

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

Moray & Aberdeenshire Forest District Strategic Plan 2014 - 2017

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

This document describes the role and strategic directions for Moray & Aberdeenshire Forest District managing approximately a tenth of Scotland's National Forest Estate. It replaces the Forest District Strategic Plan 2009-2013.

It sets out the contribution which the District will make to translate the National Key Commitments into Regional delivery. It also sets the direction for the new Land Management Plans which are currently under development to ensure that we maximise public benefit and optimise ecosystem service provision moving towards landscape scale land management.

The new Moray & Aberdeenshire Forest District Strategic Plan describes the actions to be undertaken locally which will contribute to delivery of the six goals for the National Forest Estate presented in the Scottish Forestry Strategy and the six aspirations from the Role of Scotland's National Forest Estate and Strategic Directions

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

The revised Moray & Aberdeenshire Forest District Strategic Plan sets out the programme of actions which will be delivered on the National Forest Estate in Moray & Aberdeenshire to contribute to the goals of the Scottish Forestry Strategy as represented by the aspirations in the Role of Scotland's National Forest Estate and Strategic Directions. The plan itself will not have a new impact on people, at its main function is to explain existing policy. The forests within Moray & Aberdeenshire FD on the other hand are a major source of public benefits and impact on a wide range of people both as workers, leisure users, neighbours and stakeholders.

The document lays out the six goals for the NFE in Moray & Aberdeenshire :

- Safeguarding 'national forestry treasures'
- Delivering forestry for people and rural development benefits
- Timber production for market stability and development
- Contributing to the Scottish Government's renewable energy targets
- Landscape-scale management for biodiversity and ecosystem services
- Supporting policy, R&D and exemplars of land use integration and best practice

Our management aims are described around a further six aspects:

- Treasured. Treasured by the nation as a truly multi-purpose resource sustaining livelihoods, improving the environment, and as a place for enjoyment and involvement.
- Healthy. Healthy ecosystems sustainably managed to provide ecosystem services in a changing climate.
- Productive. Managed to sustain and utilise the productive potential of the land.
- Accessible. Local woodlands and national treasures easily accessible, welcoming and open for all.
- Cared for. Well looked after countryside with natural and cultural heritage in good condition.
- Good value. Using the income-generating potential of the Estate to minimise the net cost of delivering public benefits.

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

Workers: Moray & Aberdeenshire FD employs around 75 staff directly but also provides very significant programmes of work for a wide range of contractors engaged in delivery of all six goals. All of the programmes are entirely dependant on our professional, motivated, diverse and dedicated workforce. In accordance with FCS national guidance we have a full suite of processes and guidance in place 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. It may also be the case that those in more urban-based cultural groups are less likely to consider employment in a land-based industry like forestry.

Leisure users: Some 1.8M visits are made each year to the NFE in Moray & Aberdeenshire FD, many using designed recreation facilities, for example for mountain biking and wildlife viewing. (*FC Scotland All Forests Visitor Monitoring; Survey of visitors to FCS forests 2004-2007*)

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 young children. There may also be psychological barriers to accessing forests for those more familiar with the urban environment, and for those groups that might have a fear of crime in the secluded forest environment. One of our key activities has been to develop programmes with school children and education providers to encourage them to think of the National Forest Estate as a key education and recreational resource. By influencing positively the next generation we both foster a sense of ownership/value of the forest resource and engage parents in activities within the estate

Our estate repositioning programme also recognises the locational barriers to access, particularly for those without [private transport](#). 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.

Almost 90% (the highest in Scotland) of the visitors to Moray & Aberdeenshire reach the forest by car reflecting the predominantly rural distribution of the forests and the above average number of households with access to a car (85% in Aberdeenshire), a small proportion, essentially those living, in relatively close proximity walk, cycle or ride but there was no record of anyone using public transport (*FC Scotland All Forests Visitor Monitoring; Survey of visitors to FCS Forests 2004-2007*). There may be a variety of reasons for this including the lack of suitable public transport provision and the very high proportion of users accompanied by dogs tending to be associated with the use of private vehicles. M&A have a small number of peri-urban and Woods in and Around Towns (WIAT) woodlands most particularly those adjacent to the City of Aberdeen. The M&A managed woodlands in and round the city are very heavily used but there have been no opportunities to extend this holding so our focus is primarily on providing a high quality visitor experience of the existing sites although opportunities for expansion of this resource would be pursued. In part due to national efforts, between 2006 and 2009 the proportion of the population with accessible woodland greater than 20 hectares within 4 kilometres of their home has risen from 68% to 83% which has the effect of widening opportunities to visit the NFE to the Scottish population as a whole. (*The Scottish Forestry Strategy: 2011-2014 Implementation Plan & 2010-2011 Progress Report*).

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/SFSprogressindicators2011.pdf/\\$FILE/SFSprogressindicators2011.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/SFSprogressindicators2011.pdf/$FILE/SFSprogressindicators2011.pdf)).

Neighbours and stakeholders: We take stakeholder and neighbour consultation seriously in managing Scotland's National Forest Estate. This is evidenced through our FSC sustainable forestry certification which requires an appropriate level of ongoing stakeholder engagement (see <http://ukwas.org.uk/>). This is an on going challenge with a high proportion of our contacts being local users and neighbours but we are increasingly using web based consultation mechanisms to seek to encourage wider engagement. The profile of users largely reflects national figures although there is a below average representation from those who consider themselves urban based. The increased use of web based consultation mechanisms is intended to assist this in easing accessibility augmented by direct engagement through public events particularly on those sites with a higher recreational profile. We have very limited use of the forest resource from ethnic minorities however in part this may be a consequence of the All Forests Survey data now being slightly dated. There has been a noticeable increase in ethnic minorities in the Grampian census area in the

past 10 years although is related primarily to Aberdeen City rather than the wider FD. That Aberdeen city has an unusually large proportion of students in it's population at 15% which is likely to be a key factor influencing this diversity of population

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

Calum Murray Communications Recreation & Tourism Manager Calum.murray@forestry.gsi.gov.uk 01466 794161

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

New.	New – the previous Forest District Strategic Plans were covered by Equality Analysis under taken at national level.
3 year review.	
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?

The Strategic Plan for the National Forest Estate 2009 to 2013 was subject to a partial equality impact assessment in 2010.

7. How will this initiative be put into practice?

This plan will be implemented in the following ways:

- We will ensure that all members of staff are made aware of this document and will seek to raise quality and diversity awareness issues amongst staff through updates and staff meetings. This process has already been initiated
- We will work with national Equality and Diversity leads to ensure that programmes and projects which may impact on user groups with protected characteristics are progressed in accordance with best practice
- We will continue to identify, liaise proactively and work with stakeholder groups across the FD to ensure that we are accessible and approachable to all. We will expand our approach to consultation to include web based methods, encouraging access and continue to implement advice of independent specialist advisors such as the Fieldfare Trust.
- We will continue to provide information to our stakeholders on what we are doing through face to face meetings, press releases, newsletters, information panels and leaflets.

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 Scotland's forests and woodlands:

- **FC Scotland All Forests Visitor Monitoring (AFS1); Survey of visitors to FCS forests 2004-2007**
- Estimated 1.8m visits to FCS forests per year. From sample tested:
- 47%male and 54% female in Moray and 52% male and 48% female in Aberdeenshire

- 22% between 35 and 44; 44 Moray and 41% Aberdeenshire aged 45 or over of which 16% aged over 60
- 99% white; 1% non-white ethnic origin
- 9% of visitors to Moray and 2% in Aberdeenshire stated they or a party member had a disability or special need
- 73% in Moray and 53% in Aberdeenshire were on a local day trip of less than 6 miles from home
- 87% in Moray and 90% in Aberdeenshire travelled to the forest by car; 7% walked ; less than 1% used public transport
- **Forest Visitor Surveys 2009:** Visitor Feedback Survey carried out at 5 forest districts in Scotland – a total of 530 surveys were completed across the 5 sites:
 - 36% male; 64% female
 - 17% aged 24 or under; 30% aged 25 – 44; 37% aged 45-64; 17% aged 65+
 - 3% non-white visitor
- **Bennachie Visitor survey 2013 (250 surveys)**
- In groups interviewed
 - o 80% Adults 20 % Children
- Of individuals interviewed (Adults only)
 - o 7% Aged 24 or under; 26% aged 25- 34; 23% aged 35-44; 17% aged 45-54; 12% aged 55-65 ; 14% aged 65+

Grampian population :

Gender: male Grampian average: 49% (*Census 2011*);

Gender: female Grampian average: 51% (*Census 2011*);

Disability: Scotland National average: 19.6% using the definition DDA disabled and also work-limiting disabled (*2011 Census*) Within M&A FD 16% of the population have a limiting long term illness or disability.

Types of disability: – (*Disability in Scotland 2004 DRC*)

- It is estimated that there are 180,000 people in Scotland who have serious sight problems (*RNIB Scotland*) .
- In May 2003 an estimated 18,066 adults with learning disabilities were known to local authorities throughout Scotland (*Scottish Executive, 2004*).
- It is estimated that 729,000 people have some form of hearing loss, deafness or may be a Deaf person Eighty per cent of hearing impaired people are aged over 60 years (*Scottish Executive, 2003*).
- One in four people will experience a mental health problem at some point in their lives (*Scottish Association for Mental Health*)

Minority ethnic National average: 4% (*2011 Census*); The figures for Grampian across the three administrative areas reflect a marked increase in the BAME population from 2% in the 2001 census figure to now match the 4% national average. Aberdeen city has a higher than average BAME population of 8.2% which is markedly different from the rural areas of Aberdeenshire and Moray where ethnic minorities are well below the national average.

Age:

17% 15 and under in Grampian

63% working age (16 to approximately 60.14 for women, 16-64 for men).

20 % pensionable age (approximately 60.15 and over for women and 65 and over for men) (*Scottish Government statistics*)

Under 25 years old National average: 29% (Census 2011);
Over 45 years old National average: 44% (Census 2011);

Religion (Census 2011)

- Church of Scotland: 32%
- No religion 36%
- Roman catholic 16%
- Other Christian 5%
- Religion not stated 7%
- Other religion 0.3%
- Buddhism 0.2%
- Sikhism 0.2%
- Judaism 0.1%
- Hinduism 0.3%
- Aberdeen city has notably higher percentage of Non Christians than the remainder of Grampian area.

Moray & Aberdeenshire FD Workforce demographics as at 30 March 2012:

Gender

Female: 20.5%

Male: 79.5%

Age Distribution

16 – 24 – 1.5%

25 – 34 – 15%

35 – 44 – 16%

45 – 54 – 38%

55 – 64 – 31%

65 and over 1.5%

Disability

1.5% of Moray & Aberdeenshire staff consider themselves to have a disability

Ethnicity

0% of Moray & Aberdeenshire FD staff are of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic origin (BAME)

The 2011 Staff Survey results for Scotland 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.
	Data regarding visits to FCS forests has been extracted from 3 key sources: All

	<p>Forest Surveys (AFS) 1; sampling covered the period 2004-2007; Forest Visitor Surveys 2009 and FCS Annual Mystery Shopping Report 2010/11 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 age of our Visitors, Moray & Aberdeenshire Workforce and Scottish population captured above
Disability	Evidence relating to overall numbers of our Visitors, Workforce and Scottish population using Moray & Aberdeenshire Forest District sites who consider they have a disability captured above. Data relating to specific impairment groups within Scottish population captured above to which are added census data specific to Grampian Health Board area ,
Gender	Evidence relating to gender of our Visitors, Workforce and Grampian population captured above.
Gender Reassignment	No visitor data; No Scottish population data publicly available. Workforce: the 2011 Staff Survey showed around no staff within Moray & Aberdeenshire FD who identified themselves as transgender. There were no particular issues highlighted and those who identified themselves as transgender were as content with the FC.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No visitor data; no workforce data; In 2012 there were 2573 marriages & 30 Civil partnership in the Grampian area. (GRO 2010). We are occasionally asked for permission to hold marriage services. These are dealt with as estates permissions and are not recorded specifically for this purpose. We have no record and have not requested any information regarding the type of service undertaken
Pregnancy and Maternity	No visitor data; no population data; Workforce: since 2010 only 1 member of staff has taken maternity leave and has not at this point returned to work.
Race	Evidence relating to ethnic origin of our Visitors, Moray & Aberdeenshire Workforce and Scottish population captured above
Religion and Belief	Evidence captured relating to religion or belief of Scottish population; No visitor data; Workforce: the FCS Wide Staff Surveys of 2009 and 2011 indicate that around 46% of FC employees are Christian and 27% have no belief. However, Buddhism, Judaism, Hindu and Islam are also represented, though in low numbers.
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.

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	<u>Leisure users</u> : people with young children and older people benefit from

				<p>provision of access designed with all abilities in mind, and for provision of information that makes level of difficulty clear. Surveys indicate that currently around 16% of our recreational users are over 60. It is important therefore to ensure that there is fit for purpose provision in recreational facilities particularly. This will include ensuring that information on the degree of challenge presented by promoted access routes is clear and is maintained. This will be taken into consideration through questionnaires</p> <p><u>Neighbours and stakeholders:</u> A flexible approach to conducting consultation meetings such as offering opportunities outwith standard working times should be taken to ensure as many stakeholders are able to participate. The increased use of web based mechanisms will also benefit this group as internet use becomes more widespread.</p> <p><u>Workforce</u></p> <p>There is an ageing workforce within the FD with a higher number of more mature staff than the wider full FCS compliment. To a large extent this is a consequence of a high number of long serving staff. With likely retirals over the course of the forthcoming Strategic Plan period this is likely to change quite significantly. It will be important to manage this process to ensure an appropriate blend of experience and recent recruits. The District has played an active part in modern apprenticeships and offer student placements. There have been a number of recruits entered the district to permanent posts from these programmes.</p> <p>The Forest Distinct continues to support a limited number of work placements for School children and for adults in other work experience programmes.</p>
Disability	x		high	<p><u>Workers:</u> We have few staff in the district that consider themselves as disabled.</p> <p>We remain aware that the nature of the terrain throughout the District may present difficulties for those with some physical disabilities. As an equal opportunities employer we will continue to promote and make reasonable adjustments to help existing staff or</p>

				<p>future staff to minimise or overcome barriers.</p> <p>The nature of the work undertaken by many of the roles offered within the district does lead to the presumption or requirement that individuals can drive. We do however continue to consider alternatives arrangements and have implemented these in appropriate cases.</p> <p><u>Leisure users:</u> those with disabilities benefit from provision of access designed with all abilities in mind, and for provision of information that makes level of difficulty clear. We continue to engage with Field Fare Trust on an ongoing basis across the FC Scotland estate to evaluate the facilities including trails to ensure these reach as diverse an audience as possible. The profile of visitors to Moray & Aberdeenshire reflect that of those who considered themselves disabled mobility was the most common issue followed by deafness/hearing impairment. We will continue to seek to provide high quality accessible facilities at recreational key sites such as the recent work at Roseisle. We will also maintain our Greenfingers initiative to seek to facilitate an educational/developmental opportunity for those with mental health issues in the Moray area.</p>
Gender	x		medium	<p><u>Workers:</u> Moray & Aberdeenshire has been representative of the traditionally male dominated forestry sector. This is changing gradually with some recent staff changes introducing a greater proportion (20%) of female staff. This has reflected an evolution with females now forming 50% of the Operations team which has until recently been perceived as one of the most traditional work areas. We continue to work with the education and careers sector to promote the forestry sector as a future career option.</p> <p>The ability to offer flexible working can have positive impact on the retention of staff with childcare responsibilities. The district has several staff who work flexibly or part time and this option will continue to be offered where appropriate.</p> <p><u>Leisure users:</u> Analysis of our visitors to the FCS forests has indicated that the number of male and female visitors to FCS forests is almost equal but with a</p>

				<p>differentiation between the Moray and Aberdeenshire areas still separate at the time of the last all Forest Survey. In each case the representation is consistent with the Scottish and Grampian population statistics.</p>
Gender reassignment	x		low	<p><u>Workforce</u></p> <p>No member of the current Moray & Aberdeenshire staff has identified themselves within the Gender Reassignment group.</p> <p><u>Leisure Users</u></p> <p>There is very little evidence of this group locally and no statistical evidence at Grampian level. We have not had any representation regarding facilities provision.</p> <p>We are not aware of any potential impacts on this group. However, we will review our plans if we receive any feedback that highlights issues.</p>
Marriage and Civil Partnership	x		low	<p>Leisure Users</p> <p>Approaches regarding permissions for weddings and civil partnerships are sporadic, in very small numbers and largely limited to one or two venues. It is likely that there is a degree of under recording as, in a high proportion of the small number of cases recorded, these could have been delivered through the Scottish Outdoor Access Code provisions so may take place without our knowledge. The FD does not have any records as to the nature of the wedding services so have not disaggregated weddings and civil partnerships and would not consider this relevant to approval.</p> <p>We are not aware of any potential impacts on this group. However, we will review our plans if we receive any feedback that highlights issues.</p>
Pregnancy and Maternity	x		low	<p><u>Leisure users</u>: family groups are strongly represented within the All Forests Survey this is recognised in our facilities</p>

				<p>provision at key sites within the FD. Those with young children and pushchairs benefit from provision of access designed with all abilities in mind such as Roseisle and Culbin, and for provision of information that makes level of difficulty clear.</p> <p>We are not aware of any potential impacts on this group. However, we will review our plans if we receive any feedback that highlights issues.</p>
Race	x		high	<p><u>Workers</u>: In Scotland the largest percentage of ethnic groups are concentrated in the central belt urban areas. M&A have no current staff from ethnic minority groups. In April 2010 our recruitment decreased significantly 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.</p> <p><u>Leisure users</u>: 2011 census statistics reflect growth in populations of minority groups within the Grampian area and particularly within Aberdeen City. This growth is in both white and Non white groups and the district recognises the increased need to engage with these groups.</p> <p>Some ethnic groups may have a preponderance of negative associations with the countryside, seeing it as a relatively wild and hostile place. BAME women feel particularly vulnerable in dense woodlands and in rural areas in general (OPENspace Review of Scottish Forestry Strategy: Consultation Process, Focus Groups 2004). .</p> <p><u>Neighbours and stakeholders</u>: Ethnic groups are a very small circa 4% component of the Grampian population but more urban focused ethnic groups may not have had ready opportunity to engage on forestry issues.</p> <p>The data collected as part of AFS 1 showed that no visits were recorded by those from a non-white ethnic origin. This is consistent with the very high proportion of visitors who were locally based. Thus we can be confident that the majority of visitors will be representative of the local population.</p>

				<p>The 2011 Census demonstrates that 4% of the Scottish population comes from a non-white ethnic background.</p> <p>Looking at the percentage of minority ethnic population in each local authority region confirms that minority ethnics tend to be concentrated in large urban areas. Notably in Aberdeen city there has been significant increase in the BAME population and 8.2% of residents are with in this group</p> <p>We will continue to monitor visitor numbers both anecdotally at high profile sites through wardening staff and also through the forthcoming round of All Forests Surveys. We will act on any results which indicate that BAME groups are discouraged from using the forest resource.</p>
Religion and Belief	x		low	<p><u>Leisure users:</u> Adherents of many religions and none revere the sense of spirituality that can be gained in the countryside, in communion with nature. Due to the type of recreation activities offered by FC we have very few requests for adapted services and facilities that relate to religion and belief. Applications would be considered through our permissions system and would be treated consistently irrespective of religion or belief.</p> <p>There is a recognition that interaction groups from some religions will benefit from consideration and effort to conform to the custom of that group. Staff will take advice from both local and national contacts when planning events aimed at involving these groups.</p> <p>We are not aware of any potential impacts on this group. However, we will review our plans if we receive any feedback that highlights issues.</p>
Sexual Orientation		x	low	<p>FC has not received any customer complaints with regard to sexual orientation issues. Discussions at a corporate level and in relation to specific interactions with Stonewall have also indicated there do not appear to be any particular issues with regard to customer</p>

				<p>access and participation linked to sexual orientation. As with all of the 9 protected groups we are open to approaches to organise specific events.</p> <p>We are not aware of any potential impacts on this group. However, we will review our plans if we receive any feedback that highlights issues.</p>
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11. What have you changed in the initiative to reduce or eliminate any negative impact?

Workers: 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.

Leisure users: 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))

Neighbours and stakeholders: 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.

The whole NFE is open for responsible access but may not be suitable for some disabled groups or those unfamiliar with using remote countryside. We work to achieve the right balance between facilities that facilitate access for all, and wider countryside where no specific facilities are provided but which is open for informal access.

We work with the funding made available to us for Communities, Recreation and Tourism delivery – our current expenditure allocation is £1.2M. We seek to supplement this by revenue generation, for example by car-park charges at our major visitor facilities. Nonetheless, we use the business plan process to focus resources where they will have the greatest positive impact on accessibility for the greatest number of people and local economic impact. This has resulted in a consolidation of facilities at a smaller number of key sites where we can prioritise high quality delivery.

We have made major investments in the accessibility of our buildings. However, there are a small number of locations where practical barriers to access cannot be reasonably overcome due to topography, and or conservation restrictions. These are not sites used by the public, and are generally workshop type facilities that have a very limited number of users.

13. Does this initiative fulfil the General Equality Duty?

	Comment
<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.</p>	<p>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. Within the Grampian census area ethnic groups now reflect the national statistics but remain a small 4% component of the population and are not represented at all as recreational users in the last All Forests Survey. We will seek to engage proactively with this growing group to highlight the offering of the National Forest Estate and to facilitate access</p> <p>Our estate repositioning programme also recognises the locational barriers to access, particularly for those without private transport. This is particularly the case in Moray & Aberdeenshire where the highest percentage of visitors in Scotland use cars to access the forests which are to a very high degree rural in nature. 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 can overcome these forms of social exclusion. Moray & Aberdeenshire will continue to maintain high quality WIAT woodlands in the peri urban areas of Aberdeen and Stonehaven and Elgin and hope to use these as a pump primer to encourage wider use of the forest resource.</p>

<p>Advance equality of opportunity.</p>	<p>Yes - FES is an equal opportunity employer and has a full suit 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. This is supported in Moray & Aberdeenshire through the outcomes of the 2011 staff survey reinforcing the mechanisms for addressing bullying, harassment and potentially discrimination by an agreed and promoted reporting protocol.</p> <p>We will also continue to seek and take in to consideration the views and needs of the communities we provide services to</p>
<p>Foster good relations.</p>	<p>Yes - We take stakeholder and neighbour consultation seriously in managing the NFE. 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 those in urban & minority ethnic communities who may have less initial knowledge of the natural environment, including those cultural groups focused in the urban environment. In all areas we are increasingly recognising the need to arrange community consultation in places and at times most likely to be convenient to as wide a cross-section of the community as possible.</p> <p>A large proportion of our engagement is through the development of Forest Design Plans and we are adopting contemporary methods of consultation to seek to encourage involvement and facilitate accessibility. M&A will maintain an update to date complaints register so that issues can be identified, tracked and addressed. We will review the outcomes of the on going 2013 stakeholder analysis and seek to address any areas to apply best practice. We will maintain a Community/Education team whose primary function will be to support community engagement and education.</p>
<p>14. Describe the arrangements to measure and monitor the actual impact of this initiative on people from the protected characteristic groups.</p>	
<p>How will you measure the effects of the initiative?</p>	<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>What type of information is needed for monitoring and how often will it be analysed?</p>	<p>FC Scotland conducts 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 in the process of being put out to tender and this will provide up to date and more robust data regarding our visitor demographics.</p> <p>The results from the 2010 and 2011 FC Forest Visitor Surveys are with FC Economics & Statistics being collated and analysed.</p> <p>Over the period of this plan all recreation facilities identified as easy access will be reassessed by the Fieldfare Trust.</p> <p>In addition when the 2011 Census results are published these will provide up to date demographics regarding the Scottish population.</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>We will continue to work with local groups such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenfingers who work to enable those with learning difficulties to be active in a work environment. We are currently working to help them deliver a plant nursery project on the FC estate. Greenfingers also work alongside our teams on recreation & environmental projects. • We will continue to look for opportunities re-establish partnership working with Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) or similar groups. <p>We will continue to support forest education initiatives such as through FEI or providing training for education deliverers enabling them to introduce far more children to forests and forest learning than we can do so directly. We will also actively engage with specialist schools such as St Andrews School in Inverurie to help widen the range of engagement.</p> <p>We will continue to keep in contact with groups representing the LGBT community who we have previously worked with.</p> <p>Recognising the growth in the BME population of Aberdeen City we will actively engage with representatives of those groups to establish opportunities to promote & enable forest visits.</p>

Who will be responsible for the monitoring and review?	Ultimately responsibility sits with the CEO of Forest Enterprise Scotland but the Moray & Aberdeenshire FD Equality Impact Assessment will be led primarily by the Forest District Manager who will have a key role to play in monitoring and reviewing progress on national and local initiatives.
15. What is the review date for this Equality Analysis?	
Date of next review(s)	2015
What could trigger an early revision?	Change of strategic direction/policy
16. Senior manager sign off	
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.	
Name	JOHN THOMSON
Signature	John D Thomson
Job Title	FOREST DISTRICT MANAGER MORAY & ABERDEENSHIRE FOREST DISTRICT
Date	4/11/2013