

Questions from our consultation

This form sets out the questions we ask in a consultation on restoring and expanding open habitats from woods and forests in England that we launched on 12 March 2009. The consultation ends on 5 June 2009. You can find the consultation at www.forestry.gov.uk/england-openhabitats-consultation or contact Dominic Driver, Forestry Commission for further information (contact details below).

Comments on any aspect of the consultation are welcome, but we are particularly interested in your responses to the questions below. This form is available at www.forestry.gov.uk/england-openhabitats-consultation.

Your name:	Anon 05.06.09D
Your organisation (if any):	
Date:	5.6.09

No	Question.
The nature of the change	
1.	Does your aspiration for the scale of the policy fit within our calculated range of 5,600 to 30,000 ha of restoration or expansion of open habitats from woodland or forest over 10 to 15 years? This is 370 to 3,000 ha each year. What level of intervention would you prefer and how is this justified?
As low an area as possible. The UK needs more natural/production woodland not less. Why can't the two exist within each other in a well managed forest environment. Depleting the country's forest resource to make way for heathland is absurd when there are better more cost effective areas of land that heathland could be suited to i.e farmland and greenbelt land.	
Desired outcomes	
2.	Have we developed a reasonable list of desired outcomes of the policy? Do you wish to suggest any amendments?
No	
Measuring the success of the policy	
3.	Have we developed a reasonable set of indicators for evaluation? Do you wish to suggest any amendments to this indicator list?
No	
Policy proposals	
Elements present in the policy	
We will treat woodland and open habitats as potentially mutually beneficial	
4.	Do you agree that woodland and open habitats are potentially mutually beneficial?

No	Question.
	Is promotion of this idea helpful in gaining support for open habitat restoration and expansion from woodland?
	Agree. So why deplete one to gain the other. A multi age structured conifer wood will host just as much if not more biodiversity than a heathland. Why not create heathland around woodland margins, ride systems and areas of open ground. Where the two already exist manage accordingly.
A presumption against removal of 'mature native woodland'	
5.	Do you agree with the principle that there should be a presumption against removal of ancient and 'mature native woodland'?
	Yes, but extended to all woodland.
6.	What do you think of our proposed outline definition of 'mature native woodland'?
	OK
We will expect practitioners to help local users to participate in development of the initial proposals	
7.	Do you agree that local participation in decision making is helpful? What is your preferred option for how we should apply this element?
	Very
We will promote mechanisms for prioritising woodland removal at a regional level	
8.	Do you agree that prioritisation at a regional level is appropriate for this policy?
	Yes, should you go ahead with deforestation prioritisation at a regional level is paramount as it is not suitable everywhere.
We will apply a framework for evaluation to projects	
9.	Do you agree with this framework for evaluation? What is your preferred option for how we should apply this element?
	N/A
10.	How much and what kind of support do you think we should give to practitioners to help them evaluate their projects using this framework?
	N/A
To avoid net deforestation in England we will try not to go over a threshold rate of woodland removal due to restoring and expanding open habitats.	
11.	Do you agree with the principle of an England scale threshold rate of woodland

No	Question.
	removal? What is your preferred mechanism by which such a threshold could be applied to policy?
	Yes. Any lost woodland area should be replanted to compensate. Should a private woodland owner wish to clearfell an area, re-stock planting must take place to ensure woodland cover. Why can't this apply to heathland restoration.
12.	Do you consider that the proposed threshold is about right, too high or too low?
	N/A see above.
Key variables	
What is the balance between achieving biodiversity objectives and the need to reduce green house gas emissions?	
13.	Is there a way, in the short term, we can better estimate the contribution to biodiversity objectives from different levels of restoration or expansion of open habitats?
	No. Deforestation will lead to a significant loss of biodiversity long before any is gained from increased heathland due to the dramatic loss of woodland habitat.
14.	Do you agree that management practices to minimise carbon emissions during restoration or expansion of open habitats should be adopted? Do you agree with the outline practices presented? How could we best ensure that such practices are adopted?
	Yes. The best way to minimise carbon emissions is not to carry out deforestation of under mature trees but to manage the woodlands as production forests, whether conifer or broadleaf.
15.	Do you agree that it is appropriate to include impact on long-term average carbon store <i>and</i> loss of potential to substitute timber for higher carbon materials and fuel in the calculations on carbon balance?
	Yes
16.	Where do you think the appropriate balance lies between achieving biodiversity objectives and the need to reduce carbon emissions? What processes might help to make this judgement?
	Nature is the process that should make this judgement. Heathland will occur naturally should climate change and nature wish. This will be carried out without the need for deforestation thus reduced carbon emissions.
Should we be managing open habitats to keep them in 'favourable condition' or should we adopt a more dynamic approach to land management?	
17.	Outside SSSIs, do you agree that a more dynamic attitude to land management could deliver equivalent or greater gains for open habitats and species than one where success for all sites is based on assessments of condition as applied to SSSIs?

No	Question.
	Yes, create more mult diverse habitats to encourage more varied species not just one habitat with a handfull of species. Woodlands offer far more diversity and can be managed to create more without the need for loss of comercial timber.
18.	If so, how might such an approach be developed? Is there scope for modifying the conservation objectives on some SSSIs to incorporate a similar approach? If not, do you consider that the endpoint for all restoration proposals should be judged against favourable condition as defined for SSSI habitats?
N/A	
What level of woodland removal due to restoring or expanding open habitats could avoid a significant negative impact on the timber industry?	
19.	Can you provide any information on the likely links between any reduction in timber production and economic activity in the timber sector?
N/A	Why only look at woodland to convert to heathland.
Different approaches to applying policy	
20.	Which of the three approaches by which we make decisions about woodland removal is your preferred option? Can you see any alternative types of approach based either on a combination of these approaches or on new ideas?
N/A	
The role of compensatory planting	
21.	What is the appropriate role of compensatory planting in this policy?
N/A	To ensure there is no net loss of timber due to deforestation for creating open habitats. It is hard enough to gain public support in comercial forestry without depeleting our tree stock further.
Factors to consider when deciding which policy is likely to work best	
22.	Have we developed a reasonable set of questions for informing the decision on which policy is best? Do you wish to suggest any changes to the list of questions?
N/A	
Implications for delivery mechanisms	
23.	Have we missed any major implications for delivery mechanisms? Would any be particularly welcome or unwelcome to you?
N/A	Any deforestation should not take place without rigourous consultation as this could cause a lot more damage than good. Don't be short sighted in trying to recreate a snap shot in time. We should be growing timber while climate change allows. The rest will come naturally.

No	Question.
Other comments We welcome your input on any other aspect of this consultation.	
N/A	

Please include the "information about you" form with your response.¹

Please send your completed forms to:

[Dominic Driver](#)

Senior Projects Officer | Policy and Programme Group | Forestry Commission England

620 Bristol Business Park | Coldharbour Lane | Bristol | BS16 1EJ

0117 906 6003 | 07779 627668 | oh.consultation@forestry.gov.uk

Fax: 0117 931 2859

By 17.00hrs, Friday 5 June 2009.

¹ See www.forestry.gov.uk/england-openhabitats-consultation for a copy.