

The long-term role of the Public Forest Estate in England

Summary of consultation

This Forestry Commission consultation asks for your opinions on the long-term role of the Forestry Commission Public Forest Estate in England. The consultation started on 6th July 2009 and **will finish on 28th September 2009**.

The Public Forest Estate is publicly owned and managed by the Forestry Commission. It extends to about 258,000 hectares and is made up of over 1,500 different woods and forests across England. That is 2% of the land in England and 18% of the woods and forests. More than half the population lives within 10km of the Public Forest Estate.

This consultation is part of a study of the Public Forest Estate. The purpose of the Study is to consider the future long-term sustainable role for the Public Forest Estate and make recommendations about any necessary changes to improve its ability to deliver relevant priorities in the Government's Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests and contribute to other Government objectives.

The input from this consultation will form an important part of the evidence that we will take into account when developing recommendations later in autumn 2009.

Owning and managing a large area of land is the Government's most direct way of achieving its objectives for forestry. Therefore, the Estate must provide benefits in the most cost-effective way possible. Working out how to do this is the key challenge that the Study is trying to resolve.

The consultation asks for your opinions on:

- How you are involved with the Public Forest Estate;
- The benefits that the Estate should focus on providing;
- Key trends in society relevant to the Public Forest Estate;
- How to pay for managing the Public Forest Estate;
- The size, location and type of land that should make up the Estate;
- The priorities for the Estate focussing on:
 - Moving to a low carbon economy;
 - Helping society and wildlife adapt to climate change;
 - Supporting delivery of Government policy on land owned by others;
 - Local participation in decision making;
 - Generating social benefits;
 - Improving the experience for visitors;
 - Supporting jobs and business development

It also asks you to do a "reality check" of your expectations.

To find out more go to www.forestry.gov.uk/england-estatestudy or contact:

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Questions from our consultation

The long-term role of the Forestry Commission Public Forest Estate in England

Comments on any aspect of the consultation are welcome, but we are particularly interested in your responses to the following questions. You do not have to answer all the questions for your response to be valuable to us. You can find an online version of this and other resources at www.forestry.gov.uk/england-estatestudy

Using this response form

To use this form you need to have the free Adobe Reader 8.0 (or later) software installed on your computer. You can download Adobe Reader software from the link at the above web address.

With Adobe Reader 8.0 installed you will be able to select your preferences and choices and type your answers into the fields on this form and save them to your computer. In the purple bar at the top of your screen is a button to highlight the fields if you wish.

Please first save this document to your hard drive **under a new name**. You can then complete it as and when it is convenient to you. Use the Tab key or a mouse to move between fields. The text fields will scroll to accommodate what you have to say but please be as succinct as possible.

The section headings and numbered references on the response form relate to the sections in the main consultation document, which is available from the above web address.

You do not have to answer every question. At the end of the main questions are two short questionnaires about you that will help us determine how broad this consultation exercise has been and help us handle your response appropriately. These will only apply if you are responding to our consultation as an individual. You do not have to fill these in but it will be very helpful if you do.

Sending your response to us

There is an email button at the end of the form that you can click to do this.

Alternatively simply attach your completed form to an email and send it to pfe.consultation@forestry.gov.uk.

Thank you

2.1 The Challenge

Question 1:

What is the nature of your involvement with the Forestry Commission Public Forest Estate (please choose one or more)?

Local community based (including Parish Councils)

Forest industry (including trade associations)

Other associations, groups or forums

Individuals

Non-governmental organisations

Public sector (national)

Local Government

Other (please specify)

Unknown

2.2 Relevant Government Policies

Question 2:

a. What do you think are the most important trends that will pose challenges for the Public Forest Estate and why?

b. What do you think are the most important trends that will provide opportunities and why?

2.3 The Estate today

Question 3:

The Public Forest Estate may provide the benefits below. Taking an England-wide perspective, what are the benefits that the Public Forest Estate in England can best deliver over the next few decades (please tick up to five)?

- Plant woods and forests to help combat climate change
- Provide wood as a renewable fuel
- Provide sites for windpower
- Provide places for wildlife to live
- Demonstrate how to manage woods and forests and support innovation and research
- Improve and protect the landscape
- Help people get involved in their local woodland
- Enhance areas in and around towns and cities
- Provide places to walk in
- Provide places to cycle or ride horses
- Provide places for learning and education
- Provide places for events such as outdoor concerts, sporting events and festivals
- Restore former industrial land as wooded public open space
- Provide minerals for construction
- Help encourage tourists and leisure visitors
- Provide timber for sawmills and other wood-using businesses
- Other (please specify)

3.1 Working at national, regional and local scales

Question 4:

Are you responding to this consultation with a particular focus on a region or regions rather than an England-wide perspective?

Yes

No

Don't know

If yes, on which region(s) are you focused (tick as many as apply)?

South East

South West

East of England

East Midlands

West Midlands

North East

North West

Yorkshire and The Humber

London

4 Paying for the Public Forest Estate

Question 5:

For the public benefits it provides, is the net cost to the public of the Forestry Commission Public Forest Estate:

High

About Right

Low

Don't know

Any Comments?

Question 6:

The following are examples of commercial opportunities on the Forestry Commission Public Forest Estate in England. Please tell us which you would support or not support:

	Would Support	Would support up to certain limits	Would not support
Timber for all purposes e.g. construction, wood as a renewable fuel			
Surplus land, woods and forests, and buildings			
Minerals such as sand, gravel and stone			
Leisure businesses such as Forest Holidays, catering, cycle hire, forest shops			
Charging for leisure facilities such as car parking			
Events such as concerts and sporting events			
Renewable energy – wind and water power			
Housing and other built development			
Planning gain where developers help fund services on the Public Forest Estate which mitigate the impact of development			
Payments for ecosystem services (e.g. storing carbon, reducing flooding) if a mechanism for such payments is developed			
Other activities such as film rights, intellectual property, non-timber forest products			

~~Q11~~ If you said there is a limit to how far you would support certain activities, please tell us why?

~~Q12~~ If you said there are mechanisms you would not support, please tell us why?

~~Q13~~ Are there any activities where there should be limits on the involvement of the private sector and why?

Question 7:

Can you think of any other appropriate ways of generating income from the Public Forest Estate other than those we list? Please tell us about them.

5 Size, location and type of land

Question 8:

Should the overall size of the Public Forest Estate in England

Increase

Decrease

Stay about the same

Please explain why

Question 9:

Is the Public Forest Estate composed of the right types of woodland in the right places?

Completely wrong

Broadly wrong

Broadly right

Completely right

Don't know

Any comments?

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Question 10:

If relevant, please let us know of any changes to the disposals policy set out in Section 5 that you think are necessary.

Question 11:

~~Q11~~ In which kinds of location should we prioritise acquisition of woods, forests or open ground, if any?

~~Q12~~ What kinds of wood, forest or open ground should we prioritise for acquisition, if any?

6 What are the priorities?

6.1 Moving to a low-carbon economy

Question 12:

When we make decisions about how we manage the Public Forest Estate, one of the factors to take into account is the potential contribution of the Public Forest Estate to moving to a low-carbon economy. How important a factor should this be?

Overriding

Important

Quite important

Not important

Don't know

Any comments?

Question 13:

a. Should the Forestry Commission make more wood available from the Public Forest Estate as a renewable fuel?

Yes

No

Don't know

Any comments?

b. Are there other ways in which the Public Forest Estate should support the woodfuel industry?

Question 14:

a. Should the Public Forest Estate provide sites for renewable energy generation such as wind power?

Yes

No

Don't know

b. Is there a limit to how far we could take this before you had concerns? If so, why?

Question 15:

What should be the main role(s) of the Public Forest Estate in moving to a low-carbon economy (please tick all those that apply)?

Storing carbon in trees and soil

Growing timber to lock up carbon in products and substitute for other materials that release more carbon when they are made and used

Growing wood as a renewable fuel

Providing sites for renewable energy generation such as wind power

Promoting behaviour change through communications

Other (please specify)

6.2 Helping society and wildlife adapt to climate change

Question 16:

What is the role of the Public Forest Estate in helping society adapt to climate change?

Question 17:

What is the role of the Public Forest Estate in helping wildlife adapt to climate change?

6.3 Supporting delivery of Government policy on other land

Question 18:

a. What is the highest priority issue for research using the Public Forest Estate?

b. Would you have any concerns about the Public Forest Estate being used in this way? Please explain.

Question 19:

What should be the focus for using the Public Forest Estate to work with others to deliver Government policy (please tick one or more)?

Catalysing landscape-scale working

Setting up co-operative working

Make Estate infrastructure available to others

Managing Land in other forms of ownership

Other (please specify)

The Public Forest Estate should not be used in this way (please explain).

6.4 Local participation in decision-making

Question 20:

Should we involve local people more in decision-making about the Public Forest Estate?

Yes

No

Don't know

If so, how?

6.5 Using the Public Forest Estate to generate social benefits

Question 21:

What is the most appropriate approach to using the Public Forest Estate to provide social benefits?

6.6 Improving the experience for visitors

Question 22:

What should be the priorities for providing leisure opportunities on the Public Forest Estate (rank from 1 to 4, with 1 being the highest priority)?

1 2 3 4

Free public access on foot

Way-marked trails, small car parks and other small-scale leisure infrastructure for informal recreation mainly by local visitors

Major leisure infrastructure such as visitor centres and large car parks for visitors from further afield

Facilities for specialist interests such as sports

Question 23:

What kinds of leisure activity, if any, should we charge for?

What kinds should we not charge for?

6.7 Supporting jobs and business development

Question 24:

Which of the following should be the role of the Public Forest Estate in supporting jobs and business development (please tick all that apply)?

Way of supporting jobs and business development	Role for the Public Forest Estate (tick if yes)?	Any comments?
More private-sector involvement in the Estate		
Knowledge transfer and training		
Catalysing new businesses and innovation		
Developing new products and markets		
Producing timber		
Attracting visitors and tourists		
Enhancing local quality of life		
Supporting leisure businesses		
Facilitating use of Estate infrastructure by businesses		
Promoting business co-operation, e.g. joint marketing		
Other (please specify)		

7 Reality Check

Question 25:

a. Please look back at your responses to the questions in this consultation. Overall, what effect do you think your responses will have on the net costs of managing the Public Forest Estate?

Increase

Decrease

Little difference

Don't know

b. If increase, how do you think it should be paid for?

Question 26:

If we only had the resources to do one of the activities you have suggested that increase costs, which should this one activity be?

Other Comments

We welcome your input on any other aspect of this consultation

About You

The final two pages are about you. They are a short questionnaire that will help us determine how broad this consultation exercise has been and help us handle your response appropriately.

These will only apply if you are responding to our consultation as an individual. You do not have to fill these in but it will be very helpful if you can.

Sending your response

At the foot of the final page is a Send button to help you send your response to us. You can choose to use your installed email software or your web mail provider. In any case you should save the form to your hard drive if you want to keep a copy.

The email address to send your response to is pfe.consultation@forestry.gov.uk

Thank you

Please complete the details below and return it with your response.
This will help us handle your response appropriately.

You can find an online version of this form and a version that can be completed off-line at www.forestry.gov.uk/england-estatestudy. When you have completed this form, please send it together with your response to: pfe.consultation@forestry.gov.uk or to Dominic Driver, Forestry Commission, 620 Bristol Business Park, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol BS16 1EJ. Fax: 0117 931 2859 by 17.00hrs on 28 September 2009.

Title and name:	Position and organisation (if any):	
Address:		
Postcode:		
E-mail:	Telephone:	
Question or information		
1	<p>a) Are you responding as an individual? (Go to Question (Q) 2) <i>We would be very grateful if you could also complete our optional equality and diversity monitoring form at the end of this section.</i></p> <p>b) Are you responding on behalf of a group or organisation? (Go to Q4 then Q5)</p>	<p>Please tick</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
2	<p>As an individual are you happy that your response will be made available to the public on our website? If you say 'No' please go to Q5; we will keep your response private.¹ If you say 'Yes' please go to Q3 then Q5.</p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
3	<p>Where you have not asked for your replies to be kept private we will make your replies available on our website as follows:</p> <p>Yes, make my response, name and contact details available.</p> <p>Yes, make my response available, but not my name and contact details.</p> <p>Yes, make my response and name available, but not my contact details.</p>	<p>Please tick</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
4	<p>Groups and organisations. The name and address of your group or organisation will be available to the public on our website. Are you content for us to publish your response? If you say 'No' we will keep your response private.</p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5	<p>Sharing responses and future engagement. We will share your response with other Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again but will need your permission. Are you content for us or other Government policy teams to contact you again about your consultation response?</p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p>If you say 'No' are you content for us to keep you up to date on progress with this policy? If 'No' thank you for helping us, you will not hear from us again about this process.</p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>

¹ We are required to release information to comply with the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and Freedom of Information Act 2000. We will not allow any unwarranted breach of confidentiality, nor will we contravene our obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998. The Forestry Commission will be the Data Controller. Personal data is collected for the purpose of the analysis of the responses to the consultation in order to inform future consideration of the long-term role of the Public Forest Estate. Please note that any confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system in e-mail responses will not be treated as such a request.



If you are responding as an individual, we would be very grateful if you could answer the following optional questions. This is part of our commitment to equality and diversity. The information will help us judge how well we are doing and whether we need to change the way we do things. The information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence. It will only be used to produce statistical information for the consultation and will not be linked to personal data. This monitoring form will be destroyed within 12 months.

Equality and Diversity Monitoring

1. Ethnic origin – Please indicate the ethnic group with which you most identify

a) Asian or Asian British

- Bangladeshi
- Pakistani
- Indian

Any other Asian background:

c) Chinese or Chinese British

- Chinese

Any other Chinese background:

e) White

- English
- Scottish
- Irish
- Welsh

Any other White background:

b) Black or Black British

- African
- Caribbean

Any other Black background:

d) Mixed ethnic background

- Asian/White
- Black African/White
- Black Caribbean/White

Any other mixed background:

f) Any other ethnic background

2. Gender – Please indicate your gender

- Male Female Transgender Prefer not to say

3. Sexual orientation – Please indicate which sexual orientation you identify as

- Bi-sexual Gay Heterosexual Lesbian Other

4. Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines disability as any long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits your daily activities or the work you can do.

Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

- Yes No

5. Religion or Belief – Please indicate your religion or belief

- Atheism Buddhism Christianity Hinduism Islam
- Judaism Sikhism No religion Other Prefer not to say

6. Age - Please indicate which age bracket you fall within

- 16-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+