

Forestry Commission Equality Analysis Form

1. What is the name of your policy, function or service?

Inverness, Ross & Skye Forest District – Strategic Plan 2012

2. What are the main aims and objectives of the Policy function or service?

The Strategic Plan for Inverness, Ross & Skye Forest District describes the role and strategic directions in managing approximately a tenth of Scotland's National Forest Estate during the period 2014 - 2016. The new District Strategic Plan replaces the Inverness, Ross & Skye Strategic Plan from 2009-13.

3. Briefly describe the impact (or potential impact) on people

The new District Strategic Plan for Inverness, Ross & Skye Forest District in itself will not have an impact on people as its main function is to interpret national policy at a local level. The Estate that makes up Inverness, Ross & Skye on the other hand, is a major source of public benefits and impacts on a wide range of people whether professionals, those seeking recreation, neighbours, businesses and a range of other stakeholders.

Our management aims reflect the six Scottish Government aspirations:

- **Healthy**, achieving good environmental and silvicultural condition in a changing climate
- **Productive**, providing sustainable economic benefits from the land
- **Treasured** as a multi-purpose resource that sustains livelihoods, improves quality of life, and offers involvement and enjoyment
- **Accessible**, local woodlands and national treasures that are well promoted, welcoming and open for all
- **Cared for**, working with nature and respecting landscapes, natural and cultural heritage
- **Good value**, exemplary, effective and efficient delivery of public benefits

These goals and aims can be mapped against the main people impacts:

Workforce: Inverness, Ross and Skye forest district directly employs a staff of around 70 people, including 4 apprentices and a mid year forestry student. Indirectly, through a variety of work programmes, the district employs a considerable number of contractors. In line with national guidance we utilise a full suite of processes and guidance to encourage and ensure equality in the workplace for both direct employees and contractors. We recognise that there are equality challenges for workforce development, particularly in relation to a historically male-dominated industry and workforce, and also in relation to the limitations imposed by the outdoor/forest environment for those with some disabilities.

Recreation visitors: Inverness, Ross & Skye forest district welcomes approximately 907,000¹ visitors a year to its forests, many using designed recreation facilities.

Two principle equality issues have been our focus in recent years:

- i) how can we make our existing forests more accessible to a wider range of people; and
- ii) building on the FCS repositioning programme what opportunities are there for the NFE to provide in terms of closer access to where people live.

In our efforts to make our existing forests more accessible to a wider range of people we recognise that there are both physical and psychological barriers to access. Physical barriers in relation to terrain and facility design can have a negative impact on those with some disabilities, and on the elderly or those with

¹ (FC Scotland All Forests Visitor Monitoring; Survey of visitors to FCS forests 2004-2007 – Inverness FD & Fort Augustus FD combined)

young children. There may be psychological barriers to accessing forests for those more familiar with the urban environment, for some ethnic groups with negative cultural associations with the countryside, and for those groups that might have a fear of crime in the secluded forest environment.

Many people in Scotland are unable or unwilling to take part in enjoyable woodland activity due to factors such as disability, distance, low income, or fear of crime. Using or creating woodland nearer to people, and creating opportunities for group activity potentially can help to overcome these forms of social exclusion.

A higher than average number of our visitors access the Inverness, Ross & Skye woodlands on foot (25% - 29). This underlines the importance of the woodlands particularly for local people despite a large proportion of our forests being in rural locations.

Neighbours and stakeholders: We take stakeholder and neighbour consultation seriously in managing the forests within the district. This is evidenced through our FSC sustainable forestry certification which requires an appropriate level of ongoing stakeholder engagement (see <http://ukwas.org.uk/>). We recognise the ongoing challenge of engaging with as yet uninvolved people and groups, and how we need to target limited engagement resources to best effect. The biggest challenge in Inverness, Ross & Skye Forest District is to engage with ethnic minorities but it is hoped that this can be redressed over the coming years as we seek ways to engage actively with them.

4. What are the names and contact details of the initiative’s owner and the person who completed the Equality Analysis?

Owner: Graeme Prest, Forest District Manager, Inverness, Ross & Skye Forest District

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5. Is this a new Equality Analysis or a review of a previous Equality Analysis?

New.	
3 year review.	This is a review, however the source document has been entirely re-written and this EQIA refers to the new document.
Early review, explain why.	
Review due to end of the initiative.	

6. If this is a review, when was the previous Equality Analysis signed off?

2009

7. How will this initiative be put into practice?

This District Strategic Plan will be actioned in the following ways:

- We will ensure all members of staff are made aware of this document and seek to raise equality and diversity awareness amongst staff through regular updates and staff meetings.
- We are looking to discuss with stakeholders the best way to ensure that we can progress equality and diversity matters in our future management and project planning. We are aware of a Police Scotland forum that exists where a range of minority groups are represented and we will endeavour to become involved with that.
- We will continue to actively liaise and work with stakeholder groups across the district to ensure that

everyone has an opportunity to engage with us.

- We will continue to provide information to our stakeholders on what we are doing through meetings, press releases, drop in sessions, information panels and leaflets as and when appropriate to do so.

8. What evidence regarding the protected characteristics have you obtained to analyse this initiative? Quote sources including details of engagement.

The key sources of data used for the purposes of this Equality Analysis include:

Visitors to Inverness, Ross & Skye forests and woodlands:

FC Scotland All Forests Visitor Monitoring (AFS1); Survey of visitors to FCS forests 2004-2007 (NB: This is currently being repeated so updated figures will be available during the life of this EQIA)

- Estimated 907,000 visits to Inverness, Ross & Skye forests annually

Scottish population:

Gender: male National average: **48.5%** (*Census 2011*);

Gender: female National average: **51.5%** (*Census 2011*);

Inverness, Ross & Skye Forest District ;

Gender: male **48.9%**

Gender: female **51.1%**

Disability: Scotland National average: **19.6%** Defined as; DDA disabled and also work-limiting disabled (*Annual Population Survey April 2010 – March 2011*)

As a percentage of population living in Inverness, Ross & Skye Forest District; **18.6%**

Ethnic minorities (*Census 2011*);

	Scotland	Inverness, Ross & Skye
White	96.0%	98.6%
Mixed race	0.4%	0.3%
Asian	2.7%	0.8%
Black	0.7%	0.2%
Other	0.3%	0.1%

Age (*Census 2011*);:

	Scotland	Inverness, Ross & Skye
15 and below	17%	18%
16 to 24	12%	9%
25 to 34	13%	11%
35 to 44	14%	13%
45 to 54	15%	16%
55 to 64	13%	14%
65 and over	17%	19%

Religion (*Census 2001*)

- Church of Scotland: 42%
- No religion 27.5%
- Roman catholic 16%
- Other Christian 7%

- Religion not stated 5.5%
- Islam 0.8%
- Other religion 0.6%
- Buddhism 0.1%
- Sikhism 0.1%
- Judaism 0.1%
- Hinduism 0.1%

Inverness, Ross & Skye work force (30 March 2012):

Gender

Female: 21.4%

Male: 78.6%

Age Distribution

16-24 6%

25-34 11%

35-44 23%

45-54 46%

55-64 13%

65+ 1%

Disability

2.8% consider themselves to have a disability

Ethnicity

100% of our staff are white.

The 2011 Staff Survey results for Inverness, Ross & Skye did not identify any issues for particular groups in our workforce.

9. What gaps are there in the available evidence?

	Describe the gaps and what you have done to fill them, or why you cannot fill them.
	<p>Data regarding visits to FCS forests has been extracted from one key source: All Forest Surveys (AFS) 1; sampling covered the period 2004-2007 which pre-dated the introduction of the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>A 2nd All Forest Survey (AFS2) is currently in the process of being carried out and this will provide up to date and more robust data regarding our visitor demographics.</p>
Age	Evidence relating to the age of our Visitors, Workforce and Scottish and Inverness, Ross & Skye Forest District populations is captured above
Disability	<p>Evidence relating to overall numbers of our Visitors, Workforce and Scottish and Inverness, Ross & Skye forest district population who consider they have a disability is captured above.</p> <p>Additional evidence with regard to forest visitors and stakeholdes with a disability or impairment has been gathered during visitor surveys at specific sites. This data has</p>

	not been included in the figures above.
Gender	Evidence relating to gender of our Visitors, Workforce and Scottish and Inverness, Ross & Skye forest district population is captured above.
Gender Reassignment	No visitor data; No Scottish population data publicly available. Workforce: the 2011 Staff Survey showed no staff working in Inverness, Ross & Skye forest district identified themselves as transgender.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	The national forest estate is made available for marriage and civil partnership. There are regular enquiries but in 2012 only 2 (known) have taken place.
Pregnancy and Maternity	No visitor data; no population data;
Race	Evidence relating to ethnic origin of our Visitors, Workforce, Scottish and Inverness, Ross & Skye forest district populations is captured above
Religion and Belief	Evidence captured relating to religion or belief of Scottish and Inverness, Ross & Skye forest district populations; No visitor data; Workforce: the Staff Survey of 2011 indicates that around 46% of employees are Christian and 27% have no belief.
Sexual Orientation	No visitor data; no comprehensive official statistics on sexual orientation for population; Workforce: the Staff Survey 2011 showed that between 1 and 3 % of FC staff identify themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual. No data was available for Inverness, Ross & Skye Forest District

10. What does all the evidence tell you about the actual or likely impact on different groups?

	Positive Impact	Negative impact	High, Medium or Low	Comments
Age	x		medium	Survey data shows that IRS FD forests attract age groups broadly in line with the population, but with a marked higher % of 16 to 44 year olds. The District Strategic Plan actions in line with the IRS FD stated vision recognises the importance of our forests around Inverness and that we want more people enjoying the forests across the age spectrum.
Disability	x		medium	<u>With 15% of our visitors declaring a disability (against a population of 18.6%) visitors to our forests with disabilities</u> benefit from provision of access now being designed with all abilities in mind, and for provision of information that makes level of difficulty clear. We have worked and will continue to work more closely with the Field Fare Trust on an ongoing basis across the FC Scotland estate to evaluate and are acting on the findings to make forests more accessible.

				As an equal opportunity employer we are committed to making reasonable adjustments to minimise or overcome barriers for staff.
Gender	x		medium	<p>Analysis of visitors to the IRS FD forests has indicated that the number of male and female visitors to FCS forests is almost equal and accurately reflects the Scottish figures.</p> <p>Forestry has traditionally been a male dominated profession. With 21.4% of female employees we have seen an increase in the district over the past few years. This doesn't fully recognise jobs and grades where there remains some imbalance.</p>
Gender reassignment	x		low	There is no knowledge of these groups locally and there has been no registered complaints from them.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	x		low	We have, via our permissions system, provided sites for wedding ceremonies and will continue to deal with each request dispassionately on its merits.
Pregnancy and Maternity	x		low	<u>We</u> recognise the number of family groups that visit our forests and the need to ensure that what we provide is appropriately accessible.
Race	x		medium	<p>Since 2010 the FCS recruitment 'freeze' decreased opportunities significantly due to the requirement to downsize the wider Civil Service. Improving the diversity of our staff is difficult under these continuing restrictions, but this remains an aim.</p> <p>We will continue to ensure all sectors of society have an opportunity to comment or be involved in the work we do, be it through surveys, compliments and complaints register, drop in sessions or by direct contact with known and recognised groups.</p>
Religion and Belief	x		low	We have had no approaches from religious groups to run special services or activities within our forests and any such request would be considered dispassionately on its merits regardless of faith.
Sexual Orientation	x		low	We have no data on sexual orientation and have had no recent contact with representative groups. The new strategic plan will have little effect on that however via the Police Scotland forum mentioned above we plan to improve

				that over time.
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11. What have you changed in the initiative to reduce or eliminate any negative impact?

Our People Strategy 2011-16 Fit for the Future lays out how we will take positive action for equality in the workplace

(<http://alpacorn.forestry.gov.uk:7777/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/ECONNECT/PERSONNEL%20DEVELOPMENT/FIT%20FOR%20OUR%20FUTURE%20-%20PEOPLE%20STRATEGY%202011-2016.PDF>)

A key theme of our People Strategy is to recruit and employ more people with protected characteristics in order to make the Forestry Commission as representative of the population as possible. Spending restrictions meant that active advertising in media outlets specifically aimed at various protected characteristic groups ceased in April 2010. Our recruitment also decreased significantly from that date, due to the requirement to downsize the wider Civil Service. Improving the diversity of our staff is difficult under these continuing restrictions, but it remains an aim. Meantime, we shall do all that we can to understand and eliminate any issues of inequality towards our staff and to ensure our interviewing processes are not discriminatory.

Our community and recreation work is directed by four existing policy documents for each of which equality and diversity are a core focus:

- Working with communities: our commitment (<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-7Q4J6R>)
- Forests for People Recreation Framework ([http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fcfc114.pdf/\\$FILE/fcfc114.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fcfc114.pdf/$FILE/fcfc114.pdf))
- Woods In and Around Towns ([http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fcfc120.pdf/\\$FILE/fcfc120.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fcfc120.pdf/$FILE/fcfc120.pdf))
- Woods for Health Strategy ([http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fcfc011.pdf/\\$FILE/fcfc011.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fcfc011.pdf/$FILE/fcfc011.pdf))

Our approach to consultation and engagement is laid out in Working with communities: our commitment (<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-7Q4J6R>) and OGB 44 Equality and Diversity (http://alpacorn.forestry.gov.uk:7777/portal/page?_pageid=33,1404557&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

Equality messages and commitments are embedded through the Strategic Directions document.

During 2011 the FC conducted Public Opinion Surveys in UK, Scotland and Wales. The Surveys indicated that people have a great interest in visiting forests and that around two thirds or more of all respondents said they had visited forests or woodlands in the last few years.

Disabled respondents were least likely to have visited forests or woodlands and personal mobility reasons (difficulty in walking etc) was one of the most commonly reported reasons for not visiting. The number of BAME respondents in Scotland was also very low, reflecting national demographics.

The Public Opinion Survey records positive responses from respondents in different categories. In response to the question 'In the last few years, have you visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation?':

70% of not disabled and 57% of disabled respondents in the UK said Yes

67% of male and 68% of female respondents in the UK said Yes

71% of White and 34% of BAME respondents in the UK said Yes

69% of respondents age 44 or under, and 66% of respondents aged 45 or over in the UK said Yes.

From this we can determine that there is little statistical difference in the gender and age demographics of our customers. However, there are clear differences in the level of participation in our services of disabled people and BAME communities. Therefore, we will focus our attention on engaging other communities to improve their use and enjoyment of the public forest estate e.g. people with disabilities and BAME communities. Actions to take forward this commitment are captured in the 4 existing policy documents above and actions being taken forward at a local level are contained in regional and local plans.

12. Where negative impact can not be reduced, give the reasons why.

It is our belief that to a greater or lesser extent the new Strategic Plan will allow for us to have a positive impact across all demographics.

13. Does this initiative fulfil the General Equality Duty?	
	Comment
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.	Yes - In our efforts to make our existing forests more accessible to a wider range of people we recognise that there are both physical and psychological barriers to access. Physical barriers in relation to terrain and facility design can have a negative impact on those with disabilities, and on the elderly or those with young children. There may be psychological barriers to accessing forests for those more familiar with the urban environment, for some ethnic groups with negative cultural associations with the countryside, and for those groups that might have a fear of crime in the secluded forest environment.
Advance equality of opportunity.	Yes - FCS is an equal opportunity employer and has a full suite of processes and guidance in place to encourage and ensure equality in the workplace for both direct employees and contractors. Our People Strategy 2011-16 Fit for the Future lays out how we will take positive action for equality in the workplace
Foster good relations.	Yes - We take stakeholder and neighbour consultation seriously in managing the forests in Inverness, Ross & Skye forest district. This is evidenced through our FSC sustainable forestry certification which requires an appropriate level of ongoing stakeholder engagement (see http://ukwas.org.uk/). We recognise the ongoing challenge of engaging with as yet uninvolved people and groups, and how we need to target limited engagement resources to best effect. A particular challenge is to engage with ethnic minority groups as only 1.4% of the Inverness, Ross & Skye forest district population is of non-white ethnic origin. We also recognise the continuing need for us to be as inclusive as possible when conducting community consultation to ensure as many people as possible have a chance to comment on what we plan to do, and when we are engaging with schools and offering events.
14. Describe the arrangements to measure and monitor the actual impact of this initiative on people from the protected characteristic groups.	
How will you measure the effects of the initiative?	<p>Equality monitoring commitments are embedded in the sectoral policy documents listed in section 11. These, in turn are linked to monitoring of a national set of indicators for forestry, including for Community development, and Access and Health at http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/SFSprogressindicators2011.pdf/\$FILE/SFSprogressindicators2011.pdf</p> <p>The diversity characteristics of forest visitors will be monitored through All Forest Surveys.</p> <p>We will include a consultation framework in our regional plans, which will be subject to public consultation. This will provide a locally agreed framework for local consultation on our land management plans and local activities. The consultation plans will include commitments to monitoring the effectiveness of our consultation, and this evidence will be collated at national level to inform national policy.</p> <p>Inverness, Ross & Skye forest district are directing resources towards increasing formal project management protocols and</p>

	<p>this in turn will mean the requirement for more formal 'communications plans'. This will afford a further opportunity to consider the appropriate level of pro-active engagement with minority groups.</p>
<p>What type of information is needed for monitoring and how often will it be analysed?</p>	<p>Though not specifically looking at minority groups we conduct a variety of surveys to obtain feedback from our "customers" including the FCS Annual Mystery Shopping Report. A 2nd All Forest Survey (AFS2) is currently underway and this will provide up to date and more robust data regarding our visitor demographics.</p> <p>In addition when the 2011 Census results are published these will provide up to date demographics regarding the Scottish population.</p> <p>Of more value by way of monitoring minority groups is qualitative surveying in specific instances. The FD will continue to commission 'visitor experience plans' which includes gathering data similar to that contained in the national census by way of monitoring trends in visitors.</p>
<p>How will you engage stakeholders* in implementation, monitoring and review?</p>	<p>Our approach to consultation and engagement is laid out in Working with communities: our commitment (http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-7Q4J6R) and OGB 44 Equality and Diversity (http://alpacorn.forestry.gov.uk:7777/portal/page?_pageid=33,1404557&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)</p> <p>Equality messages and commitments are embedded through the Strategic Directions document.</p>
<p>Who will be responsible for the monitoring and review?</p>	<p>Graeme Prest – Inverness, Ross & Skye Forest District Manager</p>
<p>15. What is the review date for this Equality Analysis?</p>	
<p>Date of next review(s)</p>	<p>2016</p>
<p>What could trigger an early revision?</p>	<p>Change of strategic direction/policy</p>
<p>16. Senior manager sign off</p>	
<p>I agree with this Equality Analysis and its supporting evidence relating to this initiative and that it demonstrates that it advances or will advance, the three aims of the General Equality Duty.</p>	
<p>Name</p>	<p>Graeme Prest</p>
<p>Signature</p>	
<p>Job Title</p>	<p>Forest District Manager</p>
<p>Date</p>	