole area not on a block-by-block basis. Take time to diversify, be flexible with a site specific approach.

Diversification should not be at the expense of commercial forestry activities. There is an assumption that the industry will adapt – it will not be easy, even if it is possible.

Species & provenance should not be diversified in ASNW or on PAWs sites where ancient woodland species are present.

Do not damage rare or important habitats and maintain functioning ecosystems.

There is scope for increasing diversity on land not suited to commercial production.

Diversification is wider than just replacing conifers with broadleaves – it is also about widening the genetic base.

Q 2. We intend to use continuous cover (CCF) as the default management choice on the Assembly woodland estate and encourage, through grants, this approach for other woodlands.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Number of responses	36	56	30	75	4
%	18%	28%	15%	37%	2%

A highly polarised response to the proposition

Key concerns

- Many respondents reacted adversely to the “default” position
- It was apparent there was much confusion over CCF & Low impact silvicultural systems (LISS) and their definitions and characteristics, with many different interpretations
- Much concern over reduced productivity & affordability
- Many comments that owners management objectives must come first

How these key concerns have been dealt with in the strategy:

- The word “default” is not used in the revised strategy. In the consultation many took “default” to mean that CCF will always be the management system. The revised strategy makes it clear that no management systems are ruled out; management will be appropriate to the site and conditions. However, the intention is, over time, to move away from clear felling on the Assembly woodland estate. This will be over many decades and clear felling will be part of this transformation. In the short to medium term, timber

volumes made available from the Assembly woodland estate will be broadly maintained assuming there is little change to the current size and characteristics of the estate.

- In the revised strategy CCF and LISS have been defined.
Continuous cover forestry (CCF) – silvicultural systems whereby the forest canopy is maintained at one or more levels without clearfelling. CCF is just one example of a low impact silvicultural system.
Low impact silvicultural systems (LISS) – silvicultural systems which are alternatives to clear-felling and minimise the environmental impact. They include a range of less intensive silvicultural systems such as group selection or shelterwood.
- The strategy makes it clear that the emphasis is on achieving outcomes by avoiding clearfelling rather than adopting too rigid a silvicultural system. It has been made clear that CCF is just one method of managing woodlands with minimal negative environmental impact
- The revised strategy makes it clear that clearfelling as a tool to achieve silvicultural change in the next rotation is a valid management strategy.
- It is recognised in the strategy that, subject to legislation, the management objectives of individual owners will come first.

Summary of responses

CCF was recognised by many respondents as a means to achieve diversity and resilience and also to produce quality timber.

Many respondents expressed concern that CCF is not economically viable and will compromise future timber supplies. It was believed CCF would be expensive to manage.

CCF is still being developed – it had not yet shown itself to be economic. Forecasting yields will need to be developed. More research evidence is needed.

Many were concerned and did not want this as a blanket policy for FC Wales.

It was not suited to the upland forests of Wales due to soil types, exposure and wind. CCF doesn't favour light demanding spp so will be difficult to establish through natural regeneration.

To achieve CCF there is a major training requirement. There is a shortage of management skills in FC Wales and the wider sector.

It must be appropriate to the site.

Will this conflict with the desire for diversity (Q1) as it would be a "blanket" method of management?

Improved grants will be required by the private sector for CCF management. But these grants must not be at the expense of grants for "traditional" forestry.

CCF should not compromise other habitats.

CCF in broadleaf woodlands will be difficult to achieve because of squirrels.

CCF will allow wild deer populations to increase.

Q 3. We intend to increase net woodland cover in Wales

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Number of	151	51	4	3	3

responses					
%	71%	24%	2%	1%	1%

A well supported proposition.

Summary of responses

Vast majority of respondents agreed to this proposal for the range of benefits it would deliver.

Need to increase the woodland cover of Wales with increased timber production and employment cited as positive outcomes. It was suggested there should be a target.

New woodland should not compromise other sites with environmental and archaeological features. Sensitive habitats require protection.

There were queries as to where the new land to plant was to come from. With the need for the ongoing management of these new woodlands being emphasised.

Competition with agricultural grants and high land prices were considered barriers to increasing woodland cover. Derelict and bracken areas were suggested as most suitable land to target for new planting.

Should be considered at a landscape level with an integrated land management strategy.

It is important that we do not lose sight of improving the management of existing woodlands in the push to create new ones. Grants should be additional and not reduce funds available for "traditional forestry".

Grey squirrels are cited as greatest threat – particularly to broadleaf planting.

Urban tree planting is to be encouraged but again funding is needed for both planting and for the ongoing management of these trees.

Q 4. We propose using a tiered grant structure to encourage new woodlands in locations relating to strategy outcomes, but allowing the exact location to be market-led within this framework

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Number of responses	35	91	40	6	20
%	18%	47%	21%	3%	10%

Broadly supported by the majority of respondents but with a significant minority who either disagreed or ticked 'don't know'.

Summary of responses

What would be new about this proposal? Don't grants currently relate to locations and outcomes?

Clarification of "market led" was requested by a number of respondents who did not want there to be conflict if it meant priority habitats were damaged or inappropriate sites were planted.

Grants must be additional and not remove grants for managing existing woodlands. The management of existing woodlands should be a priority.

Commercial forestry must be considered equally within the grant structure.

Grants for productive new woodlands – should be core objective rather than creating large areas of low value native species. Multi-purpose objectives can be outcomes from these productive woodlands.

Where will the land for the new woodland come from? Funding will be required so it will be economically viable to plant trees as grants will have to compete with agricultural subsidies. If it isn't changed only the poorest land will be available – need to plant better land to increase productivity.

A better understanding of what is needed and where it needs to be is required for this to work. A spatial plan would facilitate this. However care when drawing lines on maps and restricting grants to geographical areas. Don't want to compromise or disadvantage good schemes because of the geographical location.

Grants must reflect outcomes and reflect the true cost of the work e.g. Urban planting and maintenance will more expensive

Planting will need to be appropriate to the site – “right tree, right place”

Grants must be simple to deliver and reflect the true cost of the work. Also simplify grants for small areas. More complex grant structures may not deliver policy objectives

A condition of grant aid for new woodlands should be to allow public access.

Q 5. We intend to weigh up whether a change in woodland type or management would bring greater benefits, before agreeing to permanent deforestation for restoration of other habitats or for landscaping reasons

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Number of responses	77	102	6	5	7
%	39%	52%	3%	3%	4%

A well supported proposition.

Summary of responses

It was welcomed that other options would be considered before deforestation – which may include planting more trees.

There must be caution and clear reasons for deforestation as the goal is to increase woodland cover in Wales.

Habitats to be restored must be rare.

There must be clearly demonstrable scientific benefits for deforestation. Criteria and guidance was needed to ensure deforestation is appropriate.

Costs and benefits of deforestation need to be properly valued. Including cost of maintaining the new open habitat. Land management grants will be required.

Decision making should involve outside body not involved in managing the land.

Achieving TAN 8 objectives for wind energy will mean woodlands are removed. It was felt by some respondents that these areas must be replaced with compensatory planting.

Respondents also felt that compensatory planting should **also** be a requirement if productive woodlands are removed.

Forestry Act needs amending in Wales to ensure compulsory replanting is not required for priority habitat restoration.

Areas planted as compensation must preserve access rights that were allowed on deforested areas.

5.2 Responding to Climate Change

Q 6. We propose to encourage timber and woodfuel production within sustainably managed woodlands, as the best way to increase the carbon stored in woodlands and timber products

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Number of responses	112	75	6	0	4
%	57%	38%	3%	0%	2%

A well supported proposition.

Summary of responses

It was recognised that encouraging production would be an effective way of getting under managed woods managed. It was suggested by a number of respondents that non-intervention is only carbon neutral at best.

Many respondents stated that well managed conifer woodlands are the most efficient method of producing timber and storing carbon. Better quality timber will store carbon for longer if it is used for construction and furniture as opposed to firewood and pallets. Timber used to replace concrete and steel is the best method of addressing carbon emissions. Use – Re-use – Recycle – Burn.

Appropriate marketable species will be needed to encourage greater use of timber.

Bio-diversity must not suffer in achieving this - deadwood should be retained & fauna not disturbed. Care not to remove too many nutrients or loss of protection of soils if considering removing all residues. Site specific management will be necessary.

Markets will need to be developed. To develop markets in for example wood fuel – it must be available to small users (households). Can FCW do this as markets and distribution methods need to be established?

Carbon used in the management of under managed woodlands must not be greater than the carbon benefits the under managed woodlands provide.

If use of biomass is to be encouraged it will have to compete with possibly cheaper supplies from abroad.

Better recovery of other timber residues would increase availability of bio-fuels.

The effect of increased use of woodfuel on air quality was questioned. Also if wood is burnt it must be replanted/regenerated to be truly renewable.

Education and training will be needed to enable owners to manage woodlands.

Increasing the use of Welsh timber will reduce the carbon “cost” of importing it from abroad.

Q 7. We propose to continue supporting initiatives to promote the use of wood as a way of addressing our low carbon policies

	Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Strongly	Don't
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	Agree			Disagree	know
Number of responses	128	66	1	1	1
%	65%	34%	1%	1%	1%

A well supported proposition.

Summary of responses

Sustainably managed woodlands should be multi-purpose – providing a range of eco-system services. They should not be just a carbon store.

Promote timber for construction. Focus on long lasting products which substitute for steel, concrete etc.

The importance of the contribution of fast growing conifers was highlighted by a number of respondents.

Wood use could be made a requirement for planning permission. Benefits of timber should be stressed

Can changes be made to building regulations to promote greater use of timber? Currently regulations mean that timber cannot be used for some construction purposes.

The benefits of wood need to be promoted.

Woodfuel projects need to be pump-primed and the establishment of local heating schemes is to be encouraged.

Wind farms in woodland settings should be acknowledged as a method of addressing low carbon policies.

Funding of new initiatives should not remove funds from managing existing woodlands. Other sources required.

Commercially valuable wood should not be redirected to woodfuel market.

Greater promotion of UKWAS certification is required with more wood coming from certificated woodlands.

Initiatives should support larger sustainable businesses.

The use of woodfuel, biomass and harvesting residues should be encouraged. FCW should promote woodfuel market.

WAG should show the way – with new government buildings being made from wood - using wood or biomass for heating.

Encouraging the increased use of Welsh timber will reduce the carbon “cost” of importing it from abroad.

Q 8. We are considering creating a system whereby compensatory planting is required if there is permanent removal of woodland for development

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Number of responses	121	54	11	5	8
%	61%	27%	6%	3%	4%

A well supported proposition.

Summary of responses

This outcome fits better in the *Welsh Woodlands* section – not in *Climate Change*.

There is strong support for this outcome from respondents. As an objective of the strategy is to increase woodland cover the importance of maintaining what is already there was recognised.

It was highlighted that there are many other ways of mitigating climate change in developments not just by replacing trees that are removed.

Compensatory planting should be the last resort – trees should be retained wherever possible.

Compensatory planting must not weaken the protection of woodlands from development that already exists.

Who will own and manage the woodlands and where will the funds come from to pay for them?

Where will the land to plant come from? Could this be brown-field sites? Could they include hedgerows and street trees?

The compensatory planting should be at least as good or better than the woodlands being removed.

It needs to be considered if other non-woodland habitats would be more appropriate. Also any new planting must not compromise other important habitats.

This requirement could have a significant impact on TAN 8 windfarm developments.

Ancient woodlands should be protected. The level of protection should not reduce to permit development.

Worthwhile if it can be achieved – but WAG needs to be careful it won't discourage development if no compensatory planting is possible.

Should be amended to read "trees and woodland". Compensatory planting is often stipulated in planning but backing this up with national policy will be beneficial.

Any access rights lost in the felled areas should be transferred to these compensatory woodlands.

Q 9. We propose that the scope of the strategy will include urban tree planting for climate change mitigation and wider environmental reasons.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Number of responses	86	97	6	4	4
%	44%	49%	3%	2%	2%

A well supported proposition.

Summary of responses

Majority of respondents agreed and recognised the benefits - however there is concern about ownership and future maintenance.

Concern about site suitability and species choice were highlighted. With consideration for potential damaging effects of trees.

The involvement of Unitary Authorities will be required to make this work.

Urban tree arisings could be used for heating.

Funding this should not be at the expense of grant aid in the forestry sector. Other funding sources would need co-ordination.

Trees should not compromise other species and habitats.

Q 10. We are considering supporting new planting of short-rotation forestry or coppice to produce wood fibre for wood fuel, where there is established local demand

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Number of responses	44	105	24	12	10
%	23%	54%	12%	6%	5%

A well supported proposition.

Summary of responses

Many respondents highlighted that SHORT ROTATION FORESTRY & SHORT ROTATION COPPICE are very different. There was some confusion as SHORT ROTATION COPPICE was seen by some as traditional coppice management of woodlands, whereas others recognised it as being agricultural in character.

Respondents wanted the best out of woodlands and generally felt that land which can grow timber should not be used for SHORT ROTATION COPPICE or SHORT ROTATION FORESTRY.

Where is the land coming from to do this? Will be competing with agriculture and sites for growing food.

Rather than new planting there were lots of other suggestions such as making better use of existing woodlands – farm woodlands in particular. Better management of the woodlands we have will provide similar products.

Grants provided for this should not be at the expense of traditional forestry.

There will need to be markets for these products – have they been developed? Supply chains will need to be established.

Better use of lop and top from commercial forestry could provide a supply of fuel.

SHORT ROTATION COPPICE is agricultural in nature – should this be dealt with by Agriculture Dept?

May be more effective to grow fast growing species in existing woodlands than create new ones.

Don't damage other habitats and bio-diversity to achieve this outcome.

If it results in a monoculture it will contradict with the "diversity" objective

Could provide alternative income for farmers.

WAG will need to support new schemes and develop market.

Urban trees will contribute towards the development of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS).

5.3 Woodlands for People

Q 11. We intend to encourage a more varied approach to involving more communities in woodlands, especially on the Assembly woodland estate

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Number of responses	68	90	27	2	13
%	34%	45%	14%	1%	7%

A well supported proposition.

Summary of responses

This proposal was generally welcomed. Involvement was seen as a method to develop communities' ownership of local woodlands. It would also educate people about the benefits of woodlands.

There was concern from the private woodland owners that greater community involvement in woodlands would compromise management. There was concern over the funding – it would need to be better grant aided in the private sector.

There were responses about the level of involvement - some wanted the opportunity for local people to have responsibility for direct management of local woods. There was a suggestion that a financial investment in any project would increase the commitment and value to community groups.

A number of suggestions for involvement of local people were proposed such as opportunities to collect firewood, volunteer work and arts activities.

Increased access can damage the environment and habitats.

A number felt this was more appropriate in urban areas.

The problems of antisocial behaviour would need to be addressed.

Community involvement is very time consuming – it will require additional funding. FCW will require more resources to do more of this.

Q 12. We propose broadening the scope of woodlands for learning from its current focus on children and supporting education for children, towards lifelong learning and skills development and training for adults

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Number of responses	82	104	6	2	5
%	41%	52%	3%	1%	3%

A well supported proposition.

Summary of responses

Generally respondents focussed on the *education* for young people aspect.

There was some concern about damage to the environment caused by increased usage.

Where will funding for this outcome come from?

FEI cited as a good example. With more funding for Forest Schools suggested.

Education was seen as a method of increasing demand for wood products and of raising awareness of the wider benefits trees and woodlands can provide. It would also increase understanding of the activities that take place when managing woodlands.

A range of methods suggested for improving education including – voluntary work and work experience.

A number of respondents felt that educating young people may raise their interest in the sector which could have a future positive impact on reducing skills shortages.

Q 13. We intend to prioritise the development of woodland recreation opportunities close to where people live – especially in areas of greatest need in terms of health inequalities

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Number of responses	51	110	29	3	5
%	26%	56%	15%	2%	3%

A well supported proposition.

Summary of responses

There was a general perception that targeting health and equality was aimed at urban areas and that rural areas would miss out.

Some thought opportunities should be available to all communities and all abilities, not just those of greatest need.

Tourism would suffer if recreation opportunities were targeted in these areas. Tourism provides a major source of income for Wales

Will need additional funding for both the public and private sector.

The importance of woodland recreation facilities being accessible from public transport routes or within walking/cycling distance was highlighted.

Again the need to protect the environment if there was to be increased use of woodlands was raised.

The impact of increased noise, off road motorcycling and antisocial activities was raised – this needed to be managed.

Facilities and initiatives must be long-term and fully resourced so they don't just become dumping grounds and fall into disrepair.

Consult local people and involve them in management to create the right sort of facilities – form basis of sustainability

Q 14. We propose to support the development of woodland-based small and emerging enterprises

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Number of responses	77	106	5	2	4
%	40%	55%	3%	1%	2%

A well supported proposition.

Summary of responses

Many respondents thought this was just about the timber sector rather than covering all potential uses of woodlands.

Businesses needed to be sustainable and costs and benefits evaluated. Small & emerging businesses are important but support should be focussed on businesses that will survive. Innovation, commitment & track record important.

Support should be available to all business – not just small and emerging ones. Funding should not compromise existing developed business.

In addition to support for this proposal it was suggested that achieving targets such as addressing climate change may be better achieved by supporting larger scale enterprises.

Simplification of funding and grant administration is needed. Grants needed for capital set-up, training and equipment

The provision and promotion of admin/marketing/product development assistance would be a method of support.

Don't divert funds from core woodland activities.

Entrepreneurs will need security of tenure if working in / using woodlands. Also security of supplies of materials.

Address the problems of getting planning approval for woodland based businesses.

Support businesses using timber from sustainable sources. With Forestry Commission Wales, Welsh Assembly Government, Environment Agency etc. showing support buy buying products from local businesses.

5.4 A Competitive Integrated Forest Sector

Q 15 a - f. How important do you think the following are to help the forest sector develop in response to the home-grown woodland resource becoming more diverse?

15			Not at all important	Not very important	Important	Very Important	MEAN SCORE
15a	Support for product innovation	No	3	13	93	80	3.3
		%	2%	7%	49%	42%	
15b	Promotion of wood use	No	0	4	68	117	3.6
		%	0%	2%	36%	62%	
15c	Accurate information concerning the quality and quantity of utilisable timber	No	0	11	81	97	3.5
		%	0%	6%	43%	51%	
15d	Support for market development	No	1	10	115	62	3.3
		%	1%	5%	61%	33%	
15e	Grants for capital investment	No	3	13	96	77	3.3
		%	2%	7%	51%	41%	
15f	Facilitation of UKWAS certification	No	13	50	90	28	2.7

		%	7%	28%	50%	15%	
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15 g – How else can we encourage the sector to take advantage of the new opportunities increased diversity will offer?

Summary of responses

More training made available and the funding for it. More diverse woodlands will require more people to manage them and undertake forest operations.

Grow what the market wants.

Changes to existing management systems and diversity could threaten timber supplies

Markets will need to be developed. Supply chains will need to be developed.

The quality of hardwood timber grown in Wales will be of inferior quality to that grown elsewhere – Welsh timber cannot compete.

Simplify grant schemes

Integrate UKWAS certification into *Better Woodlands For Wales* – or offer grants for owners to obtain certification.

Provide grants to make the changes to adapt to diversity.

Educate the public to use wood

Provide production forecasts for CCF

Address restrictions building regulations create to allow wider use of home grown timber in construction.

A number of respondents commented that there was an assumption that increased diversity was a foregone conclusion.

A number queried what had happened to *“Wales as a location for world-class forest industries”* - a theme from the 2001 strategy.

Q 16. What are the best market “pull” and grant “push” mechanisms, or combinations of both, to get more woodlands into sustainable management and producing usable wood products?

Summary of responses

Pull:

Promotion and development of timber use and markets were proposed by a number of respondents.

The importance of WAG and Local Authorities encouraging use of wood by example was identified by a number of respondents.

Improving education and training was needed in both raising awareness of timber and how to use it.

Higher timber prices

Improving markets for timber and a stable market

Many consultees expressed the view that growing regular long term supplies of what the market wants (with accurate production forecasts) will encourage investment in equipment by both users and producers/harvesting contractors.

Encourage use of certified wood by mills.

Diverse woodlands will need a diverse market – Grants for development eg. timber housing with development of infrastructure and appropriate planning conditions.

Set up carbon trading scheme for afforestation and existing woodlands.

Help organisations such as Woodfuel Wales raise awareness of benefits of clean and efficient use of woodfuel

To encourage farmers there is a need for management of farm woodlands to be considered as part of the Axis 2 review.

Push:

Many respondents stated grants and subsidies to fund harvesting, management and product development were the best methods.

Grants will be required to facilitate change – e.g. to fund uneconomic thinning

Grant aid small & medium projects such as woodfuel – to stimulate market.

Grants to develop marketing for and education of small woodland owners

A number of respondents requested *Better Woodlands for Wales* was reviewed and/or replaced with simpler system.

Grants were suggested to encourage the use of home-grown timber

Grant aid was requested to co-ordinate production from smaller timber producers to bring supplies together and enable buyers to source local timber.

Resolution of conflict with Single Farm Payment

Better publicity of grants – particularly for farmers was requested.

Support for UKWAS and encourage owners to get it.

Combination:

Combination of push and pull methods were favoured by a number of respondents.

Issues:

Care was required so that woodland ecology was not compromised by unsustainable management practices.

Grant aid must not create more unmanaged woodland just to satisfy the target for more native woodland.

Q 17 a-e What are the best ways to address the skills shortage in the forestry sector, particularly in the light of the new skills that will be needed in future?

17			Not at all effective	Not very effective	Effective	Very Effective	MEAN SCORE
17a	Continue to develop relevant training courses to meet the needs of employers	No	1	11	117	47	3.2

		%	1%	6%	66%	27%	
17b	More long term contracts for contractors to encourage skills retention and development and investment in new machinery	No	1	10	90	76	3.4
		%	1%	6%	51%	43%	
17c	Support the provision of practical modern apprenticeships	No	1	3	73	101	3.5
		%	1%	2%	41%	57%	
17d	Raise awareness of career opportunities through Woodlands for Learning	No	0	59	86	27	2.8
		%	0%	34%	50%	16%	
17e	Work with training organisations, industry and others to develop paths into employment	No	2	11	120	41	3.1
		%	1%	6%	69%	24%	

Q 17f- In what other ways can we address the skills shortage?

Summary of responses

Higher wages will encourage more people to enter the sector

Funding and subsidies for training.

Create security of jobs and career path. Concentrate on maintaining staff.

Set up apprenticeship schemes

More direct employment by FCW and Unitary Authorities – don't rely on contractors to do work.

Education to raise awareness of the sector – to promote forestry as an industry.

Produce high value timber to attract income to encourage skills development

Encourage the use of timber to increase income to develop employment in sector

Provide work experience opportunities and on-the-job training. Provide more training for staff.

Industry & training providers must work together to provide the correct training

5.5 ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Q18. We believe more accurate information on the location of ancient woodlands and veteran trees would enable us to offer them more protection

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Number of responses	53	68	56	8	13
%	27%	34%	28%	4%	7%

Broadly supported by the majority of respondents but with a significant minority in disagreement.

Summary of responses

Some who agreed with this proposal suggested the information should be easily accessible e.g. web-based. Should include hedgerow trees.

Of those who disagreed it was apparent that it was felt that enough was already known about these trees and more focus should go on doing things and looking to the future – manage what we have better.

There were varying degrees of knowledge about what is already protected – if included in strategy more clarification is needed.

Several respondents were concerned that publicity for ancient trees could attract unwanted attention and vandalism.

Education of the public and landowners was needed to ensure this worked. Need to raise awareness of the value of such trees and woodlands.

Make clear the archaeological importance of woodlands themselves.

A number of respondents wanted grants for protection and maintenance of such trees and woodlands. Particularly with regard to tree safety.

The encouragement of volunteer wardens would work towards their protection. It was suggested that Ancient Woodland and veteran trees should have similar protection to listed buildings.

Should be illegal to fell ancient woodlands. With individual veteran trees being identified in felling licence applications. Hedgerow trees should be included.

Several respondents suggested that FC Wales should be statutory consultee in planning process.

Q 19. We propose to improve the ecological functionality of the landscape by targeting our efforts around focal (for generalist species) and core (for specialist species) woodland networks

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Number of responses	21	90	17	6	51
%	11%	49%	9%	3%	28%

Broadly supported by the majority of respondents but with a significant minority who either disagreed or ticked 'don't know'.

Summary of responses

Many respondents felt they either didn't understand the question or didn't have enough knowledge to answer.

Many of those who agreed recognised that this would improve the connectivity of habitats and wider improvement of bio-diversity.

However funds to pay for it should not be diverted from the management of existing woodlands to achieve this,

Attention must be paid to non-woodland habitats also when considering this.

Will need to make appropriate decisions about courses of action (very detailed response from CCW on this aspect)

A number of respondents agreed with the proposal but did not want it to have an impact on woodland productivity.

There should be an integrated approach to this at catchment / landscape level. Conifer woodlands should also be included in creating connectivity.

Should be site related not decided following a desk exercise which resulted in "lines on maps".

This should be considered in the context of the Axis 2 review

Q 20. We propose to use the Wales Biodiversity Partnership's Non-native Species Forum to help tackle threats to woodland such as overgrazing (e.g. deer, sheep) and non-native invasive species (e.g. grey squirrel and rhododendron)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Number of responses	38	94	11	9	38
%	20%	49%	6%	5%	20%

Broadly supported by the majority of respondents but with a significant minority who either disagreed or ticked 'don't know'.

Summary of responses

The response from the Wales Bio-diversity Partnership stated that they viewed themselves as a co-ordinating group and would expect other groups to take the lead for addressing a Wales-wide problems such as grey squirrel or rhododendron control. They also commented that overgrazing by sheep does not fall within their remit.

Combating the problem of Grey Squirrels was highlighted by many respondents as being the most important issue to be addressed.

Clarification of who the Non Native Species Forum were and what their role would be in the process was required.

It will not be possible to tackle such a broad range of issues through one mechanism e.g. The Deer Initiative should address the specific deer problem. There should be no duplication of effort.

Funding to control these threats will be required. Where will this come from?

What is meant by non-native species? Not all are threats and many are important in evolving landscape. What about climate change and non-native species?

It was suggested by several respondents that forest pests are FC Wales responsibility and they should take the lead.

Sheep and deer are native species

Q 21. We intend to manage all Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites in line with best practice restoration guidance on the Assembly woodland estate and encourage this approach through grants for other woodlands

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Number of responses	69	86	25	16	7
%	34%	42%	12%	8%	3%

A well supported proposition.

Summary of responses

Concern was expressed by a number of respondents that productivity would be reduced and that more profitable woodlands would lose value as they were restored. This will have an impact on future timber production

This should not be at the cost of production for the timber industry. Consider the effect on future timber production. Only restore best sites. No blanket approach only where it is best suited.

How is this to be achieved? What is best practice? Are there any standards set? Is it published and where is it available?

Care would be needed as to which areas to restore – not all sites are suitable. Some better suited than others – some will not be restorable. Restore the best. This must be a slow process.

Future management of restored sites will be essential or we could be creating the unmanaged woodlands of the future

Better grants will be required by the private sector.

A number of respondents stated that if productive area lost as a result of restoration compensatory planting should be required.

Full scale restoration will not always be appropriate or achievable – however simply freeing crowns of veteran trees will be of benefit.

A number of respondents made comments regarding issues over a specific PAWS site (Wentwood) and its management by FC Wales.

Q 22. We propose to use appropriate and targeted new woodland planting to help reduce diffuse pollution, soil erosion and flood risk

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Number of responses	95	89	4	1	5
%	49%	46%	2%	1%	3%

A well supported proposition

Summary of responses

A major response related to encouraging farmers to be involved in planting trees. It was considered that upland areas would benefit the most from this additional planting. The problem would be how to make it happen. Funding will need to compete with agricultural grants.

Grants paid for this should not remove funding from managing existing woodlands. It was suggested by several respondents that the funding should come from the EA

Planting trees in flood risk areas and catchments will need to involve the EA and will need to be linked to other strategic plans to be beneficial. This will require an integrated approach

Need to demonstrate the benefits of these new woodlands to the wider public.

Concern was expressed by a number of respondents that this would be mainly broadleaves not more productive conifers. It was highlighted that managed coniferous woodlands can achieve this objective and provide timber as well.

A number of consultees argued that any new woodland will need to be of sufficient scale to achieve effects – all were referring to conifer woodlands.

Future management of woodlands needs to be considered.

Care was needed not to have negative effect on other favoured bio-diversity factors or archaeological sites.

Off-road motorcycle and 4WD pollution needs to be addressed

Forest operations can themselves be causes of erosion, pollution and flooding.

It was pointed out by one respondent that diffuse pollution would by definition be difficult to tackle using focused planting.

5.6 General Questions

Q 23. a) Within each chapter what impacts or trade-offs do you feel we have overlooked?

Summary of responses

- **Welsh Woodlands**

Insufficient emphasis on effect of grey squirrels

Landowners resistant to being told what to do. Implement change slowly and stick to it for 20yrs

Improve BWW eg can't cope with CCF

More reference to CCF across the whole consultation not just related to one question. There has been no mention of the 50% target FCW had set in the 2001 WWS.

It was felt by some respondents that woodlands are expected to be too many things. They will be difficult and expensive to manage. Coniferous woodlands can deliver many of the outcomes the strategy proposes.

There was no cross reference to UKWAS and how BWW tie in to the proposals.

None of objectives of the strategy can be met in private sector unless conifers are maintained.

.
Need to consider motivational differences between public & private woodlands. It is probably not possible to lump them together.

It was suggested there may be a loss of employment when converting to CCF.

Although there is a question in the consultation relating to CCF there is no outcome related to it. Should there be an outcome that relates to silviculture?

Concentrate on improving quality and managing coniferous woodlands. Instead of focus on native broadleaves.

- **Responding to Climate Change**

No reference to the use of waste wood

No mention of wind farms

A number of respondents raised the issue of incomplete evidence of the effects of climate change and felt that a 'change policy just in case' approach is fundamentally flawed.

The adaptation of woodlands to the possibility of long term climate change is best achieved by ensuring that species used are not at the extremes of their natural geographic range to allow them to cope with any change that might occur.

- **Woodlands for People**

How much a community can do to offer support and protection for local woodlands has not been recognised.

One respondent commented that the "Woodlands for People" section now includes recreation & health and well being which are large subjects themselves. It was felt they should have been given more coverage.

Several respondents commented that improving the ability of local groups to manage FCW woodlands should be encouraged.

A key element of the previous strategy 'To provide opportunities for communities to have their say in the management of woods close to where they live' has not been translated into an outcome of the new strategy. This is a serious oversight. This policy should be re-instated together with substantial provision of staff and a will to engage local communities in forest management planning - and if the communities are willing - implementation. People operating businesses outcome belongs elsewhere.

There should be greater emphasis on enabling private citizens in groups from all parts of society, to use the woodlands for whatever activity they see fit (excluding 4x4s and fire lighting courses!). It shouldn't just be a series of "projects".

- **A Competitive Integrated Forest Sector**

The importance of the existing forest industry should be fundamental to govt policy

Objectives will only be achieved if there is economic benefit – this has been overlooked. An economic analysis of the proposals are absent and there is no mention of cost or costed benefits or the impact on jobs. More attention needed to be placed on impacts of proposals on economics of commercial Forestry. Some felt the costs to the commercial sector had been ignored – who will pay for the proposed changes?

Economic impacts of CCF over commercial forests and the effect on the industry has not been addressed.

The loss of timber and the impact on the sector and employment was not considered. Why is there nothing about saw-mills and the jobs they bring to rural Wales? There was also no mention of other parts of the sector that could suffer - such as transport.

The strategy contains no proposals to expand the forest industry apart from increase woodland area.

Several respondents commented on and queried the fact that a review of FCW did not form part of this strategic review.

There was no mention of the use of WAG forestland for non-forest use e.g. affordable housing and TAN8 windfarm proposals. Where would income streams from these uses be directed? Will the money be used to directly fund forestry?

There was reference by a number of respondents to the omission of the objective – “Wales as a location for world class forest industries” which featured in the 2001 Strategy.

There is no mention of UKWAS or its importance in this section.

BWW and its involvement in delivering the strategy outcomes is not discussed.

The trade off diagram (page 32 of chapter 5) gives positive benefits from increased species and stand diversity of long term wood production, quality and value. There is not a shred of evidence to support this assertion, which appears to be no more than wish fulfilment. Neither does it mention the increase in costs which will be necessary to achieve each or any of these objectives, leave alone all of them.

- **Environmental Quality**

Some felt there was a lack of emphasis on the retention of ecological value of woodland and non-woodland habitats – a keystone of sustainable development

The historical and cultural importance of woodlands and how they are to be supported needs more emphasis.

There needs to be more emphasis on the acidification problem and the exacerbating effects that forestry cover (particularly conifers) have in some catchments. Acidification gets one mention "There are also on-going threats of acidification, soil erosion and compaction". There should be direction as to how this will be addressed.

The risks posed by the use of pesticides in forestry are not adequately addressed by the strategy which states "There is well-developed guidance on how to keep the use of pesticides in woodland management to a minimum...".

There should be greater focus on the impacts of forestry on aquatic ecology. These include the impacts on hydrology and soil erosion and the effects of closed canopy on stream ecology. It is surprising that the strategy does not recommend the review of the "Forests and Water Guidelines".

- **Other**

There is little analysis of potential solutions with reference to delivery mechanisms.

Concern was expressed that Forestry with its tiny budget is going to set out and try to deliver against an enormous agenda including health, education, community and environment when there are organisations with vastly larger budgets that should be supporting the benefits that forestry can deliver in these areas.

Q 23 b) Between the chapters, what impacts or trade-offs do you feel we have overlooked?

Summary of responses

- **Welsh Woodlands**

Insufficient emphasis on effect of grey squirrels and deer

There is a risk of making things too complicated which will lead to owners “closing the gate”. Focus on a range of proven species with identifiable markets with flexible management productive systems. Too much diversity will threaten markets and incomes.

Landowners resistant to being told what to do. Implement change slowly and stick to it for 20yrs

Importance of sound silviculture.

That privately owned woodlands must be financially viable

There needs to be an indication of costs to consider "Gold Standard" and see if it is economically practical / achievable. There needs to be an indication of grant aid that is available so decisions can be made regarding whether to choose new planting or on-going management of existing woodlands.

- **Responding to Climate Change**

There needs to be a trade off between Chapter 3 and Chapter 6 - how can you preserve ancient woodland or trees AND diversify the species and provenance to increase resilience to climate change?

- **Woodlands for People**

How much a community can do to offer support and protection for local woodlands needs to be emphasised.

There is insufficient appreciation of the disadvantages of public access – such as vandalism, wild-life crime, fires.

- **A Competitive Integrated Forest Sector**

Again a number of respondents commented on the omission of the objective – "Wales as a location for world class forest industries" which featured in the 2001 Strategy.

The importance of the existing forest industry should be fundamental to govt policy. Objectives will only be achieved if there is economic benefit – this has been overlooked.

Waste wood, off-cuts from sawmills and waste from roadside tree maintenance needs to be recognised as a source of fuel.

Generally a number of respondents felt there was an under-representation of timber industry.

It was important to recognise that the "forest sector" includes a range of industries not directly related to trees such as tourism.

A number of respondents felt that the consultation did not contain enough really positive information about the Welsh forest industry. There was a failure to acknowledge value of commercial conifer forestry. Concern was expressed about the future impact on the industry on some of the proposals.

A number of respondents were concerned that economic matters and the consequences to the trade of the implementation of CCF, had not been given sufficient coverage. There was concern that these possible changes away from the emphasis on commercial forestry cannot be ignored, and would be economically disastrous for both the FC and industry.

Some form of FCW mission statement regarding supporting the timber growers - rather than the rather vague "integrated forest sector" would be welcome.

- **Environmental Quality**

Concern that there was a lack of emphasis on the retention of ecological value of woodland and non-woodland habitats.

The possibility of new forest industries creating pollution was highlighted.

Consider ecological benefits of conifer forests – they are not just timber factories.

- **Better Woodlands for Wales**

A number of respondents commented on the BWW grant scheme.. As the main deliver of the strategy in the private sector it was felt it should be simplified and be less bureaucratic.

It was felt to be very complicated and time consuming for small applications. The strategy recognises the role of small woodlands, linear tree features, individual and urban trees, to deliver appropriate management a simple grant scheme is essential – possibly administered separately from BWW.

The consultation paper gave scant recognition as to the role of BWW in delivering strategic objectives.

- **Forestry Commission Wales**

A number of respondents queried why FCW was not being reviewed at this time. Some questioned their dual role as woodland managers and regulators.

- **Windfarms**

A number of respondents queried that windfarms were not mentioned in the consultation paper. Particularly as FCW woodlands were to be development sites.

- **Other:**

The true nature of multi-purpose woodland management has not been grasped as separate chapters have different management objectives.

Could management of woodlands be co-ordinated? A joined-up approach involving more than one owner.

The Welsh Assembly and its advisors, Forestry Commission Wales, have a wide range of information and data about the forest resource in Wales. There is very little evidence from the consultation document that any of this has been used to analyse the consequences of the draft proposals. Yet we understand that the Assembly intends to move quickly from consultation to publication of this strategy in early 2009. There is concern at the lack of economic analysis of the detailed proposals in this document and the emphasis on process rather than outcomes.

Q 24. a) We aim to ensure that where our strategy involves people it is truly inclusive and representative of the population we serve. Can you see any areas where a particular section of the population might be unfairly disadvantaged by our proposals?

	Yes	No	Unsure
Number of responses	75	45	36
%	48%	29%	23%

Roughly half of the respondents felt the strategy consultation had disadvantaged parts of the population. The responses are summarised below by sectors of the population affected.

Q 24 b) Can you see any areas where a particular section of the population might be unfairly disadvantaged by our proposals? If yes please explain

Q 24 c) How could we amend proposals to be more equitable?

Summary of responses

b) Landowners & managers

c) How could we amend proposals to be more equitable?

Encourage investment in simple silvicultural management regimes

Persuade the public and private landowners that what the Assembly are proposing is beneficial

Realise that forestry must be paid for whatever the objective.

Do not compromise property rights.

Consider benefits of commercial forestry and that woodland management comes in waves of fashion. Wall to wall SS was overdone but now favouring native spp with grey squirrel problem is susceptible.

Provide a grant scheme simpler than BWW

Without extensive discussion and agreement with private woodland owners, farmers and other landowners many of your assumptions and proposals may well impact of these people without their ability to respond. I am not sure that this type of 'consultation' is truly that, it is more akin to an 'approval rating' for your proposals. Consultation requires an exchange of ideas with change and compromise to reach a consensus.

Allow single species stands & forests within the current guidelines & Forestry Standard which go far enough to increase the ecological & recreational value of woodlands.

b) Commercial / Business sector / and their employees

c) How could we amend proposals to be more equitable?

Do not impact on business sector with less productive "natural" woodlands. As the dominant timber FCW should not adopt "commercially irrational" strategies.

Recognise the importance of timber production and processing to the Welsh economy. Social improvements and benefits can be made but accommodated while producing conifer timber. Recognise the social, economic and environmental benefits well-managed productive woodlands can deliver.

Keep some woodland for commercial/environmental purposes – can't do everything with every woodland. Don't create a policy based on what a wood may have been like at a particular point in history.

Projects and jobs will be at risk if grants are diverted from production forestry. Extra funding will be needed for all objectives.

Improve grants for planting conifers

Remove "default" management system for CCF

Provide more practical ideas on how industry can survive.

FCW should focus on establishing and maintaining woodlands with specific objectives.

Contact more companies working in the sector & allow employees to respond.

b) Communities

c) How could we amend proposals to be more equitable?

Better community consultation

Consider reviewing proposals for wind farms on FCW land

Support existing businesses so local people are not disadvantaged by new incomers being grant aided.

b) People (general)

b)Horse riders c) Commit to strategy that treats riders on equal basis to walkers and cyclists in all forestry areas.

b) young people c) may be useful to provide child/school information summary so they will be able to comment on what affects their future.

b) people outside areas targeted for grants and those not counted as local c) Will have to target grants so will be inequality.

b) Those with mental health problems. c) give more emphasis on beneficial effects of woodlands and trees on mental health..

b) Urban environmentally disadvantaged and rural poor – c) inclusion and partnership working.

Q 25 Please comment on any other aspect of the proposals that are not already addressed above

Summary of responses

A number of respondents queried what has happened to the third strategic objective in the 2001 *Woodlands for Wales*, which was “make Wales a location for world class forest industries”. They recognised the issue of climate change but felt that more research and other evidence was needed on the future impacts. There was concern that consideration of the current role of trees and woodlands was required before making any major changes, which may effect future timber production.

Again concern over the need to control grey squirrels was stressed by a number of respondents.

The costs of achieving proposed outcomes have not been mentioned. It was felt that the strategy should not be an unachievable wish list.

If public are to be involved in their woodlands they need to participate in the planning & management & development of policy not just consulted. Needs to be evidence that their comments have been considered

There was insufficient coverage of waste wood and felling residues as a source of renewable energy.

There was insufficient focus on protected species and the measures that should be taken to protect them. The need for integrated management plans for such species should be stressed.

There was no mention on the use of chemicals.

Windfarms should be included in the strategy as Assembly woodlands will be the location of a number of developments.

The development of the 5-year action plan and monitoring framework will need to link with the BAP process in Wales.

Where reference is made in the proposals to “woodland wildlife” can this be changed to woodland biodiversity”.

It will be important to work with the new Wales Ecosystem Groups and Species Expert group to access expertise and information and to help identify the best sites to meet biodiversity objectives and targets as set out in BAP.

A number of respondents requested a review and simplification of BWW

There needs to be a distinction made between “commercial” woodlands and “natural woodlands”. They serve two separate purposes - the consultation proposals merge them into an homogeneous whole.

Concerned about urban trees and their future management..

Concern was expressed that the consultation focused too tightly on objective of increasing Welsh forestry without consideration in context with other policies. Some proposals could conflict with TAN 8 policies in which Welsh forests have a key role to play. Also the opportunities to develop partnerships to improve forests and amenity works were disregarded.

Off-road vehicles had not been mentioned in the consultation.

The use of Assembly woodlands for other uses such as housing and quarrying has not been mentioned.

There was concern expressed by some respondents about the indication that the minister insisted on a policy revision to meet the aspirations of the One Wales document which is a party-political manifesto that has next to nothing to say about forestry. Is this the beginning of the politicisation of forest policy in Wales? Although there is a political economy of forestry to have it subject to politically motivated review after every election is likely to compromise the long-term integrity of strategies which are ostensibly a vision for 50 years not the 3-4 years of a political term.

The recognition of woodlands as important green spaces in urban areas was welcomed. However it is important that the revised strategy is recognised and implemented by the Local Authorities in urban planning policy. Do Local Development Plans provide an adequate means of achieving this?

It would be helpful to have a reference to more information about the Plant! Programme.

The Welsh National Forest should a specific area of land which WAG and FCW should identify.

The consultation contained no comment or justification as to why such a high percentage of coniferous forest is owned by the Assembly. This is a potential hindrance to a competitive forest industry the issue of forest ownership should be considered. There is currently a high demand for commercial woodlands in Wales from investors. Sale of Assembly woodlands would release funds for reinvestment into community woodlands and provide a greater diversity of ownership and management approach. Strategic changes by WAG could have a major impact on the industry, as FCW is the major timber supplier.

The importance of inland water within Assembly woodlands was highlighted and needed to be recognised as a valuable asset.

Greater recognition within the strategy of the value of game shooting as an incentive to manage woodlands was requested.

Q26. In terms of this consultation, please rate the following

26	In terms of this consultation, please rate the following	Very Poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	MEAN SCORE
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26a	The overall consultation process	N	6	34	110	14	2.8
		O					
		%	4%	21%	67%	9%	
26b	Accessibility of information on the consultation	N	6	24	107	25	2.9
		O					
		%	4%	15%	66%	15%	
26c	The clarity and presentation of the consultation document	N	7	49	88	22	2.8
		O					
		%	4%	30%	53%	13%	
26d	The overall tone and content of the consultation document	N	13	49	89	16	2.6
		O					
		%	8%	29%	53%	10%	
26e	Ease of responding to the consultation	N	3	22	115	29	3.0
		O					
		%	2%	13%	68%	17%	
26f	Level of feedback we intend to provide to consultees	N	6	34	110	14	2.8
		O					
		%	4%	21%	67%	9%	

Some people felt that FCW should have held public events with question and answer session, and an event to report results to date and run workshops to assess immediate feedback and thoughts.

Some people felt the document needed to be written in Plain English and it would have benefited by the removal of jargon –

More explanation of forums etc

Many people found the questionnaire difficult to navigate and would have liked it to have the ability to spell check and the use of formatting tools.

Some people felt that the consultation process was full of leading questions and statements.

A lot of people were unsure of how 26F - (level of feedback to consultees) would be achieved.

Some people found it difficult to answer the questions on a basis of agree or not agree many of the questions can't be answered accurately in this format.

Some people felt that a lot of the questions were leading questions. This does not leave much scope for true consultation. It feels like the decision has already been made.

Some people were concern with how the consultation would be interpreted. The weighting of the results e.g. not all responses should be rated equally and those by organisations or individuals with knowledge of the topic should be rated more highly than those with a passing interest.

Some concerns regarding Internet access and download speeds that may have caused some problems. Also how people found out about the consultation if they did not have access to a computer.

6 General comments

Keep it shorter

Outline the policy drivers in each section.

Consultation by this sort of medium is much better than via meetings, which are costly, time consuming and attended by everyone you would expect to see, and limited fresh faces. Identify the responder's interest/exposure to Welsh forestry, be they're a walker, bird watcher or forester. Parts of the following questions are P.C and in some ways offensive to the genuine responder, e.g. I am not Welsh but work in Wales, own a Welsh wood and support the rugby team--where does that leave me in the pecking order of interest?

Remove the role of Forestry Commission as forest policy providers for the WAG to separate from that of managers of the national forest estate and administering grant aid and enforcing forest legislation.

We are very grateful for such a robust and enthusiastic document, which we would like to support, and for the prompt way in which copies were supplied to us.

The good and poor does not allow me to say ok, but not brilliant! A column between 2/3.

The consultation process is very poor. I have worked in the forest industry in Wales for 30 years and have never felt that I had any say on how the forests should develop. Wales should not be allowed to become an area purely just for tourism. It needs to produce something and what better than timber?

The timing of the consultation period over the summer has realistically reduced the time available. - avoid summer months.

Provide more data and details of what is being proposed (e.g. sums available for grants, focal species/habitats for conservation etc.). Ask more open questions rather than simply asking for preference scores on FCW ideas.

Many in the forestry and forest products sector, including professional foresters, have found it difficult to respond to some questions, because of their unfamiliarity with certain specialist subjects and this has undoubtedly limited responses from some quarters. This has been a very time-consuming document to complete and time is an increasingly precious commodity for those in the private sector. The opportunity to participate in the consultation is appreciated, but if it could have been made easier/more straightforward, a greater level of engagement may have resulted.

Appendix 1

List of respondents – listed alphabetically

Abertillery Communities First
Afonydd Cymru (Wales Rivers)
Aitchesse Ltd. Arkady Ltd. Stakis Forestry, The Forestry Partnership
AJ Charltons
Allt Pwll Priddogg, Llandovery
Alternative Woodland Management
Andrew Bronwin & Co
AOM Associates
ARC Woodlands Ltd.
AW Jenkinson Forest Products
BASC (British Assoc Shooting & Conservation)
Bat Conservation Trust
Blaen Bran Community Woodland
BSW Timber
Bwlch Sais
C Lewis Timber Haulage
CADW
CALU - Bangor Uni
Cambrian Mountains Society
Cambrian Woodlands Ltd
Carmarthenshire County Council
CCW
Cefn Coch Estate
Cefn Croes Action Group
Charles Ransford & Son Ltd
City & County of Swansea
Clifford Jones Timber Ltd
Clwyd Badger Group
Clwydian Range AONB
Coed Cadw - Woodland Trust
Coed Cymru
Coed y Bobl Community Woodland Trust
Coedwig Gymunedol Long Wood Community Woodlands
Confor
Continuous Cover Forestry Group
Corwen Forestry Ltd.
Country Landowners and Business Association
Cymdeithas Eryri Snowdonia Society
D Rees Forest Nurseries
David Rice Forestry
Dyfnant and Vyrnwy Horse Riders and Carriage Drivers Association
Edystone Limited
Elwy Wood
Environment Agency Wales
ETC Sawmills
Euroforest
Farmers' Union of Wales
FE Woodlands
Flintshire County Council
Forest School Wales
Forestry Direct
Fountains plc
Friends of Anglesey Red Squirrels
Glasfryn Fencing & Sawmills
Golyfa Gwydyr
Greener Aberystwyth Group

Groundwork MT & RCT
Groundwork Wales for Groundwork in Wales
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
Gwynedd County Council
Hay Woods
Hugh Wheeldon & Co
Institute of Chartered Foresters
Maelor Forest Nurseries
Merthyr Tydfil Environment Partnership
MG Harvesting
Miller Land Management
National Parks Wales
Neath Port Talbot CBC
Neath Port Talbot Countryside Environmental Group
NFU Cymru
Pathfinder Renewable Energy
Paul Raymond-Barker & Co
Pembroke Dock Town Council
Pembrokeshire county council
Pembs CPRW
Peter Chambers Ltd.
Pontrilas Group Packaging
Pontrilas Timber
Ramblers Cymru
Rob Marsh Woodland Services
RSPB
RWE Npower
SJ Archer & Son Timber Haulage
Small Wood Services
Small Woods Association
Softwood Services
St Madoc Christian Youth Camp
Steve Lloyd Timber
Sustainable Forest Management
Teifi Timber products Ltd.
The Deer Initiative
The Very Efficient heating Company
Tilhill Forestry Ltd
Tir Coed
Trallwm Woodlands
Tree Nurseries of Powys Association
Trustees of Felinfach Estate
Tubex Ltd.
UKFPA
UPM Tilhill
Wales Biodiversity Partnership
Wales Community Woodland Association
Wales Tourism Alliance
Wales Wild Land Foundation and Wildland Network
Wales Environment Link
Welsh Canoeing Association
Woodfuel Wales
Woodknowledge Wales
Woodlands for Learning Forum
Wrexham CBC

In addition there were 104 responses received from individuals who did not align themselves with any specific group or organisation.