

Operations Note 027

May 2012

Natural England Consent for Work in Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Purpose

This Note explains how you can apply for Natural England's consent for works on or adjacent to a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at the same time as applying for a Felling Licence or grant agreement.

Context

Land managers must **always** obtain consent from Natural England for any operations listed in the SSSI notification, in relation to any English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) proposal or Felling Licence proposals on land designated as a SSSI. This requirement is over and above any consultation the Forestry Commission (FC) may undertake with Natural England on your application. Formal consent is not required for work adjacent to a SSSI but Natural England may wish to advise the land manager of precautions to consider so that their work does not cause damage to the features of interest.

To streamline the process, we will obtain Natural England's consent for you when we process your application to us. This means that when we send the grant agreement or Felling Licence to you we will also send Natural England's consent. This consent may list additional conditions.

To enable us to do this you must complete a [Supplementary Notice of Operations within a SSSI](#) and send this to us with your grant or licence application. **If you do not provide this form you must obtain consent from Natural England independently.**

To help us and Natural England process your application as quickly as possible, we may arrange a joint pre-application or application site visit with your Natural England advisor.

Background

Procedures to control operations in SSSIs are set out in Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (W&C Act). This is to ensure that the work is appropriate to the site, safeguarding the SSSI's features.

Natural England's consent and any conditions listed must be provided in a separate consent (issued under section 28E of the W&C Act). Therefore, land managers have so far had to apply to both the FC and Natural England to get approval for works in a SSSI.

For work on land adjacent to a SSSI, formal consent is not required but Natural England may wish to advise the land manager of precautions to consider, so that their work does not harm the SSSI's features.

Making your application

So that we can send Natural England's consent with your Felling Licence or grant agreement you must complete the *Supplementary Notice of Operations within a SSSI*. This form collects the supplementary information Natural England need to determine their consent and any conditions that should apply. It constitutes your notice to Natural England of the operations you plan to undertake which require their consent.

This form is available on the [FC website](#) and should be submitted with your application. If you do not send this form with your application, we will still process your application, consulting Natural England as normal. However, **you will need to apply independently to Natural England for their consent before starting work.**

If you submit the form we will send Natural England your Supplementary Notice of Operations so they can make a decision on whether to give consent. This may mean that we conduct a joint site visit to look at the application together with you.

Where Natural England give their consent for the work, we will send you a letter from them confirming their decision (and any conditions identified) together with the grant agreement or Felling Licence.

Applications which may affect the SSSI:

Where the application is on land outside a SSSI, Natural England's consent is not required. However, we will consult with them and any advice they provide on preventing damage to the site's interest features will be sent to you for information when we send your grant agreement or Felling Licence. We may take account of this advice in any conditions attached to a grant agreement or Felling Licence.

Sources of further advice

The [Grants and Regulations website](#) contains all the information you need to apply for grant support. Alternatively, you can request this information from your local [Forestry Commission office](#).

Versions

Version 1.0 issued May 2012.