

8. Plan Appraisal

The appraisal of the revised plan is measured against the design brief on page 6, this has three separate sections and the appraisal relates to these sections:

Land and Natural Environment

The felling comparison chart below shows how the revised plan has 'smoothed' the creation of felled area over the long term so that Woodlark and Nightjar habitat is more evenly distributed. Just under 95% of the clearfell area is in coupes larger than 5ha.

- Trees cannot be harvested at the optimum age due to the uneven age of conifers (see bar chart on page 11) — some areas will be felled early, others late.
- Coupes allocated to the "red stripe" period of the existing plan are now felled so have been allocated a fell period beyond the end of the existing plan.
- The broadleaves and over mature conifer are being retained to maintain the woodland's character.

Unfortunately the analysis work involved in the Thetford Open Habitat Plan is more complex than envisaged so the plan is not available to dovetail with this revision. It is still the intention to use the plan as a guide to creating linkages between existing

Communities and Places

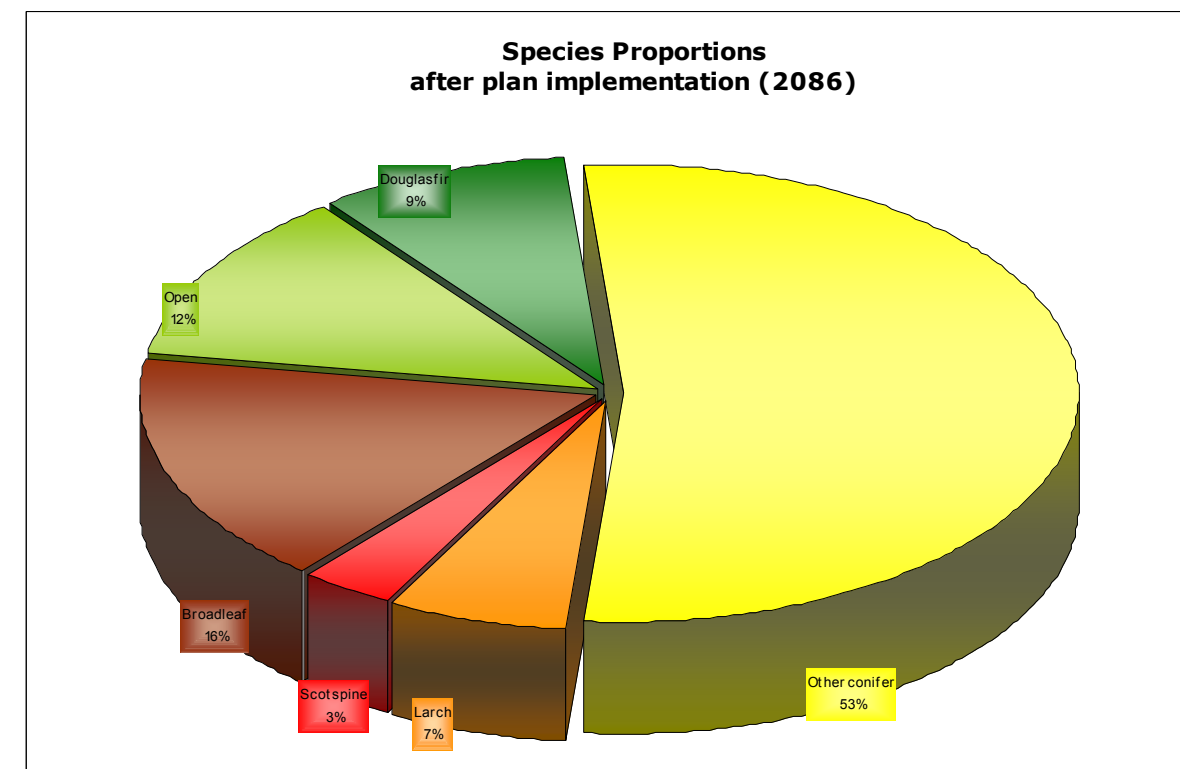
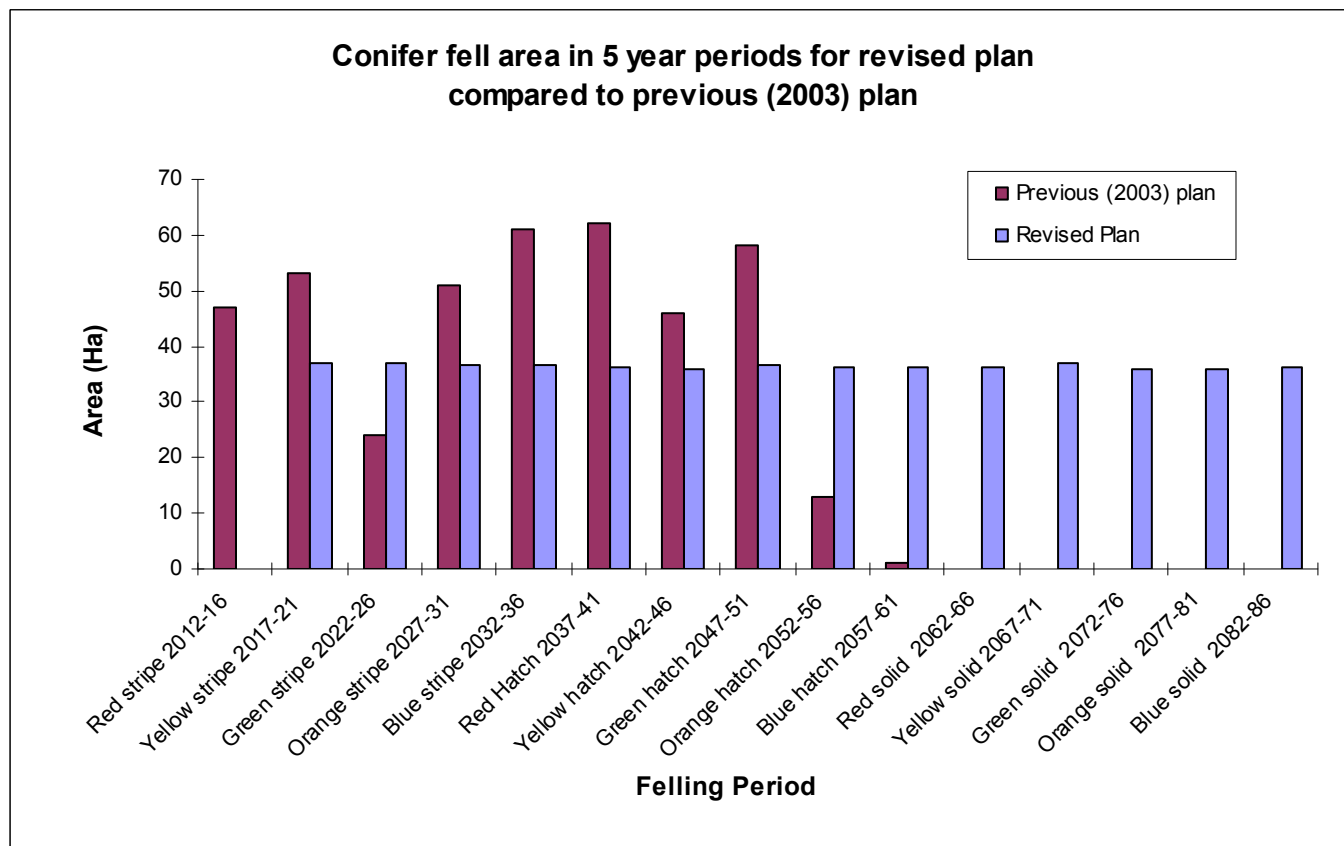
It is difficult to assess how pleasant a woodland environment as it is subjective, but maintaining mature woodland should create a pleasing environment for forest users and viewers. Restocking with a wider variety of species will increase visual diversity.

The size and shape of the coupes planned for felling can be seen on the management maps on pages 12/13; the average size of these coupes is 9.7ha and the continued use of organic shapes blend well into the landscape.

Working Woodlands

The objective to smooth timber production while continuing to meet market commitments complements the objective for provision of SPA habitat. The plan attempts to balance smoothing the area to clearfell in a period with optimising the timber value at clearfell. In the revised plan almost 95% of the stocked clearfell coupes are programmed for felling close to their optimum marketable size between age 45 and 70.

The pie chart below shows the projected species proportions by the end of the plan period, when compared the to the current species proportions (page 11) there is a significant increase in the diversity of tree species across the plan area.



9. Summary of Proposals

The increase in restock species diversity should increase the resilience of the forest to climate change and the threat from pests and diseases.

The habitat map on page 14 gives an indication of the split between conifer and deciduous trees across the plan area; Larch is separated out because it is a deciduous conifer. The habitat map on page 15 indicates provisional restock species based on soil maps. Restock species will be confirmed by a site assessment after felling—soil pits and vegetation surveys will be used to ascertain the optimum species for the coupe taking into account prevailing knowledge of species performance and pathology concerns.

Monitoring

To monitor compliance with the felling plan, after a coupe is felled the shape is captured on the ground using a GPS* receiver and the data is uploaded into GIS*. The resulting point data is then compared to the original coupe shape to confirm that the felling coupe has been accurately laid out on the ground.

To monitor compliance with the restocking plan, the forest district database is updated at replanting to show the newly planted species and their proportions. As part of this updating process the restocking information is compared with the Habitat Plan to confirm compliance. The restocking area can vary slightly from the plan as physical features come to light only after felling. Most of these minor changes are within the tolerances agreed between Forest Enterprise and the Forest Services – see Tolerance table on page 21. A felled coupe is usually restocked two years later, when all the ground preparation and weed control has been completed.

To monitor timber sustainability, a stocking assessment is carried out to measure establishment success after five years.

Ongoing monitoring of the SPA is undertaken by surveying woodlark and nightjar numbers; the results inform subsequent Forest Plan revisions and site management prescriptions.

Date of commencement of the plan: *approved date*

Expiry Date:

Mid-Term Review Date:

I seek approval to clearfell and restock 80ha of the Public Forest Estate (this is the area in yellow and green stripe fell periods—i.e. 2017-2026, all felling from the previous red stripe period has been completed).

I also seek approval to selectively fell approximately 90ha within an area of 351hectares (for the purpose of continuous cover forestry) during the period _____ to _____ as shown on the enclosed plans.

Signed

FOREST MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR

Date

Signed

REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Date