

What is an Environmental Impact Assessment?

Under the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (England & Wales) Regulations 1999 and the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (Scotland) Regulations 1999 anyone planning to carry out certain forestry projects must seek the consent of the Forestry Commission if the proposals are likely to have a significant effect on the environment. If the Forestry Commission decide that consent is required then the applicant must prepare an Environmental Statement (ES) as part of their application. Before preparing the ES the applicant must hold a scoping meeting. The ES must include a detailed description of the project, the aspects of the environment that are likely to be significantly affected and a description of the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, where possible offset, any or all of these effects.

What is a Forest Plan?

The purpose of a Forest Plan is to enable landowners to take a coherent, comprehensive and long-term view of their woodland management. The Plan can apply to a whole forest or wood, a whole estate comprising several woods, or to a distinct landscape unit. It is primarily concerned with the location and timing of tree felling and the distribution of tree species, covering the felling, restocking and thinning planned over a 20 year period. We give approval for restocking grants and felling over the first 10 years of the plan.

What is a Woodland Grant Scheme

The Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) provides grants for landowners to create and manage woodlands on sites all over Great Britain. A WGS can cover one woodland or a whole estate covering several woodlands. We give approval for new planting, felling, restocking and thinning over a 5 year period.

What is a felling licence?

Under the Forestry Act 1967 the Forestry Commission controls the felling of trees and issues felling licences. Normally anyone wanting to fell trees will require a felling licence, although there are certain exemptions.

What is Forest Design Plan?

A forest design plan is the way that Forest Enterprise (FE) plans and organises its forest activities. The final plan will contain relevant background information about the current state of the woodland, provide a vision of how the woodland will be in the future, and outline work proposals for the next rotation that will move the woodland towards the desired vision. Pictures of how the forest is likely to look in the future may also be included. We give approval to FE for felling and restocking over the first 10 years of the plan.

Further Information

- Woodland Grant Scheme Applicant's pack
- Forestry Commission Booklet "Tree Felling – getting permission"
- Forestry Commission Booklet "Environmental Impact assessment of Forestry Projects"

www.forestry.gov.uk



Country Services, Forestry Commission,
231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 7AT
Tel: 0131 334 0303

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Taking part in a Scoping Meeting



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Introduction

The Forestry Commission's role is to protect and expand Britain's woodlands for the many benefits they provide for society and the environment.

We do this through:

- Legislation
- Grants
- Advice

When we receive proposals to plant new woods or carry out work in existing woods we consider the impacts of them on society and the environment. When doing this we may need to take account of the views of other interested parties. One of the ways that this is done is through a meeting and possibly a site visit to discuss the issues, a process known as scoping.

This leaflet is aimed at anyone who may be invited to participate in a scoping meeting. This includes Local Authorities, Environmental agencies, local interest groups, community councils and neighbours.

What is Scoping?

Scoping is a mandatory part of the Environmental Impact Assessment and Forest Plans application processes and may be required for complex Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) and felling licence applications. Forest Enterprise also carry out scoping when preparing Forest Design Plans. The object of scoping is to agree priorities in terms of objectives and other relevant factors that need to be addressed as part of the planning and decision-making process.

A scoping meeting is held at an early stage in developing proposals so that as much information as possible can be taken into account. It enables you to meet the applicant (the person wanting to carry out the work) and discuss any relevant issues or make known information that will help in the planning of work. It also enables the applicant to discover any gaps in his/her knowledge and any survey work that may be required.

The applicant must give you sufficient advance information before a scoping meeting to allow you to consider the issues from your point of view, and may provide outline proposals. You may wish to visit the site to familiarise yourself with the layout on the ground, and any associated issues, before attending the meeting. You should contact the applicant to arrange this.

What happens at the meeting?

The meeting is likely to follow the following format:

- **Introduction, apologies, purpose and content of the meeting**
- **Background and outline of proposals by the applicant**
- **Raising of relevant issues and concerns by each participant**
- **Discussion on outcome and way forward**
- **Summary and close**

At the meeting the Forestry Commission acts as an independent facilitator. We cannot be expected to cover your field of interest if you do not highlight the issues that are important to you.

As a Participant what is your role in Scoping?

The purpose of the meeting is to hear and record your views and comments. After the meeting it is useful if you provide the applicant with a written note of the issues that you raised.

You will be asked to:

- **Have already considered any outline proposals, sent to you in advance, in the light of your own knowledge and particular interest in the site.**
- **Ask the applicant to clarify any issues you are unclear about.**
- **Be in a position to make recommendations relating to the application on behalf of your organisation (if applicable).**
- **Provide information about the site that may not be known by the other parties.**
- **Highlight the nature and degree of any site sensitivities.**
- **Be prepared to suggest ways in which potential site sensitivities or conflicts might be overcome.**

Why it is important to attend the scoping meeting?

Preparing forestry proposals is a time-consuming and expensive process. It is vital that the applicant is aware of all the issues and sensitivities at the beginning of the planning process. This makes the process more effective for all concerned.

What should you do if you can't attend?

- **send a substitute who is able to present information and make recommendations on your behalf**
- **provide written comments to the applicant prior to the scoping meeting**
- **arranging a meeting with the applicant**