

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING – 13 SEPTEMBER 2007

TOWARDS AN AUTHORITY POSITION ON WOODLAND AND LANDSCAPE

Report by: Stephen Trotter, Director of Conservation, Recreation and Sustainable Development

Summary:

This report sets out:

- background information on New Forest woodland,
- the policy framework for woodland management in the New Forest,
- the roles of the various public organisations concerned with the woodland landscape in the New Forest,
- management of the Crown Lands woodland,
- background and a draft response to the New Forest Association's "Recovering Lost Landscapes" document, and
- proposals for future work by staff including the development of a coherent woodland strategy for the whole New Forest National Park to help guide the Authority and key stakeholders in taking decisions and to ensure that woodland management conserves, maintains and, where necessary, enhances the special qualities of the National Park.

Recommendations:

- 1 To note the national and regional policy framework for woodland management.**
- 2 To authorise the Director of Conservation, Recreation and Sustainable Development to respond to the New Forest Association on its proposals to restore lost landscapes of the New Forest, as outlined in Section 6.**
- 3 To approve the long term development of a *strategy for trees and woodland in the New Forest* and associated actions within the context of the existing policy frameworks.**

Resources and Corporate Plan:

A significant amount of staff time will be required in the medium term.

Papers:

NFNPA 203/07: Cover Paper

NFNPA 203/07: Annex 1 - Facts and figures about woodland in the New Forest

NFNPA 203/07: Annex 2 - The strategic framework for woodlands in England and the South East

NFNPA 203/07: Annex 3 - The Forest Design Plan 100 year vision

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Report by: Stephen Trotter, Director of Conservation and Enhancement

1 Background

- 1.1 The question of how the New Forest should be managed has been the subject of intense debate for many generations. In particular, the issue of how the Forestry Commission manages the Crown Estate with its important resource of trees, forest and woodland has always attracted a great deal of interest from commoners, local communities and visitors alike. Facts and figures on woodland in the New Forest are given in **Annex 1**.
- 1.2 Although much of the debate is concentrated on the Crown lands, which comprise 47% of the National Park, there is also a substantial area of woodland in private ownership or held in Trust by non governmental organisations. These areas are also of great significance and should be covered by a woodland strategy covering the entire National Park.
- 1.3 It is important to recognise that the woodlands of the New Forest provide many functions and services that benefit society as a whole and that many demands are placed on them, some of which are shown below. Increasingly the production of timber is only one of the 'products' of multi-functional woodland that now has to meet a range of public needs.
- 1.4 The living resource of woodland and trees is an important asset for the National Park; it has an important contribution to make to sustainable living for both local communities and the nation. Much of the woodland in the New Forest is of international or national importance for nature conservation and this will need to be safeguarded where there are competing demands on the resource.

Functions, uses and services provided by woods in the New Forest

Environmental

- Aesthetic contribution to the beauty and quality of the New Forest landscape, and in their own right
- Internationally important wildlife habitats for a wide diversity of plants, animals and fungi
- Ecological services and public goods: cleaner water; cleaner air; soil improvement; potential for resilience and adaptation to future climate change such as the shading of streams and watercourses, acting as carbon sinks and contributing to flood protection and alleviation

Economic

- Woodlands with a long history as working forests producing a renewable natural resource of timber for construction, fencing and other materials from both conifers and broad leaved trees
- Renewable energy supplies i.e. wood fuel
- Shelter, food and grazing for livestock
- A resource that attracts visitors and tourists, supporting the local economy

Social

- Significant rural employment and wealth generation
- A destination and environment for recreation, exercise, relaxation, refreshment, improved health and enjoyment including:
 - walking
 - dog walking
 - cycling
 - horse riding
 - camping
 - natural history
 - food collection
- Protection for an historic landscape rich in archaeological remains and cultural heritage
- A reservoir of tranquility conferring a sense of place and local identity
- A resource for education, research, learning and play

1.5 The woodland resource is fragile and vulnerable to a range of threats, which are shown below:

- Development pressures: outwith the Crown Lands the value of woodland is low compared with the value of land for development (the value ranging from £25,000 per hectare for woodland to £250,000 per hectare for housing)
- Inappropriate and unsympathetic management practices or neglect
- Recreational pressure and erosion arising from development and increasing population
- Climate change
- Invasive species
- Poor financial returns from small woodlands
- Disasters such as climate extremes, fire, disease
- Damage and removal by unsympathetic management of particularly vulnerable ancient and veteran trees, or misunderstanding about their risk to health and safety
- Failure to respect for the value of veteran trees.

2 The policy framework for woodlands in England

2.1 There are a number of documents which provide the policy framework within which the Authority operates. The table below lists the key relevant documents and **Annex 2** provides more detailed summaries of their content.

Key policy documents

Title	Date		Coverage
National			
A strategy for England's trees, woods and forests	2007	Defra	This key document sets out the vision and broad strategic policy direction for the management of trees and woodlands in England for the next 10 – 15 years. The Strategy is available from www.defra.gov.uk .
Keepers of Time	2005	Defra Forestry Commission	Sets out a strategy for looking after the UK's ancient woodland and veteran trees
Regional			
Seeing the wood for the trees	2004	Forestry and woodland Framework Steering Group	Establishes policy and priorities for the South East
Local			
The New Forest Strategy	2003	New Forest Committee	The interim management plan for the New Forest National Park
Ministerial Mandate for the New Forest	1999	Minister of State	Sets the direction for the management of the Crown Lands by the Forestry Commission. Due for review in 2008

3 Current arrangements for managing woodlands in the National Park

- 3.1 The landowner is normally responsible for managing woodland and will do so consistent with their financial and other priorities and personal objectives. This diversity of approach and styles is one of the factors contributing to the diversity of the rural landscape. The public sector will usually only get involved in management of private land where the landowner asks for advice, applies

for grant aid or requires consent for any regulated operations (such as major felling or projects requiring planning permission).

The Forestry Commission

3.2 The Forestry Commission's main activities include:

- the provision of silvicultural advice to landowners and the development of new technology;
- the management of woodland grants (the England Woodland Grant Scheme) which encourage landowners to manage their woods in line with national and regional priorities;
- controlling tree felling through granting felling licences (it is illegal to fell more than 5 cubic metres of timber in any three-month period without a licence). These may require environmental impact assessments for large schemes;
- through Forest Enterprise, the direct management of the Crown Lands. All of the woodlands are certificated under the Forestry Stewardship Council scheme to demonstrate that they are managed in a sustainable manner.

The National Park Authority

3.3 The Authority does not have a direct role in managing woodlands other than through providing strategic advice on whether a particular proposal supports National Park purposes, and by encouraging and influencing land managers.

3.4 The Authority's statutory functions which impact on the management of trees and woodland are:

- the **Tree Preservation Order process**: providing protection for either individual trees or woodlands or groups of trees with an amenity value. There are currently around 300 tree preservation orders in the National Park;
- as a **statutory consultee on felling licences and forest design plans** determined by the Forestry Commission. Comments could cover nature conservation, archaeology, landscape and cultural heritage impacts of a proposal particularly where the nature of the proposal requires an environmental impact assessment;
- **development control** where proposals/changes in woodland management require permission for change of use or new infrastructure. The Authority also has a duty to inform the Forestry Commission of any development proposals it is considering which are within a certain distance of ancient woodland;
- **Management Plan, biodiversity and landscape strategies** which set the policy framework, and

- as a **statutory consultee** for some agri-environment schemes managed by Natural England.

Natural England

- 3.5 Natural England is involved in the management of woodlands that are designated nature conservation sites (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Natura 2000 sites) through its powers to limit potentially damaging operations and its duty to ensure that wildlife sites achieve favourable conservation status for their important habitats and species. Natural England's remit also covers landscape and recreation. Virtually all of the Crown land woodlands lie within the SSSI - including many conifer woodlands of relatively recent origin (mostly planted on other habitats since the 1860s). Natural England may also manage some woodland payments under agri-environment schemes such as Environmental Stewardship.
- 3.6 Each of these statutory organisations has a duty under section 62 of the 1995 Environment Act to have due regard to the purposes of the National Park in undertaking its work. The Authority expects to see its objectives reflected in any plans or work programmes for Crown land or other publicly-owned woodland in the New Forest.

4 Management of the Crown woodlands

Minister's mandate

- 4.1 The **Ministerial Mandate**, due for review in 2008, sets the context and objectives for the way the Commission manages the Forest. In summary, the current Mandate sets the following objectives:
- Conservation of natural and cultural heritage as the principal objective of management.
 - Community engagement through greater public participation in decision making, promotion of rural development opportunities, provision of access and recreation opportunities and increasing public awareness and understanding.
 - Insofar as is consistent and compatible with the first and second objectives, efficient management of the Forestry Commission's operations and appropriate generation of income from timber production and other uses of Crown lands.

Forest Design Plans

- 4.2 Since 2001, a **Forest Design Plan** has identified how each woodland inclosure will be managed over a ten year period (with an option to review between years five and ten). The Plan seeks to achieve a realistic balance between the objective of sustaining a working, managed forest (including sustainable timber

production) and working to meet the needs of commoning, nature conservation, archaeological conservation and recreation.

- 4.3 The Plan has been prepared in consultation with stakeholders and the general public in the Forest and a Forest Design Plan Forum was formed to facilitate provision of advice to the Commission. In 1998/99, the Forum initially met to agree a 100 year vision and comment on detailed plans. The Forum was reconvened in 2006/07 to undertake the first review of the Plan, which has recently been completed. The process has enabled stakeholders to have an open discussion and dialogue with the Commission which has significantly and positively influenced the planning process and resulting plans and enabled a degree of consensus to be reached over the detailed prescriptions for each inclosure.
- 4.4 The 100 year vision is expressed in map form (see **Annex 3**) and presents the long term strategy for each woodland inclosure. The Plan also identifies ancient and ornamental woodland to which a general prescription of non-intervention (in terms of forestry management) is applied, so these areas are excluded from the Forest Design Plan. **Annex 1** shows targets for changes in the extent of different habitats under the Plan. As circumstances change, the 100 year vision is periodically reviewed.
- 4.5 Improvements delivered through the Commission's Forest Design Plan and their balanced management approach include:
- improving the conservation status of the Forest for biodiversity, generally around 80% of the Crown Lands are now in favourable or recovering condition although some work remains to reach the target of 95%;
 - restoration of a significant area of heathland through conifer removal;
 - making progress in restoring ancient woodland in conifer plantations;
 - putting in place measures to conserve historic and archaeological sites;
 - the successful management of Forestry Commission woodlands to provide an important recreational resource for the National Park with major benefits for the local economy, health and well being – and with few major conflicts. The PROGRESS initiative has taken an innovative view of how to address some of the remaining issues;
 - support for commoning including the provision of affordable housing (28 properties currently let to commoners) and jobs;
 - sustaining timber production, income and employment alongside those other activities.
- 4.6 Notwithstanding these improvements more remains to be done to secure agreement to the general direction of the Forest Design Plan as it evolves in future years. The New Forest Association's proposal '*Recovering lost landscapes*' published in October 2006, has provided a further contribution to the debate.

5 The New Forest Association's proposed vision for woodland management: 'recovering lost landscapes'

- 5.1 The Association's proposals involve taking a landscape scale approach to the restoration of landscapes and habitats that have been fragmented by forestry operations since 1851. They seek to build on the current Forest Design Plan process by connecting habitats and enhancing landscapes over a time scale of 60 to 100 years, and to take the Forestry Commission's work further than the current Plan proposes. Working within the context of the historic landscape, the proposals seek to reverse some of the perceived damage caused by post 1851 inclosures by revealing some of the habitats 'trapped' within conifer plantations and by connecting isolated habitats.
- 5.2 The proposals would reduce the extent of conifer plantations on inappropriate sites but not remove them completely and further restore ancient woodland sites within those plantations either to broadleaved woodland or heathland. In this way landscapes considered more characteristic and typical of the New Forest would be restored.
- 5.3 The supply of conifer / softwood timber would continue for at least 60 years. The Association argues that alternative employment opportunities would be created on the Open Forest.
- 5.4 The key proposals have been applied by the Association to a sample core area of the Forest centred on Bolderwood and Rhinefield and can be read in detail on the Association's website at www.newforestassociation.com.
- 5.5 Some of the issues raised by the New Forest Association include their concerns (not necessarily agreed by the Forestry Commission) that:
- although the Forest Design Plan process has achieved a good deal, there are some missed opportunities within the existing programmes;
 - because an inclosure by inclosure approach has been adopted, some larger landscape scale opportunities have not been realized;
 - there is not enough room within the Plan for natural and dynamic processes to operate;
 - current practice and the current landscape does not reflect the historic landscape;
 - conifers are still being planted on the SSSI;
 - the conifer plantations are not in keeping with the character of the New Forest;
 - industrial scale forestry techniques continue to be used, causing visual and physical damage to the Forest.

6 An Authority response to the New Forest Association's proposals

6.1 The following paragraphs set out a proposed response to the New Forest Association's proposals.

6.2 *Recovering lost landscapes* is a welcome contribution to the debate about woodlands and the future of the New Forest landscape. The Association should be congratulated for challenging current thinking with a series of thought provoking and exciting ideas.

6.3 In particular, the Authority agrees with the aspirations to:

- reduce the extent of fencing (the Forestry Commission is already doing this) whilst still allowing necessary management such as drifts and restocking. The Authority would like to see fencing reduced to the minimum needed to meet management requirements;
- create a more dynamic woodland mosaic driven by more natural processes and natural regeneration. This is more likely to be resilient to climate change and promote biodiversity conservation;
- produce a landscape more typical of the New Forest, in particular reduce the harshness of woodland/heathland edges in a way that respects contours and links habitats;
- have a vision that there will be more woodland in the National Park that ultimately resembles the old ancient and ornamental woodlands, recognising that there is more work to do to reach agreement on where this should happen. These woodlands are of great aesthetic and wildlife value and are locally distinctive in landscape terms;
- follow an holistic and landscape scale approach;
- respect and have due regard for the history of the New Forest and the development of this historic landscape;
- recreate lawns on the sites of some plantations to improve grazing and benefit commoning.

6.4 The Authority recognises that the Forestry Commission has already made substantial and impressive progress towards many of these objectives. The Commission is pursuing the right direction of travel in many areas although there are questions over some issues such as whether the planting of conifers on the SSSI should continue.

6.5 The Authority does however have a number of concerns about the Association's proposals that would need to be resolved:

- i) A number of **protected species** occur within and appear to rely on the conifer woodland areas proposed for clearance. Under the European Habitat Regulations, a full assessment of the impacts of changes in the management regime would need to be carried out in advance of any

proposals being licensed and implemented. The Authority has already given financial support to a partnership project that is surveying rare bats in the New Forest which should assist with any assessment. In the long term many, if not all, of these species are likely to benefit from the habitat changes and the issue may be how to manage the transitional period.

- ii) **Commoning** may be adversely affected by the wholesale removal of fences. The amount of additional grazing is likely to be beneficial in the long term but there are concerns that the new areas will be difficult to manage. If existing drift lines are lost, the Commoners / Agisters may find it more difficult to drift the ponies – an activity that is already becoming increasingly difficult due to other factors such as greater levels of disturbance from visitors, there being fewer skilled riders available for drifts and higher traffic levels.
- iii) The **long term economic impacts** of the proposals are uncertain. There is likely to be a significant resource cost to achieve the proposals and a potential reduction in the income and returns from timber production both for the public and private sectors. The balance between the area of productive managed conifer woodland, the supply of timber and the sustainability of rural employment and business is a fine one and planning must inevitably take a long term perspective. If a substantial change is made to the proportions of managed woodland and relatively unproductive (in terms of timber production) forest, then careful consideration of the consequences is necessary.

Alternative funds and resources to support open forest management will almost certainly be required.

- iv) A balanced and secure future will best serve the needs of the Forest and reassurance that there is a **secure socio-economic foundation** to the rural economy is critical to the success of the other functions and services that woods provide. Currently a large number of Commoners also work in forestry and this has significant reciprocal value for the New Forest and the maintenance of the special qualities. Any change would need to be planned carefully to retain livelihoods, rural employment and a core of people with the skills that are needed to manage the Forest.
- v) It is vital that there is some degree of consensus and agreement amongst key stakeholders such as Commoners and residents and the Forestry Commission about the future options before any major changes are implemented.
- vi) Forestry and the working landscape has a legitimate claim to be considered as much a traditional part of the New Forest's cultural heritage as many other land management activities. The post 1851 inclosures are themselves part of the historic landscape and are just as much part of the story of the New Forest as other features. It is important to retain

elements of this interesting historical period of conflict (including upstanding banks, ditches etc) whilst recognising and repairing some of the environmental damage it may have caused.

- vii) As is recognised by the Association, some conifers in some locations do have a landscape and cultural value and should be retained.
- viii) There is a question as to whether it is either appropriate or possible to try to restore or re-create the pre-1851 landscape. Would it be more appropriate to start with the current landscape and protect and conserve what has value whilst enhancing / creating *new* New Forest landscapes in places that have been damaged or where their distinctive character has been eroded.

Next steps

- 6.6 The Authority's key role is to influence, inform and where appropriate support the strategic direction of woodland and landscape management in the National Park, both to ensure that it delivers a wide range of public and natural benefits and to ensure that the New Forest's special qualities are conserved, maintained and in appropriate circumstances enhanced. To do this the Authority needs to develop its own position on the management of woodland and its landscape setting for the **whole** National Park, to support and praise excellent work by partners and to act as a 'critical friend' where there appears to be a gap between National Park purposes and what is happening on the ground. (The Authority also has a major role to play in explaining and raising awareness of tree and woodland management issues with the general public.)
- 6.7 As regards woodland management on the Crown Lands, the Forest Design Plan is a working document and the next opportunity to contribute to the development will be in five to ten years time when the Forestry Commission reviews the 100 year vision as part of its long term planning cycle.
- 6.8 This timetable enables the Authority to gather the evidence it needs to support future decision making, and to develop its own policies in relevant areas to strengthen its input to the next review. In particular better information on the wider economic impact of woodland management in the Forest is needed. The Management Plan and supporting landscape, biodiversity, and cultural heritage strategies will be in place. The impact of recently changed processes, such as those on protecting archaeology, will have been assessed for their effectiveness.

7 Actions

- 7.1 Endorse the *Strategy for England's Trees and Woodlands* and *Seeing the wood for the trees* as a basis for the Authority's future policy.

- 7.2 Undertake research into the economic impact of forest and woodland management in the New Forest on the wider rural and social economy to help inform future decision making.
- 7.3 In association with the Forestry Commission, complete a survey of veteran trees in the New Forest and consider whether a review of ancient woodland is required.
- 7.4 Prepare a *strategy for trees and woodland in the New Forest* with key stakeholders as an integral part of the Landscape Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plans, to support and influence future revisions of the Forest Design Plan, and plans of other private landowners and Non-Governmental Organisations.
- 7.5 Continue to support the Forestry Commission, Natural England, private landowners and the forestry industry in developing a partnership approach to resolving differences on woodland issues and working towards a common vision.
- 7.6 Support and assist the Forestry Commission's delivery of the current agreed Forest Design Plans as they are contributing to the special qualities of the National Park.

Recommendations:

- 1 To note the national and regional policy framework for woodland management.**
- 2 To authorise the Director of Conservation, Recreation and Sustainable Development to respond to the New Forest Association on its proposals to restore lost landscapes of the New Forest, as outlined in Section 6.**
- 3 To approve the long term development of a *strategy for trees and woodland in the New Forest* and associated actions within the context of the existing policy frameworks.**

Facts and figures about woodland in the New Forest

- Woodland covers 1 million hectares or nearly 9% of England. This represents around 1.3 billion trees of which two thirds are broadleaves and a third conifers (Defra, 2007).
- The South East is the most wooded region of England with trees covering 270,000 hectares or 14% of the land surface. There are a further 10 million trees outside woodlands. The region has the highest concentration of ancient woodland and the richest woods for biodiversity and cultural heritage.
- In the area covering the New Forest Strategy, woodland comprises some 21,000 hectares of which 8000 hectares (38%) are in private ownership – the remainder being owned by the Crown or by non-governmental organisations such as the National Trust or the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. The Crown Lands include around 8550 ha of inclosures. There are an estimated 10,000 ha of ancient semi-natural woodland with one of the highest concentrations of veteran trees in Europe.

The Crown lands

	hectares
Open Forest	14450
Ancient pasture woodland	3700
Woodland or plantation (ungrazed inclosures)	8550
Total	26700

Summary of Forest Design Plan Targets

	2006 target (% of area)	2006 actual (% of area)	20 years time (% of area)
Mostly broadleaved woods	28	26	31
Mostly conifer plantation	51	49	16
Mixed woodland	7	9	23
Valley mire and wetland	1	1	1
Streamside habitats	1	1	4
Pasture woodland	1	3	11
Heathland / lawns	7	8	11
Wooded heath	1	1	1
Other open space	2	2	2

- Annual timber production is around 70,000 tonnes (48,000 tonnes softwood; 12,000 tonnes hardwood) of which 70% goes to local sawmills.

- Local employment in private businesses is more than 115 and forestry income around £13 million locally (source: R.F.Giddings Ltd).
- Income from timber production (largely from softwood) from the public estate in the New Forest was around £0.7 million in 2005/06. This helps to off-set the costs of managing the Crown Lands which run at a significant deficit to the tax payer (around £3.3 million in 2005/06).
- Employment in forestry is an important part of the rural economy both in terms of direct employment and in the processing / distribution of timber products. Around 90 people are directly employed by the Commission on the Crown lands and there are many others employed in private businesses (R.F.Giddings estimate 115 jobs within 20 miles of their site in Netley Marsh). Many commoners are also employed in forestry and there are close links between the two activities that provide many benefits for commoning and the management of the Forest.

The strategic framework for woodlands in England and the South East

Summary of the *Strategy for England's trees, woods and forests, 2007*

<p>Vision</p>	<p>That by 2050 England's trees, woods and forests are helping us to cope with the continuing challenge of climate change and are also valued because many more people enjoy using them. Trees are not just an important part of England's history, but an essential feature of a modern, sustainable society, which has significantly reduced carbon emissions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many more people are engaged in the sustainable management of trees, woods and forests ▪ Woodlands within easy reach are used for educational, social and community purposes, including play opportunities and healthy activities for children and young people. ▪ The networks of urban walking and cycling routes are made more attractive by trees, which offer shelter, shade and separation from traffic.
	<p>A coherent network of trees, woodland and other semi-natural habitats is helping wildlife to adjust to climate change, as well as providing ecosystem services such as the management of water and soils.</p> <p>The vast majority of ancient or native woods are improving in terms of their quality for wildlife and the most valuable woodland habitats are in a resilient condition, buffered where appropriate by strategically placed planting.</p> <p>Woodland creation and management is guided by considering the potential benefits and impacts at the scale of whole landscapes. Both new woodlands and the neglected woodlands that have been brought back into management have species mixtures better able to cope with the changing climate.</p> <p>These benefits have been achieved by a flexible and creative woodland sector that takes full advantage of new opportunities. Government has led by example by clearly defining the outcomes required for people, places and products, by procuring sustainable timber and wood-based products, and by managing its own estate sustainably. Local and regional supply chains are strong, with effective co-operation between producers, processors and manufacturers, and most private woodlands are now capable of producing for a range of markets.</p>

Aims: what is to be done	provide, in England, a resource of trees, woods and forests in places where they can contribute most in terms of environmental, economic and social benefits now and for future generations
	ensure that existing and newly planted trees, woods and forests are resilient to the impacts of climate change and also contribute to the way in which biodiversity and natural resources adjust to a changing climate
	protect and enhance the environmental resources of water, soil, air, biodiversity and landscapes (both woodland and non-woodland), and the cultural and amenity values of trees and woodland
	increase the contribution that trees, woods and forests make to the quality of life for those living in, working in or visiting England
	improve the competitiveness of woodland businesses and promote the development of new or improved markets for sustainable woodland products and ecosystem services where this will deliver identifiable public benefits, nationally or locally, including the reduction of carbon emissions
Principles: how it will be done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ long-term sustainable management of trees, woods and forests ▪ the right tree in the right place ▪ effective use of public investment ▪ synergy with other Government policies
Themes: where the action will be	Communities and Places <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ cohesive and engaged communities ▪ green infrastructure ▪ sense of place
	Land and Natural Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ biodiversity ▪ natural resources ▪ resilience to the changing climate ▪ cultural heritage
	Working Woodlands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ competitiveness ▪ skills and innovation ▪ providing public goods ▪ woodfuel and timber products reducing CO2 emissions
Delivering the Strategy	Delivering this Strategy and its vision will require a regional and local interpretation of national priorities to apply those most suitable to the locality's needs and resources and to co-ordinate them with the regional priorities of the Regional Forestry Frameworks. Decision-making should be based on an assessment of local needs and local resources, and should use the landscape-scale approach where appropriate.

	<p>The delivery plan to implement this Strategy will co-ordinate the priorities in this Strategy with the Government's spending priorities and with the priorities of the Regional Forestry Frameworks. It will be produced by the Forestry Commission and Natural England in partnership with other key organisations; supporting the alignment of Forestry Commission programmes with those of Natural England and other Government agencies to ensure that action on trees, woodlands and forests is effective and that landowners receive co-ordinated advice and support.</p>
	<p>The Forestry Commission is the Government's primary instrument for advocacy, expertise, regulation and direct action on trees, woods and forests. It plays an especially important role as a repository of skills and a source of innovation. Its role as a centre of expertise is important throughout the country, but especially for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ key growth locations – where there is a pressing need to develop green infrastructure, including trees and woodlands, in partnership with other public and voluntary bodies; ▪ regeneration areas – in and around major towns and cities where The National Forest and the Community Forests have shown how environmental regeneration and business development based on trees and woodland has a role in improving social and economic well-being; ▪ landscape-scale management – the public forest estate can help land managers from public, private, and voluntary and community sectors to contribute to establishing woodland planting and management regimes, over wide tracts of both rural and urban land, which will deliver a range of ecosystem services.
	<p>We also recommend the policy framework and priorities of this Strategy to local authorities when they consider decisions on development control, economic planning and sustainable community strategies and in managing their own trees, woodlands and greenspace. The tools and mechanisms for delivery are already in place through the development planning and control system, Green Space Strategies, Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements but success will depend on effective partnership working at a sub-regional and local level. The increasing inclusion of local communities in the planning, planting and management of woodlands will be important, both through involvement in decision-making and active participation in ownership and management.</p> <p>The private sector, as owners and managers of a major part of our woodland resources, delivers important public benefits and should be involved in delivery partnerships.</p> <p>Most successful partnerships in this sector include non-governmental organisations. They manage key parts of the woodland resource and bring unique organisational skills, especially in engaging local communities.</p>

Keepers of time: a statement of policy for England's ancient and native woodland

Vision	Ancient woodlands, veteran trees and other native woodlands are adequately protected, sustainably managed in a wider landscape context, and are providing a wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits to society
The existing area of ancient woodland should be maintained and a net increase in area of native woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid losses of ancient woods or veteran trees ▪ sustain the total extent of other native woodland
Ancient woodland and trees should make an increasing contribution to our quality of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ increase opportunities for the public to visit and walk in ancient and native woodlands ▪ improve the quality of the recreational experience in those woods that are open ▪ improve the understanding and enjoyment of trees and woodland, especially their heritage and wildlife value ▪ enhance the contribution of native woodland and ancient trees to urban environments and the rural landscape
Ancient and native woodland should be exemplars of sustainable development and provide opportunities for enterprise and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ increase the recognition and use of environmental services which native woodland can provide ▪ promote the production of renewable energy, hardwood timber and other products from existing woodland ▪ foster enterprises and employment associated with ancient and native woodland
The ecological condition of ancient and native woodland should be improved and maintained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ increase our knowledge of both woodland condition and threats – especially climate change ▪ take action to manage invasive and problem species ▪ increase awareness amongst owners of the value of their woodland and of any threats ▪ support work on the ground to improve condition particularly of designated sites and to restore plantations on ancient woodland sites ▪ monitor changes in response to management etc
Rare threatened and priority species should be conserved and enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ increase our understanding of the needs of priority species ▪ provide guidance on good management practice for these species ▪ support work on the ground to increase populations and/or ranges of priority species

<p>The cultural heritage associated with ancient woodland should be protected and conserved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ improve our knowledge, awareness and understanding of woodland heritage ▪ promote good working practices to ensure valuable features are identified and conserved ▪ ensure that any woodland creation is in keeping with the distinctive local landscape and its history ▪ provide opportunities for wider appreciation of the woodland heritage
<p>The landscape context of woodland should be improved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ create new native woodland to extend, link or complement existing woodland and other habitats ▪ create semi-natural habitats in locations where they will benefit species which use both woodland and non-wooded habitats ▪ reduce or buffer the impacts of intensive land uses and development which adjoin ancient or native woodland ▪ work towards creating landscapes that are ecologically functional ▪ ensure the management and creation of ancient and/or native woodland conserves and enhances the natural beauty and character of landscapes

Seeing the woods for the trees: a forestry and woodlands framework for the South East

<p>Vision:</p>	<p>We want our woods to make an increasing contribution to the sustainable development of the South east region in both urban and rural areas</p>
<p>Better places for people to live</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ trees and woodland supporting the development of sustainable communities ▪ more people's health and well-being improved through visiting woodland ▪ greater use being made of trees and woodlands for community projects and activities
<p>Enhanced biodiversity and environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ woodlands enhancing and protecting the region's environment together with safeguards for the heritage features within them ▪ woodland habitats and species being brought into good ecological condition
<p>Stronger contribution to the economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the economic value of woodland products to the region being increased ▪ woodlands playing a greater role in attracting tourism, inward investment and other economic activity

Secure future for woodland resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ woodlands and trees especially ancient woodlands and veteran trees protected from loss ▪ integrated strategic planning of woodland management ▪ the skills base needed to manage our woodlands ▪ increasing public awareness about woodlands and their management ▪ the financial viability of woodland management secured
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The New Forest Strategy: Forestry and Woodland Management

Objective	Maintain sustainable forestry and woodland management as important Forest land uses which benefit the local economy while making sure they help to conserve the special landscape character and wildlife value of the Forest
Proposals	Implement the Forest Design Plans for the Crown Land Inclosures
	Encourage Forest Plans, Native Woodland Plans and Management Plans for other woodland areas throughout the Forest
	Produce a Forest-wide woodland and tree planting strategy which identifies possibilities for extending woodland cover where this provides a range of benefits for the Forest landscape, biodiversity, economy and recreation
	Agree a coordinated approach to awareness raising and education about the importance of woodlands to the landscape and economy of the Forest, aimed at landowners, local people and visitors
	Support the local finishing of Forest grown timber and better marketing of new and traditional New Forest and other local wood products, emphasising their sustainable source
	Create better links between landowners and local timber merchants, craftsmen, manufacturers and retail outlets
	Assess the feasibility of a New Forest School of Excellence promoting craft skills, furniture design, sculpture and other skills using locally produced wood
	Improve the understanding of the woodland resource through baseline survey work across the whole Forest

The Forest Design Plan 100 year vision

Map overleaf