

SUSTAINING ENGLAND'S WOODLANDS

Commitments and Actions

APRIL 2006

Foreword

The sustainable management of our rich heritage of woods and forests is central to forestry policy in England. In 2001 the Forestry Commission led a review of how they could most effectively support sustainable management. The review Steering Group produced a report with a wide range of important recommendations and the Forestry Commission published its response in October 2002. This document reports on the actions the Forestry Commission has taken on the commitments made in 2002. A great deal has been achieved over the last 3 years and I am pleased with the Steering Group's very positive commentary.

The last few years have been very difficult for woodland owners and many woodlands are suffering from lack of management. The full potential of England's woodlands is not being realised. We know we must build on the momentum that has been developed if we are to bring our woodlands into sustainable management, and we are committed to meeting this challenge.

An impressive feature of the 'Sustaining England's Woodlands' initiative has been the level of engagement with woodland owners and managers. There were nearly 400 responses to the consultation exercise and the Forestry Commission has maintained very active links with stakeholders at both national and regional levels. We are showing our commitment to continuing in the spirit of open engagement by publishing this document. We will only fulfil our objective of achieving sustainable woodland management in England by working in partnership with the people who own and manage woodlands.

'Sustaining England's Woodlands' has been an important initiative and I commend the Forestry Commission for the work it has done and the way it has done it. It is now time to move on to new agendas as we revise the England Forestry Strategy. But the commitment to work with owners and managers to achieve the sustainable management of England's woodlands remains firmly in place.

Jim Knight MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Commons) (Rural Affairs, Landscape and Biodiversity)

Introduction to the Steering Group's commentary

The Steering Group were pleased to have been given the opportunity to comment on the Action Plan Statement. One of the welcome characteristics of the SEW process was the openness and genuine sense of engagement in which FC England took it forward. I am sure that woodland owners and managers in England will want this spirit of real partnership to continue.

We compliment FC England on the work that has been done. The Action Plan describes a challenging set of commitments and impressive progress has been achieved. There is of course more to be done if England's woodlands are to become truly sustainable. Far too many woods are either not managed or under-managed and therefore failing to realise their potential to generate income for their owners and wider benefits for society.

There are encouraging signs, for instance the increasing understanding, involvement and commitment of national and regional agencies. Decision-makers now have a better understanding of the potential role that sustainably managed woodlands can play in advancing a wide range of policy agendas. We hope the emerging wood energy market may encourage and enable owners to bring their woods into profitable management.

Overall the SEW programme has been important, not only for what it has achieved, but also for the way it has been achieved. The Steering Group agree that the work that has been taken forward under the SEW banner has been well conceived and executed. We all know that there is much more to do if we are to achieve widespread sustainable management, but this work should now be taken forward under new programmes such as 'Keepers of Time' and be reflected in the revision of the England Forestry Strategy. Woodland owners and managers look forward to working with the FC as the new agendas and opportunities emerge.

Judith Webb
Chair of the SEW Steering Group

Steering Group Commentary on Actions Taken on Sustaining England's Woodlands

COMMUNICATION, OUTREACH, ADVOCACY

Action 1 – Communications

We acknowledge the good work the FC has done on communications over the past 3 years, but feel that they should further raise their game. We strongly support the FC's intention to undertake a Communications Review and recommend the full involvement of other stakeholder organisations in this. It is important to recognise the wide variety of audiences – both 'external' (the general public) and also 'internal' (the woodland sector) – and target the messages appropriately. A particularly important audience are those woodland owners not currently involved in woodland management.

Action 4 – Advocacy

We recognise the importance of the RFF process in raising awareness of and embedding woodland issues at regional levels and commend the FC for the work they have done in developing RFFs. However, we are concerned that a negative impact of regionalisation is reduced communications between regions, with the associated danger of duplication of efforts, which has occurred with the preparation of advocacy material and in the work of some Woodland Initiatives. We recommend that the FC keeps a careful eye on this and seeks to avoid wasted effort through duplication.

Action 30 – Engaging more owners

We attach a very high priority to efforts to engage more woodland owners in the sustainable management of their woodlands. We welcome the opportunity to engage with a new range of farmers, landowners and managers through contact with RDS (soon to become part of Natural England) and the FC should ensure close and effective working relations with the RDS. In order to engage with owners it is important to have a clear understanding of their motivations and we encourage the FC to undertake more work in this area. An increasing number of woodlands are owned by new "hobby" owners who have little understanding of woodland management and to whom financial support alone may not be an important consideration.

Action 38 – Outreach

We welcome the increased effort that has been made on Outreach, and see it as a high priority to continue to develop activity in this area. It is important for the FC to act with one voice, joining up with Forest Research and Forest Enterprise. We recommend that the FC also seek closer co-operation on Outreach with other members of the Defra Family.

Action 40 – Freeing up of Woodland Officer time for more advisory work

We consider that this remains a key activity for Woodland Officers and should be examined once GLADE is fully functioning.

MARKET DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

Action 7 – Timber research

The continuing importance of timber research to the forest industry is agreed and the Forestry Commission's role in this is key. There is a need for research to link into the construction sector, promoting the role of timber in sustainable construction. This should help to build the market for timber, which is key to the economic sustainability of the forestry industry.

Actions 8, 9, (10), 11 – Local marketing of products

We recognise the role that local marketing of produce plays in stimulating rural development and supporting small woodland owners. This work should be taken forward at regional and local levels. However, a higher priority for the FC is to push forward development of high-volume markets at national level to underpin the financial sustainability of the forestry industry. This should be done by working in conjunction with the English Forest Industries Partnership and industry.

Action 12 – Harvesting, Processing and Marketing Grant

We strongly support the development of this grant and feel it is essential that provision for this type of grant is included in the successor England Rural Development Programme.

Action 13 – English Forest Industries Partnership (EFIP)

We recognise the vital role that the FC has played in setting up and supporting the English Forest Industries Partnership. The Jaakko Poyry Mapping Study will be the basis for further partnership work to promote the contribution of the sector and build the market. Through this work the FC has opened the door to enhanced co-operation throughout the sector and industry. This work must be embraced and supported by the forestry sector in England.

Action 18 – Certification (also link to 16, 17, 19, 20)

We note the progress on certification, particularly increased acceptance and reduced controversy across the sector. We commend FC England for the constructive work they have done to encourage woodland owners into certification but further work is required. Certification must not become a barrier to woodland management, particularly in small woodlands, and it is essential that the SLIMF work is soon concluded.

Actions 21–25 – Woodfuel

We are pleased that most of the actions have been undertaken, and note that this issue has become even more relevant for the sector than when 'Sustaining England's Woodlands' was originally published. It is a key issue which must be taken forward into the future, particularly by the English Forest Industries Partnership. We hope to see a positive response by Government to the recommendations of Sir Ben Gill's Biomass Task Force. Good information and outreach events have taken place but more needs to be done to develop both the supply of and demand for woodfuel. We are concerned that in taking this forward there is a need for one champion and clear guidance for woodland owners to be able to confidently engage with this opportunity. There is a clear need to encourage the private sector to commit to long-term supply chains for energy. Whilst FC may help to unblock the supply chain, the private sector itself must rise to the market opportunity. We see a clear role for EFIP in facilitating and supporting this.

Action 41 – Contractors

We continue to be concerned about the availability of contractors, particularly those who are locally based. This remains a key issue in facilitating woodland management and should be addressed by EFIP working closely with the Forestry Commission.

Action 43 – Training

We are concerned that Lantra are not giving an appropriate level of support to the woodland and forestry sector. This is an important issue which must be taken forward. We note that Lantra have contributed to the funding of the Jaakko Poyry Mapping Study and they should be encouraged to develop an action plan for forestry sector training in conjunction with EFIP.

Actions 44 and 45 – Forest business

There is increasing evidence that supporting forest businesses is an effective way of achieving sustainable rural development. We recommend that the FC continues to back projects that help to further develop the evidence base and press for this type of support to be included in the successor England Rural Development Programme.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Action 32 – Woodland Initiative and role in RFFs (link to 31 and 48)

We welcome the support for the Woodland Initiatives Co-ordinator. The role of Woodland Initiatives in delivering RFFs was noted; the continuity of core funding to support Woodland Initiatives remains an issue.

Action 39 – Woodland Advice (also link to 46 and 48)

We believe that the increased funding for Partnerships by the FC has been extremely effective. Core funding should be provided to lever further funding, giving a multiplier effect where there is good evidence that the partnership is delivering good value for money. Many partners were increasingly looking beyond FC for funding, but the significance of FC in-kind support was particularly important.

ANCIENT WOODLAND AND BIODIVERSITY

Action 49 – PAWS Restoration (55, 56, 57 – Ancient Woodland)

We are particularly glad to note the great improvement in support for ancient woodland through the Keepers of Time policy and the Planning and Policy Guidance 9 (PPG9). These have been key pieces of work to raise the profile and importance of ancient woodland. However, there is more work to be done to influence Local Authorities.

Action 50 – Non-woodland habitats

We recognise the progress made on this issue and consider that there will be some worthwhile stories coming from this activity to be widely communicated.

Action 51 – Overgrazing

We welcome the work that has occurred in developing tools to measure overgrazing and inclusion of this issue in Environmental Stewardship. However, the impact of this work on overgrazing must be monitored.

Action 59 – Deer Management Groups

We recognise that there has been particularly good joined-up working on this issue across the Defra Family and through increased support for the Deer Initiative. We see the Deer Action Plan as clear and helpful. We believe this is still a key issue and affects delivery of other targets. Progress needs to be monitored and long-term support by the Defra Family must be taken forward through the Deer Initiative.

Action 62 – Grey squirrels

We know that this remains a significant concern in woodland management and action should continue. It is recognised that not only do grey squirrels pose a physical threat to trees, but the problem can act as a significant disincentive to woodland management. Whilst awaiting the FC/Defra policy statement on grey squirrels, we recommend the need for positive, practical and focused actions, as well as management at sub-regional levels. It is unrealistic to eliminate grey squirrels, but their control should be encouraged. Public perception also needs to be informed. There is a need for a watching brief on this issue.

Action 67 – Grants to increase woodlands in favourable condition

We welcome the increased grants made available to SSSIs in unfavourable condition and we note the challenge to the sector to ensure that this resource is utilised.

MISCELLANEOUS

Actions 26, 27 & 28 – Grants

We note that there has been a shift in allocation of grant support towards existing woodlands, but feel that this has not gone far enough. We believe that there will still be a much greater provision of public benefits through better management of existing woodlands. However, we recognise that woodland creation is effective in providing public benefits where it is appropriately sited and targeted. The key feature is ensuring provision of the most cost-effective public benefits, alongside value for money. We are disappointed that the setting of regional priorities through the RFF process has not followed through into greater regional flexibility in the setting of grant priorities.

Action 35 – Public access

While recognising the importance of this public benefit we believe that it is not as contentious as when SEW was published. There has been valuable progress in mapping accessible woodland. The key actions for the future should be the promotion of this access to the public and encouragement of quality public access provision. There should continue to be financial support for provision in areas with limited access. We believe that access to woodland should be considered as part of access to greenspace as a whole, with the FC working in conjunction with other access bodies.

Action 37 – Fiscal policy

We consider that there continues to be a case for looking at fiscal policy relating to forestry. This means looking at a wide range of incentives, not just taxation. However, we recognise that if this is to be taken forward it requires agreement across the sector before approaching Government.

Action Plan for Implementing the Commitments in Sustaining England's Woodlands

Action	SEW Para	What we said we'd do	Action by 30 June 2005	Action Planned by 30 June 2006
1	5	Produce an action plan to bring together partners to develop a strategic and co-ordinated approach to promotional work (to the general public)	The Public Opinion Survey (published 2003) provides a valuable insight into what the general public value about trees, woods and forests.	This will be taken forward through an FC England Strategic Review of Communications which is planned for 2006.
2	6	Organise a discussion forum on education and learning in woodlands	Due to lack of capacity within FCE this has not happened. However, FCE has reaffirmed its commitment to education and learning through supporting the Forest Education Initiative (FEI), supporting the further development of Forest School across England and developing the FEE education service. Forest School is being supported in East England through a pilot WIG Challenge Fund.	Forest School Quality Assurance Scheme went out to consultation, through FEI, during Summer 2005. Further work is needed to pilot any scheme; this is planned for 2006 before funding is sought to mainstream. FCE continues to support the Forest School England network and FEE has developed its Education Framework which will start to be put into action during 2006.
3	8	Consider what part FCE should play in the funding of the Forest Education Initiative (FEI)	FCE have agreed with the FEI Executive Committee that from FY 2004/05, funding will be provided through a single pot which will include partnership funding and core costs. It has also been agreed that the partnership fund will remain at £50,000 for the next two years. Discussions are also under way as to a longer-term relationship with FEI as an important delivery agency for FCE education strategy.	Monitor the success of the new funding procedures and continue discussions with FEI. An Annual Report will be produced for 2005. FCE is committed to funding the FEI Co-ordinator post for 3 years from 05/06. ConFor and the Community Forest Partnership are new partners to FEI. FEI is seeking to establish country steering groups in 2006.
4	11	Develop an advocacy toolkit bringing together the issues, evidence base, case studies, etc. to support advocacy in a wide range of programme areas	Substantial progress, particularly at Conservancy level connected to the preparation of Regional Forestry Frameworks. The RFFs are themselves important advocacy documents, helping to raise public awareness. The report on Social and Environmental Benefits from forestry has helped to quantify the non-market benefits. "People Want Trees" is a valuable advocacy document, particularly aimed at opinion-formers.	Ongoing work associated with the RFFs. We propose to bring together experience and lessons learned in terms of effective advocacy when the RFF process has been completed.
5	12	Badging projects with the FC label to raise awareness that forestry is being used to deliver a diverse range of outcomes	Various initiatives at national level and in all Conservancies. The RFF process was important in this respect.	We will continue to pursue opportunities (e.g. Keepers of Time) to raise awareness that woodland and forests deliver a wide range of benefits.
6	13	Carry out appraisals giving qualitative and quantitative data on the value of each region's woodlands to people.	Action taken in all Conservancies associated with RFF process. See also 4 above.	No further work intended at present in light of RFF contributions.
7	20	Continue to support timber research	FC has continued to support this: details in FC Research Catalogue (P37 and elsewhere). The Science and Innovation Strategy for British Forestry (June 2005) states that "Revenue from products, principally wood, remains crucial to the sustainability of British Woodland". See Section 4.25 on Forest Products research which indicates continuing research in this area.	Current work on developing the new Research Strategy will review the weight given to this.

Action	SEW Para	What we said we'd do	Action by 30 June 2005	Action Planned by 30 June 2006
8	22, 24	Provide selective support to well-planned localised marketing campaigns, facilitate the sale of local wood products in other local outlets, and encourage inclusion of wood products in other branding and marketing schemes	Positive action has been taken in all Conservancies. We commissioned research to review existing practice in woodland product marketing and review the marketing lessons that might be drawn from relevant consumer awareness studies. The results of the research have been used to develop a joint programme of work and produce promotional and advocacy material. A contract has been let to prepare marketing guidance for woodland owners and small-scale producers.	We will publish the marketing guides. FE are reviewing sales from their retail outlets and expect to focus more on local products.
9	23	Discuss with the Countryside Agency the role of wood products in Eat the View	A joint programme of work to develop markets for products from sustainably managed woods has been prepared in conjunction with the CA. Specific actions that we are taking are covered under Activities 8, 10 and 11.	Continue to implement the Action Plan in the joint programme.
10	23	Discuss the inclusion of woodland products in markets with National Association of Farmers Markets and the Farm Retail Association	Initial discussions led to pilot workshops in Yorkshire and SW England in 2004 with the aim of developing better links between local food and wood products sectors. Results have been actioned under 8 above.	
11	24	Encourage Woodland Initiatives and producer networks to do work along the lines of Activity 8	Woodland Initiatives involved in Activity 8 actions (see above).	Continue to encourage Woodland Initiatives to get involved in this work: this is ongoing work for the Woodland Initiatives Co-ordinator.
12	25	Submit (to the EU) an ERDP Modification allowing the introduction of a woodland harvesting, processing and marketing grant (HPMG)	Modification submitted and approval given.	Pilots launched in July 2005. Detailed guidance for potential applicants is on the FC website.
13	27	Run a joint workshop with FIDC to discuss areas where we can work together with the forestry business sector in areas of mutual interest	Workshop held and England Forest Industries Partnership (EFIP) set up with a Partnership Manager employed by ConFor and part funded by FCE.	Contract let to Jaakko Poyry to construct a map of the forest industry in England and make recommendations. FCE are committed, as part of EFIP, to develop and implement an Action Plan from this report.
14	30	Work with FE through EWIG to develop an improved partnership approach to marketing	EWIG superseded by EFIP, which includes FE. FE are continuing to support a partnership approach to marketing, particularly in relation to woodfuel.	FE will be involved in the Action Plan (13 above).
15	34	Produce supplementary guidance note on RES for forestry applicants	Detailed guidance for Defra (RDS) staff has been produced.	
16	37	Provide owners and managers with information on certification	Four Certification Workshops held in March 2003, clarifying certification requirements for owners and managers. Outreach Seminars in June 2004 to encourage the preparation of Woodland Management Plans, meeting UKWAS requirements.	We plan to publish an advice note on certification, aimed at woodland owners and managers in England, in 2006.

Action	SEW Para	What we said we'd do	Action by 30 June 2005	Action Planned by 30 June 2006
17	38	Develop G&L system so that it is more closely linked to achieving UKWAS certification, and provide grant aid to bring woods up to the standards required	Clear linkage between EWGS and certification, through the Woodland Management Planning Grant, Woodland Assessment Grant and Woodland Management Grant. Properties over 30 ha will have to be certified to be eligible for WMG.	WPG and WAG have been available from Summer 2004. WMG was launched in Autumn 2005.
18	39	Develop simplified certification procedures for small woods	We assisted in the development of simplified procedures for small woods (SLIMF).	The revision of the UKWA Standard in 2006 will help clarify the requirements for small woods, and the intention is to do further work on this.
19	39	Support Certification Pilot Projects	Three Certification Pilot Projects supported for 3 years from October 2002.	The Pilot Projects will be reviewed following completion in 2005.
20	40	Support industry in its investigation of Chain of Custody issues	Little evidence that the industry is seeking this support.	We will raise the question of support for an investigation through EFIP.
21	43	Woodfuel projects to quantify costs and to quantify and forecast available woodfuel	Woodfuel Resource Study undertaken by the FC and published in February 2004 (available at www.woodfuelresource.org.uk). In addition there have been regional and local studies in several Conservancies which are contributing to the development of regional woodfuel strategies, sometimes as a component of biomass or renewable energy strategies.	The Jaakko Poyry Mapping Study should indicate if lack of resource information is holding back the development of the woodfuel industry, and the Biomass Task Force has recommended that further work should be done on resource availability. We will respond positively to their recommendations in this area. Conservancies will continue to support regional/local studies.
22	44	Raise the profile of forestry as a source of renewable energy in Government	Considerable work on this at GB and England level. We fed into the development of the UK Energy White Paper and the work of the Select Committee on Biofuels. In addition we provided information on biomass for the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, and to the Biomass Task Force. We are funding a review of the potential environmental impacts of short rotation forestry which will help identify site types/locations where SRF is likely to be environmentally acceptable. At regional level we have provided critical input, raising awareness through availability and opportunity studies, appraisal or woodfuel boiler installations, skills and training audits, woodfuel seminars/workshops and the production of promotional material.	We will continue to work with Defra and DTI on this. The report of the Biomass Task Force will be influential in guiding future action. We will continue to actively promote the opportunities provided by new and existing forests in contributing to renewable energy strategies at national and regional level.
23	46	Spread information about woodfuel	Information disseminated in a number of ways including magazine articles, CD-ROM and Royal Show exhibit in 2003. Woodfuel harvesting workshops held in SW and NE in 2004. Woodfuel Information Pack launched in 2004.	Further woodfuel harvesting workshops took place in EM and NW (as part of Outreach Programme) in 2005.
24	48	Contribute to the funding of specialist teams at regional level to take forward woodfuel plans and strategies	In all regions we are actively supporting the development and/or actioning of woodfuel plans and strategies. This can be done through specific woodfuel projects or as a component of renewable energy or biomass projects. In all cases we are working within a wider partnership.	We will continue to support activity in this area in all regions, recognising the growing importance of the woodfuel market and the contribution it can make to achieving SFM, as well as contributing to renewable energy policies.

Action	SEW Para	What we said we'd do	Action by 30 June 2005	Action Planned by 30 June 2006
25	49	Produce a policy statement and guidance on using woodfuel to heat FC buildings	Guidance issued GB-wide within FE. In England a district heating system has been installed at Kielder Castle.	Continue to consider woodfuel as an option in FC buildings. We are preparing a paper on meeting renewable energy targets within the FC (in common with other Government Departments).
26	51	Review the grants package	Consultation on EWGS completed and ERDP modification approved by EU. Applicant seminars held in June 2005.	WPG, WAG, WRG and WCG launched in July 2005. WMG and WIG launched in Autumn 2005.
27	53	Ensure that new grant schemes have flexibility at regional level	Regional flexibility built into EWGS. Regional budgets have been established and prospectuses published.	East England pilot of WCG score form in 2005.
28	54	Seek to direct more money towards woodland management than creation		In future years regional priorities, as indicated through the RFF process, will be increasingly influential. EWGS Prospectuses show a shift towards more evenly balanced funding for woodland stewardship and creation. This will be reviewed further as part of new ERDP 2007-13.
29	55	Support management planning in woodlands	Grant support for woodland management planning is a key component of EWGS. Outreach Seminars to encourage the preparation of woodland management plans held in June 2004. Transitional WPG and WAG available from Summer 2004; over 33,000 ha and 3,000 ha respectively applied for.	WPG and WAG will continue to be available in all Conservancies.
30	56	Consider alternative ways of engaging and inspiring owners to protect/manage woods	We published "So You Own a Woodland" with this as a key objective. Local initiatives and partnerships in all Conservancies are increasing our engagement with owners who had not been actively managing woods. Farmers Briefing (Woodlands and their interaction with Single Farm Payment and Environmental Stewardship) published in May 2005. An Environmental Stewardship session was included in the EWGS launch seminars, and we have been involved in training RDS staff on woodland issues and priorities.	We will increasingly target the owners of ancient and semi-natural woodland, both directly and through partnership projects. We will work with Defra staff to encourage uptake of the Woodland Option under the Environmental Stewardship Scheme, and will develop an Accord with RDS covering this. We are considering commissioning a study to help us better understand the aspirations and motivations of woodland owners.
31	58	Develop REEFS and, as part of the process, demonstrate the benefits of woodland management and creation to rest of Government	RFFs are being developed in each Region. Their preparation involves a range of Government Departments and Agencies and the beneficial effect, in terms of raising the profile of trees, woods and forests, is already evident.	All 9 RFFs published by end of August 2005.
32	59	Involve Woodland Initiatives in the development of REEFS, and use REEFS to clarify the role of Woodland Initiatives in a region	All Woodland Initiatives have been involved in the development of RFFs.	Continue to involve Initiatives in the development of RFFs and seek clarification of their role as associated Action Plans are developed. Agenda item for Initiatives Networking Conference in May 2006. Regions are starting to appoint RFF Action Plan or Delivery Managers, who will work closely with Initiatives in respect of delivery priorities where appropriate.

Action	SEW Para	What we said we'd do	Action by 30 June 2005	Action Planned by 30 June 2006
33	64	Support an Access pilot in the South East	"Woodland Welcome" pilot run in the South East, focusing on Kent. An associated study, undertaken by Brighton University, looked particularly at the perceptions and motivations of owners. This pilot informed the development of EWGS.	No further action planned.
34	64	Advice and training on commercial recreation and general access management in pilot	This was a component of the Access pilot (see Activity 33 above).	East England have developed a commercial recreation toolkit – Naturally Active – which will be launched in January 2006. Pilot Woodland Officer training took place in June 2005 and associated support documentation in the form of an interactive CD is being developed to support further Woodland Officer training and an outreach programme for private woodland owners and managers in late 2006.
35	64	Collect information on demand for public access	We are working with the Woodland Trust on a "Woods for People" project which will identify all publicly accessible woodland in England. National "social priority areas" have also been determined.	The baseline information on accessible woodland (Woods for People) and priority areas (Social Regeneration Priority Areas) for more access will inform national and regional priorities leading to more effective targeting of resources through EWGS. Woodland Trust are managing the maintenance of the dataset, and Version 2 will be available early in 2006.
36	66	Use information on demand for public access to allow more effective targeting of resources	See Activity 35 above.	See Activity 35 above.
37	67	Work with other bodies interested in analysing impact of fiscal policy on SFM	The Forestry and Timber Association launched their discussion paper "A Level Playing Field for Forestry" in August 2003. This led to extensive discourse across the forestry sector and with the Forestry Commission about the fiscal treatment of the sector and the impact of Forest Enterprise activity. The discussion is ongoing with the FTA and others at a senior level. The Economics and Funding Workstream of the England Biodiversity Strategy has included fiscal measures in its work. The conclusions of this workstream, which could have implications for woodlands, will be shared with Treasury.	We have undertaken to re-open a dialogue with the FTA and other industry sectors if circumstances change.
38	69-71	Develop an initiative to enhance significantly our advice, information and technology-transfer capacity	We have improved and increased our "outreach" activity at both national and regional levels. For the first time we produced an Outreach Programme for 2004, including a series of national seminars on key topics, and a Programme is being run in 2005. Outreach events have and will involve staff from FE and FR. However, we have not achieved as much in this area as we would have liked.	We are currently considering our 2006 Outreach Programme. Advice, information and knowledge transfer will become an increasingly important part of our work.

Action	SEW Para	What we said we'd do	Action by 30 June 2005	Action Planned by 30 June 2006
39	81	Explore partnership arrangements to fund additional posts to provide woodland advice	Additional funding has been provided for partnerships in Northumberland, the South East and several AONBs resulting in improved information and advice, particularly relating to ancient woodlands.	No further increase planned due to budgetary constraints. We will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of our partnership spend. Significant evaluation exercises are being completed for SW Forest and Forest Futures projects, which are needed to inform future partnership funding decisions. 2005/6 business plan decisions taken on certain new posts such as East of England Deer Management Officer. South East England Ancient Woodland Unit now staffed with 2 new full-time officers.
40	82	Give WOs more time for advisory and facilitation activities	WOs have been encouraged to develop this aspect and have done so to a limited degree.	The introduction of GLADE and EWGS in 2005 will increase our capacity in this area, once applicants and FC staff have become familiar with the new procedures.
41	85	Obtain a better understanding of the issues relating to contractors	Work done in WM to establish how best to support forestry businesses and contractors. The FCA have been invited onto the Applicants Focus Group and are members of EFIP.	The Jaakko Poyry report will help to identify the issues and make recommendations.
42	86	Run a joint workshop with Defra to communicate changes in VTS	Workshop held in October 2002.	We are providing advice to Defra on legislative training issues for the forestry sector. Support for training will be considered as the next Rural Development Programme is developed.
43	87	Work with Lantra to determine training priorities for forestry	Lantra have set up a Trees and Timber Industry group and prepared an Action Plan. We held a Workshop in October 2003 and the conclusions from the Workshop were fed into the Defra Learning Skills and Knowledge Review. Subsequent work to address the key recommendations, including a Forestry Workshop in October 2004, was completed in March 2005. FC are supporting the Advanced Apprenticeship Scheme.	We will continue to work with Lantra in this area. Lantra are represented on the Jaakko Poyry study Steering Group, and the JP study will make recommendations relating to training and skills development in the forestry industry.
44	88	Ensure that forestry businesses are invited to SBS rural business conference	Conference held in June 2003. Forestry businesses were invited but only 2 attended.	
45	89	In the light of EFF paper from SBS, consider the need for specific measures to support forestry businesses, and how to fund them	We have supported 6 Woodland Initiatives and are trialling a benchmarking approach.	Future action will be informed by the Jaakko Poyry study and the evaluation of SW Forest/Forest Futures. Support for businesses will be considered as the next Rural Development Programme is developed.
46	91	Continue to increase proportion of resources spent on partnerships	FC partnerships funding has increased from £0.3m in 2000/01 to £1.5m in 2004/05.	No further increase planned due to budgetary constraints. We will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of our partnership spend.

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47	96	Explore the pros and cons of collective working, identifying pilot areas	We have identified areas in each Conservancy where we are facilitating a collective approach to management across a number of properties. For example, in the Hambleton and Howardian Hills AONB we are involved in a project to develop the environmental and cultural heritage opportunities on a landscape scale. A partnership project in the Blean in Kent has developed a vision for the 3,000 ha of ancient and semi-natural woodland and is working to enhance the environmental and social benefits. The Ravine Woodlands Life Project is working on a landscape scale to improve ravine woodlands in the Peak District and the Wye Valley.	We are increasingly looking to work with others on landscape-scale projects, recognising the benefits of this approach. It will be for Conservancies to assess how and to what extent we should facilitate and support landscape-scale working.
48	100	Work with partners to fund Woodland Initiatives in a way which gives greater security of funding, whilst ensuring appropriate outcomes	Discussed at Woodland Initiatives Networking Day in May 2002. Intention to support Initiatives for a minimum of 3 years and up to 5 years.	Woodland Initiatives will continue to make their bids for funding to Conservators. Where appropriate we will consider providing core funding for up to 5 years.
49	105	Develop policies and incentives to promote the restoration of PAWS to native species	Incentives promoting the restoration of PAWS are incorporated within EWGS, particularly the Woodland Regeneration Grant. We published a PAWS restoration best practice guide in 2003 and held Outreach Seminars promoting PAWS restoration in each Conservancy in 2004. The major policy statement on ancient woodland, including PAWS restoration, was launched in June 2005.	We will take forward these actions as outlined in the Keepers of Time Policy Statement and we will be consulting on associated management guidelines in 2006.
50	105	Develop policies and incentives on restoration of woodland to non-woodland habitats	We have recruited an additional member of staff to develop policy in this area, and work began in October 2004.	We will work with Defra and Natural England partners to produce a statement on policy and practice for the restoration of woodland to non-woodland habitats in 2006.
51	106	Work with EN and Defra to develop measures to reduce overgrazing in upland woods, and including woodland in 'broad and shallow' pilot	We have developed, in conjunction with Defra and EN, a methodology for assessing overgrazing in upland woodland and this is being used in pilot surveys in 2 upland areas. Woodlands were included in the Entry Level Scheme Pilot and will be included in the Scheme when it goes live in 2005.	EWGS and Defra's Environmental Stewardship Scheme provide mechanisms for dealing with overgrazing. The cross-compliance requirements of the Single Farm Payment Scheme may also have a role to play.
52	107	Encourage Woodland Officers to become involved in development of LBAPs and ensure they influence our work	FC are involved with regional biodiversity fora in all regions. Woodland Officers are contributing to LBAPs in many areas.	Continue to encourage engagement at regional and local level.
53	107	Provide national guidance to LBAP partners on woodland management and restoration priorities, and on management for SAPs	Guidance on the management requirements of several forestry "target" SAP species is being produced. Work is under way on woodland management priorities and targets.	We will publish, with partners, guidance relating to dormice, bats and birds in 2005 and 2006.

Action	SEW Para	What we said we'd do	Action by 30 June 2005	Action Planned by 30 June 2006
54	108	Build cultural heritage aspects into management planning	Woodland management plans under EWGS take historic and cultural heritage into account: assessment grants are available for identifying important elements of the historic environment in existing woodland.	We are working with RDS archaeological advisers on mutual understanding of the important contribution that woodlands make to the historic environment.
55	110	Ensure that appropriate info on ancient woodlands is widely disseminated to local planning authorities, and that their planning guidance includes reference to importance of AW	Appropriate guidance has been included in the Regional Planning Guidance in WM and EM, and is likely to be included in NW and Y&TH. We contributed to the revision of Planning and Policy Statement 9, which includes a comprehensive section on ancient woodland and veteran trees.	Continue to influence regional planning documents and strategies as they are produced and revised.
56	110	Encourage local authorities to make info available to developers.	Progress with some local authorities.	We will press for this to be picked up in RFF Action Plans. This will also form part of the wider RFF stock-take exercise planned for late 2005.
57	111	Encourage planning authorities to consult us on development plans affecting AW, and develop decision support systems to help streamline this	Existing arrangements (FC is a non-statutory consultee for developments potentially affecting AW) continue to operate.	Once national guidance is in place we will revise our arrangements for commenting on planning applications.
58	114	Promote approaches to solving pest problem that also generate economic opportunities	This approach was taken into account in the development of the Defra Family Deer Action Plan announced in December 2004.	
59	115	Improve the effectiveness and coverage of DMGs	An evaluation of the Deer Initiative was completed in 2004. This resulted in a very substantial increase in the funding of DI Ltd from the Defra Family, enabling DI Ltd to recruit 2 new Deer Liaison Officers. This has increased the capacity of the DI to facilitate the creation of new and more effective DMGs.	The Defra Family and DI Ltd are increasingly looking to support activity at regional and local level: see the Deer Action Plan.
60	115	Mobilise wider support for the DI	See above: Defra, EN and CA are all now supporting (financially) the DI.	We will encourage regional and local partnerships which will work with the DI to support the sustainable management of deer.
61	116	Review with Defra how deer management can be funded under the ERDP	The East England Study referred to in para 116 has been completed and there is now an East England Deer Forum.	Deer management will be supported through EWGS; we will clarify the grant support mechanisms by the end of 2005.
62	117	Develop policy and practice in area of grey squirrel management	Background paper prepared with input from the England Squirrel Forum. Revised version of the best practice guide published. We consulted on a revised grey squirrel management policy in Autumn 2004.	We will announce the grey squirrel policy statement and associated Action Plan in early 2006, in conjunction with Defra.
63	119	Consider grant-related approaches to control of invasive plants	Expenditure on this work is eligible for EWGS grants, through WMG and WIG (SSSI and BAP).	We will encourage regions to include woodlands where regional "state of the countryside" reports are being produced (e.g. NE England).

Action	SEW Para	What we said we'd do	Action by 30 June 2005	Action Planned by 30 June 2006
64	121	Produce periodic reports on the "state of England's woodlands" and produce more information from indicators which are region specific	EN's SSSI condition survey has provided information on the condition of woodland SSSIs. The comprehensive set of indicators for the woodland sector of the England Biodiversity Strategy is updated regularly and a report will be published in 2006.	A set of indicators will be published relating to the outcomes we seek to achieve from the Ancient Woodland policy.
65	124	Develop methodologies for assessing the condition of woodland	The UK HAP Group has agreed a methodology for assessing condition of woodland. Simplified methodology has been trialled in Northumberland. Woodland condition assessment methodologies have been field tested with a view to inclusion in NIWT2. The results of a major long-term monitoring project providing information on the condition of woodland have been published.	Woodland condition will be included in the Farm Environment Plans which will be prepared for farms in connection with the Environmental Stewardship Scheme. We will be seeking to incorporate woodland condition assessment into future woodland inventories.
66	125	Find out more about measures which would encourage owners to take more active steps to safeguard their woodland	See comment against Activities 30, 33 and 39.	We will consider the inclusion of information on owners' motivations in NIWT2, and are exploring further ways of obtaining this information.
67	126	Develop grant based measures to increase the proportion of woodland in favourable condition, especially ancient woodlands	EWGS provides a grant mechanism for increasing the proportion of woodland in favourable condition. Transitional WRG provided incentives for desirable change especially on AW sites. Extra funds obtained for improving woodland SSSI condition.	SSSI and BAP funds available through WIG from Autumn 2005. WMG likely to prioritise AW sites.

