

Forestry Commission Equality Analysis Form

1. What is the name of your service?

FOREST SERVICES

Forestry Commission England (FCE) – Impact on the services provided by Forest Services under the current change programme and review of the impact of services delivered under SR10.

Background: An Equality Analysis of changes proposed to FCE as a result of SR10, was undertaken in 2010¹. At the time, Forest Services (FS) was a new structure within Forestry Commission England and the impact of the following measures were assessed:

- A 25% reduction in 'Grant in Aid' on programme activities by 2014/15.
- A 26% reduction in designated administrative activities² by 2014/15.
- Changes to **what** the FC delivers **and** methods of delivery (to reflect emerging Government policy and approach).

In addition, the proposed reforms were considered, based on:

- A review of activities that should be done (and what should be stopped or modified) by 2014/15 in light of the Corporate Plan 2011-14;
- A review of staff structures and numbers required to carry out these activities; and;
- Checks to ensure work could be delivered within a reduced budget in subsequent annual Business Planning rounds.

The Equality Analysis (EqA) undertaken for SR10 only assessed the impact on FS service provision and the specific impacts on people from Protected Characteristic groups. The impact on staff was considered beyond scope and was covered by a separate EqA for the whole SR10 programme (Staff SR10 EqA).

Four years on, this document presents a review and update on the EqA undertaken for SR10, (herein referred as SR10 EqA) together with details of progress made on subsequent work packages.

This SR10 EqA assesses only the impact on FS service provision and the specific impacts on people from Protected Characteristic groups. It does not consider the impact on staff or the impact of changes under the Woodland Policy Enabling Programme (WPEP). The latter was covered by a separate overarching EqA Framework which was submitted to the WPEP Programme Board early in 2014.

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

Aims and Objectives of the Service: Current Brief

This review of the SR10 EqA updates work undertaken in 2010 (and reviewed in 2013) by presenting progress to date, alongside opportunities for improvement.

¹ The EQA was signed off by members of the programme board in 2011.

² This included the Area Teams, Grants & Regulation and National Office functions

The analysis has been undertaken in accordance with Forestry Commission Operational Guidance Booklet (OGB) 44 (version 2.1 – October 2013).

This review proceeds to assess the potential impact of current change programmes, as follows:

- Forest Services (FS) (FC SR10 Change Programme)
- Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) (Defra led programme)
- English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) (non-RDPE) (FC (FS) programme)
- Common Agricultural Policy Delivery Programme (CAP DP) (Defra led programme)
- New Environmental Land Management Scheme (NELMS) – to be called ‘Countryside Stewardship’ when scheme is launched in 2015 (Defra led programme)
- Selected Projects from the planned work programme (relating to Plant Health, charging for services, deploying the new Rural Payments (CAP IS) service, EU Payments) from the 2015/2016 FS Business Plan

This analysis makes a series of recommendations to underpin our aspirations for continuous improvement.

Sustainable Forest Management

Incentives and Regulations,

The Incentives and Regulations National Team (I&R) have lead responsibility for the operation of forestry and woodland regulations, including the issue of Felling Licences and the provision of grant support for woodlands other than the Public Forest Estate, delivered through (in future, Countryside Stewardship), the (now closed) English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) and other legacy schemes. The team manage the Admin Hubs and support the Area I&R Teams (e.g. Field Managers, Woodland Officers) across England and through guidance and support to deliver these functions and work closely with stakeholders.

Plant Health, (*proposed name change to Tree Health in 2015*)

The Plant Health Team heads the strategic and operational response to protect England’s trees, woods and forests from pest and disease threats, including quarantine organisms identified under EU Plant Health regulations. The team works closely with Forest Research, FS Area teams, AHPH, Defra and other organisations to undertake and co-ordinate tree health surveillance and monitoring, collation and recording of data for each pest and disease and monitors land managers’ compliance with statutory PH requirements. The team also provides training and guidance to staff and associated organisations and engages with stakeholders to raise awareness of current pest and disease threats.

National Expertise Team,

The National Expertise Team (NEt) is working to develop a more resilient woodland resource by creating the conditions that enable landowners and managers, businesses,

civil society organisations and local communities (the forestry sector) to protect, improve and expand England's woodland resource.

Its role is to channel expertise and experience from across Forest Services to:

- provide advice and policy support to Defra, other Government departments and their Ministers, other public bodies, and Forestry Commission England;
- Implement selected national scale initiatives to enable the sector to protect, improve and expand England's woodland; and
- further develop the evidence on how to achieve the greatest impact and value for money and, with the Strategic Development Team, feed this back into decisions about what Forest Services does.

The Team work with a network of experts from right across Forest Services, the wider Forestry Commission and the sector. NEt Advisors are responsible for channelling expertise on one of the four commonly used categories of ecosystem service. The Team play a key role in raising the profile of the Forestry Commission within government to ensure that the value of trees, woods, and forests in serving society is recognised. It has an important role in ensuring that the evidence is there to back the Forestry Commission's work.

Strategic Development Team,

The Strategic Development team use business intelligence and evidence to support decisions to move toward continuous improvement. The team support the business move toward an ever more refined way of working, they also undertake work to identify and prioritise key work areas. The team do this so that Forest Services staff are equipped with tools to serve Forest Services customers. The role of the Team involves driving new ways of working that are more efficient (for example, ensuring systems and business processes match business needs) and building evaluation into all Forest Services work to ensure changes are made that best deploy resources. Examples of what the Team do include: Management and Business efficiency innovations.

The Area Delivery Teams,

The Forest Services Delivery teams are organised into five Areas³, each covering one or more of the former English regions and Greater London, so that the Forestry Commission England's Forestry and Woodlands Advisory Committees (FWACs) can still be supported by Area teams. Each Area is led by an Area Director, who ensures the development and delivery of the Area team's contributions to national business plan programmes and service targets. The Area Directors ensure that Forestry Commission resources and expertise are deployed to facilitate civil society activity and economic opportunities that achieve priority protect, improve and expand outcomes for and from trees, woodlands and forests.

At the forefront of this part of the business are the Woodland Officers and Partnerships

³ Areas cover: East and East Midlands, North West and West Midlands, South East and London, South West and Yorkshire and North East.

staff who work directly with the people who own and manage our woodland resource. They carry out the Forestry Commission's regulatory and grant support functions and connect national priorities to the distinctive needs of each area. This will include a much higher level of joint working with Natural England for delivery of the Countryside Stewardship scheme from 2015 and with Defra and the Rural Payments Agency on Countryside Productivity support for targeted rural business schemes. As such, the Areas are involved in various people centred partnership projects at local and regional scale that reflect our business plan priority activities and outcomes. They also lead the majority of our stakeholder engagement, working closely with the FWACs. The Area teams play a key role in facilitating and influencing the delivery partnerships with external organisations at the sub-national level and work closely with National Expertise colleagues on enabling some of the priority national partnerships and networks. Area incentives and regulations delivery work is undertaken in close collaboration with the Sustainable Forest Management team and future change developments are planned in conjunction with Strategic Development colleagues.

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

In this section the impact (or potential impact) of changes on people originally set out in the SR10 EqA are reviewed. After which this section describes the impact (or potential impact) of changes set out in the 2014-2017 Business Plan (which is designed to deliver the Government's January 2013 Forestry and Woodland Policy Statement and subsequent policy developments within the 2015/16 Business Plan. First, service changes assessed in 2010/11 are presented (Table 3a) accompanied by analysis relating to the current change programme. In Table 3b services which were considered out with the 2010/11 analysis or result from new changes are presented, in relation to the current programme.

To be Noted: on 4th November 2014, Forest Services launched an Internal Collective Consultation exercise on the reshaping for Forest Services as a result of how the Defra network (operating under the 'one business' model) will deliver EU payments in England. Transactional functions within FS for the new Countryside Stewardship scheme will transfer to the RPA, resulting in a proposal that three of the Admin Hubs will cease operating by 2017-2018 together with a slight reduction in staff numbers at National Office, Bristol. A separate EqA for this Consultation has been produced. These proposals are included within the Business Plan assumptions for 15/16.

3a. Review of Impact on People set out in the SR10 EqA and Business Plan for 2014-2017, together with policy developments within the 2015/16 Business Plan

SR10 was primarily driven by the Government's commitment to reduce the size and scope of the public sector and the need to reduce the financial deficit. Under the Review, the budget reductions were assessed to consider their impact on the services that FC England's Forest Service would be able to deliver. The impact was significant, however there was limited impact on people from protected groups as the majority of services were:

- statutory or required by Government, therefore the impact was concerned with changing the way in which services were delivered rather than removing or reducing services; and
- focussed on land management rather than direct services to people in general.

The list below, presents a list of the services, the nature of the change under SR10

and subsequent Business Plans and whether they were considered likely to have an impact on people and progress to date.

3a Review of impact on people of the SR10 programme

Service	Situation at 2010/11 baseline	Change proposed in SR10 by 14/15	Change proposed in Current Business Plans (FY 15/16)	Potential impact on people relevant to the 2010 EqA	Potential impact on people relevant to this EqA (Business Plan 15/16)
Forest Services	Budget: £14.1M	Budget: £10.6M (25% cut) The FS plan for FY 2014/15 reflects a total net requirement of £14.492m against a total RDEL settlement of £10.792m. The £3.637m net variance comprises unfunded in-year pressures of delivering Big Tree Plant (BTP) and plant health, which are not included in the RDEL baseline.	The FS plan for FY 2015/16 reflects a total net requirement of £12.334m against a total RDEL settlement of £11.826m. (Plan is supplemented by £2.469m funding from the Defra plant health business case but for activity at England, GB and FR)	Yes – see below	Yes. However, as stated in 'Fit for our Future: Equality and Diversity Objectives 2012-2016' ^{4*} . There is a Government freeze on expenditure to publicise and promote Government services. Until this is lifted, many of the objectives to promote the range of services that the FC can offer to communities of those with protected characteristics, and therefore the opportunity to increase participation, will be limited."
Service	Situation at 2010/11 baseline	Change proposed in SR10 by 14/15	Change proposed in Current Business Plans (FY 15/16)	Potential impact on people relevant to the 2010 EqA?	Potential impact on people relevant to this EqA (Business Plan 15/16)

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*<http://alpacorn.forestry.gov.uk:7777/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/ECONNECT/PERSONNEL%20DEVELOPMENT/E%20AND%20D%20HOME%20PAGE/E%20%26%20D%20OBJECTIVES%202012-2016.PDF>

Forest Services Equality Assessment: Update of SR10 Impact on Forest Services and Review of Current Change Programmes

English Woodland Grant Scheme Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) funded element.	Grants to woodland owners and managers for sustainable forest management, woodland improvement and woodland creation under RDPE. Woodland improvement/creation includes public access requirements. RDPE: £33M (not part of Forest Services overall budget).	No change in the round which lasts to December 2013. The next round was subject to revisions at European Union level. The assumption under SR10 was for a similar level of funding. It was correctly anticipated that the mechanism for grants would merge with Environmental Stewardship. As RDPE is subject to revisions at EU level, changes are to be confirmed. There will be a period of transition during 2014/15, key activities will include: - Design and implementation of new integrated grants scheme (NELMS) with Natural England and other relevant new schemes with Defra and Rural Payments Agency.	The current RDPE for England will ended December 2013 (FY 2013/2014) The forestry elements of the next programme is being developed to enable the delivery of our priorities. As RDPE is subject to revisions at EU level, changes are still to be confirmed. Future plans for 2015-16 and 2016-17 include embedding Countryside Stewardship interim Woodland Creation Grants; (details to be published Dec 14); new process for CAP delivery; reduction in legacy grant scheme processing	No – no change in the level, no known change in the nature of the service, not directly related to the general public. Focussed on delivery to landowners/managers, whose diversity is beyond our control.	Yes. The next round of RDPE funding will be delivered via CAP and will be 'digital by default'. Transition arrangements are being implemented by the RPA to increase the rate of digital uptake of Countryside Stewardship Customers. Any changes in the level of service impacting our customers (land managers / owners) are not directly related to general people or protected groups. (The diversity of our customers is considered to be beyond our control); however the 'assisted Digital' EqA (from RPA) sets out the impacts and mitigations for accessing the new service.
Service	Situation at 2010/11 baseline	Change proposed in SR10 by 14/15	Change proposed in Current Business Plans (FY 15/16)	Potential impact on people relevant to the 2010 EqA?	Potential impact on people relevant to this EqA (Business Plan 15/16)
English Woodland Grant Scheme, non-RDPE	Grants for other elements of woodland management such as access and community involvement	Reduction in the non-RDPE budget. Most of this was considered to have little impact to EqA in 2010 because most of the non-RDPE	Woodland Management for Access reduced from £219k to £0 as the scheme is closed to new applicants.	Yes – WIG for Forest Schools, this was in two Regions and was project based. The impact on young people, as well as different	Yes. Impact on Public Access resulting from a reduction in WMG Access Grant.

	<p>t using non-RDPE money.</p> <p>Non-RDPE: £1.2M</p>	<p>budget was for re-stocking which was covered by RDPE.</p> <p>The two areas of support which were relevant to EqA included:</p> <p>Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) Forest Schools (reduced from £126k in 10/11 to £0 in 13/14).</p> <p>Woodland Management for Access only: reduced from £231k in 10/11 to £219k in 13/14. The scheme was closing to new applicants. This was considered a relatively small impact, further minimised by the fact that what used to funded under non-RDPE Woodland Management Grant could be funded under the Woodland Management Grant (biodiversity) which is EU co-financed.</p> <p>Budget £300k in 13/14 (75% reduction).</p>		<p>genders, ethnic groups and children with disabilities from withdrawing the WIG for Forest Schools to a close. The move reflects the wider FCE approach presented in the National Learning Strategy: http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Forestry_Commission_Learning_Strategy.pdf/\$file/Forestry_Commission_Learning_Strategy.pdf</p> <p>Yes. Impact on Public Access resulting from a reduction in WMG Access Grant. Woodland Management for Access only: reduced by £22k down to £219k in 13/14</p>	
Service	Situation at 2010/11 baseline	Change proposed in SR10 by 14/15	Change proposed in Current Business Plans (FY 15/16)	Potential impact on people relevant to the 2010 EqA?	Potential impact on people relevant to this EqA (Business Plan 15/16)
Engagement with stakeholders such as National Parks, local	Numerous national and sub-national processes, sub-national processes	There was little change envisaged and national scale forums were to continue to be supported. Sub-national forums were to be	Change from Regional Advisory Committees to FWAC. Move to increased local focus. Change in	Yes - The impact of changing from RAC to FWACs were considered and a proactive approach adopted.	Yes – reduction in level of service and changes to engaging with stakeholders, including changes to FWACs

<p>biodiversity partners and industry groups and support for forums to generate engagement.</p>	<p>were organised in Regions. Approx. 66 FS staff were directly engaged in this.</p>	<p>organised into fewer areas. We are likely to be engaged in fewer, higher level processes. Ways of engaging to change: more use of web communications, more use of other organisations to engage on our behalf. Changes to Regional Advisory Committees (RACs); formation of FWACs Approx. 50 staff directly engaged, 30% reduction. It was envisaged that Woodland Officers would start to use a wider variety of tools alongside more outside grants and regulations work.</p>	<p>capacity to engage with stakeholders. More detail under 'NELMS', presented in table 3b.</p>	<p>The overarching position is stated in 'Fit for our Future: Equality and Diversity Objectives 2012-2016*'. "Many of the Objectives dependent on recruiting staff into the Forestry Commission will not be able to be taken forward until the Government's recruitment freeze has been lifted. In the meantime, external recruitment has been greatly reduced". http://alpacorn.forestry.gov.uk:777/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/ECONNECT/PERSONNEL%20DEVELOPMENT/E%20AND%20D%20HOMEPAGE/E%20%26%20%20OBJECTIVES%202012-2016.PDF</p>	
<p>Service</p>	<p>Situation at 2010/11 baseline</p>	<p>Change proposed in SR10 by 14/15</p>	<p>Change proposed in Current Business Plans (FY 15/16)</p>	<p>Potential impact on people relevant to the 2010 EqA?</p>	<p>Potential impact on people relevant to this EqA (Business Plan 15/16)</p>
<p>Advice and guidance to landowners and managers.</p>	<p>46 Woodland Officers were employed to provide this advice.</p>	<p>Original SR10 change proposed a reduction to 44 Woodland Officers.</p>	<p>External factors (e.g. CAP EU Payments, Countryside Stewardship) are starting to have a significant impact on what we plan to deliver and the resources available to deliver them.</p>	<p>No – no reduction in service.</p>	<p>No – However any impact on capacity has potential to have a negative impact on the extent to which we can engage with everyone, including protected groups. However there is no reason why any protected groups in particular would be</p>

			In Areas, total of 43 WO. Woodland Health resources have been increased to continue to improve local engagement. (5 Woodland Health Officers; 2 Biosecurity Officers)		impacted more than any others.
Service	Situation at 2010/11 baseline	Change proposed in SR10 by 14/15	Change proposed in Current Business Plans (FY 15/16)	Potential impact on people relevant to the 2010 EqA?	Potential impact on people relevant to this EqA (Business Plan 15/16)
Policy advice to Government, Forestry Commission and other stakeholder organisations.	20 FS staff were directly engaged in providing policy advice. 3 focussed on people issues.	14 National Experts, with staff with responsibility for expertise in other areas distributed across Forest Services. 2 national experts focussed on people issues but with a further staff member focussed on green infrastructure and urban forestry related issues in local delivery teams.	The Forest Services Business Plan FY 15/16 proposes an addition of an Urban Forestry Adviser into NEt to take up a national role.	No. However, were there to be a loss of national expertise there would be potential for a reduction in service. However, the service is not directly related to the general public or protected groups but focused on national stakeholder engagement.	No – no reduction in service is anticipated. This service is focused on national stakeholder engagement and not directly related to the general public.
Cash support for forestry related partnerships.	Funding was available for partnership projects of relevance to EqA of £739k in 38 projects.	Funding available for partnership projects (of relevance to EqA) increased to £1.3M*, an increase of 170%. However, at May 2011 this was encompassed in just 6 projects, of which 3 were for expenditure that was not defined, accounting for £1.27M of the funding. Cash funding for some relevant projects	Funding is available for partnership projects of relevance to EqA of £678k in 11 projects	Yes – a change of approach may have an impact on localism	Yes – a change of approach may have an impact on localism. FC funded projects from which we have withdrawn are being passed over to charities and civil society organisations to run; with facilitation and enablement from FS

		was expected to cease and the approach to funding for others was expected to change.			
Service	Situation at 2010/11 baseline	Change proposed in SR10 by 14/15	Change proposed in Current Business Plans (FY 15/16)	Potential impact on people relevant to the 2010 EqA?	Potential impact on people relevant to this EqA (Business Plan 15/16)
Regulating forestry	We regulate forestry via felling licences, Environmental Impact Assessment and setting and communicating standards contained in the UK Forestry Standard.	A slight increase in the number of woodland officers. Potentially significant reform of regulation arising from the Forest Regulation Task Force recommendations but such reforms are not a direct part of SR10. Assessment of any impact will be covered elsewhere.	Unclear. Dependent on the scenarios presented in Forest Services Business Plan FY 15/16.	No. If there is a loss of capacity there is a risk of: increased illegal activity; reduced compliance; increased environmental impact from forestry; decrease in UKFS compliance. However, it is not clear if/how reduction would be approached and therefore we are unable to consider in detail. It is unlikely that any protected groups would be impacted more than others.	No. No reduction in service and not directly related to people.

3b. Analysis of potential impact on people under the current programme

Service	Situation at the 2014 /15 Baseline.	Change proposed in Current Business Plans (FY 15/16)	Potential impact on people relevant to this EqA?
Rural Payments (CAP Delivery) Programme: EU Payments analysis, planning and implementation; other strategic alignment activities (e.g. IT	Situation at end 2014/15: We will continue to manage organisational change under the Rural Payments Programme and our change programmes will be designed and implemented accordingly.	IT transition planning/implementation of new Rural Payments IS system. Rural Payments Delivery staff and stakeholder engagement. Training for transition to new Rural Payments IT system via coordinated	Yes. IT transition to a digital by default system has the potential to impact on those customers who are not IT literate. A specific Assisted Digital programme is being run by the RPA through the Rural Payments Programme to cater for those who require support with IT (digital by

system Transition)		comms and education/training campaign.	default / assisted digital). We have actively engaged with those responsible for its development to ensure the needs of our customers are met.
Charging for services: Project to review the potential to charge for our services.	Approval was given by the FS Board (October 2013) to assess if there is potential to charge for services we provide. The project is scheduled to feed in findings to the business plan concerning potential income streams for FY 16-17. The project is expected to conclude by April 2016.	Subject to findings of the project there may be charges added to the services we provide. Some services which are currently 'free of charge' may in the future, have costs associated.	No. Whilst there is potential for charging for services to impact protected groups (those associated with low income) and impact the degree to which they could access our services, it is too early to undertake detailed analysis until the FS Board agree which services have a potential for charging. The Discovery Phase of the project short listed services which had a potential for charging and charging mechanisms explored. The project was put on hold pending further resource being available to take this forward. Until agreement has been reached it would be premature to undertake further analysis.
Woodland Protection. Communication with the sector to develop knowledge and understanding of the need for a wider range of species, restructuring and ecological adaptation; Planting stock assurance scheme; A review of Forestry Commission Adaptation Reporting Power and, Urban adaptation and green infrastructure.	Situation at end 14/15: Climate change adaptation will be built into the new Countryside Stewardship programme (including woodland restructuring and the creation of habitat networks) and will be communicated through the CAP programme and via direct communication (email, mailshot, FC web site)	Future plans for 2015-16 and 2016-17: - Continued advice and support for woodland owners and the nursery sector. - Area teams' routine advice for the Ecological Resilience work programme. - Ongoing guidance and support for woodland condition monitoring to feed into woodland management planning.	No – no reduction in service is anticipated. This service is focused on woodland protection through climate change adaptation via communication with the sector and not directly related to the general public.
New 'Countryside Stewardship' land management scheme - launched in February 2015	New scheme being developed. Transitional grants proposed from Feb 2015.	Future plans for 2015-16 and 2016-17: - Continued advice and support for woodland owners and the nursery	Yes. However, whilst a Woodland Management Plan will be required as a pre-requisite of all Countryside Stewardship support, the impact on our

	<p>New scheme will replace: Environmental Stewardship (ES), English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) and capital grants from the Catchment Sensitive Farming Programme.</p> <p>Running alongside existing ES & EWGS agreements, the new scheme will be the main way of supporting a wide range of local, national and international environmental commitments.</p>	<p>sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Area teams' routine advice for the Woodland Resilience work programme. - Ongoing guidance and support for woodland condition monitoring to feed into woodland management planning. - Realising opportunities to deliver Biodiversity 2020, water management and more woodlands close to where people live <p>A Woodland Management Plan will be required as a pre-requisite of Countryside Stewardship support.</p>	<p>customers is as yet unclear until final details of the scheme are announced. We continue to consult and engage with owner networks concerning development to ensure the needs of our customers are met. Overlaps with CAP DP.</p>
<p>Regulating to protect the woodland resource (interactive Felling Licence tool)</p>	<p>Licence applications & mapping can be completed using paper-based forms.</p>	<p>Interactive mapping as part of a fully interactive mapping tool will be investigated in 2015/2016, with planned deployment in 2016/2017</p>	<p>Yes. A move toward online applications and mapping has potential to impact on those customers and others who are not IT literate. Mechanisms are being considered through the CAP Programme which will precede our work in this area and any deployment plans will be informed by experience in the CAP Programme.</p>
<p>Plant Health (Woodland Health)</p>	<p>Key activities will include surveying and monitoring of established Woodland health issues. There will be operational response to key diseases, based on work done during the Chalara outbreak including reprioritisation of resources to respond to any outbreaks.</p>	<p>The 2014/17 Business Plan suggests that the overall threat from tree diseases appears to be increasing. The Government's full response to the Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity Task Force presented new governance arrangements for plant and tree health and these will improve decision making and operational control.</p>	<p>Yes– This service is focused on plant health activities and strategic prioritisation; it is directly related to the general public.</p> <p>We have increased resources to increase service. We are engaged with Forest Research to increase our understanding of and ability to manage Oak Processionary Moth (which has associated health implications) and other tree pests and diseases.</p> <p>We are working to ensure messages relating to plant and woodland health are communicated in an inclusive way and reach all communities. For example, we provide information on</p>

			<p>plant health on the website http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pestsanddiseases This is in accordance with our accessibility statement, (http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/HCOU-4UBEHR)</p> <p>We are committed to ensuring it is accessible to a wide range of people as possible.</p>
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This Analysis assessed the potential impact of the following changes to the services relevant to equality and diversity provided by Forest Services, (Table 3a. and 3b. above) which are:

3a. Review of impact under the SR10 Change Programme:

- Removal of Woodland Improvement Grant for Forest Schools.
- Reduction in level of direct engagement with stakeholders (mostly at the Regional level) and changes to approach to engaging with local stakeholders (localism agenda), including changes of RACs to FWACs (with new terms of reference).
- Changes in approach to cash funding of partnership projects.

3b. Analysis of potential impact under the Current Change Programme:

- Rural Payments Delivery Programme - Move to 'Digital by Default' / 'Assisted Digital'.
- Regulating to protect the woodland resource –Consider needs for a digital licence application / interactive mapping.
- New 'Countryside Stewardship' Scheme – main way of supporting a wide range of local, national and international environmental commitments.
- Woodland Health - increased resources and public awareness.

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

Owner

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

Review	Review & update of Forest Services EqA (dated 05 Dec 2013)
1 year review.	
Early review, explain why.	
Review due to end of the initiative.	Yes, review at start of 2015/2016 Business Planning cycle

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

05 December 2013

7. How will this initiative be put into practice?

Background: The changes assessed in the SR10 EqA were implemented as part of the Forestry Commission SR10 process, set out in "Shaping the Future of Forestry Commission England, Forestry Commission Spending Review 2010 Staff Consultation, February 2011". The document set out the proposed changes to our structures and ways of working. The final decisions were subject to further work, based on consultation and additional planning. The changes were put into practice through the following processes:

- **Removal of Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) for Forest Schools:** via business as usual amendments to EWGS grant criteria, following consultation with the Applicants Focus Group and other representatives (described in section 8).
- **Reduction in level of direct engagement with stakeholders and changes to the approach taken to engage with stakeholders, i.e. change from Regional Advisory Committees (RAC) to Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committee (FWAC):** A Forest Services Transition Team undertook work in this area, predominantly via two workstreams in the FS transition plan a) "New ways of working" and b) "New working relationships". This work influenced the final structures of the committees (described in section 8).
- **Changes in approach to cash funding of partnership projects:** A set of criteria based on the policy context for EQA were developed to inform decision making in relation to partnership projects (described in section 8).

Activity related to the initiatives continues to date (as detailed in section 8).

The changes in the current programme covered by this EqA will be implemented as part of the Business Plan 2015/16.

- **Changes in the Rural Payments Delivery Programme - Move to 'Digital by Default'.** Members of the Strategic Development Team will work with the RPA and Defra to ensure that the needs of our customers who share protected characteristics are considered and represented.
- **Regulating to protect the woodland resource –The need for a digital licence application / interactive mapping.** This will be considered subsequent to 'digital by default' in the Rural Payments Programme (noted above) and lessons learnt will be used to inform planning and deployment of the new interactive tool.

- **Countryside Stewardship (NELMS).** Will replace Environmental Stewardship (ES), the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) and capital grants from the Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) programme in 2015. The new scheme, part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), will deliver over £900 million for enhancing the countryside. It will be open to all eligible land managers, owners and tenants. Overall, biodiversity will be the priority for the new scheme, with water also an important area of focus. The scheme will deliver outcomes for the historic environment, landscape quality and character, genetic conservation and educational access. It will also contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

In the first year of the new RDP in 2015, the funding opportunities for environmental land management through water capital grants and woodland grants will be introduced in stages. From January 2016, multi-year agreements will be available, starting on the first of January each year. From 2016 onwards capital only agreements will be available to start at any point during the year. Before the full suite of agreements and grants become available in 2016, we intend to make woodland grants available to support woodland creation. This meets Ministerial commitments to ensure woodland grants are available during the 2015 planting season.

- **Plant Health (Tree Health).** Increased provision in services and increased resources, implemented as part of the FS Business Processes. Increased surveying, monitoring and operational response to key diseases; enhanced communication strategy at national and local level; centralised PH database built and linked to other systems; interim PH grants available from 2015.

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

The population of England is 53,012,456 and consists of a range of different groups. Annex 1. presents information taken from the 2011 Census showing the basic statistics concerning the England demographic.

SR 10 Review

Removal of Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) for Forest Schools.

The relevant protected characteristics are age, race, gender and disability. As discussed in the SR10 EqA (2011), there is evidence that Forest Schools can benefit young people, including those otherwise at risk of exclusion from school, challenge gender stereotypes related to working in the forestry sector and provide opportunities for disabled young people to access woodland in new ways.

- The Forest School WIG operated as a pilot in two regions, West Midlands and East of England, with funding being directed at building capacity for the projects to run without further EWGS rather than acting as long-term core funding. The decision to remove WIGs supported the aims of the Big Society by reducing direct intervention by government and resource constraints, budgetary and staffing, related to operating a bespoke scheme. The decision-making process involved informal consultation with a stakeholder group where the grants were operating. This

included feedback from those involved. An East of England RAC meeting (July 2011) debated the closure of the grant in response to SR10 budget cuts; the feeling expressed by the panel was that removal of the WIG would be low impact as projects could continue to operate using resources from other means.

Reduction in level of direct engagement with stakeholders and changes to approach to engaging with stakeholders, including changes to RACs.

In 2010 evidence (Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2009; Forest Research work on social benefits of the Public Forest Estate 2009; "Perceptions, attitudes and preferences in forest and woodlands", Forestry Commission technical paper; and work on indicators for quality of life benefits of woodland by Forest Research) suggested that the majority of people who engage in forestry are white, over 25 and are not disabled, although there is recognition of the benefits that participating in woodland activities can have, i.e. health benefits, social engagement, etc.

Further research by O'Brien and Morris (2013) (evidencing work by Morris, O'Brien, Ambrose-Oji, Lawrence, Carter and Peace 2011) concluded that whilst many people gained well-being benefits from trees and woodlands, there are differences in the social distribution of these benefits, with women and the 35+ age group gaining the broadest range of benefits and BME groups gaining a narrower range of well-being benefits. However eleven of the studies analysed focused on interventions aimed at encouraging access to 'hard to reach' groups and were successful in reaching BME groups and those of lower socio-economic status.

This research, and practical experience gathered from the work on the Public Forest Estate (PFE) and other countryside providers, has helped identify a range of barriers to participation and engagement which are being used to inform the services we provide and the design of new interventions. For more detail, refer to section 11.

We continue to monitor and review the situation. Since 2010 there has been more research to better understand and address these issues and to address these barriers. For example, the Public Opinion of Forestry Survey (2013) included additional questions specifically to gather information about protected groups (questions relating to trans-gender were added), the survey covers all woodland in the UK, not just those owned and managed by the FC. The UK survey included a number of questions (some for the first time in 2013) that are relevant when considering personal characteristics for the purposes of equality and diversity. These include: Gender, Age group, Disabilities or health problems, Ethnic group, Marital status, Trans community, Sexual orientation and Religion. Other socio-demographic variables include working status, whether there are children in the household and the index of multiple deprivation (based on respondents' home postcodes).

- For those asked if they visited woodland, there was a significant difference for variables associated with younger age group, those with disabilities or health problems, ethnic group, working status, deprivation indicator, religion (Christian v others) and marital status. Meaning that those in younger age categories, those who are disabled or deprived or not-married were less likely to visit woodland.
- For those asked about involvement in woodland, the following variables are statistically significant: Age group (younger respondents versus others) and Ethnic group. Meaning that younger respondents and ethnic groups were less likely to be

involved in woodland.

- Whilst outside the EQA, of note was the strong correlation between those who visit woodland and those involved in woodland, meaning that those who visited woodland were more likely to get involved in activities such as volunteering, consultation etc. and vice versa.

In all cases these variables relating to personal characteristics were included in the analysis however the results should be approached with caution since the number of respondents in certain categories (such as Trans community) were low, which reduces the level of confidence. Research by Doick *et al*, (2013) looked at the barriers to use of woodland and design preferences which may address barriers.

Recommendation 1 – We will work closer with Social Forestry scientists in Forest Research to promote their ‘value add’ in providing research findings, knowledge exchange and building monitoring and evaluation into all FS work to ensure changes that are made best deploy resources and the delivery of future partnership projects.

Although we have worked to reduce the level of direct engagement with stakeholders, and continue to do so, we will continue to explore and utilise better ways of reaching those people who will benefit most from interaction. This will be taken forward through the initiatives described in section 11, in particular through the review of the Forest Services annual business plan and the previous year’s EqA. This will involve improvements to how EqA is communicated internally as part of business planning.

The potential for direct impacts on such individuals arise from the following possible changes:

Locality and proximity of face to face interaction with our office based staff:

Since the original EQA (2011) we have reduced the overall number of staff and reduced the number of offices from which we operate. This has enabled us to reduce the amount of funding we receive from Government to run the services we provide. As noted in the original EQA, there is little demand for the general public to visit Forest Services offices. However, we continue to ensure that we are in a position to facilitate access to our services. We will continue to do this by using different venues, more accessible and closer to public transport to minimise any potential impact on people (the impact on our staff is assessed on an ongoing basis).

We are aware of the Government’s recently published (Oct 2014) ‘Estate Strategy’ to 2020 (published by the Cabinet Office)

(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/360262/Government_estate_strategy.pdf) and will work with Defra on any planned initiatives re our estate holdings and office locations.

The move to use more web based communication: As described in the original EQA (2011), we are looking to improve our communication tools to assist more people to access our services while reducing resources. As a Government body, we work to central Government standards published by Government Digital Services (GDS) and we work to the principles set out in Digital by Default and to Government Digital Design guidelines and standards.

Currently, over 50% of traffic to the Commission’s website is now from mobile devices (such as tablets and smartphones) and web content is being made more responsive in order to work better on these mobile devices. As noted in the last EQA “evidence shows the internet can be effective in accessing certain hard to reach groups,

especially those with mobility problems and young people". However, we also recognise that web-communications are currently less effective for some groups, particularly disadvantaged people and older people (Manifesto for a Networked Nation, Raceonline 2010) -

<http://www.google.co.uk/url?url=http://download.microsoft.com/download/E/D/1/ED1C5516-2AF6-456F-961B-0393EB8FAE96/ManifestoForANetworkedNation.pdf&rct=j&frm=1&q=&esrc=s&sa=U&ei=cGyFVIO-yvNS7vSA2A8&ved=0CBOQFjAA&usg=AFQjCNHgNyI4p151ZybpluabcwOUGkvqzg>

Our web accessibility statement is available here
<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/HCOU-4UBEHR>

We (FS) monitor electronic activity and the use of e-communication, for example we report monthly on webform submissions in the Management Information Pack. We are working with our Defra colleagues through the Rural Payments Delivery Programme to understand and minimise the impact on our customers of 'digital by default'. For those who prefer electronic engagement, we have improved the content and design of our website and continue to implement webforms where appropriate to help those that do want to engage with us electronically. We have actively increased our presence on social media (Facebook, Twitter) and Citizen Space.

Recommendation 2: All Countryside Stewardship and Rural Payments communication will be led by RPA (moving to gov.uk); we need to ensure our standards comply with Government Communication Network (GCN) for Government Digital Services (GDS) for delivery of messages to our customers.

The move to using other organisations to communicate on our behalf: In the last EQA (2011), we set out our intention to work in partnership with key stakeholders to deliver joint communications. The plan was to take forward experience in the East Midlands where we worked in partnership with the RSPB and communicated on the availability of a WIG for Woodland Birds with a new group of woodland owners. In 2013 for 'The Big Tree Plant' we used the DirectGov web-site (*now Gov.uk*) as our route of communication to disseminate key messages about the funding scheme. We will continue to ensure that our partnerships work to agreed government communication standards, including accessibility, as mentioned above. This will be taken forward through the initiatives described in section 11, in particular through the review of the Forest Services annual Business Plan and the previous year's EqA. This will involve improvements to how EqA is communicated internally as part of business planning. In relation to Digital communications, we will continue to work with our Defra family colleagues on Assisted Digital provision for the Rural Payments Delivery Programme.

Changing 'Regional Advisory Committees' to 'Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committees': changes to the RACs described in the original EQA (2011) have been completed. The term of office for the FWAC Chairs and Committees began on 1st December 2013 and will run for three years. The number of committees we service has not been reduced (as originally planned) and there has been no change to the areas across which they operate. However, the membership of these groups has expanded and their remit has been revised to include advocacy and representation. The groups are now referred to as FWACs. This change has given us the opportunity to

promote the membership of the Committees to wider protected characteristic communities and to encourage more people, both as individuals and via stakeholder nominations to consider joining. This has been met with some success.

FWAC Chair Recruitment:

In July 2013 the recruitment of the FWAC Chairs was undertaken by HR and 15 of the 17 applicants submitted an Equal Opportunities form which encompassed questions for all protected groups. Six new chairs were appointed and three existing RAC chairs reappointed. The ratio of male to female Chairs has changed. In 2010 two of the nine RAC Chairs were female and seven were male. In November 2014 four out of nine FWAC chairs are female and five are male. While we have no historic records of other personal characteristics of the RAC Chairs; of the new FWAC chairs, one mixed race representative has been appointed.

FWAC Members Recruitment:

In November 2014 there are ninety two (92) FWAC members; 70 members are male and 22 are female. Unfortunately there is no data of personal characteristics of these members. The England National Committee (ENC) approve new members and the reappointment of others. For those committee members who were reappointed, there is no data (they were first appointed up to six years ago).

Area Directors used their existing networks to proactively approach people, they also advertised in newsletters and through lists of contacts, enhanced via additional contact groups obtained from the Diversity Manager⁵. Those who have been appointed fall into similar categories as the RAC groups (as far as is known) and at the time of writing, there is limited representation from groups with protected characteristics.

The remit for the committees has been revised to provide insight into local needs and priorities and facilitate engagement with priority communities where more people having protected characteristics would benefit. The current terms of reference for the Chairs and Committees require working knowledge of forestry and associated environmental issues

([http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FWAC_guide_and_role2013.pdf/\\$file/FWAC_guide_and_role2013.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FWAC_guide_and_role2013.pdf/$file/FWAC_guide_and_role2013.pdf)).

The move from RACs to FWACs has provided opportunity to promote the membership of the Committees to wider protected characteristic communities and to encourage more people, both as individuals and stakeholders to consider joining. This has been met with some success. However it is recognised that in the case of forestry and land management, where practitioners are predominantly white and male, opportunities to increase the diversity of the FWAC chamber of interest may be limited. The pool of people in a position to apply positions in other FWAC chamber of interest is more diverse because of the knowledge or nature of the experience required.

⁵ There is a list of organisations providing access to people from protected groups. See "Consultation Database" at http://alpacorn.forestry.gov.uk:7777/portal/page?_pageid=33,1794524&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL .

We will proactively engage with local communities' contacts and/or associated networks together with civil society organisations (e.g. Civil Service Partnership Network) to promote and encourage greater diversity within FWACs when the next full round of FWAC recruitment commences in December 2016. We will continue to follow Government guidance (Government Equalities Office) in relation to public appointments and civic participation.

Recommendation 3: Area Directors to use their existing network to proactively approach people from diverse communities and civil society organisations, promote locally (community newsletters, email contact lists) enhanced via additional contact groups.

Cessation of other regional scale support structures and reduction in number of other sub-national forums supported:

As well as the move from RACs to FWACs, we once supported regional forestry framework (RFF) forums in some regions and other local forums, such as county woodland forums. We have ceased to support most of the regional scale forestry forums as part of the removal of the regional tier of government. However the annual National Forestry Framework meetings are now lead by Defra Forestry, with input from the Commission. We have also withdrawn from direct support to local forums. However, other processes for supporting local engagement have arisen since the original EQA in 2011. Through our Partnership and Expertise Managers and Local Partnership Advisers we have moved toward an increased focus on local partnerships which have enabled us to retain/rebuild our relationship with local authorities, hence utilising their expertise and contacts with key groups. For example, we work with Community Woodland Groups, with 'generic communities' (e.g. communities of place, interest, faith, etc.) focused on getting local people involved in the management of local woodlands. Our involvement is to support civil society to set up a network for those groups. Other initiatives have included FC support for establishing the Woodlands Social Enterprise Network.

• Changes in approach to cash funding of partnership projects:

In the original EQA (2011) the changes to our partnership funding between 10/11 baseline and 14/15 were presented. The changes were accompanied by a method of prioritising decisions which involved informal local consultation. The available amount of funding resulted in a decrease in the total number of projects.

As a result of the reduction in public funding in 2015/16 over the 2010/11 baseline, the sector will need to find alternative means of funding its activities. We will focus our attention on developing greater capacity within the sector via direct support to work being achieved through collaboration, co-operatives and partnerships; identifying good practice that exists across the sector.

We will be developing sustainable exit strategies for current FC funded relationships by building capacity in the sector to utilise other funding sources. (See below for examples re FEI and Visitwoods). The FC have facilitated the creation and running of the FWAC Urban Network, where urban specialists from each of the FWACs come together to report and advise on best practice to the FC and the sector on urban issues.

There is little monitoring of information related to the impact of reduced funding as a result of SR10. However, there is evidence of increased activity amongst the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). For example we are working with the UK Forest Products Association, CONFOR and Local Authorities across Northern England via the 'Routes to Prosperity' project. This has enabled sector engagement with the four LEPs in the North to support larger productive woodlands which in turn will support the rural economy and the rural job market and demonstrate collaboration is the key to a successful outcome.

(Roots to Prosperity: A Strategy and Action Plan for the Growth and Development of the Forestry Sector in Northern England
http://www.ukfpa.co.uk/publications/Roots_PERAP.pdf)

FS, working with the NorthWest Regional Forestry Framework have supported Stobart Energy in making a successful multi-million pound application to the sixth round of the Regional Growth Fund (*Greenleaf Economy*). The aim is to increase the supply of timber from England's undermanaged woodlands to the market by 500,000 tonnes over 8-10 years.

FS, working with the Coast to Capital (C2C) LEP have been successful in securing £800k to help the forestry sector grow in two areas – Woodfuel and Local timber in local construction.

Private enterprise, including CONFOR, Grown in Britain, BSW Timber, Estover Energy are working with the FC and the National Parks in partnership with Enterprise M3 (EM3) LEP and C2C LEP to seek out entrepreneurs, best practice and finance to modernise and develop the forest supply chain within the South Downs National Park. (*Coast to Capital Draft Strategic Economic Plan, December 2013 P 88-89*)

Recommendation 4: We will work with woodland productivity and supply chain initiatives being developed by e.g. ICF, CONFOR, GiB and LEPs (as well as our Defra family colleagues) to ensure forestry and woodland sector diversity priorities are included in their investment and growth plans. Where we form partnerships to deliver our business plan commitments (and we are not the lead partner), we can encourage fellow partnership members on their considerations and commitments, especially LEPs, who have the same public duty responsibilities as the Forestry Commission.

Table to show proposed changes to our partnership funding.

	Programme supported in 2015/16	Summary of Activities	Funding Available
1.	Tree Health: Helping the sector reduce the threat from diseases of forest trees	Surveillance, monitoring and responses; Tree Health Comms strategy; Evidence and Analysis	£2.469m funding from Defra PH business case ring-fenced for Plant Health work
2.	Regulating to protect the woodland resource	Felling licences, EIAs, CRoW, EPS regulation and enforcement; UKFS; red tape challenge enforcement; Planning system vigilance	No funding available for specific projects; activities processed through core activities

3	Woodland resilience: ecological resilience, deer, grey squirrels and invasives	Evolved approach to deer control; refreshed grey squirrel policy; indicator reports of woodland ecological conditions; Sector comms via FWAC network	£239k is available for project work
4	Growing the forest economy to bring woodlands into management: more English woodlands are sustainably managed	Grown in Britain; Countryside Stewardship; FFPS/LEADER; LEPs; Packages for woodland owners; Apprentice Forestry Skills; TTF; collaboration in forestry; Comms strategy	£237k is available for project work
5	Woodland Creation: Advocacy and Special projects	Advocacy and support; Deliver Biodiversity 2020, water management via Countryside Stewardship closer to where people live; Incentives to increase private finance into woodland creation	£17k is available for project work
6	Business Management and Development	Launch RDPE; EU Payments transactional function transfer; Reshape FS; Develop new IT internally and via CAP/CS; continue journey towards evidence based organisation	£85k is ring-fenced for EU Payments work; £80k is available for project work

Potential risks to people from the Protected Characteristic Groups we currently or potentially deliver to are likely to come from:

- Reduced capacity and less policy emphasis on direct support and delivery of the full range of people focussed initiatives, e.g. less emphasis on direct support for health, education, inclusion of young people and disabled people. However there continues to be more emphasis on empowering communities to take local action.
- Reduction to the funding we provide that helps civil society organisations to keep running their day to day business. We support core-funding relationships only in exceptional circumstances and have started to taper support to those in receipt of funding so that they have time and capacity to find other means of support.

In most cases, our 10/11 baseline projects are complete or were for small sums of money (compared to the overall turnover of the organisations in receipt of our support). On this basis it was predicted there would be little impact. On a national scale, one of the key changes was in our support for the Forest Education Initiative

(FEI) by removing the funding which employed the FEI Co-ordinator and transferred this resource into cash funding on an annually decreasing basis. We informally consulted the FEI network on how best to implement this proposal and adopted a graduated reduction in involvement, which has now ceased. We facilitated the tender for new support for the initiative (which was awarded to 'Council for learning outside the classroom', a registered charity) and are directly supporting the new provision via governance representation.

The Visit Woods project, funded by lottery funding and a range of other sources, including £10k pa from FC has now ended. The project surpassed all expectations and provided a great resource for the general public to identify accessible woodlands. Discussions took place on the future of the project with The Woodland Trust taking the project in-house with the principle of providing a one stop shop to the public for information on accessible woodland continuing.

A number of new cash projects have evolved from 2014/15 and into 2015/2016 under the "Slice of pie to PIE" funding process. These are a set of fewer, larger projects with more impact. Many of the groups above will benefit from these projects, but it is not yet possible to assess which in detail.

Since the last EQA (2011) the work of the National Association of AONBs (NAAONB) Social Forestry project has moved forward, highlighting where AONBs have been working with local AONB partnerships, woodland owners and local community groups to support a number of social enterprise pilots using a number of enterprising approaches such as developing two new wood fuel co-operatives and two new Community Benefit Societies to support woodland management. A report published in October 2013 (<http://www.landscapesforlifeconference.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Social-Forestry-Pilot-Report-FINAL-Oct-2013.pdf>) suggests that woodland social enterprises could unlock more sustainable management of small woodlands, secure and build jobs and address issues around fuel poverty. In addition, by mobilising local community volunteers and trainees, such social enterprises can unlock much needed biodiversity and economic activity in protected landscapes by galvanising interest and initiatives from local people, supplementing traditional woodland management practices by adding in a new and rich community dimension and acting as conduits for new sources of finance for woodland management activity.

Failure to adequately consider equality when making decisions about new projects funded through the Business Plan: enabling projects proposed for 15/16 will be allocated to funding streams (as part of standard business planning) using "Questions to structure decisions on the activities we undertake" (our framework for decision making). The annual Business Plans are subject to EqA, signed off by the FS Board. Further developing the evidence available and the skills of our staff to make reasonable decisions, including consideration of equality and diversity was part of the SR10 implementation programme and activity continues to date. As described in section 11, an annual review of the FS EqA will be done to coincide with the annual business planning cycle. This will identify improvements as to how the EqA principles are communicated internally as part of business planning. Learning and Development are able to set up a bespoke training course on EqA for all those likely to initiate significant new projects and programmes. For those FS staff who are not up to date on EqA training, EqA training can be built into their individual learning plans. For more

detail concerning other specific actions arising from the new EqA, refer to section 11.

The Big Tree Plant funding scheme was earmarked in the last review as a project that could potentially promote benefits for people with protected characteristics. The Big Tree Plant was a partnership led by Defra and covered in the EQA previously. The scheme was open to all community groups at a local level and was targeted at disadvantaged areas. Research by the Silvanus Trust for Defra and FC into 'Characterising Community Groups involved in BTP and identifying benefits and challenges of involvement for Participants' was published in November 2013.

<http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Completed=0&ProjectID=18468>. The report highlights the benefits and challenges of involvement for participants, to explore and understand the successes and challenges of participation within a scheme of this nature and aspiration. It also aims to inform possible future environmental community grant schemes.

Recommendation 5: We will learn from and communicate findings of major social partnership projects (e.g. Big Tree Plant) to inform and develop future 'localism and enabling projects'. We will ensure that equality considerations (including Equality Analysis) are integrated into our annual business planning cycle, enabling relevant business plans to reflect appropriate actions and outcomes, building on the previous year's plan each time. This ensures the diversity considerations for all plans are considered at the point of development and deliver appropriate business benefits and are appropriate for all users.

Changes under the current change Programme (Table 3b)

• Rural Payments (CAP) Delivery Programme – Move to 'Digital By Default'

The relevant protected characteristics are age and disability. Whilst there is no specific evidence that people in the forestry sector are less digitally aware than other parts of the land-use sector or other sectors, we are keen to ensure that a move to 'digital by default' and increased access to digital means of communication⁶ does not lead to more discrimination against people in the forestry sector. It has been suggested that a move toward increased service delivery using IT / computer systems can exclude older people and those who are unable to use digital systems to access our services and that a move toward increased online provision may impact these groups.

All Delivery Bodies involved in the new Rural Payments Programme (Natural England (NE), Rural Payments Agency (RPA), Forestry Commission (FC)) are working towards an 'Assisted Digital' (AD) approach to cater for the stated protected characteristics within the agri-environment sector.

In October 2014, Defra published a Ministerial approved statement (<https://intranet.defra.gov.uk/capd/files/Assisted-Digital-Briefing.pdf>) on how to support Rural Payment Customers who are unable to use the new IT system. An Assisted Digital campaign is being run by the RPA which includes the use of 'Digital Support Centres' (DSCs) where Customers can attend in person and work with RPA staff in order to check their business details and subsequently make a claim under the new CAP system. There are 50+ DSCs in England and each has been designed to work

⁶ as requested by the Forest Regulations Task Force

'face-to-face' and 'face-by-face' with Customers who require specific assistance to access the Rural payments IT system (e.g. visual impairment, disability)

One of the aims of going 'Digital by default' is to 'provide our customers with digital services that are so straight-forward and convenient to use that all those who can use them choose to do so, while those who can't are not excluded'. This statement sets out the legal position and principles underpinning the proposed approach. Whilst this approach is considered by Government as satisfactory in principle, we have been directed to consider: precisely what we offer those who are unable to use the system; where liability would lay in the event of an error and whether they are being dealt with equitably with others. All Delivery Bodies have worked together to design the specifics of the Assisted Digital offer.

A separate EqA has been created by RPA in respect of the Assisted Digital & Digital Support Centre offerings. (To be made available as a separate document).

Recommendation 6: We will continue working with RPA to deliver the Assisted Digital support service to our customers who experience physical and literacy difficulties in accessing the Internet and the new Rural Payments service via the provision of Digital Support Centres (DSC). All DSC's will provide basic specialist equipment (e.g. magnifying screens for visually impaired customers), for complex specialist equipment, the customer will be asked to bring with them; if this is not possible, the DSC staff will perform the transactions on the customer's behalf).

A survey of Forestry Commission staff on understanding and use of social media (Stewart and Ambrose-Oji, 2013) highlighted that 71% of the sample use social media. Although the sample size was small and the survey was undertaken amongst FC staff, it found that it is more likely to be those in the older age categories who are not using social media. There were however, no major differences in which tools are being used and how they are being used by age category, other than the amount of time spent on a weekly basis – engagement is greater in the younger age categories 16-35.

The study demonstrated that social media is useful because it allows information to be provided to the public quickly and to be rapidly spread with minimal effort – in some cases it can therefore be more cost effective than other forms of communication or advertising. It is also valuable in terms of gathering feedback, opinions, information and data from customers, stakeholders, forest visitors and other relevant actors. Social media was reported to be useful for sharing knowledge and best practice with those outside the organisation.

Recommendation 7: We will use the findings of the survey to inform future work on the use of social media in relation to older people and in relation to the services we provide and 'localism and enabling projects'.

- **Charging for Services – Review the potential to charge for our services**

Many organisations across the Defra Network raise fees and charge for the delivery of statutory services. This is fully in accordance with the principles of 'Managing Public Money' (MPM) and has become a more important issue in recent years as reducing budgets have increased the pressure to generate income where it is possible to do so.

A project was initiated in October 2013 to review the options for charging for services provided by FS. The 'discovery phase' short-listed services which had a potential for charging; however further progress was put 'on hold' pending available resource to take it forward.

Defra recently initiated a 'Fees and Charges Group' within the Defra Network to share experience and to ensure consistency within MPM. The group initially will focus on statutory charges with commercial charges being considered in future. We will take an active part in the Group and use experience from Network organisations who charge for services as a matter of course to inform our decisions and review the impacts on protected groups (especially those associated with low income).

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.
Age	<p>Impact of more web-based communication on older people. Evidence differs in whether this will have a positive or negative impact; however amongst our own staff, social media is less likely to be used by older people. This may increase costs of communication for those in this category and isolate them from contributing their feedback and opinions using media based surveys. Furthermore, where social media is used to share knowledge and best practice with those outside the organisation, older people may be isolated from dialogue more than others, which may limit the potential benefit from their input and engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will seek to identify if the use of social media by older people is reflected in the wider forestry sector and across other digital / web based activities. <p>Digital Assistance Insight. Research was conducted on behalf of RPA in 2013 for submission to Defra, NE, Forestry Commission & others involved in the Rural Payments Delivery Programme, based on a telephone survey. This survey determined that 79% of Customers would be able to access the new Rural Payments IT system (digital by default) and 21% would experience issues (can't – no broadband, or skills or complex issues). This has quantified the percentage of offline customers needed to be supported via the Rural Payments Delivery Programme Assisted Digital planning. It has identified those customers who exhibit the characteristics the RPA has ascribed to various segments in order to address barriers, inform campaign planning and effective targeting of scarce resources. (see RPA's EqA for AD/DSC)</p> <p>Impact of FEI changes to children and young adults. Very little baseline data from direct beneficiaries is available, as FEI did not capture this data.</p> <p>Through the Forestry Skills Initiative we offer support to colleges for Forestry apprenticeships. We have undertaken a retrospective analysis of the ages of these individuals (the average age is 21) highlighting the benefit of our funding to young people.</p> <p>Although we had baseline representation of RAC membership in 2010, it lacked detail regarding personal characteristics, thus limiting our ability to</p>

	<p>benchmark membership and thus monitor change of membership of people with protected characteristics.</p> <p>As noted in Section 8 we have since sought to resolve this and collected benchmark membership of the new FWACs. This will enable us to monitor the change of membership of people with protected characteristics. However, as previously noted, technical prerequisites for membership, in relation to forestry, exist and may constrain the potential pool of members due to wider issues regarding the sector's diversity profile.</p>
Disability	<p>Impact of more web-based communication on people with disabilities. Very little evidence exists to demonstrate impact of our services and therefore any changes on this Group will be difficult to monitor. Whilst questions related to disability are included in the Public Opinion of Forestry Survey (2013), low numbers of respondents with these characteristics limits the degree to which we can draw meaningful data. However, in seeking to ensure the main characteristics of age, gender, disability, race and ethnicity are monitored and reported, we will seek to address any impacts from these wider Groups.</p> <p>We have the baseline representation of the FWAC membership and so will be able to monitor the change of membership of people with protected characteristics. However, technical prerequisites for membership, in relation to forestry, exist and may constrain the potential pool of members due to wider issues regarding the sector's diversity profile.</p>
Gender	<p>We have baseline representation of the FWAC membership and so will be able to monitor the change of membership of people with protected characteristics. However, technical prerequisites for membership, in relation to forestry, exist and may constrain the potential pool of members due to wider issues regarding the sector's diversity profile.</p>
Gender Reassignment	<p>Very little evidence exists to demonstrate impact of our services and therefore any changes on this Group will be difficult to monitor. Whilst we have added related questions to the Public Opinion of Forestry Survey (2013), low numbers of respondents with these characteristics limits the degree to which we can draw meaningful data. However, in seeking to ensure the main characteristics of age, gender, disability, race and ethnicity are monitored and reported, we will seek to address any impacts from these wider Groups.</p>
Marriage and Civil Partnership	<p>Very little evidence exists to demonstrate impact of our services and therefore any changes on this Group will be difficult to monitor. In seeking to ensure the main characteristics of age, gender, disability, race and ethnicity are monitored and reported, we will seek to address any impacts from these wider Groups.</p>
Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>Very little evidence exists to demonstrate impact of our services and therefore any changes on this Group will be difficult to monitor. In seeking to ensure the main characteristics of age, gender, disability, race and ethnicity are monitored and reported, we will seek to address any impacts from these wider Groups.</p>
Race	<p>We have baseline representation of the FWAC membership and so will be able to monitor the change of membership of people with protected</p>

	<p>characteristics. However, technical prerequisites for membership, in relation to forestry, exist and may constrain the potential pool of members due to wider issues regarding the sector's diversity profile.</p> <p>In the 2010 EQA we committed to developing a better understanding of the extent to which groups in receipt of new funding streams (such as the Big Tree Plant) represent people with protected characteristics. This has now been done⁷ and <u>will use the findings of this research:</u></p> <p><u>a) to direct future projects (i.e. planning and set up);</u></p> <p><u>b) for comparison purposes with other projects, and;</u></p> <p><u>c) continue to raise awareness of the report findings, both internally and externally, to inform projects going forward.</u></p>			
<p>Religion and Belief</p>	<p>We have the baseline representation of the FWAC membership and so will be able to monitor the change of membership of people with protected characteristics. However, technical prerequisites for membership, in relation to forestry, exist and may constrain the potential pool of members due to wider issues regarding the sector's diversity profile.</p> <p>In the 2010 EQA we committed to developing a better understanding of the extent to which groups in receipt of new funding streams (such as the Big Tree Plant) represent people with protected characteristics. This has now been done and <u>will use the findings of this research, as noted in Section 8.</u></p>			
<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>Very little evidence exists to demonstrate impact of our services and therefore any changes on this Group will be difficult to monitor. Whilst we have added related questions to the Public Opinion of Forestry Survey (2013), low numbers of respondents with these characteristics limits the degree to which we can draw meaningful data. However, in seeking to ensure the main characteristics of age, gender, disability, race and ethnicity are monitored and reported, we will seek to address any impacts from these wider Groups.</p>			
<p>10. What does all the evidence tell you about the actual or likely impact on different groups?</p>				
	<p>Positive Impact</p>	<p>Negative impact</p>	<p>High, Medium or Low</p>	<p>Comments</p>

⁷ Monitoring work reported by Silvanus Trust for Defra and FC looked into 'Characterising Community Groups involved in the Big Tree Plant and identifying benefits and challenges of involvement for Participants' (published in November 2013). <http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Completed=0&ProjectID=18468>). The report highlights the benefits and challenges of involvement for participants'. As an example of a project that considers how the groups in receipt of our funding represent people with protected characteristics.

Age	x	X	Low	Evidence unclear on whether move to more web based communication, e.g. digital by default will be positive or negative, however there may be some impact on older people and the extent to which they may engage as fully as those in other age categories. Forestry Skills Initiative (FSI) has a positive impact on young people (average age 21).
Disability	x	X	Low	Current FWAC membership does not reflect the disabled community.
Gender	x	X	Low	Current FWAC ratio does have good gender diversification
Gender reassignment	x		Low	Unknown
Marriage and Civil Partnership	x		Low	Unknown
Pregnancy and Maternity	x		Low	Unknown
Race	x	X	Low	Current FWAC membership does not reflect racial diversity
Religion and Belief	x		Low	Unknown
Sexual Orientation	x		Low	Unknown

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

Strategic approach: EqA Forest Services annual business plan and review the previous year's EqA each year.

Improvements to how EqA is approached:

- Communicate the new EqA internally as part of business planning.
- Build the actions arising from the EqA into the business plan and task the relevant programme lead to promote delivery, monitoring and evaluation and building the results of the evaluation back into our work. We propose it goes into Programme 6: Business Management and Development
- Routinely require consideration of the EqA of the business plan and explicit reference to this conclusion at initiation stage of all significant (e.g.: Board level) projects or programmes.
- Ask Learning and Development (L&D) to set up a bespoke training course on equality and diversity, including Equality Analysis, for all those likely to

initiate, develop and/or deliver significant projects and programmes. Include the EqA of the Business Plan in its training material.

- There is no policy on how often training should be undertaken; under the old (pre April 2010) legislation there was a mandatory requirement to provide training to all staff at least every 3 years. However this was removed when the new legislation was introduced. Instead, people undertake training as part of induction as a new starter to the FC. It is now up to individuals and their Managers as part of PMS discussions to decide what training (or refresher training) is appropriate for their roles.

Other specific actions arising from the new EqA:

- Digital communications: Continue to work with RPA and Defra on Assisted Digital support for the Rural Payments Delivery Programme.
- Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committee (FWAC) representation: monitor progress on diversity against the 1st December 2013 baseline for FWAC members and chairs and be more active on generating applications for membership from people who share protected characteristics.
- Forestry Skills Initiative: Collate data on characteristics of applicants and entrants to the apprenticeship elements of the forestry skills initiative.
- Utilise data collected on the grant allocation (by projects such as The Big Tree Plant funding scheme) to ensure we monitor groups receiving grants fairly represent the diversity of England.

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

We have to reduce our overall resource budget and staff complement by the targets required. The government's over-arching policy context also requires us to reduce the scale of central government direct intervention.

13. Does this initiative fulfil the General Equality Duty?

	Comment
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.	<p>There is no evidence of potential unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.</p> <p>When facilitating groups to communicate on our behalf we will ensure they have equality and diversity policies that prevent unlawful impacts.</p> <p>We will refresh the equality and diversity skills of our staff as part of the ongoing business planning.</p>
Advance equality of opportunity.	<p>We will monitor changes in the composition of FWAC members in respect of people with protected characteristics.</p> <p>We will monitor recruitment of apprentices and monitor changes in the composition in respect of people with protected characteristics.</p> <p>We will use best practice on increased use of digital / electronic and web-communications, as evidenced by Government Digital Services.</p>

	We will refresh the equality and diversity skills of our staff as part of the ongoing change programme through our business planning.
Foster good relations.	We will refresh the equality and diversity skills of our staff as part of the business planning for future change programmes (Countryside Stewardship and Rural Payments).
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 effects of SR10 as a whole were monitored by progress towards our financial and headcount reduction targets and achieving milestones along the implementation plan. The effect of the current change programme will be monitored on a programme basis as we align the EqA with our business planning cycle; each Business Plan as part of the process of producing the plan will build on the previous year's plan. This will underpin the appropriate balance of detail and strategic information to cover all activities in the business planning year and fits with our upgraded approach to business planning.</p> <p>We will understand any impacts on key stakeholders from the protected characteristics and groups through continued national and local liaison and relationship management. We will report to the Forest Services Board on an annual basis in line with business planning.</p> <p>Feedback from refresher equality and diversity training.</p>
What type of information is needed for monitoring and how often will it be analysed?	<p>We will continue to use the Public Opinion of Forestry Survey (held every two years; the last one published July 2013) as the only national data source to demonstrate any trends in engagement in local woodland, which will allow us to monitor changes/impacts to the protected characteristics of age, gender, disability and ethnicity.</p> <p>Presence of people with protected characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity, disability) in FWAC membership.</p> <p>Retain knowledge on use in England of web based communication and awareness of those it is less likely to reach – liaise with others concerning progress and adjust communications methods appropriately. Work with Defra and other Delivery Bodies on the impact of the 'digital by default' Rural Payments service by target groups.</p> <p>Utilise data collected on grant allocation (by projects akin to The Big Tree Plant funding scheme) to ensure we monitor groups receiving grants fairly represent the diversity of England.</p>

How will you engage stakeholders* in implementation, monitoring and review?	We will use a variety of local and national forums in implementation, monitoring and review as part of our normal business practice. A key part of this will be through the FWACs and national cross-cutting forums.
Who will be responsible for the monitoring and review?	Programme Manager of Programme 6 of the 2015/2016 Business Plan, currently the Strategic Development Team Manager.
15. What is the review date for this Equality Analysis?	
Date of next review(s)	November 2015, early in next business planning cycle.
What could trigger an early revision?	<p>Rejection of our proposed changes in the Business Plan by the FS Senior Management Board.</p> <p>If (during the process of detailed implementation) it becomes apparent that the reforms are not feasible and need radical change, or key stakeholders face unsustainable major impacts from the changes.</p> <p>Under the Woodland Policy Enabling Programme, Forest Services is going through a series of complex organisational changes; each of a number of change drivers, namely Rural Payments Delivery, EU Payments, Countryside Stewardship, Review of Forestry Functions, Plant Health and other parts of the WPEP Programme such as the creation of a new Public Forest Estate Management Organisation may have an impact upon this Equality Assessment.</p> <p>The election of new Government in May 2015 who immediately put into place a new 'spending review' which may have an impact on our services due to budget reductions.</p>
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	Richard Greenhous
Signature	
Job Title	Director, Forest Services
Date	31st March 2015

List of Supporting Evidence

- Public Opinion of Forestry Survey (FC 2013) – Page 16
- Estates Strategy to 2020 (Cabinet Office, 2014) – Page 17
- Manifesto for a Networked Nation (Raceonline, 2010) = Page 18
- Forestry Commission Woodland and Advisory Committee, Role, Remit and Policy (FC 2013) – Page 19
- Roots to Prosperity: A Strategy and Action Plan for the Growth and the Development of the Forestry Sector in Northern England. (UKFPA 2014) – Page 21
- Coast to Capital Draft Strategic Economic Plan (C2C LEP 2013) – Page 21
- Social Forestry Pilot Report (NAAONB 2013) – Page 23
- Big Tree Plant Executive Summary (Defra 2013) – Page 24
- Common Agricultural Policy – Assisted Digital Service (Defra 2014) – Page 24

References

Doick, K., Atkinson, G., Cordle, P. & Giupponi., G. (2013) Investigating design and provision of access facilities as a barrier to woodland use. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 12.

Stewart, A and Ambrose-Oji, B., (2013), A survey of Forestry Commission staff on understanding and use of social media, Forest Research, Northern Research Station, Edinburgh

Morris, J., O'Brien, L., Ambrose-Oji, B., Lawrence, A. and Carter, C., Peace, A. (2011). Access for all? Barriers to accessing woodlands and forests in Britain. *Local Government*, 16:4 375-396

O'Brien, L., and Morris, J., (2013) Well being for all? The social distribution of benefits gained from woodlands and forests in Britain. *Local Environment: the International Journal of Justice and Sustainability*, DOI: 10.1080/13549839.2013.790354

Annex 1. Census 2011

Population of England – 53,012,456

Age

- The median age was 39.
- 10,022,836 people (18.9%) are 15 and under
- 34,329,091 people (64.8%) are of working age (age 16 to 64)
- 8,660,529 people (16.4%) are 65

Gender

- 26,069,148 men (49.18%)
- 26,943,308 women (50.82%)

Race

White: English/Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish /British	42,279,236	79.8%
White: Irish	517,001	1.0%
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller *	54,895	0.1%
White: Other White	2,430,010	4.6%
Total White	45,281,142	85.5 %
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Black Caribbean	415,616	0.8%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Black African	161,550	0.3%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Asian	332,708	0.6%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: Other Mixed	283,005	0.5%
Asian/Asian British: Indian	1,395,702	2.6%
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	1,112,282	2.1%
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	436,514	0.8%
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	379,503	0.7%
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	819,402	1.5%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African	977,741	1.8%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean	591,016	1.1%

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Other Black	277,857	0.5 %
Other ethnic group: Arab *	220,985	0.4%
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	327,433	0.6%
Total non-white	7,731,314	14.3 %

1.1.1 Religion or belief

Christian	31,479,876	59.4%
Total Christian	31,479,876	59.4 %
Buddhist	238,626	0.5 %
Hindu	806,199	1.5 %
Jewish	261,282	0.5 %
Muslim	2,660,116	5.0 %
Sikh	420,196	0.8 %
Other religion	227,825	0.4 %
All non-Christian	4,614,244	8.7 %
No religion	13,114,232	24.7 %
Religion not stated	3,804,104	7.2 %
Total no or not stated	16,918,336	31.9 %

1.1.2 Disability

Day-to-day activities limited	9,352,586	17.6%
Day-to-day activities not limited	43,659,870	82.4%