

## 8. Plan Appraisal

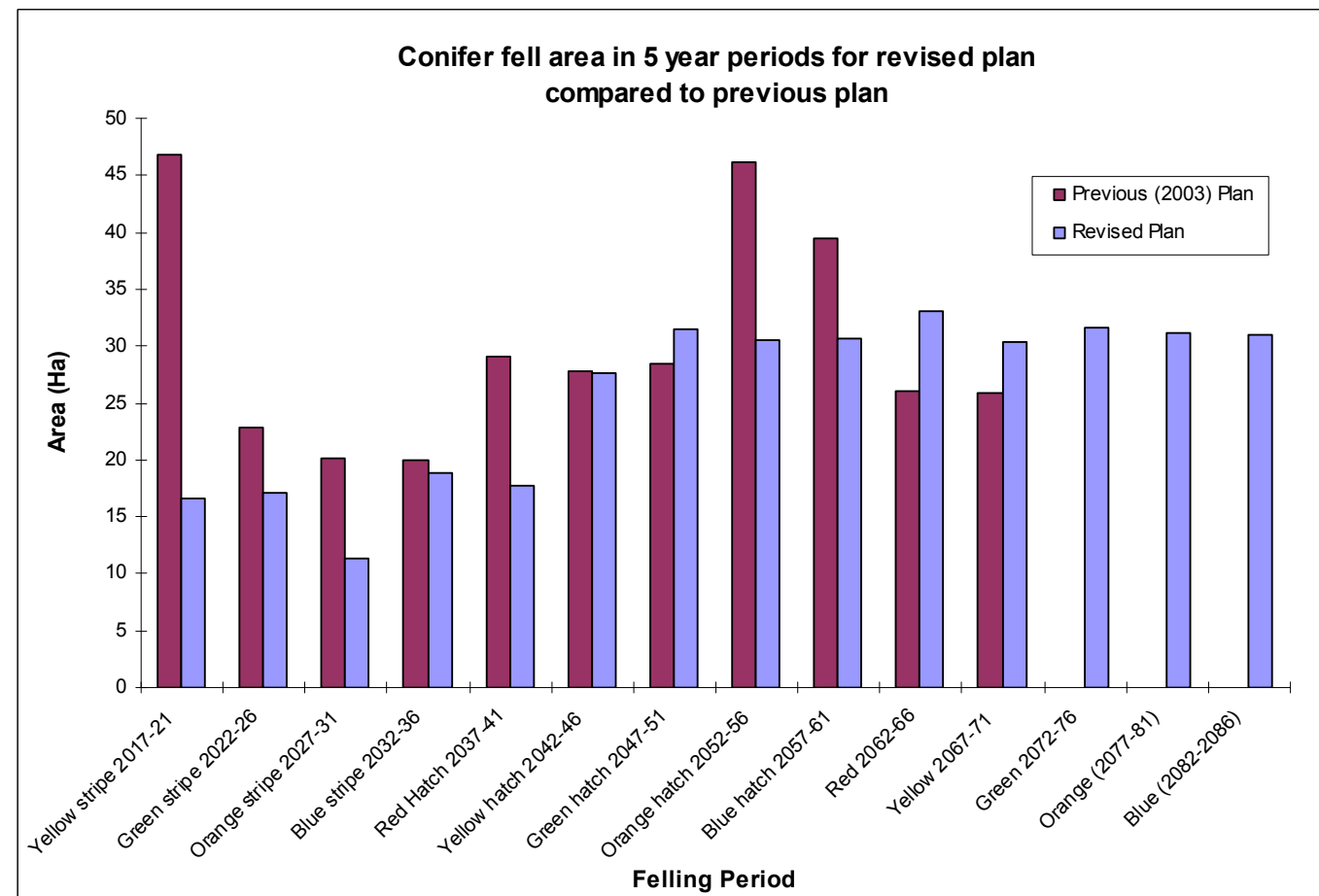
The appraisal of the revised plan is measured against the design brief on page 6, this has three separate sections and the appraisal relates to these sections:

### 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 around the mean value. However, in the short term, complete smoothing has not been possible because there is insufficient mature timber to clearfell in this 10 year period (see age class chart on page 11).

The proportion of planned open space takes account of the extensive adjoining area of designated heathland habitat, and the surrounding open arable landscape.

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 open space, but this will be a separate project.



### Communities and Places

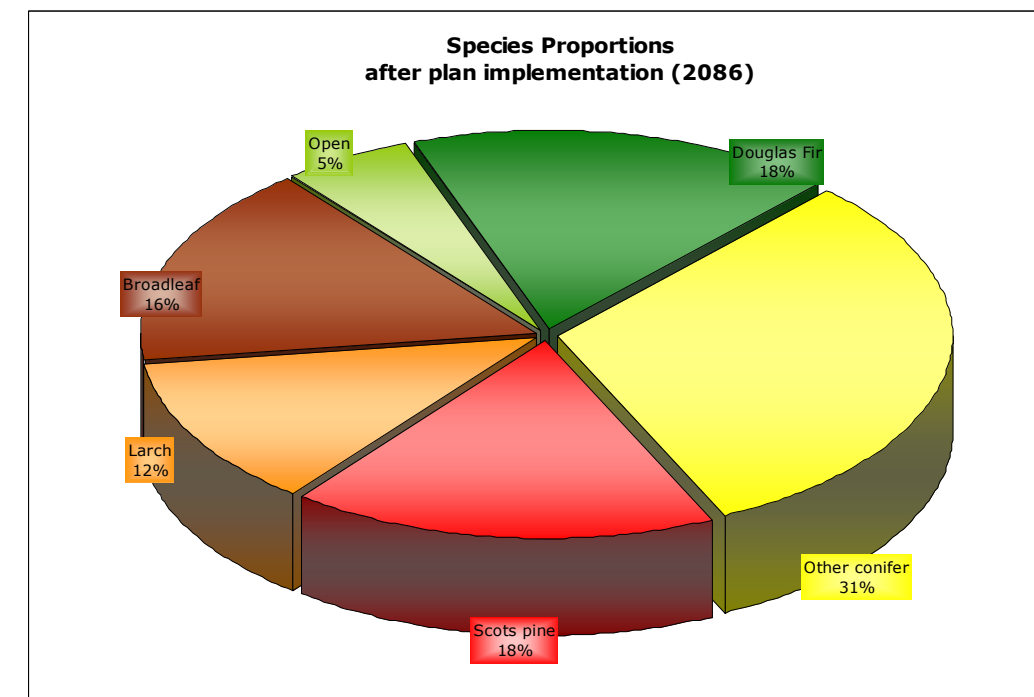
It is difficult to assess how pleasant a woodland environment is subjective but maintaining areas of woodland under continuous cover systems and keeping patches of mature trees in long term retentions should create a pleasing environment for forest users and viewers.

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 9ha 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 is very similar to the prior objective for the provision of SPA habitat and the same restriction of age class on clearfell area applies. Most of the stands in the plan are programmed for felling at their current optimum marketable age—between 50 and 70 years old. In the interim, the productive stands at Roudham are expected to yield good quality thinnings material.

Where possible, coupe size is large enough to allow efficient timber harvesting.



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

### 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:** TBC

**Expiry Date:** 31 March 2023

**Mid-Term Review Date:** 31 March 2018

I seek approval to clearfell and restock 36ha 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 24ha within an area of 94hectares (for the purpose of continuous cover forestry) during the period 1/4/2013 to 31/3/2023 as shown on the enclosed plans.

Signed .....

**FOREST MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR**

Date .....

Signed .....

**REGIONAL DIRECTOR**

Date .....