

**A JOINT ACCORD BETWEEN ENGLISH NATURE
AND THE FORESTRY COMMISSION (ENGLAND)**



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Purpose

English Nature and the Forestry Commission have a common wish to see trees and woodland enriching the environment, the economy and people's quality of life, in both urban and rural areas.

This statement sets out how we will work to achieve this shared aim. Our starting points are the Government's overarching policies on forestry and the environment.

The Forestry Commission is the Government department, within the Defra family, with responsibility for woodland and forestry matters. This includes development of policy, regulating tree felling and providing advice and incentives for woodland creation and management. The Commission's own estate, managed by Forest Enterprise, extends to 220,000 ha and includes both woodland and non-woodland SSSIs. The Forestry Commission's mission is to protect and expand England's woodlands, and to increase their value to society and the environment.



English Nature is the Government's statutory adviser on nature conservation, and reports to Defra. It pays incentives, carries out research and implements regulations relating to both protected sites and species. SSSIs cover approximately 1m hectares, and it also has direct management responsibility for 84,000 ha of National Nature Reserves. English Nature's mission is to ensure that future generations can enjoy and benefit from a wealth of wildlife as a major part of their quality of life.



ENGLISH NATURE AND THE FORESTRY COMMISSION (ENGLAND) WOODLAND AND BIODIVERSITY POLICIES

The England Forestry Strategy expresses the Government's aims for trees, woodland and forestry in England. It has four programmes and biodiversity is relative to all four:

Rural Development
Economic Regeneration
Environment and Conservation
Recreation, Access and Tourism



The Government published the England Biodiversity Strategy in 2002, and the vision stated for the Woodland and Forestry sector is:

"Woodland and forests, managed and created to enhance both woodland and non-woodland species and habitats, that at the same time provide sustainable goods, environmental services and recreational benefits enhancing people's quality of life."

English Nature wishes to see woods rich in wildlife that also support a prosperous and sustainable forestry sector. Its priorities for woodland and forestry are set within the context of the England Forestry Strategy, the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and the England Biodiversity Strategy. Forestry and woodland features in each of our major work areas:

- Designated sites
- Wider environment
- People and Policies
- Strategic science
- Communication



Forestry Commission (including Forest Enterprise) and English Nature therefore share many areas of common interest in delivering woodland biodiversity targets and in ensuring that forestry does not have an adverse effect on non-wooded habitats and species.



ENGLISH NATURE AND THE FORESTRY COMMISSION (ENGLAND) AREAS OF JOINT WORKING

Both organisations need to work closely together in the following areas:

Policy development

Advice and development of Government policy and legislation, at a UK, country and regional level:

- Sustainable development and quality of life
- Conservation of biodiversity and related cultural heritage
- Forest, agricultural and land use policy
- Environmental protection (soil, water and atmospheric pollution)
- Urban regeneration and sustainable communities
- Rural development, employment and enterprise

Designated sites

Promotion and approval of management of woodland within SSSIs, and the management of other habitats within the FC estate:

- Approval of grant schemes and felling licence applications for SSSIs
- Removal of woodland from non-woodland SSSIs
- Creation and management of NNRs on the FC estate

Protection and management of woodland and wildlife

Delivering regulation, incentives, advice and promotion on the management of habitats and species:

- Felling licences & EIAs for forest creation and removal
- Species protection and wildlife crime
- Targeting of incentives for woodland creation and management
- Promoting sustainable deer populations
- Publishing advice and management guidelines
- Maintaining the Ancient Woodland inventory
- Development and delivery of HAPs and SAPs

Knowledge, information and research

Improving our understanding of the natural environment and reporting on progress towards targets:

- Information on the condition of SSSIs and woodland habitats
- Improved understanding of the functioning of woodland communities
- Scientific research into the conservation needs of priority species
- Better evidence on the contribution of woodland and wildlife to rural economies
- Enhancing opportunities for life-long learning

People, woodland and wildlife

Enhancing the appreciation of woodland and its wildlife by local communities.

- Participative planning for publicly owned sites
- Consultation on management proposals for other sites
- Enhancing local environments and providing 'greenspace' in urban areas
- Providing opportunities for environmental education and life-long learning
- Developing and promoting the quality of life and health benefits associated with woodland and wildlife, for both rural and urban communities

ENGLISH NATURE AND THE FORESTRY COMMISSION (ENGLAND) PERFORMANCE TARGETS

There are three key areas where the organisations can mutually assist one another in delivery of Government performance targets, as set out in the England Biodiversity Strategy. Progress against these targets will act as indicators of the success of our partnership:

SSSIs:

- Achieving 95% of SSSIs in favourable or recovering condition by 2010
- Achieving favourable or recovering condition in 95% of SSSIs where the FC has statutory responsibilities by 2010



Woodland & Farmland birds

- Reverse the long-term decline in the populations of woodland birds by 2020 as measured annually against underlying trends using the Woodland Birds Index.
- Reverse the long-term decline in the populations of farmland birds by 2020 as measured annually against underlying trends using the Farmland Birds Index.

Habitat Action Plans

- Make progress against the targets set out in the Habitat and Species Action Plans
- Lead implementation of the UK Biodiversity Habitat Action Plans for woodland and wood-pasture in England for delivery by 2015 - which includes preventing loss of native woodland, expanding the area by 10% and increasing the area by 10% through restoration of plantations.



We will develop a close and effective working relationship, based on the 'core values' of each organisation, and expressed in the following ways:

- Developing mutual respect, trust and an open approach
- Ensuring that we, and our customers, are clear over our individual roles and responsibilities, and avoid any duplication of effort
- Taking innovative approaches to achieve desired outcomes and develop efficient 'joined-up' working procedures
- Working on the basis of sound evidence, rigorous analysis and professionalism
- Pooling resources to develop initiatives of mutual interest
- Sharing information and data to promote understanding and avoid any 'surprises'
- Ensuring that where differences arise they are recognised or resolved in an objective manner
- Identifying opportunities for joint publicity and shared promotion of our achievements.

This is a list of the key actions we aim to complete together during the first year (2003 - 2004) of our Joint Statement of Intent.

Policy development

- 1) Secure approval for the final HAP for native woodland, develop a delivery plan for all the woodland HAPs and agree methods of monitoring progress against the various targets.
- 2) Develop policy and practice on the removal of woodland and plantations from sites with potential for restoration to priority open ground habitats.

Designated sites

- 3) Develop revised procedures for formal approval of woodland management on SSSIs which reflects our respective obligations under the CROW Act and Habitats Regulation.
- 4) Develop a complete picture of the condition of all SSSIs which either comprise or include woodland, and agree ways of pro-actively promoting action on those not in favourable or recovering condition.
- 5) Complete a similar analysis of the condition of all SSSIs on the FC estate, accompanied by a costed schedule of work necessary to bring all such sites into favourable condition.

Protection and management of woodland and wildlife

- 6) Initiate a pilot survey of grazing levels in woodland, testing the provisional methodology developed with Defra.
- 7) Working with Defra and RDS, agree a way forward on deer management, including a review of the Deer Initiative.

Knowledge, information and research

- 8) Investigate the extent and nature of discrepancies between the Ancient Woodland Inventory and the National Inventory of Woodland and Trees
- 9) Develop a shared evidence base in support of quality of life, health and access benefits.

People, woodland and wildlife

- 10) Produce a protocol and criteria to guide decisions on the restoration of derelict or brownfield land, which will ensure an integrated approach to the conservation and re-creation of both woodland and non-woodland habitats.
- 11) Hold a joint meeting of English Nature, Forestry Commission and Community Forest staff to develop initiatives to enhance and promote the value of urban wildlife and woodland as a resource for local communities.