

Will the Regional Woodland and Forestry Strategy help the South West to meet its sustainability challenges?

A Sustainability Assessment of the draft Regional Woodland and Forestry Strategy (as presented Oct. '04) based on the South West Regional Sustainable Development Framework

Prepared by:



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A sustainability assessment of the draft Regional Woodland and Forestry Strategy

1.0 Introduction

This sustainability assessment is based on the Regional Sustainable Development Framework (RSDF). The RSDF has been endorsed by key regional agencies/organisations including: Government Office for the South West, South West Regional Assembly, South West Regional Development Agency, Environment Agency, Department of Health, Countryside Agency, English Heritage and English Nature. Central government intends that the RSDF be used as a reference point for assessing and maximising sustainability in all other regional strategies, it is therefore appropriate that the Regional Woodland and Forestry Strategy should be reviewed against it.

The assessment has been prepared by Sustainability South West, the independent charity that acts as an advisor and champion for sustainability for the region.

2.0 Assessment of the Strategy objectives: Attached Appendix 1

This detailed assessment considers each of the Strategy key outcomes presented and identifies:

- The most significant links to the RSDF
- The opportunities to maximise the strategy's contribution to sustainability
- Some of the key potential risks to progressing sustainability
- Comments on the proposed range of actions to achieve key outcomes

The sustainability risks and opportunities identified in Appendix 1 are not 'weighted' as such but have been highlighted for further consideration by the steering group (and for potential delivery partners). The sustainability issues which SSW considers to be key have been drawn out below in Section 3.3 ('The strategy's sustainability strengths & weaknesses').

3.0 Summary of assessment and key sustainability questions

3.1

Overall, the strategy aims to focus on the role that woodland and forestry has in relation to some elements of the wider regional agenda (identified as Economic Regeneration, Rural Development, Recreation, Access & Tourism and Environment & Conservation). It also aims to 'contribute to Sustainable Development'. However, in order to maximise the contribution the strategy could make to Sustainable Development in the region, the strategy will need to make broader connections to the regional agenda, including making specific links to strategic work in the areas of health, learning and skills, social inclusion, climate change, urban renaissance, sustainable construction and regional intelligence.

3.2 There are a number of key sustainability challenges in the region which the strategy should relate to. These include:

- Climate Change – adaptation and mitigation
- Responding to an ageing population
- The need to increase natural resource efficiency
- The need to prioritise sustainable methods of transport and increase local sourcing of goods and services
- The need to build/regenerate in a more sustainable way
- The need for diversification in the rural economy
- The need to reduce inequalities in public health
- The need for more learning and skills for sustainable development
- Protecting and creating habitats inline with National Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)

3.3 The strategy's sustainability strengths and weaknesses

The strategy's sustainability strengths are significant and include:

- Recognising the economic, social and environmental elements of woodlands and forestry
- Recognition of some of the potential community benefits of forestry
- Recognising the potential of forestry to support preventative health strategies through recreation
- Promoting biodiversity through the protection/buffering of ancient woodlands as key biodiversity assets to the region
- Some reference to the potential of targeted tree planting to mitigate against climate change impacts
- Broad reference to the increased use of woodfuel as a potential supply of renewable energy sources for the region
- Using woodlands as classrooms to provide a valuable interactive tool in education about climate change
- General promotion of woodlands and forestry
- Recognising the potential contribution of forestry to sustainable construction via an increase in local/regional timber sourcing and wood products

The strategy's sustainability weaknesses include:

- The *potential* incompatibility of some of the objectives (e.g. increased timber production vs. potential threats to biodiversity or increased access vs. environmental impacts) is not thoroughly addressed – the crosscutting themes could consider the extent to which achieving some outcomes *could* compromise others
- Not sufficiently addressing the negative impacts of more visitors eg through the provision of car free access
- Not always explicit how the strategy will link in to existing regional strategies, policies, action plans, processes and bodies (eg Food & Farming Strategy, Environment Strategy, Community Strategy process, Market & Coastal Towns initiatives, energy efficiency and climate change initiatives)
- The value of local community ownership/management of small scale woodlands close to urban areas needs to be identified/ recognised eg actions around new small scale woodland plantation are largely omitted
- Not identifying the potential of the forestry industry to support year-round employment through an extended tourism season
- Not making strong enough connections with the wider potential benefits of forests to mental well-being (eg stress-busting [linking in with employers], personal development opportunities etc)
- Not explicitly linking potential forestry health benefits to existing initiatives such as eg Walking the Way to Health
- No specific actions regards siting/planting of new urban woodlands in areas with poor air quality/little access to quality green space
- Limited consideration of existing/new infrastructure required to support public transport access
- Limited consideration of potential links with sustainable transport options eg community transport schemes (helping to make such schemes more viable and supporting more inclusive access)
- Unclear how work opportunities will be focussed on community needs (eg upskilling to boost local economy, encouraging participation and recognising learning preferences)
- Not recognising the potential to engage and involve the community in effective resource management strategy eg keying to local markets for recycled or recyclable products
- Opportunities to link into wider Education for Sustainable Development agenda (eg raising awareness of sustainability issues and the contribution of forestry, providing environmental management skills, promoting sustainable tourism to visitors and skills for delivery) are not maximized
- Lack of recognition of the potential value of some non-timber forest products
- Lack of clarification about the degree to which forestry accreditation schemes will encourage the adoption of holistic environmental management policies and practices which cover **all** operations associated with forestry management (particularly where visitor amenities are involved)

Currently, some of the key outcomes could be pursued to the detriment of others. Maximising the contribution the strategy can make to sustainable development in the region will mean delivering the key outcomes of livelihoods, liveability and environment in a mutually supportive way. Potential conflicts, and opportunities for sustainable solutions, could be addressed in more detail within the cross-cutting themes.

3.4 As the consultation on the draft Strategy is taken into consideration, the key sustainability questions to ask include:

Does the regional Woodland and Forestry strategy:

- **Support sustainable tourism in the long term'?**
- **Boost biodiversity in the long term'?**
- **Help the region to adapt to and mitigate against Climate Change?**
- **Help to prevent poor health for those most in need in the long term?**
- **Increase amenity woodlands in /close to urban areas in the long term and support the sustainable communities agenda?**
- **Promote car free access to amenity woodlands/forests?**
- **Promote new opportunities for sustainability learning and skills in the long term'?**
- **Promote satisfying, all year round employment that will meet changing local needs**
- **Boost timber markets, rural economies and business opportunities which are sustainable in the long-term?**
- **Support sustainable construction?**
- **Support local/regional distinctiveness in the long term?**
- **Tie in to wider land-use change programmes and rural economy diversification initiatives?**
- **Consider what regional intelligence is needed to address the potential contribution of the forestry sector to a more sustainable region eg a. its contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation and b. how environmental accreditation schemes can be made more accessible/attractive**

LIVELIHOODS: Key Outcome – ‘An increase in the volume of wood and wood products consumed and sourced from within the region’				
	Significant Links to RSDF	Opportunities to maximise contribution to sustainability	Potential risks to sustainability	General Comments including feedback on proposed range of actions
ECONOMY	Employment & training opps. and increased competitiveness	Matching new employment opportunities to local needs eg young, old, special needs (see Learning). Establishing business start-ups which incorporate environmental management to enhance business competitiveness.	Competitiveness strategies focus on the short term only.	<i>Reference to the international context would be helpful eg the dependability/sustainability of timber import markets vs. the benefits to regional sustainability of local timber markets.</i>
WORK	Employment and training opps.	Providing high quality, satisfying employment.	Narrow focus on amount of jobs created rather than quality.	
LOCAL NEEDS	Increased demand for goods & services	Sourcing the associated design, operational management, maintenance, marketing etc. from <u>within</u> the region.		
LEARNING	Opps. for new learning & skills	Promoting learning & skills for SD directly within the operations and more widely to consumers of the product. Offering opps. for skills development for employees in those sites with an emphasis on production.		
BASIC NEEDS	Potential fuel source	Maximising economies of scale to provide efficient, affordable energy to communities.	Links to fuel poverty initiatives are not established.	
ACCESS	Impacts on transport patterns and issues around access	Planning production routes around existing transport infrastructure/sustainable infrastructure development to minimise environmental and community impact. Timber processing plants to be available close to production centres.	Expansion of forestry activity compounds congestion and access problems.	
HEALTH & WELL-BEING	Impacts on air quality & recreation opps.	Improving air quality. Increasing opportunities for leisure. Exploring the potential for producing non-timber woodland products for health?	Deterioration of air quality due to increased volume of traffic. Recreational access curtailed by prioritising of production.	

POLLUTION	CO2 and chemical emissions	Growing carbon sinks. Adopting environmental management systems to reduce use of chemicals, CO2 emissions in operations. Emphasising sustainable transport opps. in planning/transport policy.	Creation of CO2/ pollution from increased transport and production is not cancelled out by an overall reduction in global 'wood miles'.
RESOURCES	Management of energy & resources	Adopting environmental management practices with increased efficiency of resource use. Increasing woodlands could reduce soil erosion and flooding. Improving the availability of wood for sustainable construction and renewable energy initiatives.	Production processes do not adopt environmental management practices.
BIODIVERSITY	Impacts on local habitats	Promoting a variety of species to support biodiversity. Planning for unavoidable climate change eg will species planted survive changing conditions	Focus on production could result in less opportunities for promoting biodiversity.
WASTE	Volume of waste created	Increasing the production and use of sustainable timber for products could reduce volumes of wastage from unsustainable alternatives. Indirectly it could also make wood more viable for renewable technologies.	
SAFETY	Future security of energy sources	Indirectly helps to mitigate against climate change by increasing availability of fuel for renewables – potentially increasing the security of energy supply.	
DISTINCTIVENESS	Product identity	Promoting local distinctiveness, regional/local identity of products.	Increased volumes could lead to 'mass production' of single/restricted number of products.
LEISURE	Opps. for leisure and culture	Maximising any opportunities for cultural, creative and leisure activities within any associated developments.	Opportunities are not maximised. Decreased availability of woodland for recreational use.
DEMOCRACY	Community involvement	Ensuring that local consultation and participation are key to the volume increase strategy (see Economy & Local Needs).	Local people are not involved in planning.
<p>Long term : Recognising connections to global context eg climate change. Recognising the long-term potential to increase the self-sufficiency of the region in terms of wood production and consumption.</p>			

LIVELIHOODS: Key Outcome – ‘An increased contribution of woodfuel to renewable energy in the South West, measured by installed capacity’				
	Significant Links to RSDF	Opportunities to maximise contribution to sustainability	Potential risks to sustainability	General Comments including feedback on proposed range of actions
ECONOMY	Employment and business opps.	Supporting wider environmental sustainability and business opportunities in the renewables sector.		<i>Specific reference to wider regional renewable energy strategies would be helpful.</i>
WORK	Employment and training opps.	Supporting equal opps. Providing new all year round satisfying employment helping to reduce seasonal unemployment where this exists.		
LOCAL NEEDS	Supply to local renewables markets	Directly supporting local sourcing.	Pressures on infrastructure.	
LEARNING	Opps. for new learning & skills	Supports new opportunities for learning sustainability skills and increasing understanding of sustainable development through marketing of the product.		
BASIC NEEDS	Efficient energy source	Promoting availability of wood fuel for community use and access to those most in need.		
ACCESS	Issues around access to product	Promoting sustainable access to the fuel itself eg tying in to other services to the community to avoid unnecessary distances travelled by road.	Some risk that unsustainable patterns of access to fuel cancel out the benefits of woodfuel.	
HEALTH & WELL-BEING	Impacts on air quality	Supporting clean, non-polluting technologies.		

POLLUTION	CO2 and chemical emissions	Reducing CO2 and other harmful pollutants.	As above	
RESOURCES	Management of energy & resources	Supporting efficient resource use.		
BIODIVERSITY	Impacts on local habitats	Supporting appropriate planting of more trees to provide habitats. Reducing CO2 emissions and associated climate change impacts. Reducing pollutants which may impact on wildlife.		
WASTE	Volume of waste created	Reducing waste through efficient use of biodegradable product.		
SAFETY	Future security of energy sources	Lessening reliance on energy sources from countries facing instability.		
DISTINCTIVENESS				
LEISURE				
DEMOCRACY	Community involvement	Making info available to public re. sustainability benefits of woodfuel as part of wider sustainability challenge, facilitating informed consultation/debate.	Community aren't in a position to make informed contributions to the any potential developments.	
Long term : A secure, renewable and sustainable energy source for the future				

LIVELIHOODS:

Key Outcome – *‘An increasing contribution of woods and forests to leisure and tourism as part of the South West Environmental Economy’*

Significant Links to RSDF	Opportunities to maximise contribution to sustainability	Potential risks to sustainability	General Comments including feedback on proposed range of actions
ECONOMY Employment and training opps.	Matching new job opportunities to local workforce needs. Contributing to Regional Economic Strategy’s ‘environment driver and ‘2015’ regional tourism strategy’s destination management plans. Supporting rural diversification. Supporting sustainable business start-ups (eg eco holidays.)	Exacerbating seasonal employment problems where these exist. Not making provision for development of local skills to serve new tourist facilities.	<i>Reference to 2015 Regional Tourism Strategy and Regional Environment Strategy is needed. Links to Sustainable Food & Farming Action Plan would also be helpful.</i>
WORK Employment and training opps.	Offering more all year round, satisfying employment in healthy working environments. Providing volunteering opportunities through, for eg, BTCV	Proliferation of unrewarding jobs and insufficient regard for employee well-being.	
LOCAL NEEDS Increased provision of and demand for goods & services	Promoting local sourcing for all new tourism developments.	Non-local sourcing and increased flows of traffic/ pressures on infrastructure.	
LEARNING Opps. for new learning & skills	Supporting opportunities for learning & skills to support sustainable tourism, promoting visitor ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) and supporting opps. for life long learning.	Skills opportunities do not meet long term challenges.	
BASIC NEEDS			
ACCESS Inclusivity/ sustainability of access	Promoting more car free access and developing more urban woodlands linked in to existing infrastructure.	Inclusive access increases emissions and is to the detriment of biodiversity eg loss of wilderness. Access attracts affluent groups and/or excludes minority groups and those with special needs.	
HEALTH & WELL-BEING Effects on long-term health of residents and visitors.	Making a positive contribution to health & well-being of visitors and residents by promoting preventative health strategies such as physical fitness, mental well-being and an all-round healthy lifestyle.		

POLLUTION	CO2 and chemical emissions	Assessing and taking account of climate change mitigation and adaptation in any proposed developments.	Increased CO2 generated by new developments and operations.
RESOURCES			
BIODIVERSITY	Impacts on local habitats	Respecting or contributing to regional and local Biodiversity Action Plans in any new tourism/leisure developments. Removing some existing plantations from priority habitats, ie heathland onto farmland/brownfield sites.	Conflicting with Biodiversity Action Plans. Pressures on biodiversity.
WASTE	Volume of waste created	Maximising opportunities for sustainable waste management eg adopting waste neutral strategies as per Eden Project.	No waste management strategy is developed.
SAFETY		Ensuring safety of any leisure opp offered.	Lack of comprehensive risk assessment strategy.
DISTINCTIVENESS	The visitor experience inc. amenities, products and services	Maximising and promoting local distinctiveness in new tourism/leisure developments and raising awareness amongst visitors (see learning).	The visitor experience is not distinctive – a blanket approach is taken to development .
LEISURE	Opps. for leisure and culture	Increasing access to woodlands/forests for those most in need/under-provided and providing more woodlands in areas with lack of woodlands. Maximising the opps. for recreational and creative activity.	Increased visitor/leisure opportunities are taken advantage of by narrow section of society only.
DEMOCRACY	Community involvement	Involving local communities in consultation about new leisure and tourism developments.	Insufficient consultation on proposed developments..

Long term : If wider sustainable tourism criteria/environmental management practices are adopted, woods/forests will make an increased contribution to the development of a sustainable economy in the long term.

LIVELIHOODS: Key Outcome – <i>'Better knowledge and skills at all levels in the sector'</i>				
	Significant Links to RSDF	Opportunities to maximise contribution to sustainability	Potential risks to sustainability	General Comments including feedback on proposed range of actions
ECONOMY	Employment and training opps.	Matching those most in need with new learning opportunities. Increasing access/availability of environmental management training to increase efficiency and competitiveness of businesses in this sector. Supporting 'eco-business' start-ups.	Short-term/narrow approach to skills development..	<i>See comments against previous outcome.</i>
WORK	Taining, re-training and upskilling opps. Satisfying work and working environments	Promoting training to those currently only in seasonal employment and those wishing to diversify eg farmers/farm employees. Supporting a better skilled, better paid, more satisfied workforce. Offering rewarding volunteering opps.	Forestry still seen as exclusive sector which attracts a narrow range of people.	
LOCAL NEEDS	Procurement practices	Promoting greater understanding through training/education of the sustainability benefits of more local sourcing.	Procurement staff (plus caterers etc.) apply 'best value' in too narrow a way ie not looking at benefits to the locale/region of local sourcing.	
LEARNING	Learning & skills of forestry professionals	Ensuring Education for Sustainable Development is at the heart of better knowledge and training throughout the sector.	ESD is seen narrowly as only environmental education.	
BASIC NEEDS				
ACCESS	Sustainability of access to learning	Engaging forestry personnel in idea of sustainable access. Potential to promote reduced CO2 emissions in accessing learning itself eg remote learning /ICT options eg tutors travel to learners. Access to learning engages employees of all backgrounds and at all levels.	Learning activity does not consider sustainability of access for sector generally and of learners themselves.	
HEALTH & WELL-BEING	Staff welfare	Providing info to forest personnel to encourage a proactive approach to their own well-being.		

POLLUTION	Environmental impact of operations	Understanding the importance of pursuing a low carbon approach to activities in the sector.	See Access.	
RESOURCES	Environmental impact of operations	Promoting efficient resource management as a key basis for sustainability in the sector.	Resource management is narrowly applied to forestry management only.	
BIODIVERSITY	Impacts on local habitats	Promoting understanding of Climate Change adaptation and mitigation.	Incomplete understanding of threats and opportunities of climate change.	
WASTE	Volume of waste created	Promoting waste minimisation as fundamental to sustainable business practice in the sector.	Waste minimisation is narrowly focussed on recycling.	
SAFETY		Ensuring that staff are informed of health and safety risks and responsibilities.	Staff insufficiently trained to new roles for woodlands.	
DISTINCTIVENESS	Importance of local identity and history	Promoting staff understanding of local histories and identities to better inform their roles.	Staff insufficiently informed.	
LEISURE	Opps. for leisure and culture	Promoting skills to support increased opportunities for a variety of recreational opportunities eg sporting activities, local crafts and local history.		
DEMOCRACY	Community involvement	Increasing knowledge & skills to support good decision making eg promoting skills in community consultation and participation.	A directive rather than 'facilitative' approach is promoted.	
Long term : Increased knowledge & skills about sustainable development will facilitate a longer term approach (see learning)				

LIVELIHOODS:

Key Outcome – *'A better integrated sector, championing itself at the regional level and working more effectively together'***

Significant Links to RSDF	Opportunities to maximise contribution to sustainability	Potential risks to sustainability	General Comments including feedback on proposed range of actions
			<p><i>*This outcome needs to understand and demonstrate how the Woodland & Forestry Strategy can help to meet the wider longer term regional agenda.</i></p>

LIVEABILITY: Key Outcome – <i>‘New and existing woodland increasingly incorporated as a key component of ‘green infrastructure’ in and around communities’</i>				
	Significant Links to RSDF	Opportunities to maximise contribution to sustainability	Potential risks to sustainability	General Comments including feedback on proposed range of actions
ECONOMY	Management of development	Developing the woodlands in an integrated way that supports other strategies (eg community) so that employment and training opps. are targeted to identified needs.	Woodlands developed in isolation from community need.	<p><i>Is there potential to review/develop existing planning guidance aimed at those in a position to influence the contribution of woodlands to development plans. Guidance could cover woodland issues, for eg, health benefits, safety, transport etc.</i></p> <p><i>Action 2.5.1.7 – seeking evidence of the contribution of wooded landscapes to local economies may also be an opportunity to establish wider ‘community well-being’ benefits.</i></p>
WORK	Working environments	Increasing woodland based work opps in urban areas. Working with employers to provide sustainable access to woodland for urban workers. Supporting more accessible volunteer opps in eg woodland/habitat management and ESD. Promoting woodlands as community resource to support more all-year-round employment.	The potential for woodlands to support more pleasant, satisfying working environments is not recognised.	
LOCAL NEEDS	Sourcing of goods & services	A more integrated approach to planning should support forestry’s contribution to local sourcing strategies.	Contribution of woodlands to local sourcing strategies not recognised.	
LEARNING	Opps. for new learning & skills	Integrating with community planning and local learning strategies to identify specific or ‘special’ learning needs that woodlands could support (See also Economy). Boosting the woodland’s integral role as an ESD and lifelong learning resource.	ESD does not widely engage or impact on the sustainability of local communities.	
BASIC NEEDS	Meeting basic needs	Increased potential to meet the community’s needs for affordable energy, from an efficient, local and renewable source. Some limited potential to contribute to local/organic food initiatives.		
ACCESS	Inclusivity/ sustainability of access	Integrating with existing public transport infrastructure, eg cycle path network, to encourage car-free access. Siting within/near existing communities to improve car-free access (walking, cycling etc.) and inclusivity.	An unintegrated approach to access is taken.	
HEALTH & WELL-BEING	Impacts on air quality & health of local people	Providing integrated access to support an improvement in local air quality. Linking in with community strategies, health agencies and employers to promote physical and mental well-being of local people.	Well-being opps only focussed on physical exercise rather than offering a range of activities.	

POLLUTION	CO2 and other emissions	Integrating with strategies for improving air quality including reducing CO2 and mitigation and adaptation to climate change eg flooding issues. Potential to provide future carbon sinks.	The areas with the worst air quality do not benefit from woodlands.
RESOURCES	Management of energy & resources	Supplying source of renewable, efficient energy to local community reducing demands on non-sustainable sources. Engaging the community in management of the environment eg land and soil resources. Strengthening resource efficiency through economies of scale (eg markets for recycled products?).	Opportunities to support wider resource efficiency initiatives are not recognised.
BIODIVERSITY	Impacts on local habitats	Enhancing local and regional biodiversity and rural and urban landscapes, specifically contributing to targets of local and regional Biodiversity Action Plans. Exploring the potential to create 'wildlife corridors'. Involving local communities in a supporting role. Potential to support land swap schemes could deliver BAP priorities such as eg heathland restoration.	
WASTE	Volume of waste created	(see also Resources) Supporting local and regional waste strategies. Adopting a waste neutral approach by exploring markets for 'waste' by-products including scoping local community demand for eg sawdust, chippings etc.	Waste travels excessively long distances to be reused/recycled or disposed of.
SAFETY	Community safety	Supporting community safety by linking in with local strategic partnerships. Considering whether any potential crime can be 'designed-out'. Providing access that <i>feels</i> safe for all eg supported, well-lit, signposted as appropriate.	Woodlands are viewed as 'unsafe' and not 'owned' by the community.
DISTINCTIVENESS	Local identity	Specifying siting, materials and design which take into account community identities. Linking in with initiatives to support local creativity and traditional skills.	No consideration is given to local sourcing/identity of materials and design.
LEISURE	Opps. for leisure and culture	Supporting increased provision of recreational activities to communities currently under-provided by linking in to local health and culture strategies.	The range of opps offered does not take into account the needs of different groups.
DEMOCRACY	Community involvement	Integrating woodland strategies into existing and ongoing community consultation processes/ mechanisms (avoiding 'consultation overload') to ensure communities take ownership of local development plans.	Communities are insufficiently consulted or over-consulted.

Long term : Does existing planning guidance take into account particular long-term issues for region's forests eg flooding, rising sea levels etc.?

LIVEABILITY: Key Outcome – <i>‘Increasing use of accessible woods and forests by people for enjoyment, health and learning’</i>				
	Significant Links to RSDF	Opportunities to maximise contribution to sustainability	Potential risks to sustainability	General Comments including feedback on proposed range of actions
ECONOMY	Business/employment opportunities and business competitiveness	Encouraging all associated business start-ups to adopt environmental management principles. Matching jobs generated (by the increased access) to local need.	Service providers do not adopt environmental management practices. Business-start up are not sustainable.	<p><i>The def. of accessible woodland (follows below) could be incorporated in the strategy: ‘Any site that is permissibly accessible to the general public for recreational purposes.’</i></p> <p><i>Research has shown that the UK’s woodland cover is currently insufficient to meet our social requirements. The Woodland Trust state that the benefits of woodlands can be most effectively harnessed by developing woods near to where people live. The Trust has concluded that an additional 6, 126 hectares of new woodland is required to ensure minimum of 2 hectares is within 500 metres reach (refer to the Woodland Trust report ‘Space for People: targeting action for woodland access’ for the county/unitary authority breakdown).</i></p> <p><i>The Crabtree report ‘economic analysis of forestry policy in England’ concluded that public access is a good use of public investment especially in urban and suburban situations.</i></p>
WORK	Satisfying work	Supporting an increase in rewarding volunteer opportunities. Ensuring staff benefit from an increased focus on well-being. Focussing on out-of-season activities to support all-year-round, fairly-paid employment.	Work and volunteer opps created are not satisfying.	
LOCAL NEEDS	Sourcing of goods & services	Specifying local procurement for those providing amenities at forestry sites. Offering opportunities for eg local artists/performers within programmes of events.	Service providers procure from outside the region/UK and do not maximise contribution to local economy.	
LEARNING	Opps. for new learning & skills	Extending the range of learning opps offered to hard-to-reach groups and minorities. Offering upskilling and re-training opps. Supporting the wider ESD agenda.	Learning opps. do not match local need/wants and do not attract socially excluded groups. Learning is disconnected from wider sustainability agenda.	
BASIC NEEDS	Meeting basic needs	Increase access to those most in need to reduce inequalities.	Access fails to attract those most in need.	
ACCESS	Inclusivity/sustainability of access	Focussing on woods that are accessible by non-car modes of transport. Encouraging group/coach visits by linking in with schools and community groups. Linking in to cycle network. Rewarding those who arrive by public transport/car share. Linking in with transport providers to offer ‘through’ ticket deals. Ensuring disabled access and accessibility of information.	Access is unsustainable and exclusive.	
HEALTH & WELL-BEING	Supporting health strategies	Using the increased access as a vehicle for widespread promotion of the benefits of woodlands/green space to well-being. Extending the range of sporting/recreational activities offered. Exploring the opps. to support mental well-being eg retreats, self-development, stress-busting, saunas. (see also Basic Needs).	Range of opps. is too narrow attracting only certain sectors of the community.	

POLLUTION	CO2 and other emissions	Focussing increased activity on accessible woods embedded in public transport infrastructure where possible. Diverting leisure activity away from less polluting recreations.	Modes of access and types of recreation increase CO2 and localised pollution.
RESOURCES	Management of energy & resources	Embracing environmental management systems to minimise impact on increased operational activity.	An environmental management system is not adopted.
BIODIVERSITY	Impacts on local habitats	Encouraging public support for national, regional and local biodiversity strategies. Involving visitors in woodland and other habitat management and in wider biodiversity surveys.	Increased access threatens biodiversity and existence of wildernesses.
WASTE	Volume of waste created	Ensuring visitors are actively involved in woodland waste management (based on the reduce, reuse, recycle message) eg onsite recycling facilities, info on composting, free waste wood 'off-cuts'. Broadening the potential end uses for any 'waste' wood products.	Increased access is serviced in a way that generates greater volumes of waste.
SAFETY	Safety of visitors	Ensuring that increased access to recreation is safely managed with appropriate guidelines and supervision. Ensuring that all sectors of the community feel safe to access the forests.	Visitors do not feel safe and/or are inadequately supervised/informed.
DISTINCTIVENESS	Local distinctiveness	Ensuring access is managed in a way that supports local distinctiveness and that amenities are sensitive to local surroundings. Promoting understanding about the value of local distinctiveness. Offering opportunities to learn about local history or crafts.	Visitors are not engaged or appreciate the value/vulnerability of local distinctiveness.
LEISURE	Opps. for leisure and culture	Ensuring that hard-to-reach groups are engaged in the increased opps for woodland based recreation and that sense of ownership not restricted to affluent groups.	Opps. for recreation are not recognised by socially-excluded groups.
DEMOCRACY	Community involvement	Ensuring local communities/stakeholders are actively involved in development proposals and are able to make informed contributions to any relevant plans.	Communities are not engaged and do not take ownership of local woodlands/forests.

Long term : Ensuring that access is truly sustainable so that future generations may enjoy woodland environments that have not been over-accessed and that areas of wilderness are preserved and enhanced.

LIVEABILITY:

Key Outcome – **‘Woods and forests meeting the needs of people from across the region (now and in the future?) and from all parts of society’**

Significant Links to RSDF	Opportunities to maximise contribution to sustainability	Potential risks to sustainability	General Comments including feedback on proposed range of actions
ECONOMY Employment opportunities	Addressing the particular employment/training needs of local communities. Supporting local quality of life/liveability agendas. Supporting environmental goods & services which taking into account needs of future generations.	Local/future needs are not assessed.	
WORK Satisfying work	Offering <i>satisfying</i> (all year round), fairly paid work, ensuring that workers benefit from a healthy work environment and ongoing personal development opportunities. Creating volunteering opps. for socially excluded groups.	Work opps do not offer development potential. Volunteering opps. do not benefit excluded groups.	
LOCAL NEEDS Sourcing of goods & services	Maximising the benefits of forests to local communities by supporting local businesses and initiatives.		
LEARNING Opps. for new learning & skills	Establishing the particular learning needs of local communities in consultation with providers and communities themselves and contributing to local learning strategies. Recognising learning as the route to participation in the economy but also as an enhancer of quality of life. Offering ESD to all sectors of the community and to visitors.	Skills provision is not joined up to local strategies and/or focuses only on the needs of employers or only on informal learning opportunities.	
BASIC NEEDS Meeting basic needs	Linking in to existing programmes to improve provision of to those currently under-provided eg energy initiatives, housing strategies, healthy food.	Opportunities to support basic needs are not recognised.	
ACCESS Inclusivity/ sustainability of access	Ensuring that the needs of people with particular access requirements are met. Linking in with community transport services. Encouraging <u>all sectors</u> of the community to access the woodlands including facilitating ‘ownership’ within minority groups.	Needs are met at the expense of sustainable access.	
HEALTH & WELL-BEING Health strategies	Ensuring forestry strategy supports existing preventative health initiatives eg ‘Walking the Way to Health’ targeted most ‘at risk’ and excluded groups. Extending access to complementary health therapies. Supporting mental well-being eg working with employers on anti-stress initiatives.	Health opps. are only narrowly focussed on sport recreation.	

POLLUTION	CO2 and other emissions	Ensuring that more inclusive access is carbon neutral where possible (see also Access), minimises damage to natural systems and avoids noise and light pollution. Using environmental management principles in running amenities.	See Access.	
RESOURCES	Management of energy & resources	Ensuring resource efficiency/environmental management measures (eg sustainable construction) are incorporated in any developments. Facilitating a more balanced debate about the potential of renewable energy.	Environmental management systems are not adopted.	
BIODIVERSITY	Impacts on local habitats	Ensuring that increased access is balanced with sensitivity to local habitats and wildlife and engaging the public in the importance of biodiversity (see Learning).	Loss of biodiversity /wilderness from increased access.	
WASTE	Volume of waste created	Adopting a waste neutral approach to services and amenities.	No waste strategy adopted.	
SAFETY	Safety of visitors	Ensuring that all sectors of community are able to safely access woodlands and that visitors feel secure. Adopting H&S best practice. Discouraging reckless use of woods. Giving adequate supervision/training for use of woods.	Safety measures taken are inadequate.	
DISTINCTIVENESS	Local distinctiveness	Ensuring that local distinctiveness is <i>enhanced</i> (encouraging involvement of visitors) and not threatened by the extended access.	Standardised rather than localised approach could lead to loss of distinctiveness.	
LEISURE	Opps. for leisure and culture	Maximising the potential of the woods to be used more widely for recreation and cultural activities particularly in underprovided areas, targeting excluded groups eg supporting arts/sports facilities in less affluent areas		
DEMOCRACY	Community involvement	Facilitating informed input through creative consultation (linking in to existing processes/mechanisms where appropriate) with all stakeholders. Being prepared to 'take risks' in terms of offering new experiences and activities.		
Long term: Ensuring that extended access to woodlands is balanced with the rights of future generations to share in the benefits of forests and wilderness. Recognising the long term value of retaining local distinctiveness.				

ENVIRONMENT: Key Outcome – <i>‘Woodlands and forestry increasingly recognised for and contributing to biodiversity’</i>				
	Significant Links to RSDF	Opportunities to maximise contribution to sustainability	Potential risks to sustainability	General Comments including feedback on proposed range of actions
ECONOMY	Jobs, training opps	Scope for some specialist job creation (e.g. establishing evidence base for decline of bird pop). Active woodland management (building bird boxes, clearing forest) could create local jobs. Increasing biodiversity could help promote image of sector within/outside region and attract investors.	Job creation could be limited to a narrow field which is not suited to local requirements.	<p>Actions on how to increase biodiversity could be made more explicit within the strategy</p> <p>Consideration could be given to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in forests which are categorised outside the ‘ancient woodlands’ definition.</p> <p>Actions to ensure that the trend for species in decline is reversed could be included more explicitly.</p> <p>Potential to include an action point on the preservation of species reliant on open areas within woodlands.</p> <p>There are opportunities to engage local communities in the small scale management of woodlands where appropriate active management could facilitate improved biodiversity.</p> <p>The introductory text suggests that a targeted approach to changing woodland to open ground (for conserving important BAP habitats/species) will be taken. Action point 2.6.1.14 could be amended to clarify the outcome – e.g. changing woodland to open ground for habitats/species conservation rather than opening up sites for recreation.</p>
WORK	Voluntary work opps	Potential opportunities for satisfying work: managing woodlands, assessing biodiversity levels & ensuring species decline is reversed. Potential for unpaid labour/voluntary work if local communities get involved in small scale woodland management. If rare species are attracted and woodlands managed in a sensitive manner, tourists could visit in off peak season and provide some limited job creation.	Opportunities to involve local communities and provide satisfactory unpaid/voluntary work are missed.	
LOCAL NEEDS	Using local goods/services	Active management of forest – should ensure local goods and services are used e.g. bird boxes use local wood, source local labour etc. If tourists are attracted, appropriately managed visitor centres could use local materials; sell local produce etc.	Goods/services are imported from outside the region, losing opportunities to sustain local jobs/industries.	
LEARNING	Raising awareness of sustainability	Campaign to raise profile of ancient woodland could increase awareness of sustainable development in region. If enhanced biodiversity is achieved, woodland could be cited as a good practice and used to educate a range of audiences.	Campaign attracts increased visitor numbers with potential adverse impacts on the region’s biodiversity.	
BASIC NEEDS	Limited link.			
ACCESS	Reduced car reliance	Sites should be managed to ensure sufficient access for those with disabilities. Transport could be organised in groups to reduce dependence on single car usage	Increased access to woodland could degrade habitats.	
HEALTH & WELL-BEING	Limited direct benefit	Ensuring visitors have sufficient access to woodlands promoting physical and mental wellbeing.	As above.	

POLLUTION	Contain pollution to air & water	Additional tree planting provides potential to help mitigate climate change. Additional tree planting, buffer zones could help minimise noise and light pollution. Management of forests presents an opportunity to consider impact of climate change e.g. species that will disappear/appear and follow up actions.	Impacts of climate change are not sufficiently taken into account with adverse impacts on biodiversity.
RESOURCES	Conserve land/soil resources	Retaining existing forest and planting additional trees could help conserve land and soil resources, in addition to helping to reduce flooding	Opportunities to help conserve land/soil are lost.
BIODIVERSITY	Protect and enhance biodiversity	Protecting and managing ancient woodlands should help maintain and even increase biodiversity levels Potential to create more wet woodland and other habitats essential to declining woodland birds (PSA target).	Management of woodlands is unsuccessful and biodiversity in the region declines.
WASTE	Limited direct link.	By leaving dead trees 'waste' wood can provide unique habitats eg areas for rare birds to nest	
SAFETY	Limited direct link.	Raising profile of local communities to self manage forests could increase biodiversity. A community presence in actively managing woodland could reduce potential for vandalism, litter etc	
DISTINCTIVENESS	Retain natural character	Preserving ancient woodland and veteran trees should allow local distinctiveness to be retained. Retaining any species which are unique to the area helps preserve local distinctiveness.	Management of ancient woodlands does not sufficiently retain local character.
LEISURE	Limited direct link	Increased biodiversity combined with active forestry/woodland management could facilitate increased recreation in forests re interest and access.	
DEMOCRACY	Community involvement	Potential for local communities to be engaged in drawing up action plans for local areas and importantly delivery.	Local communities are not sufficiently involved in the decision making process and supportive of changes to local woodlands.
Long term : The objective should help enable future generations to experience ancient woodlands and for biodiversity levels in these areas to be maintained.			

ENVIRONMENT: Key Outcome – <i>'Woodlands and forestry helping to reduce the effects of climate change'</i>			
Significant Links to RSDf	Opportunities to maximise contribution to sustainability	Potential risks to sustainability	General Comments including feedback on proposed range of actions
ECONOMY Jobs opportunities.	Promoting regionally sourced wood products will support local businesses. Encouraging businesses to use locally sourced timber could enhance their business competitiveness as these products can be cheaper (when mass produced) or can provide a unique marketing or selling point. Public/private bodies could win more contracts by illustrating that they have 'green' credentials. Potential benefits of carbon trading to the regional economy.	Opportunities to incorporate improved environmental performance for local businesses are not sufficiently harnessed.	Raising awareness/ understanding of the role of woodlands/forests in mitigating climate change should inform current stakeholders on the value of this natural resource and the need for it to be preserved. Promoting woodfuel as an alternative energy source provides major opportunities for the region to move away from energy sources responsible for CO2 emissions. Could create active incentives for consumers/businesses to use woodfuel as well as wood as a building material.
WORK Voluntary work	Promoting locally sourced wood products and materials should help create and sustain local jobs. There may be specific opportunities for voluntary/unpaid work if the woodlands are to be used as a classroom. Teaching assistants could be employed at major woodlands.	Jobs created to fulfil the action points eg the research and communications campaign are imported from outside the region.	
LOCAL NEEDS Local goods/services	Actively encouraging the use of regionally sourced wood products and materials will help promote goods/services.	As above, opportunities to use local goods/services are lost with adverse implications for local communities and the environment – eg increased CO2 emissions from increased travel.	
LEARNING Raising awareness of sustainability	A communication campaign and using woodlands as a practical classroom tool to increase understanding of the role of woodlands in addressing climate change provides an opportunity to help raise awareness of sustainable development in the region.	The communications campaign does not successfully portray the role of woodlands and forests in mitigating climate change.	
BASIC NEEDS Providing energy efficiency	As cost for energy derived from finite fossil fuels increases, the region will seek alternative, cheaper energy sources. Woodfuel provides a potential renewable form of energy and basic research work could be undertaken to evaluate the viability of this energy source for the region. Positive incentives to encourage the consumers/businesses to take up this energy source could then be pursued.	Woodland fuel uptake is minimal resulting in the region's continued reliance on fossil fuels.	

ACCESS	Reduced car reliance	Using woodlands as classrooms for education could require adjustments to be made in ensuring equal access for all including those with disabilities. Visits to these woodlands can be facilitated via coach with a reduced emphasis on car.	Increased access to woodlands is heavily reliant on car use resulting in increased CO2 emissions.
HEALTH & WELL-BEING	Limited direct link	There is a limited direct link to promoting physical and mental well-being. However, campaigns to increase the understanding of the role of woodlands in mitigating climate change could be linked to promoting the health benefits of physical exercise in woodlands.	
POLLUTION	Promote use of renewable energy and create potential carbon sinks	There is potential for targeted planting to help mitigate the impacts of the climate change by creating future carbon sinks. Planting native trees has the additional benefits of minimising noise and light pollution. Sourcing timber locally rather than bringing in timber from outside the region, will reduce CO2 emissions in reduced transport mileage. Encouraging the use of wood fuel as an alternative energy source will directly help the region reduce its CO2 emissions produced from fossil fuels.	
RESOURCES	Reduced flooding	The major link is to create opportunities for the use of renewable energy – woodfuel – see comments under basic needs. Targeting planting could help mitigate the unavoidable impacts of climate change including increased flooding events. In addition targeted planting should help conserve land resources and reduce erosion.	Opportunities for the use of woodfuel are not sufficiently captured and the region's reliance on fossil fuels continues.
BIODIVERSITY	Consider impact of climate change	Targeted planting of native trees provides an opportunity to plan habitats in a way which could increase biodiversity. As climate change occurs the biodiversity of woodlands/forestry will change. Owners should take into account the evolving species that are likely to decline and potential for new species to arrive.	The impacts of climate change are not sufficiently considered and species decline as the unavoidable consequences of climate change occur.
WASTE	Limited direct link.		

SAFETY	Limited direct link			
DISTINCTIVENESS	Promote local sourced wood products	Promoting the use of regionally sourced wood products and materials should help promote local character and distinctiveness. In addition to preserving the woodlands throughout the region.		
LEISURE	Limited direct link	Campaigns to raise awareness/understanding of woodlands in mitigating climate change could be linked to opportunities for promoting recreation, arts etc.		
DEMOCRACY	Community involvement	There is scope for people to become informed of the benefits of woodlands.	Local communities are not fully involved in the decision-making process.	
<p>Long term : There is potential for targeted native planting to help the region cope with the unavoidable impacts of climate change such as flooding. Promoting woodfuel use could provide a potential long-term renewable energy supply.</p>				

ENVIRONMENT: Key Outcome – <i>‘Woodlands and forestry increasingly recognised for and contributing to landscape quality, cultural and archaeological Heritage’</i>			
Significant Links to RSDP	Opportunities to maximise contribution to sustainability	Potential risks to sustainability	General Comments including feedback on proposed range of actions
ECONOMY Job retention and creation	Demonstrating the positive aspects of woodlands through projects, seminars and training events could provide some employment opportunities. Encouraging the use of traditional skills could create further employment opportunities for specialist jobs such as woodcrafts, sculpture etc. and boost the local economy. Protecting/promoting woodland heritage should have a positive impact on the local economy by protecting jobs that are currently dependent on forestry.	Small number of jobs created which are sourced from outside the region.	<p>There is a need to ensure that the aim to protect and promote woodland heritage to community and tourism development is combatable. Community management of small scale urban woodland could be harnessed with an array of benefits.</p> <p>Action point 2.6.3.4 states that the strategy will protect <u>and</u> promote woodland heritage as part of community and tourism development. These could be conflicting aims and will require sensitive management to ensure that whilst tourist numbers to forests increase, their impact on is minimised. This should ensure that the woodland heritage is maintained for future generations as well as current/immediate visitors.</p> <p>Action point 2.6.3.4 states the Strategy will promote woodland Heritage as part of Community Development. Specific action Points could be included which specifically aim to harness the benefits of local community management and the opportunities to increase awareness/understanding.</p>
WORK Voluntary work	Promoting woodland heritage as part of community and tourism development could provide opportunities for voluntary/unpaid work. For example, small scale exhibitions in tourist centres can be manned by volunteers and community projects are often reliant on unpaid work. In promoting woodland heritage for tourism, short breaks could be encouraged and therefore contributing to year round employment.	As above, jobs are sourced from outside the region.	
LOCAL NEEDS Local goods/services	If the strategy promotes the use of traditional skills (eg woodcrafts) then local goods could be used. Promoting arts and culture opportunities in woods/forests could further the use of local goods/services by incorporating locally derived resources e.g. in sculptures.	Opportunities to support local goods/services are not sufficiently captured.	
LEARNING Learning opportunities	There is a major opportunity to promote learning via tourism and community engagement. Simple exhibitions or cultural events could be used to link the significance of woodlands to increased understanding. For example in the Forest of Dean, mining was a significant industry in the woodlands and this history could be highlighted to educate visitors. Demonstrating how woodland character can be a positive agent through seminars provides opportunities for learning via training.		
BASIC NEEDS Limited link			

ACCESS	Access for those with disabilities	Small scale community management of woodlands (because of the close location) could result in a reduced reliance of car when visiting. When promoting woodland heritage as part of community and tourism development, efforts should be made to ensure that the woodlands are accessible to those with disabilities. For example placing board walks can not only provide access to those with walking difficulties but can have the additional benefit of directing visitors to particular areas of the woodlands – avoiding damage to sensitive areas. Forest drives can provide an effective mechanism of allowing those with disabilities access.	Increased access could degrade the woodland and lead to a loss in biodiversity
HEALTH & WELL-BEING	Facilitate physical exercise	Promoting community involvement and tourism to woodlands should provide opportunities to promote physical and mental well-being.	
POLLUTION	Minimise noise/light pollution	Planting small scale woodlands in urban areas can help reduce noise and pollution, in addition to absorbing CO2 emissions. Maintaining the woodland/forest coverage should help combat climate change via carbon sinks.	Opportunities to create small scale woodlands close to urban areas are not sufficiently captured – omitting potential benefits to local residents and wildlife, such as minimising light/noise pollution and creating wildlife corridors.
RESOURCES	Conserve land resources	Protecting woodlands will help conserve land and soil resources in addition to reducing the risk of flooding. By promoting woodland heritage to local communities and tourists, the benefits of using wood as a renewable energy could be highlighted.	
BIODIVERSITY	Maintain small scale habitats/wildlife corridors	Protecting large and small scale woodlands will help maintain biodiversity numbers. Small scale woodlands can provide valuable habitats and form a vital part of wildlife corridors and thus allow species to be maintained and possibly increased within the region.	As above, opportunities to create wildlife corridors are lost.
WASTE	Limited link	Traditional skills, such as woodcraft, are generally resource efficient thus there is minimal potential for waste to be produced.	
SAFETY	Limited link	Community engagement in protecting woodlands can reduce nuisance of gangs using them. As it is apparent that local residents take pride in the woodland and are less likely to tolerate woodlands being littered, trees damaged etc.	

DISTINCTIVENESS	Preserve local character	Promoting and protecting woodland heritage provides significant opportunities to preserve local character, historical industry etc. Using traditional skills, produce and creativity should help ensure the local character of the area is protecting and even enhanced.	
LEISURE		Action points included within this objective are to encourage arts, culture and heritage in the region. There is potential for this to be a key outcome of the strategy and is linked to well-being, promoting local goods, learning and distinctiveness. Specific action points could be included to demonstrate explicit outcomes in promoting arts, culture and heritage in the region. For example, old mines could be restored and used as visitor centres. Large forests could host open theatre productions.	Tourist development needs to be managed sensitively to ensure positive benefits are achieved and potential negative impacts are minimised.
DEMOCRACY	Community involvement	Enabling local communities to get involved will facilitate local decision making and management of woodlands.	Omitting the benefits of small scale community management of woodlands close to urban areas could result in decline of these woodlands.
<p>Long term : Promoting and protecting woodland heritage should enable future generations to experience the forests and learn about the historical significance of these environments.</p>			