

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

Scottish Lowlands Forest District – Strategic Plan 2014 -2017

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

The purpose of the Scottish Lowlands Forest District Strategic plan to tell the story of the district and summaries the management of priorities and key actions for the next 3 years. The focus is on defining the tasks that Scottish Lowlands would accomplish.

The revision of the Local strategic plan will provide a clear steer for the revision for the period 2014 to 2017.

The local plan will reflect the direction given in the National Strategic Plan 2012 -15 that was subject to Equality Analysis screening.

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

The Strategic Plan for Scottish Lowlands District document itself will not have a new impact on people as its main function to focus and deliver existing policy of the National Strategic Plan. The forest district, on the other hand, is a major source of public benefits and impacts on a wide range of people both as workers, leisure users, neighbours and stakeholders.

The document lays out the management aims for the district, based on the National Strategic Plan

- Treasured – Treasured by the nation as 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 aims can be mapped against the main people impacts:

Workers: Scottish Lowlands is one of the largest districts with 71 direct staff and many contractors engaged in delivering all aims. We recognise that we cannot achieve our aims without a professional, motivated, diverse and dedicated workforce. Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) 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. 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: With an estimated 305,000 visits made to Scottish Lowlands each year, many using designed recreation facilities, for example for mountain biking or walking. (FC Scotland (FCS) All Forests Visitor Monitoring; Survey of visitors to FCS forest 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 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 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.

The estate repositioning programme also recognises the locational barrier 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 people, and creating opportunities for group's activity potentially can help to overcome these forms of social exclusion. This is most evident within Scottish Lowlands; we have taken on 385 hectares of urban sites within the district through purchase and management agreement in the last 3 years, with these being the main focus over our work over the next few years, increasing confidence and desire from the local community to use their woodlands.

Neighbours and stakeholders: We take stakeholder and neighbour consultation seriously and in managing Scottish Lowlands Forest District. This is evidenced through our FSC sustainable forestry certification which requires an appropriate level of on-going stakeholder engagement (see <http://ukwas.org.uk>). We recognise the on-going challenge of engaging with as yet uninvolved people and groups, and how we need to target limited engagement resources to the best effect. A particular challenge is to engage with those in urban 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.

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

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

New.	Yes – however it should be noted that there is no change to management priorities or approach, but in how we communicate the role of the NFE
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?

7. How will this initiative be put into practice?

The effort and focus of Scottish Lowlands is devoted to the subject of this document, namely managing the NFE within Scottish Lowlands Forest District. We are working with the project officer to ensure our spatial and thematic planning hierarchies are fully connected into the national strategic directions. Part of this project is to determine the appropriate balance between spatially-based and theme based planning at a regional level.

The Scottish Lowlands District Strategy will be communicated to staff through a bespoke staff summary. We will initiate a roll-out through the district via our manager's meetings. This will be reinforced by a series of communication emails and as part of existing meetings in Spring 2014.

In terms of external communication, we will align our web content to the priorities and messages in the strategic plan document. Local consultation on, for example our forest plans and proposals for recreation facilities, will be guided by the district strategy.

Within Scottish Lowlands Forest District we are also working on Community Engagement planning for each of the core beat areas. This allows the teams to focus the community engagement work that we do with the local communities, this takes into consideration any consultations that we are looking to do and the approach required. Within the district we also undertake a Stakeholder mapping and analysis process for all management plans to ensure that our approach is as inclusive to the local audience as possible, and that everyone is considered.

We are also in the process of pulling together an action plan for engaging people from more diverse groups in our work, looking at the under-represented groups and working with them to reduce barriers to them using our woodlands.

We will consider the possibility of setting up an equalities panel to ensure we get the views and input of as wide a group of people as possible, an approach for how this would work in Scottish Lowlands will need to be worked out.

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

FC Scotland All Forest Visitor Monitoring (AFS1); Survey of visitors to FCS Forests 2004 – 2007

- Estimated 305,000 visits to Scottish Lowlands forests per year,
- From national sample data:
- 54% male; 46% female
- 20% between 35 and 44; 43% aged 45 and over; 17% aged over 60
- 99% white; 1% non-white ethnic origin
- 5% visitors stated they or a party member had a disability or special needs
- 49% were on a local day trip of less than 6 miles from home
- 78% travelled to the forest by car; 18% walked; less than 1% used public transport

Census 2011 data

Resident population for Scottish Lowlands area – 59% of the Scottish population are resident in the area. Census (2011) information for 17 Local Authorities (Clackmannanshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, East Renfrewshire, City of Edinburgh, Falkirk, Fife, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, Midlothian, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Perth & Kinross, Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire, and West Lothian) has been used to inform this analysis.

Gender:

	Scotland	Scottish Lowlands
Male	48.5%	48.25%
Female	51.5%	51.75%

Disability for Scottish Lowlands area

Over 700,000 people from a total local population of just under 3.5million people consider they have a disability that limits their day to day activities, around 20.1% of the local population. (Census 2011). This is slightly higher than the Scottish population average of 19.6%

Ethnicity:

	Scotland	Scottish Lowlands
–		
White	96.0%	95.2%
Mixed	0.4%	0.4%
Asian	2.7%	3.3%
Black	0.7%	0.8%
Other	0.3%	0.3%

The Census (2011) data shows that Scottish Lowlands has a higher population of non-White people in comparison to the Scottish average; however this is not consistent across the area with pockets of different communities settling in locations, which for some include locations considered more rural. Pockets of communities:

- White Polish : Glasgow, Edinburgh, West Lothian, Fife, Perth & Kinross and North Lanarkshire
- Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Chinese, Bangladeshi): Mainly Glasgow & Edinburgh, with increasing populations in the Fife and Lanarkshire areas
- African: Glasgow & Edinburgh (smaller population)
- Caribbean/Black: Glasgow & Edinburgh
- Other Ethnic(including Arab): Glasgow & Edinburgh

Age (Census 2011)

	Scotland	Scottish Lowlands
15 & below -	17%	17%
16 to 24 -	12%	12%
25 to 34 -	13%	13%
35 to 44 -	14%	14%
45 to 54 -	15%	15%
55 to 64 -	13%	12%
65 and over -	17%	16%

Religion (Census 2011)

	Scotland	Scottish Lowlands
No religion:	36.7%	35%
Church of Scotland:	32.4%	33%
Roman Catholic:	15.9%	18%
Religion not stated:	7%	6.75%
Other Christian:	5.5%	5%
Muslim:	1.4%	1.25%
Other Religion:	1.1%	1%

Similar to data on ethnicity it should be noted that there are areas where some religions are identifiable as being higher than average, including:

- Muslim: Edinburgh, Glasgow & East Renfrewshire
- Other religion: Edinburgh, Glasgow & East Renfrewshire

Workforce Data as at March 2013 (71 staff in post)

Gender

Female: 30%

Males: 70%

Age Distribution

16 – 24: 7%

25 – 34: 38%

35 – 44: 37%

45 – 54: 27%

55 – 64: 1%

65+: 0%

Disability

Staff who have declared a disability: 3%

Without: 97%

Ethnicity

White : 98%

Black: 2%

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 forest has been extracted from All Forest Surveys (AFS) 1; sampling covered the period 2004 – 2007 which predated the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 A 2 nd All forest Survey (AFS2) is currently in the process of being put out and this will provide up to date and more robust data regarding our visitor demographics.
Age	Evidence relating to ethnic origin of our Visitors, Workforce and Local Scottish population captured above. Some gaps in the make-up of local visitor population, as this information has not been previously gathered, but new information will be available in 2014 following completion of the AFS2.
Disability	Evidence relating to overall numbers of our Visitors, Workforce and Local Scottish population who consider they have a disability captured above.
Gender	Evidence relating to ethnic origin of our Visitors, Workforce and Local Scottish population captured above. Some gaps in the make-up of local visitor

	population, as this information has not been previously gathered.
Gender Reassignment	No visitor data; Census data publicly available. Workforce; the 2011 staff survey showed nationally 0.5% of FC staff 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	Due to us not conducting either of these ceremonies in the forest district estate at Scottish Lowlands. We are not required to provide evidence for this category.
Pregnancy and Maternity	No visitor data; no population data; Workforce: using data going back to 2005, for FC as a whole we have analysed our return to work after maternity leave. We are encouraged that, on average 84% of women return to work following their pregnancy and that this figure will increase if those who remain absent return to work in due course. Many women have more than one period of maternity leave and we offer unpaid leave and career break options to extend periods of absence and offer flexibility in working patterns.
Race	Evidence relating to ethnic origin of our Visitors, Workforce and Local Scottish population captured above. Some gaps in the make-up of local visitor population, as this information has not been previously gathered.
Religion and Belief	Evidence captured relating to religion or belief of Local Scottish population; No visitor data: Workforce: the staff surveys of 2009 and 2011 indicate that around 46% of Fc employees are Christian and 27% have no belief. However, Buddhism, Judaism, Hindu an Islam are also represented, though in low numbers
Sexual Orientation	No visitor date, no comprehensive official statistics on sexual orientations for population; A recent research piece carried out by Central Scotland Conservancy, showed that LGB community found no real barrier to using the forest, apart from the normal barrier experienced by other part of society, ie lack of time. 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	<p><u>Leisure users:</u> Visitor surveys show that less than a fifth of our forest visitors are aged over 65, and that we have a good representation of visitors from across all age groups. We will continue to ensure we consider the needs of all age groups when designing and implementing our services, and providing. We will continue to seek feedback through the use of questionnaires.</p> <p><u>Workers:</u> Forestry Commission in general has an aging workforce, but Scottish Lowlands has a younger population. In order to help with our ageing workforce we are currently host 3 apprentices, a graduate and a mid-year student. We have also over the last 3 years, ran a number of successfully</p>

				<p>skills programme, targeting the 16-24 age group.</p> <p><u>Neighbours and stakeholders:</u> Most of the people that currently attend our consultations are from the older local generations, however we take a flexible approach to conducting consultation meetings such as offering opportunities out with standard working times should be taken to ensure as many stakeholders as possible are able to attend.</p> <p>We are also working with some of the local schools as part of an on-going consultation to try and link the younger generation with a new planting site.</p>
Disability	X		High	<p><u>Workers:</u> Whilst we currently have a small number of staff who consider themselves disabled, we recognise that manual work and the terrain could provide a barrier to future employees who do have a physical disability or to current members of staff who develop. However as an equal opportunity employer we are committed to making reasonable adjustments to minimise or overcome barriers.</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 on-going basis within the forest district to evaluate the facilities including trails to ensure these reach as diverse an audience as possible.</p> <p>We are an active partner in the Branching Out Initiative, with several groups being held across the district. Branching Out is a referral programme for mental health patients to maximise the therapeutic benefits that green space has on a wide range of physical and mental health issues.</p> <p><u>Neighbours & stakeholders:</u> Most of our current consultations are attended by a mixture of people from the local community. We ensure that all venues are accessible for all, and that materials used are suitable for visually impaired.</p> <p>However we continue to engage with disability forums and groups in our local areas about our plans and work on site</p>

Gender	X		Medium	<p><u>Workers:</u> Traditionally, employment in the forestry profession had been male dominated and perceived as practical, outdoors, and physical role. In order to attract a wider range of applicant our advertising vacancies we have been proactive in trying to dispel some of the myths surrounding forestry. We have seen an increase in the district in female operational staff over the past few years which has helped to diversify the workforce.</p> <p><u>Leisure users:</u> Analysis of our visitors to FCS forest has indicated that the number of male and female visitors to FCS forests is almost equal and fairly representative.</p> <p>Although, over all users are well balanced, there is some hotspots within Scottish Lowlands that need work to balance the visitor numbers. Differences can be attributed to the types of services on offer, for example we know that males are more likely to access mountain biking, whilst females' utilise more family friendly facilities.</p> <p><u>Neighbours & stakeholders:</u> Attendees at our consultations are representative of both genders, however there is a larger proportion of male attendees, we are working to try and involve a broader audience, by looking at areas where there is a higher footfall of the public, instead of expecting them to come to us.</p>
Gender reassignment	X		Low	<p><u>Workers:</u> we are not aware of any staff in the district who identify as being transgender.</p> <p><u>Leisure users:</u> There is limited knowledge of this user group locally, and there has been no registered complaints received.</p> <p><u>Neighbours & stakeholders:</u> A range of people participate in our consultations and engagement, however we do not currently record details on gender reassignment.</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: Not tested to date; no sites in Scottish Lowlands are licensed</p>

				<p>to provide civil weddings</p> <p><u>Workers:</u> All staff policies that could be impacted by marriage and civil partnerships are dealt with centrally, at a national level.</p> <p><u>Neighbours & stakeholders:</u> A range of people participate in our consultations and engagement, however we do not currently record their marital status.</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> Those with young children and pushchairs benefit from provision of access designed with all abilities in mind, and for provision of information that makes level of difficulty clear.</p> <p><u>Workers:</u> The FC offers a number of flexible working policies, and the district will try and accommodate any requests where possible, to meet the needs of individual staff.</p> <p><u>Neighbours & stakeholders:</u> We are not aware of a large representation of this group; however this is not something that we actively record. We do try to hold our consultations at times that are flexible for people.</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 within Scottish Lowlands Forest District. 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 remains an aim.</p> <p><u>Leisure users:</u> 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:</p>

				<p>Consultation Process, Focus Groups 2004)</p> <p>The data collected as part of AFS 1 showed 1% of visits were undertaken by those from non-white ethnic origin. 49% of visits were carried out by those on a local day trip of less than 6 miles from home thus we can be confident that the majority of visitors will be representative of the local population. The 2011 Census demonstrates that 4.55% of the Scottish Lowlands population comes from a non-white ethnic background. There is a need for this group to be targeted for further engagement, even though they are not local to a lot of our current woodlands.</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. Glasgow has the highest percentage of minority ethnic population living in the city. Edinburgh follows this with lowest concentration found in the rural areas.</p> <p>We will continue to monitor visitor numbers through analysing the results from public opinion surveys and seek opportunities to work with local groups to encourage BAME communities to visit the National Forest Estate.</p> <p><u>Neighbours and stakeholders:</u> Ethnic groups are not currently represented at our consultations, however the ethnicity within the areas that we currently own are well represented, as the local communities are predominately white. We are where possible working with more urban focused ethnic groups may not have had ready opportunity to engage on forestry issues.</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.</p> <p><u>Workers:</u> We do not currently hold data on the religion or belief of our staff at a local level it is only collated at a national level via the staff survey.</p>

				<p><u>Neighbours and stakeholders:</u> We will continue to ensure all sectors of society have an opportunity to comment on 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> <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><u>Leisure users:</u> We have had no approaches from groups to run special services or activities within our forests but would consider any requests in the future.</p> <p><u>Workers:</u> We do not currently hold data on the sexual orientation of our staff at a local level it is only collated at a national level via the staff survey.</p> <p><u>Neighbours and stakeholders:</u> We will continue to ensure all sectors of society have an opportunity to comment on 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> <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>

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 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 we can to understand and eliminate any issues of inequality towards our staff and to ensure our interviewing processes are not discriminatory.

The district also takes part in the Apprenticeship scheme, which is run by FES, as well as taking part in the Graduate scheme and hosting a mid-year student. We currently have 3 apprentices, 1 graduate and 1 med-year student

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 Town ([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/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/ECONNECT/OPERATIONAL%20SUPPORT%20UNIT/OGB/EQUALITYOGB/OGB%2044%20-%20EQUALITY%20AND%20DIVERSITY%20VERSION%202%201%20-%204%20OCTOBER%202013.PDF>)

Equality messages and commitments are embedded through the District Strategic Plan.

Although our current visitor numbers show us under represented by people with disabilities, we are working closely with Field Fare Trust, installing accessible trails on sites where possible under the guidance of Field Fare Trust. A number of sites have had trails surveyed and added to the photo trails website (<http://www.phototrails.org.uk>) to allow visitors to make assessments on paths for themselves. All district staff involved in the planning and supervision of facility construction have also attended a training and awareness day to look at the difficulties experience by people on some of our current facilities. We have also carried out some work on various sites, making a number of our trails more accessible for all. The access improvements that are described above also help make access easier to family groups and people with buggies, which is an area that we need to increase within our user groups across a number of sites.

Across the district we work with a large number of local schools, aimed at increasing awareness of woodlands and forest throughout the area, as well as raising the profile of the organisation to a new audience. In a number of our more urban sites, the work with the schools is seen as a key way of engaging the wider local community in their local woodlands. We also run the employment skills programme within our district, which looks at targeting 16 – 24 year olds who are unemployed and out with main stream education. We have had some positive outcomes from this with 50 % of participants 6 months after training going on to full time employment, volunteering or education.

We will look to work with communities from some of the ethnic groups that have been identified as part of this process directly, as all our work with the groups up to this point has been facilitating visits through the Engagement Officer at Central Scotland Conservancy, who has made all the initial contact and arrangements with the groups.

Targeting of some of the ethnic groups has been difficult due to the locality of them to the FC sites that we currently own or manage, even with taking on new sites, due to limited funding available we are unable to target all the groups, Community engagement planning at a local level will allow for prioritisation of the key protected characteristic groups. As part of our on-going acquisitions programme and management agreements, we will look at the key pockets of BAME communities and target these areas.

During 2013 the FC conducted Public Opinion Surveys in UK, Scotland and Wales. In Scotland around three quarters of respondents have visited forests or woodlands in the last few years; this information is in relation to usage of all woodland and not just those on National Forest Estate.

Disabled respondents were least likely to have visited forests and personal mobility reasons (difficulty in walking etc) was one of the most commonly reported reasons for no visiting. The number of BAME respondents in Scotland was also very low.

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 laid out in the Strategic Plan for the district.

We have undertaken works to ensure that all our public buildings are as accessible for people as possible; some work is still on-going to bring some of our outstation building in line with DDA standards.

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 to less able user 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 allocation for the district is £2,750,000. 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 and local economic impact.

13. Does this initiative fulfil the General Equality Duty?

	Comment
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.	<p>Yes – In our efforts to make our existing forests more accessible to a wider range of people we recognise that these 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 association with the countryside, and for those groups that might have a fear of crime in the secluded forest environment.</p> <p>Most recent acquisitions within Scottish Lowlands have been within urban communities, to fit in with the national repositioning programme also recognises with locational barriers to access, particularly for those without cars. Many people within Scottish Lowlands 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.</p>
Advance equality of opportunity.	<p>Yes – FES is an equal opportunity employer and had 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 of equality in the workplace.</p>
Foster good relations.	<p>Yes – we take stakeholder and neighbour consultation seriously in managing Scottish Lowlands. This is evidenced through our FSC sustainable forestry certification which requires an appropriate level of on-going stakeholder engagement (see http://ukwas.org.uk/).</p> <p>We recognise the on-going challenge of engaging with as yet uninvolved people and groups, and how we need to target limited engagement resources to best effect. Within Scottish Lowlands this is a particular challenge to engage those in urban communities who may be less knowledgeable of the natural environment, including those cultural groups focussed in the urban environment.</p> <p>We are also 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</p>

	possible.
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>The diversity characteristics of forest visitors will be monitored through All Forest Survey.</p> <p>We will include a consultation framework in all our forest design plans. This will provide a locally agreed framework for local land management plans and activities. The consultation plans will include commitments to monitoring the effectiveness of our consultation.</p>
What type of information is needed for monitoring and how often will it be analysed?	<p>FC Scotland conducts a variety of survey to obtain from our "customers" including the FCS Annual Mystery Shopping report.</p> <p>A second all forest survey is currently in the process of being carried out, this will provide up to date and more robust data regarding our visitor demographics for the district area. We will also use any data generated from our compliments and complaints process as well as the surveys we conduct at our visitor centre and during Christmas tree sales.</p>
How will you engage stakeholders* in implementation, monitoring and review?	<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</p> <p>Equality messages and commitments are embedded through the District Strategy.</p>
Who will be responsible for the monitoring and review?	<p>Ultimately responsibility will lie with Forest District Manager but CRT, Estates and Planning managers will play a key role in monitoring and reviewing progress on national & local initiatives.</p>
15. What is the review date for this Equality Analysis?	
Date of next review(s)	October 2016
What could trigger an early revision?	A change to the current district strategy covered by this EQIA
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	Brent Meakin
Signature	
Job Title	Forest District Manager
Date	

