

Seeing the Wood for the Trees

A Forestry and Woodlands Framework for South East England

Responses to Consultation

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Executive summary

The consultation on a regional forestry framework for South East England ran from 3rd March to 28th May 2004. There were 111 written responses to the consultation.

1. Respondents were asked to classify themselves into a 'respondent type'. 28% of responses were from non-governmental organisations or charities, 20% were from woodland owners, managers or contractors. 29% were from individuals, the remainder from organisations.
2. Overall, the response to the consultation was positive with most respondents welcoming the broad thrust of the document. Most respondents made suggestions and comments rather than criticisms. The sheer amount of work and thought that went into the responses is testament to the high level of interest in the future of the region's woodlands.
3. Most respondents welcomed the 'vision' and introductory sections though many added qualifying comments. The most common qualifying comments were that financial viability of woodland management is vital for the success of all the outcomes of the document, and that there needs to be some indication of the diversity found among woodlands around the region. The issue of financial viability was referred to repeatedly throughout responses to the consultation from all kinds of respondent.
4. For Theme 1, 'Better places for people to live', the key concerns appeared to be:
 - The problems that public access brings for owners and/or the fact that woods need extra resources if access is to be managed properly (many saying that the need for such resources should be acknowledged in the document)
 - The potential conflict between public access and the biodiversity or heritage value of sensitive sites.
 - With regard to community projects and activities, we should not be trying to reinvent the wheel but should work with the wide range of existing initiatives.
 - The importance of involving communities, not just in projects and activities in woodland settings, but also in caring for and creating woodlands and delivering the outcomes of the framework.
 - The important role of planning authorities in ensuring that green spaces are part of new developments.
5. For Theme 2, 'Enhanced biodiversity and environment', the key concerns appeared to be:
 - There was not enough in the document about aspects of the environment other than biodiversity. This includes a lack of emphasis on landscape, historic environment and archaeology.
 - The emphasis on active management. Many strongly supported this, saying it is what has led to the rich biodiversity in the first place but others cautioned against giving the impression that it is appropriate in every case.
 - There needs to be more emphasis on the damage caused by deer and, particularly, by grey squirrels in the whole document. Many from respondent type 'woodland owners, managers or contractors' saw this as the most important threat facing woodlands.
 - There were some concerns that a 'landscape-scale' approach means universal management prescriptions or 'wall-to-wall trees'.

6. For Theme 3, 'A sustainable economy', the key concerns appeared to be:
 - Tourism will not bring income to support the management of the tourism asset, i.e. woodlands. This needs to be addressed or such an outcome is not particularly desirable.
 - Need to recognise that the sale of woodland products, especially timber, would benefit the delivery of most of the other outcomes in the document.
 - A need for realism about which woodland products can be supplied, coupled with frustration that regional bodies will carry out research and feasibility studies but not make investment to support supply chains and processing facilities.
 - The importance of quality products and a long term approach to management.

7. For Theme 4, 'Securing the future of our woodland resources', the key concerns appeared to be:
 - Protection of ancient woodlands is considered a vitally important outcome. Such protection should not stop at ancient woods, nor should it lead to a preservationist approach which prevents active management.
 - Veteran trees are crucially important and must not be 'lost' within the document text.
 - Awareness among woodland owners and the general public of the benefits of active management is important.
 - If woodland management were financially viable then skills would come forward - but at present, key problems are insurance costs, affordability of housing and the cost of training (especially for small businesses).
 - Concerns about independent certification of woodland management. Many were very supportive of certification, often recognising that support was needed to reduce the cost burden on owners. Others did not accept that there was a value to certification.
 - Co-operation throughout the woodland sector was seen as important, as were measures to support networking and co-operation.

8. There were a number of comments on implementation of the framework with respondents suggesting that while the framework provided a good start, the 'proof of the pudding' would be in the action plan and whether real benefits were delivered on the ground.

Introduction from the Framework Development Officer

A consultation draft of *Seeing the Wood for the Trees*: a forestry framework for South East England, was launched on 3rd March 2004 in the impressive timber-framed Gridshell Building at the Weald and Downland Museum in West Sussex. This launch marked the culmination of a year's work by a steering group of regional partners.

This steering group was chaired by Charlotte Dixon, Director of Economic Inclusion and Sustainability at the South East England Development Agency and included representatives of regional government and some of the region's woodland owners. Together the steering group set out proposals for the way in which woodlands could contribute more to the region while at the same time ensuring that the woods themselves had a sustainable future.

The consultation ran from 3rd March to 28th May 2004, with late responses being accepted up to 7th June. This analysis of responses has attempted to summarise the feelings of more than a hundred respondents, most of whom put an enormous amount of time and effort into providing a well-considered and detailed response. Regrettably, no summary can do justice to each individual response but in this analysis I have sought to capture the overall picture and general feeling of respondents while retaining as much as possible of the diversity of opinion expressed.

In producing the final framework document, the steering group has had to make judgements about which of the often-contradictory views and statements collected through consultation should influence the framework. Inclusion in this analysis of responses does not therefore necessarily imply endorsement of that statement or viewpoint in the final document.



Mrs Jo Ellis
Framework Development Officer

The respondents

There were 109 written responses to the consultation in this time, plus two late responses that were considered in redrafting the framework document but not included in the analysis of responses. A full list of respondents can be found at Appendix 1.

Respondent type

32 responses (29%) were from individuals, the remainder from organisations.

Respondent type (as on response form)	Number of respondents (NB some in two categories)	% of total
Regional government	5	4.6
Local government	15	13.8
Woodland owner, manager or contractor	22	20.2
Non governmental organisation or charity	31	28.4
Other*	22	20.2
Not stated	17	15.6

*Among the 'other' category there were 5 non-regional Forestry Commission responses, 4 responses from AONBs and a range of individual stated types.

Geographical distribution

Note that this can only give a very rough indication of geographical distribution because the mailing address does not necessarily reflect the geographical remit of the organisation.

County of address	No. respondents	%
Berkshire	3	2.8
Buckinghamshire	6	5.5
East Sussex	15	13.8
Hampshire	10	9.2
Isle of Wight	3	2.8
Kent	21	19.3
Oxfordshire	11	10.1
Surrey	13	11.9
West Sussex	9	8.3
Outside region	16	14.7
Not supplied	2	1.8

Comments on sections of the document.

In all cases, please note that while percentages may seem low, responses are unprompted and lack of response does not necessarily imply lack of agreement. The questionnaire asked respondents whether the text was helpful. For this reason, each 'outcome' table starts by noting the number of people saying that the text was helpful or not helpful.

Vision and introductory sections

There were 92 comments on these parts of the consultation.

There was majority support for the vision with 58 respondents (63%) expressing support for the vision and only 3 (3%) stating they did not support it. However, half of those who supported the vision added qualifying comments. Of all the comments on the vision and introductory sections, the most common are summarised in the table:

	No.	%
Financial viability of woodland management is vital for the success of the all the outcomes of the document.	21	23%
There needs to be some indication of the diversity found among woodlands around the region	7	8%

In addition, the main omission from the document was seen to be aspects of the environment other than biodiversity, especially the historic environment, archaeology, heritage and landscape character.

The wide range of detailed comments on the introductory sections have not been summarised but will be taken into account in re-drafting the framework document.

Outcome 1: More people's health and well-being improved through visiting local woodland.

There were 76 responses to this part of the consultation. In summary:

	No.	%
Text was helpful	19	25%
Text was unhelpful	1	1%
More access to woodlands is needed	7	9%
More access to woodlands is not needed	2	3%
New access needs to be carefully targeted (many citing the Woods for People project as a good means of choosing where to put it)	9	12%
Public access brings problems for owners and/or needs extra resources if it is to be managed properly (many saying that the need for such resources should be acknowledged in the document)	14	18%
Public access can damage biodiversity or wildlife	12	16%
Text too focussed on walkers - should include horse riding /carriage driving	14	18%
Text too focussed on walkers - should include motor sports	5	7%
Text too focussed on walkers - should include cycling	4	5%
It is important that publicly accessible woodlands are, where possible, accessible by public transport or on foot	6	8%

Other notable or representative comments included:

Practical considerations:

- Management of woods for public access may require attention to develop more open tracks and rides and remove invasive undergrowth such as laurel that can make woods feel threatening. Good way-marking, signs and seats all help encourage use. In addition, it's not just a question of providing good local facilities but of ongoing maintenance to ensure that the woodland environment remains attractive to visitors and is not a problem to the owner.....good interpretation is essential to add to whole woodland experience.
- The problems of keeping all the different kinds of users of woodland (e.g. walkers, horse riders, mountain bikers) happy in each others' presence.
- Somewhere in the document, education about responsible use of/access to woodlands will be needed.
- A collaborative approach to public access management is essential - e.g. if local authority ranger services could extend their areas to help private owners this could help, e.g. at Ashenbank Wood with Kent County Council.

Resource issues:

- The approach of relying on encouragement of private land owners has not worked and grant funding for short term periods has been wasteful to the tax payer. Private woodland owners do have a place in supplying access and recreation but they should not be pressured into doing so, as is perceived at present - rather should see how they can contribute to a clear, professional process of strategic development which will continue to deliver without their involvement.
- Woodland parks and woods near towns are good for attracting people, but both require more resources than the average woodland opening.
- Consider that a range of government departments should contribute to the step change in resourcing that is needed to meet the forestry framework outcomes. The FC has consistently failed to increase its budget to deliver these agendas so DCMS, DoH, DfES, Defra and ODPM must be brought in as 'investing' partners where the forestry framework delivers on their agendas.
- How about prescriptions from doctors to visit a wood - £5 payable to owner!

Specifics to change or add:

- The range of recreational activities which can be undertaken in SE woodlands should be mentioned.
- It is hard to make a special case for woodland - countryside in general delivers similar benefits.
- More emphasis on the generally robust nature of woodlands would allay fears of ecological overload
- Text should mention access for disabled people.
- Recognise the role of woodlands (benefiting health) benefiting the prosperity of the region - a healthy and productive workforce.
- Useful to see in the text much more on the health benefits of woodlands in urban areas, including reduction in air pollution, provision of shade and reduction in stress.

Outcome 2: More use being made of woodlands as settings for community projects and activities.

There were 69 responses to this part of the consultation. In summary:

	No.	%
Text was helpful	15	22%
Liability issues/insurance is a barrier to using woodlands for such activities	8	12%
Possible benefits to landowners ('increased use of woodlands has the benefit to landowners that it increases people's understanding of, and consideration for, the countryside') will not be outweighed by costs and problems of using woodlands for community projects and activities	8	12%
Existing initiatives (such as the Forest Education Initiative and a range of local initiatives) should be supported.	7	10%
Tree planting is a good way of engaging people	4	6%

Other notable or representative comments included:

Ways of making it happen:

- Encouraging owners could include help with ranger services, finance, assistance with liabilities and health and safety issues.... Directly support woodland education by forming an umbrella group to assist with insurance, training, publicity and independent police checks.
- Encouraging local people to take the initiative and purchase community woodlands is a way forward to putting the 'people' back into the woodland.
- More demonstration projects are needed to show what can be achieved.

Other aspects to consider:

- Build in community development and capacity building as an integral part of the approach outlined.
- We wish to see the opportunity taken here of educating people about the economic and varied uses of woodlands, not just from an environmental/countryside appreciation view....use of wood as a product for construction, energy, etc, not just places for wildlife and recreation.
- SE is a *de facto* community woodland - the model that new forests in other parts of the country are trying to deliver. The challenge we face is how the woodlands can better deliver these benefits in perpetuity, recognising that the woods themselves are often in private ownership and access offers dis-benefits to the owners.
- Exemplar projects are usually small in scale and should be measured on the benefits they provide, not hectares. Quality not quantity as index of success.
- Activities in woodlands can also mean that owners benefit from free labour.
- Involving the community with woodlands can help encourage recruitment of woodland workers.
- We need to do scoping exercises first to find out what is wanted and needed.
- Developing facilities for education requires initial capital investment to kick start process, plus recognition by planners that these facilities are essential.

Specifics to change or add:

- The text on setting offenders to work in woods may be misinterpreted, their time may be better spent on learning a trade or IT skills.
- There is no mention of education for adults and the opportunities for promoting understanding of woodland management.
- Refer to the mobility impaired.

- Include adults with learning difficulties in the part about woodland activities providing purposeful activity. If projects in woodlands are set up for those disaffected from the education system, it could help with recruitment of woodland workers.
- Include reference to parish tree wardens
- Generally supportive of comments but focussing attention on particular elements of the population e.g. deprived and growth areas reduces the attention that will be given to other sectors of the community. By emphasising the disadvantaged you are doing local people a disservice.
- Text perhaps unreasonably optimistic - there are many successful community based projects but these tend to be where resources have been made available (e.g. development workers) rather than from the presence of woodlands alone.

And finally...

- "Forestry and woodland should not be seen as the sole reason for educational underachievement, poor health and high crime rates"!?

Outcome 3: New and existing trees and woodlands supporting urban renaissance and regeneration.

There were 66 responses to this part of the consultation. In summary:

	No.	%
Text was helpful	14	21%
Text was unhelpful	1	2%
Planning authorities need to be involved, and this needs to be a (compulsory) part of planning gain from the start of the development process	10	15%
The value of existing woodlands and trees should be emphasised	8	12%
New woodlands must be more than just green backdrops to development. They should provide opportunities for active community participation and recreation.	7	11%
Need to ensure that appropriate long term management arrangements and resources are in place for all new planting.	6	9%
Include bridleway provision	5	8%
Supportive of the use of woodlands in flood mitigation and floodplain management	7	11%
Supportive of emphasis on use of local wood and timber in construction, landscaping and energy generation	9	14%
Local wood and timber will only be used if it is an essential part of planning consent or if it is competitive with other materials.	4	6%

Other notable or representative comments included:

The value of trees and woodlands:

- New development would be less controversial if it brought with it the creation or management of woodland for production and recreation, through planning gain. Though some say we shouldn't use expensive urban land for forestry, if all were subject to the same requirements it would be fair and also less unacceptable to release more land for development.
- OK, providing that green grids are not at the expense of expanding development into even wider areas of countryside.
- We also need to develop regional parks, which connect together and add coherence to green corridors and wedges and make more of the sum of the parts than the individual green spaces.

- Maintenance of a high quality environment not only has an impact on local pride and quality of life but encourages people to treat surroundings with more respect. But resource implications are considerable and the reverse is also true - litter leads to more litter.
- Local communities, as represented by local government, should have a key role in shaping local development strategies and deciding the character of growth areas and where woodlands and trees will be protected and planted.

Considerations when planting new trees and woodlands:

- Many brownfield sites have high nature conservation value often with important historical and cultural links to the local community. Brownfield should not be taken as synonymous with being of no value for anything other than redevelopment and landscaping.
- Heavy regulation should be sought re species types to prevent local contamination to native dominant species already in development areas.
- Climate change may dictate that non-native species have a role in hedging bets for future survival of woods.
- Planting in advance of construction may reduce the opportunities for using woodland events as a real catalyst for community development... Urban community tree planting schemes play a significant role in developing both a sense of place and ownership.
- Make reference to guidelines on personal safety when tree planting used in urban areas... Little red riding hood view of woodlands should be considered seriously when designing new woodlands - possible pasture woodland type.

The role of planners:

- Though the ideas are sensible, there will be conflict... planning gain is essentially a negotiating process and developers are more tenacious than local authorities.
- New structural planting in advance of development is a central tenet of urban forestry theory but in practice underused especially in role as temporary ground cover as developers are suspicious about planners' motives and intentions.
- Local timber specified in planning conditions could be used as a plus point in favour of development.

Trees in urban areas pose some problems:

- Greater understanding is needed by planners, etc, of the needs of trees when developing areas; too many buildings are placed too close to existing trees causing damage to tree roots and leading to management problems related to tree safety.
- Note problems of trees in urban areas - heavy shade, overhanging branches, etc.

Specifics to change or add

- Mention the energy savings caused by trees in developments.
- Make reference to PPS1 and relevant PPGs
- Include hedgerows.
- Note potential role of Land Restoration Trust in cost effective remediation of brownfield sites.
- Text uses quite a few technical terms - a glossary could be useful.
- There should be no net loss of street trees in the region.
- Include functional uses of trees scrubbing air pollution and dust.

Outcome 4: Priority woodland habitats and species being maintained, or brought into, good ecological condition.

There were 75 responses to this part of the consultation. In summary:

	No.	%
Text was helpful	17	23%
Text was unhelpful	4	5%
There needs to be more action to control grey squirrels and/or deer	18	24%
Need to make woodland management economically viable, then more management would take place and the biodiversity benefits outlined would follow (also noting that management for profit and for biodiversity need not be in conflict).	16	21%
There is undue emphasis on the link between active management and biodiversity (this is OK in some situations, but not all)	5	7%
Awareness-raising, education, advice and assistance with management planning would help to achieve this outcome	8	11%
There is not enough emphasis on the historic environment, archaeology or landscape character - these aspects merit another section	8	11%
Not happy with references to restoration of plantations on ancient woodland sites	4	5%

Other notable or representative comments included:

Ways to help implement this action:

- Emphasise that extension of ancient woodland by appropriate planting creates a sum greater than the parts.
- Education, education, education. Provision of a free biodiversity survey would help. Most woodland owners are interested in their woods but may be ignorant of what they have got, how to manage it and what effects on wildlife will be if they do nothing.

Deer and grey squirrels:

- The loss of the red squirrel from our region is ignored. This much loved and enigmatic native animal has been driven out of the woods by the exotic grey and the failure of government to meet its international responsibilities in this respect.
- Making a distinction between native and introduced species would be helpful, e.g. deer and grey squirrels.
- Deer and grey squirrel control is unlikely to be supported by the general public.
- Realistically, vertebrate pest control can only be successful when undertaken as blanket activities over large areas.

PAWS restoration:

- A definition of AW/PAWS would be useful.
- PAWS restoration is a potentially difficult and threatening subject for our members but we welcome the straightforward and pragmatic approach advocated here. It will, of course, be important to have adequate financial support to underpin these management aspirations.
- PAWS restoration isn't as much of a priority as the management of the native woodland we already have - until this can be sustained economically and in terms of workforce, restoration should be a secondary objective.

Specifics to change or add:

- There is a broad range of different priority habitats across the SE. These differences should be reflected and should influence available grants. A map of the SE region's natural areas and the associated important woodland habitat would clearly illustrate the broad picture.
- Climate change is only mentioned fleetingly though this may have the biggest effect on biodiversity
- Note that text on PAWS should be changed to 'many sites are capable of significant recovery' so as not to imply that planting conifers on ancient woodland sites is not a problem in the long term.
- Expand to include UKBAP priority non-woodland habitats and species such as lowland heathland, nightjar and woodlark.
- Text makes no mention of importance or use of local provenance in relation to seed or seedlings for planting into new or existing woodlands.
- SPAs are about birds and many are devoid of other ecological interest.
- Clear need to target grants but this should not limit the vision for this 'outcome'. Grants may be limited to priority sites but biodiversity should be encouraged on all sites.
- Also mention Habitats Directive habitats.
- Refer to National Nature Reserves, and don't use the nightjar as an example (a heathland bird) - use nightingale or lesser spotted woodpecker instead.

Outcome 5: Woodland biodiversity being supported at a landscape scale.

There were 68 responses to this part of the consultation. In summary:

	No.	%
Text was helpful	18	26%
Text was unhelpful	2	3%
There are more landscape-scale areas than mentioned in the text - if mentioning any, need to mention them all (or don't mention any specifically).	10	15%
Perceived intention to encourage landscape-scale planting of new woodlands unwelcome. (NB. This was not what was intended by the text).	7	10%
Perception that a landscape scale approach means set prescriptions across large areas rather than locally appropriate ones is unwelcome.	4	6%

Other notable or representative comments included:

Implementing the approach:

- Co-operative management is becoming increasingly difficult as many existing woodlands are split up by land agents and sold off to private individuals as recreational retreats.
- Actions go beyond just landowners. Include the small businesses and timber users who will undertake and support the work.
- De-fragmentation of key sites has immediate appeal, but tree planting may not always be appropriate. Biodiversity/connectivity issues should be carefully evaluated and a range of options - hedges, parkland, open space, edge extent, commercial conifers on arable - considered.
- To be successful government must commit to long term plans which local planners and councils cannot choose to ignore.
- Need acquisition of key sites by public or voluntary sector or outcomes will be uncertain.
- Co-operative work is the only way forward. Linking woodland owners and estates to provide larger areas of operations would help the limited market/contractor base and have landscape outcomes.

- The FC need to show considerably more leadership in this area and concentrate less on their woods but more on the wider landscape.
- Woodland creation funding seems very much under pressure. Targeted creation can serve social, landscape and biodiversity benefits and needs to sit alongside need for increased woodland management.

Other landscape scale considerations:

- Diseases such as Dutch Elm Disease and Sudden Oak Death need to be tackled across large areas.
- Rights of Way linking sites should be a priority for Rights of Way Improvement Plans - and bridleways should be included.
- Highlight the development of a regional park concept.
- Additional regional biodiversity monitoring should be established to complement wild bird population measurements, for which additional funding will be needed.

Specifics to change or add:

- The 30:30:40 'landscape prescription' is out of context and should be removed from the text.
- 'Landscape scale' may be misleading - would local natural area be more useful?
- 'Invade' is a negative work; consider total picture of habitat types and the benefits and damage that regenerating trees contribute to our environment.
- Co-ordination of conservation and restoration of habitats can be achieved through local HAPs.

Outcome 6: Woodlands playing a greater role in attracting tourism, inward investment and other economic activity.

There were 76 responses to this part of the consultation. In summary:

	No.	%
Text was helpful	14	18%
Text was not helpful	1	1%
Care will be needed to balance the needs of different users and the sensitivity of the sites themselves	8	11%
Ways need to be found for woodland owners to derive real value from the use of their woods by tourists or in promoting inward investment	7	9%
The value of woodlands to tourism is not just in its trees. Add the historic environment, landscape character etc. to this section	7	9%
Need to balance encouraging prosperity and protecting the environment (concerns about this being a back door for development)	6	8%
Add equestrian tourism	9	12%
Add off-road motor sport related tourism	7	9%

Other notable or representative comments included:

Making it happen:

- The direction of woodland grants for new access routes and recreational development should be guided by the need to fill strategic gaps in the network of footpaths, cycle routes and facilities and equestrian routes and centres...across the region there is an excellent footpath network that caters for the visitor with interpreted and managed routes.
- Additional facilities such as bike hire, pony trekking and tea-rooms for income to woodland owners.

- Woodland owners should get financial recognition for the tourist attraction that their woods represent... some innovative thinking needs to be applied. A slice of the business rates or the council tax are some suggested avenues to explore in order for a supplement to go to woodland owners as compensation or reward for providing the wooded attraction.
- Woods managed for game are also good for wildlife - and note high economic value of shooting.
- The lack of a commercial base for woodland produce means that this side of woodland benefit has to be played to the full.
- We recommend the development of a regional schedule/guide of rates for woodland leisure use so that users get charged an appropriate and realistic fee wherever they go.
- It is worth mentioning that well managed (thinned) woodland is most attractive and lends itself to recreational uses.
- Add an action for targeted planting in high-profile sites, such as beside major transport corridors and on business parks. Although less important than in other regions with more significant areas of industrial blight, a regional assessment of the first impressions made on potential investors around airports:, motorway junctions, ports and major stations could be very useful.
- To realise this, more visitor facilities from basic (car parks and toilets) to focal points/honeypots will need support of planning system, perhaps in face of local opposition. In more sensitive areas simple interpretation and self guided walks could be sufficient.

Notes of caution:

- Many visitors to the 'countryside' want to experience woods as part of a wider picture with walks including fields, streams, views, etc - not woods in isolation from the rest of the area...woods provide a backdrop as much as a location for the visit.
- Woodland will only ever be a backdrop - access facilities and accommodation, sensitively planned, will be required to make a significant difference.
- This must be compatible with tranquil areas...would increased tourism simply erode the very qualities that made woodlands initially attractive?

Perceived barriers:

- The planning system needs overhauling, recreational use of woods is severely discouraged in favour of 'nature'.
- Developing forests as tourist centres requires planners to recognise and accept that development activities are necessary
- Nothing about difficulties private owners have with public access, e.g. insurance costs and poor profit levels. Public ownership land is not encumbered with some of these difficulties.

Specifics to change or add:

- Omissions from the text include the high carrying capacity of woodland compared to other rural land uses, and relatively low cost of providing and managing woods for countryside access compared to, say, country parks.
- Sporting should be included - worth £10M in the region and interests many private owners.
- Note impact of wider tourist developments (e.g. airports) on biodiversity.
- Do not refer specifically to the New Forest.
- List of woodland attractions could be extended to include shooting and paint-balling in selected areas.
- Make reference to sustainable tourism, i.e. something that will sustain itself.

Outcome 7: The economic value of woodland products to the region being increased.

There were 68 responses to this part of the consultation. In summary:

	No.	%
Text was helpful	14	21%
Text was unhelpful	0	0%
Expressed support or hopes for the use of wood as a renewable fuel	12	18%
This is a key outcome which would lead to the achievement of many of the other outcomes	9	13%
Planning considerations are hampering the development of (or failing to protect) timber processing facilities in SE.	5	7%
Promote local products rather than, necessarily, regional products.	4	6%
We need to focus on the production of quality timber	4	6%
We need a longer term focus - much more than the 20-25 years of this document	4	6%
There should be more emphasis on the diverse range of products from woodlands - non-timber forest products, innovative uses of wood, etc.	4	6%
The framework should concentrate efforts on a limited range of products (especially hardwood timber) rather than diluting effort on a wide range of products	3	4%
There should be more focus on woodland certification through FSC or UKWAS (independent sustainability assurance).	3	4%

Other notable or representative comments included:

Marketing and promotion:

- We are disappointed that government, through the FC, does not champion strongly and consistently British timber products. State Aid needs to be taken account of, but should not be a reason to do nothing.
- Log prices in Europe are far higher than in the UK but the UK price is set at the price agreed in the FC big industry contracts. This gives the FC a stable market share but the woodland owners in the SE cannot get an economic price.
- Is there an opportunity to give locally produced woodland products added value by marketing them with regional biodiversity messages attached?
- Price is not the only factor in purchasing decisions for many consumers. Local, secure and quick supply chains with a smile are equally important.
- Many products are made by small businesses or sole traders. Unless encouraged to work more closely together e.g. in a producer group, promotion is likely to lead to longer waiting lists and dissatisfied customers in the short term. Unrealistic to expect that supply chain issues will be overcome by purely market led solutions.
- A corporate image for locally produced timber product would help it find a place in a significant 'eco-market'.
- Public bodies are charged with 'best value' - they need to be made aware of the best value that is locally produced wood and timber.
- In encouraging the use of local wood and timber, need a realistic approach. Establish what products are available within the region and promote these first. What are the products that can compete with imports?

Processing of wood products:

- Do not overlook the importance of bulk markets, albeit not within the region (but that should not matter) for wood products i.e. pulpwood. Purely local markets are unlikely to be able to handle the sheer volume of produce, not to mention the range of sizes,

species, qualities, etc... counsel against a presumption that non-local bulk markets are inherently out of step with your wider aspirations.

- The economy of woodland products is seriously hampered by the loss of all softwood sawmills.... Inward investment for sawmills and mobile saw businesses which can saw on site is vital if the forestry framework is to have any realistic chance of making the management of woodland and forest a financially viable option for landowners in the region.
- If high quality engineering factories could be developed, timber could be used for many of the products for which steel, concrete and PVC are used as replacements for wood.
- Previous studies have shown that we will be unlikely to be able to attract big investment in timber resource processing - better support in other regions and a perception that access to raw materials overly preserved through planning and other protection. Better to focus on smaller scale adding-value activities to meet specialist niche markets.
- Research, awareness raising and grant aid is insufficient unless accompanied by serious investment in infrastructure and facilities to add value to local timber, concentrating on hardwoods.

Products and potential markets:

- There is a good market for quality timber in quantity. What is needed is a market for small wood - thinnings and coppice.
- Equestrian activities use wood and wood products in many ways, e.g. timber stables and shelters, fencing stakes, post and rail fencing, jumps, wood chip exercise areas and, importantly, wood shavings as stable bedding. Local sourcing of materials is common for equestrian use and provides considerable support for local wood products where available.
- We would welcome an undertaking by SEEDA, local and county councils and other interested parties supporting an initiative to utilise local wood in the manufacturing, for example, of footpath signs and road signs.
- Tourists are willing to pay a premium for ornamental items of bog oak or spalted beech.

Taking a long term view:

- We are aware that some consider that the financial yield from woodland products is so small that we should move away from considering this factor as significant. We disagree. The woodlands of the SE have been economically viable in the recent past and history has shown that performance fluctuates over time. If we do not invest now then we will not be able to respond when the economics improve as many predict they will as world shortages bite in 60-80 years time.

Comments supporting the development of wood as fuel:

- Supporting the development of wood as a fuel should include simple firewood and domestic heating.
- The economics of wood fuel only stack up with small-scale local wood heat schemes and high value added domestic log market.
- SEEDA has the potential to show the way and arrange subsidy for the construction of power stations, at least using combined fuels, e.g. coppice product and coal.
- Include the link between forestry for carbon sequestration and forestry for timber production.
- Implies that electricity is inherently bad and to be avoided. What is the objection to wood from existing woodlands being used for generating electricity, even on a small scale, such as a single isolated farm?
- Massive new housing developments in the SE region should be conditional on installation of communal combined heat and power.
- The lead should come from public bodies e.g. county education departments insisting on wood fired heating systems.

Notes of caution on wood fuel:

- The existing woodland resource should be seen as the main supply, rather than planting new biomass crops.
- Our experience is that a key issue is the commitment of energy providers to using wood fuel and being prepared to pay a price which makes production feasible for landowners.
- Take care that the promotion of wood fuel products does not lead to the destruction of biodiverse native woodland.
- Concern about short rotation coppice planting - can have a detrimental impact on landscape character and there is plenty of unused coppice in existence.
- Wood fuel is hopeful but lets get a few local examples running and stop wasting money on feasibility studies.
- The lowest common denominator, energy, will not help much so long as fuel prices are held down by cheap oil.

Notes of caution more generally:

- The market for coppice products is under pressure from imported spars, spar gads and hazel hurdles with the majority if not all of these products arriving without FSC certification. This should be a warning when looking to develop and market new or existing products.
- The document does not acknowledge the problem of diversity of species and small parcels, compared to our competitors overseas who have millions of acres of 1-4 species only.
- Don't impose clearfell in urban areas where standing trees are precious to local users. Only remote areas should be clearfelled as this is distressing to local people who love their local woods.

Specifics to change or add:

- No mention of charcoal burning or its potential in the region
- Innovation of wood uses and advanced usage via laminates etc. should be mentioned.
- There is too much emphasis on owners and managers in the text - include the full range of those in the industry including processors.

Outcome 8: Woodlands and trees, especially ancient woodlands and veteran trees, protected from loss.

There were 63 responses to this part of the consultation. In summary:

	No.	%
Text was helpful	23	37%
Text was unhelpful	0	0%
Protection of ancient woodlands is a vitally important outcome	18	29%
It's not just ancient woodland that is important and we must not give the impression that other woodlands are expendable	7	11%
There is a danger of a preservationist approach which would prevent active management and would be bad for the woodlands.	5	8%

Other notable or representative comments:

Supportive of protecting ancient woodland (AW):

- If the development people are serious about the ancient woods being important then they should never consider or allow development in or, say, three fields from any ancient wood or SSSI. This includes not isolating sites or driving more barriers between them.

- Preservation of ancient woodlands is more cost-effective than creation of new woods.
- Applying the concept of environmental capital and so evaluating services and attributes is helpful...trees as the oldest living organisms likely to be encountered and so providing a tangible link to the past. This cannot be substituted - replaced - by simply replanting.

Ways of protecting ancient woodland (AW):

- AW should be given the same legal status and national financial aid as grade one listed buildings.
- Protect through raising public awareness and pride in local veterans and ancient woodlands.
- It would be good to see acknowledgement of the value of continuity of long-term management/stewardship through traditional estate ownership which has maintained these features in many instances.
- Support and encouragement should be given to community initiatives seeking to raise replacement seedlings of significant trees, acknowledging that trees have a life span and will not last for ever.
- Existing methods (felling licences, tree preservation orders) could be more rigorously enforced to protect woodland sites.
- Including AW less than 2 hectares is crucial as these are under greatest threat.

Sounding notes of caution:

- Protection can be negative and stop active management. All this leads to more red tape and encourages owners to do nothing.
- Mitigation should be used extremely carefully and is not to be encouraged as a suitable alternative to forest removal for development.
- It is wrong to put fences round woods and watch them die.

Not in agreement with protection in all cases:

- There must be situations where the imperative of development is such that any planning gain requested will be acceptable to the developer. In these situations it is conceivable that there would be greater benefit in taking the 'blood money' to invest in increasing remaining ancient woodland in the area by planting contiguous secondary woodland.
- It seems that by stressing importance of AW we are effectively saying that non-AW is expendable - this may be appropriate in a growing region needing more infrastructure and housing to maintain competitive edge.
- There is too much AW in the region to make it a useful designation and a lot of it is undifferentiated broadleaf woodland. Need a review of the status to hone the tool and a more flexible approach to development.

Considerations on veteran trees:

- Many veteran trees are felled because of insurance risk. Need lobbying at national level to legislate to regain balance between low level risk and need to preserve veteran trees.
- Need a clearer distinction between preserving veteran trees and the fate of AW. They are distinct and justify different actions. Veteran trees have cultural significance and merit protection, with local community (via tree wardens) being involved as much as possible.

Outcome 9: Ensuring that we have the skills base needed to manage our woodlands.

There were 70 responses to this part of the consultation. In summary:

	No.	%
Text was helpful	23	33%
Text was unhelpful	0	0%
Woodland owners (especially those new to ownership) need more awareness of the benefits brought by active woodland management	8	11%
If the finances were there for management (e.g. better markets for timber) then the skills would come forward.	6	9%
Insurance costs are a key issue	7	10%
Affordability of housing is a key issue	5	7%
The cost of training is a barrier, especially for small businesses	3	4%

Other notable or representative comments:

The urgency of the situation:

- Time is running out if the government wants to keep a contracting base in the area. All you will end up with is a few well-intentioned conservation-type chainsaw outfits and a few harvester-base contractors who don't really have the time or interest to take much care in their woods.

Types of skills needed:

- Learning, skills and knowledge are now increasingly recognised by national and regional government as being major drivers for economic well-being, as well as a mechanism for ensuring both effective change management and long term sustainable development.
- Need to think about marketing skills for woodland owners as part of the required skills set.
- Specialist skills are required to manage ancient trees and to restore, manage and establish wood pasture and parkland. We believe that there are significant gaps in provision of the relevant skills and advisory services for and that this should be addressed as a priority.
- Integrated species recording and assessment to monitor management activity effectiveness needs more people to be interested and trained to identify the species, many more. This is as important as other forms of training suggested because if we do not know the results of what we are doing we will repeat the mistakes of the last century and lose even more species.

Making it happen:

- Recommend that framework acknowledges existing good practice and indicates that, where appropriate, the goal is to work with it.
- Currently there appears to be overlap and 'underlap' between areas such as forestry and agriculture....there is a need to break down barriers between disciplines to allow cross-sectoral approaches.
- An additional aspect is diversity within woodland workers - particularly coppice workers. These range from highly educated well-equipped operators using up to date harvesting equipment to single person businesses operating 'traditional' businesses...[this type] tend to have detailed knowledge of the woods, often returning year after year, and their working methods tend to respect ecological integrity generally causing less damage than when outside contractors are brought in on a one-off basis. Need to recognise their needs, traditional training may not be appropriate.
- Need to make it illegal for someone to undertake woodland work for gain without proper insurance. Problem is not availability of insurance but all the fringe operators who

undercut because they have none. Need to ensure availability of insurance to one-man operators and small firms.

- No point in training if you can't keep them afterwards. £30 per week to keep them in the industry?
- If it can't be done economically, may need other means e.g. volunteers, community service, small owners carrying out work themselves.

Specifics to change or add:

- Surely this is about the whole woodland workforce, not only managers. As written it gives the impression of being aimed at managers only. It should also extend to downstream processors, those who market products, etc.
- Should say something about labour costs in SE expensive, and processing far away.
- Many of the issues addressed are of course not just forestry ones and it does beg the question of how forestry fits into other regional frameworks.

Outcome 10: Securing existing - and developing new - sources of finance for woodland management.

There were 68 responses to this part of the consultation. In summary:

	No.	%
Text was helpful	9	13%
Text was unhelpful	2	3%
Certification is an unnecessary burden to woodland owners.	6	9%
The need for certification is accepted but measures need to be taken to reduce the burden on woodland owners.	6	9%
Fully supportive of certification	3	4%
Supportive of co-operation between owners or better networking (e.g. through Woodlots-type publications)	6	9%
Grants need to be more accessible and less complicated	3	4%

Other notable or representative comments:

Comments about grants:

- Grants and support for woodland management and products needs to have a wider base than just relying on funds from the Forestry Commission or Defra. Other sectors that benefit from the presence of the woodland resource and its management should play their part, from RDAs and DTI to private development companies.
- Need one-stop shops among grant providers to avoid waste.
- [Many ways in which direct income can be obtained from woodland] Although these can be obtained without grants, grants can help accelerate the rate of progress. Cost effectiveness is increased by co-operation between owners and concentration of facilities (or access to facilities).
- Highlight different levels of support to farmers and foresters!
- Grant aid should only be allocated to woodlands or schemes where a holistic and sustainable approach to management, marketing and use of woodland produce will be achieved. Little point in funding schemes that show little promise of becoming sustainable now or in the future.

Barriers to financial viability:

- Development of wood using businesses and diversifying the use of woodland can often come up against barriers in the local planning system. There is a need for greater

understanding of the benefits these businesses may bring and a forward looking and positive approach needs to be adopted by planners.

- By and large, the timber supply chain is not geared to the retail and much of the wholesale market. For example, the large DIY retailers demand assured supplies of large quantities, of certified timber, on demand. We do not have the infrastructure to deliver this nationally, with home grown timber and wood products.
- It is important that long term sustainability be emphasised and that woodlands can pay for themselves if timber quality is improved. That means grey squirrel eradication - the public must be told this otherwise woodlands will demand more and more grant aid.

Suggestions of how to make it happen:

- To be a reliable supplier of woodland products to an end user, need 100,000 hectares of woodland. No loose association of owners will work, need a proper co-op.
- A network of 'forest products outlets' supported like farmers markets might work.
- What is needed at policy level is vision to see how wider economy may be assisted in making decisions favourable to good woodland management and provide for sustainability and biodiversity.
- Need assurance standards that are appropriate to small woodlands of SEE - perhaps independent of UKWAS or a junior partner.
- Woodland owners are traditionally conservative in their approach to marketing woodland produce. Efforts to broaden horizons and provide support to add value are to be welcomed.

Comments about income other than markets:

- More emphasis on non-market benefits. This is the crux -how to get money in for all the benefits that the rich ancient woodlands of SE deliver.
- We must not get too focussed on the timber market as being the saviour of British forestry. Neither will the small niche markets help on a wider scale although they could benefit innovative owners. Financial return is not always a priority for new woodland owners as their ownership aspirations are frequently different from the traditional estate owner.
- Woodland is the greatest contributor to our landscape - many people come to live in the countryside of our region because of the landscape...some way should be found for those who enjoy our woodlands and landscape to contribute - a tax or levy on a house with a view!
- Additional return needs to be investigated perhaps in the form of tax relief and other incentives.

Additional comments not assigned to an 'outcome'

The final section tended to be one where people 'took a step back' and considered the consultation as a whole, or where they reiterated their most important points already made in previous sections. These latter points have been dealt with under the ten 'outcome' sections above. The overall comments should be considered in conjunction with the comments on the vision and introductory sections at the beginning of the analysis.

One respondent noted that 'there is nothing new in this paper that has not already been aired before', going on to suggest that the money spent on the document would have been far better spent on research into grey squirrel control. Though not expressed in such strong terms, many more expressed some cynicism, reflecting on the need for the need for financial viability of woodland management to achieve the aims of the framework.

Ten respondents made very supportive concluding comments, which included noting the importance of such a document for woodlands in the region and thanking the steering group for their hard work and enterprise in preparing the consultation.

Six respondents questioned how the framework would be taken forward, for example, suggesting that it needs to be made clear who will drive the actions which will follow; that the joint nature of the statement needs to be backed up by joint action; that an action plan will need clear targets and time-scales, that lack of clarity on the future was a significant weakness of the framework.

Other areas which were have not been covered elsewhere in the analysis include:

- The framework seems to be very focused on existing woods and downplays the value of creating new woods, even in relatively well-wooded areas such as Kent and East Sussex. Such benefits include, for example, planting/aftercare provides employment and offers chance to choose profitable species and to use fertile agricultural land; new woods provide a range of public benefits; agricultural land under planting grants is less of a burden on the taxpayer than agricultural land in production subsidy. Concern that the emphasis on existing woods will be translated in to reductions in grants for new woodlands.
- The forestry framework does not add much to what is in current regional planning guidance and needs to develop a longer term vision for the economic contribution which forestry could make in the region and provide clearer evidence and advice on, for example,
 - Where are the ancient woodlands which need protection?
 - What is the desired balance between various functions of forests at local/sub-regional level?
 - Where is there most scope for new woodland?
 - How can the economics of woodland ownership be improved?
 - How can woodland yield be used more effectively for renewable heat and power?
 - What are the emerging impacts of climate change?
 - Is there a skeleton green grid already in place of would it need to be developed from scratch?
- The title 'forestry framework' should be changed to include the word woodland or woods - 'forestry' doesn't mean much to people.

Key gaps in the framework identified by respondents

- Reference to the historic environment, archaeology, heritage and landscape character are lacking.
- There is not enough on the environmental benefits of woodlands other than biodiversity.
- The approach is too short-term - we need to think in the time-scales of woodlands, not governments.
- There is a tendency to a 'one-size-fits-all' approach; need more recognition of diversity in the region.
- Not enough reference to quality (of timber) - we should be investing in silviculture now to produce high quality timber for the future.
- Horses only have one mention.

Appendix 1: List of responses.

Response Number	Organisation	Response made by:
6	Action in Rural Sussex	Mr Jeremy Leggett
15	Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers	Mr David Hopkins
29	Beaulieu Estate	Mr A.P. Glanville
60	Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust	Ms Lynn Anderson
89	Bracknell Forest Borough Council	Mr John Wenman
66	British Horse Society	Ms Susan Quarendon
95	British Horse Society	Mrs Anne Rillie
40	British Horse Society	Mrs A Sleeman
94	British Horse Society and Livery Yard Manager	Ms Sue Saunders
93	British Horse Society	Mrs Janet Miller
41	Buckinghamshire County Council	Mr Philip Bowsher
70	Butterfly Conservation	Mr Tom Wigglesworth
42	Canterbury City Council	Mr Brian Watmough
50	Chiltern Woodlands Project	Mr John Morris
101	Chilterns AONB	Mr Steve Rodrick
43	Civic Trust South East	Mr Brian Horsley
45	Cotswolds AONB Partnership	Mr Mark Connelly
65	Country Land and Business Association	Mrs Julia Page
62	Countryside Agency	Mr Graeme Kerr
87	CPRE South East	Mr Edward Dawson
*	Crown Estate	Mr Derick Stickler
26	Dartford Borough Council	Mr John Arnold
31	Defend our Commons Campaign	Mr Bob Milton
44	DEFRA Rural Development Service SE	Mr Geoff Newsome
36	East Hampshire AONB Project	Mr Nick Heasman
83	East Malling Research	Ms Karen Russell
75	East Sussex County Council	Mr David Saunders
23	Englefield Estate	Mr G. Beer
73	English Woodland	Mr John Murphy
14	English Woodlands Timber Ltd.	Mr Tom Compton
51	Environment Agency, Southern Region	Mr Howard Davidson
16	Farming and Countryside Education (FACE)	Ms Meg Hart
24	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Kent and East Sussex	Mr Chris Harvey
97	Forest Enterprise England	Mr Brian Mahony
108	Forest Manager	Mr Rob Gazzard
59	Forestry and Timber Association	Mr Andrew Ingram
53	Forestry Commission	Mr Alan Betts
20	Forestry Commission	Mr Mike Habbergham
3	Forestry Commission	Mr P Noot
52	Forestry Commission	Mr Gareth Price
12	Forestry Commission	Mr Andy Wright
99	Forestry Consultant	Mr Rick Pakenham
8	Forestry Consultant	Mr Roger Fitter MBE
79	Government Office for the South East	Ms Eike Muller
104	Gravesham Borough Council	Mr Kevin Burbidge
109	Great Western Community Forest	Mr Dave Evans
61	Groundwork UK	Mr David Eggett
54	Hampshire County Council (Environment)	Mr Jonathan Rau

11	Hawkley Hurst Estate	Lord Lucas of Crudwell and Dingwall
98	Independent Woodland Management	Mr Stephen Judd
5	Isle of Wight AONB	Mr John Brownscombe
28	Isle of Wight Council	Mr Colin Pope
106	Kent County Council, Environment and Economy	Ms Linda Davies
80	Lantra	Ms Tricia Bloomfield
48	National Urban Forestry Unit	Mr Tom Freeland
10	New Forest Committee	Ms Maddy Jago
30	Northmoor Trust	Mr Jon Watson
76	Oxfordshire County Council	Mr A.E. Dougliss
27	Oxfordshire Woodland Project	Mr David Rees
25	Paddockhurst Estate	Mr C.J. Schooling, FRICS.
96	Plumpton College	Mr Robin Jackson
68	Record Centre Surrey Unit	Ms Theresa Greenaway
103	Regional Advisory Committee of the Forestry Commission	Ms Bridget Bloom
*	R.F.Giddings and Co. Limited	Mr Tony Giddings
77	RSPB	Ms Carrie Temple
49	S. Northants Trail Riders Fellowship and Bedford and Luton Joint Local Access Forum	Mr Andy Gerrard
92	S.H. Marston Forestry	Mr Steve Marston
82	Small Woods Association	Mr John Morris
74	South East England Biodiversity Forum (SEEBF)	Mr Tony Chadwick
56	South East Forum for Sustainability	Mr Tony Chadwick
71	Sowrey Pigeon Partnership	Mr Frederick Sowrey
33	Sparsholt College	Mr Jonathan Baker
13	Squerryes Estate	Mr J Warde
4	St Regis Paper Co Ltd	Mr Mike Henderson
2	Surrey County Council	Mr Adam Curtis
17	Surrey County Council Archaeology	Mr David Bird
9	Sussex Branch of International Tree Foundation	Mr Desmond Gunner, MBE
107	Sussex Downs Conservation Board	Mr Robin Truscott
64	Sussex Wildlife Trust	Dr Tony Whitbread
21	Tourism South East	Mr Roger Budden
1	Tourism South East	Ms Rachel Simpson
81	Trail Riders of East Kent (TREK)	Mr Ian Roscow
22	TV Energy	Ms Charlotte Bruton
63	Various Equestrian and Access Groups	Mrs Anne Beecham
100	Weald WoodNet	Ms Jenny Martin
102	West Sussex County Council	Ms Julie Bolton
46	Wight Wildlife	Mr Richard Grogan
90	Wilderness Wood	Mr Chris Yarrow, BSc (For), MICFor
35	Woodland Diversification Consultant	Mr Adam Dawson
72	Woodland owner	Mr John Champion
55	Woodland Trust	Mr Tony Chadwick
69	Wychwood Project	Mr Charles Keighley
38	Wychwood Project	Mr Nick Mottram
39		Mr Richard Colquhoun
7		Lord Cornwallis
18		Mr Merlene M Davis FLS
58		Mr David Gardner
84		Dr David Hill

105		Mrs D.J. Kerrison
86		Mr Tim Last
57		Mr David Maddock
34		Miss Chris Owlett
37		Mrs Mary Parker
32		Mr Stephen Peak
47		Mr R.N. Potter
78		Ms Rosemary Sanders
88		Mr Saunders
85		Mr Paul Vodden
67		Mr Patrick Wallace
91		Mr Frank Widdowson
19		Anon

* Not included in numerical analyses because of late receipt.