



Forestry Commission  
England

**WHAT THE OUTCOMES OF THE  
GOVERNMENT'S SPENDING REVIEW MAY  
MEAN FOR TREES, WOODS & FORESTRY –  
AND THE FORESTRY COMMISSION**



- Defra Arms Length Body Review announces FC to be retained but substantially reformed (also NE/EA)
- Public Bodies Reform Bill enables Government to bring in changes to FC structure in due course
- Cuts to the Forestry Commission's budget in England over four years of 30% plus
- FC England will be undergoing a major re-structure to meet the organisational and financial challenges it faces  
Similar for Natural England and Environment Agency
- Separate, differing cuts in Scotland and Wales



- The Public Forest Estate in England will also be subject to change
- Government have just announced a 12 week consultation on a new approach to ownership and management of the Public Forest Estate. Details may be found at [www.forestry.gov.uk/england-pfeconsultation](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-pfeconsultation)
- A West Midlands consultation event for stakeholders will be held at the Wyre Forest Visitor Centre on 11th March
- During this spending review period asset sales will continue :-  
40,000 ha - 15% of the Public Forest Estate in England

- FC EWGS grants programme looks set to be maintained at current level (and possibly some increases) to 2013/14
- HLS woodland element may decrease/become more targeted
- Indications that EWGS and HLS may be unified after 2015
- FC and Defra Partners need to work effectively together in all respects
- Natural Environment White Paper may help to shape forestry policy

- England's Trees Woods and Forests Strategy is defunct (creature of last Government) - but much content still relevant
- FC working on new Forestry Policy Framework
- FC priorities could include :- Protection of the Resource (including biosecurity and improved climate change adaptation); Sustainable Forest Management; Expansion of woodland area; Support for forestry sector; Empowering and Enabling
- ConFor led Review of Regulation agreed by Government. Indications that FC will continue to be responsible for regulation of felling etc



What this all might mean in summary :-

- In response to spending cuts, disappearance of regional level of Government and Government aspirations to change the ownership of the PFE – FC is set to become a smaller, re-structured and more focused organisation. Watch this space!
- Forestry policy priorities will evolve and change – picture incomplete so far
- FC's role will move away from direct delivery to more enabling and facilitating 'Big Society'
- Trees and woodland do appear to be a key part of the Government's environmental agenda and forest industry is clearly regarded as important