

Forestry England Board Meeting Agenda

7 October 2020 10:00 - 12:30

MS Teams

Attendees

Forestry England Board: Ian Gambles, Julia Grant, Tristram Hilborn, David Hodson, Peter Latham, Jennie Price, Gurch Randhawa, Mike Seddon, Chris Simpson, William Worsley (Chair)

Apologies:

In attendance: Clare James (Item 5), PK Khaira-Creswell (Item 6), Andrew Stringer (item 7), James Simpson (item 7)

Secretariat: Rachel Mackintosh

NO. / TIME mins	Start time	ITEM (Materials)	OUTCOME REQUIRED	LEAD
Welcome				
		Chair's Welcome		
1. 10 mins	10:00	Declarations of Interest Approval of minutes (3 sets), matters arising and action log	Approval	Chair
Management Accountability				
		CEO report		
2. 25 mins	10:10	Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic update Business area update Health & Safety (covered under item 5) Risk Management Performance Scorecard 	Discussion & note	Mike Seddon
3. 25 mins	10:35	Finance report	Discussion & note	David Hodson
4. 15 mins	11:00	ARAC Report	Discussion & note	Julia Grant
Items for Approval				
5. 20 mins	11:15	Health & Safety 6-month review	Discussion	Clare James
6. 20 mins	11:35	3-year plan - actions content	Steer	Pk Khaira-Creswell

7. 30 mins	11:55	Vision for nature conservation	Steer	Andrew Stringer / James Simpson
Concluding items				
5 mins	12:25	AOB		Chair

8 Dec 2020	Future meetings: MS Teams 8.30 - 11am
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Papers:

- Item 1
 - Paper 1.1 Register of Interests
 - Paper 1.2 Minutes 04.06.20,
 - Paper 1.3 Extraordinary Board minutes 14.08.20
 - Paper 1.4 Extraordinary Board minutes 17.09.20
 - Paper 1.5 Action log updated Sept 2020
- Item 2
 - Paper 2.1 CEO Report Sept 2020
 - Paper 2.1.1 Appendix 1 Corporate Risk Register Sept 2020
 - Paper 2.1.2 Appendix 2 Performance Scorecard Sept 2020
- Item 3
 - Paper 3.1 Forestry England Board Finance Report Sept 2020
- Item 5
 - Paper 6.1 Forestry England 3 - year plan Oct 2020 update paper
- Item 7
 - Paper 7.1 Vision for nature conservation paper



Forestry England board meeting minutes

7 October 2020 10:00 - 12:30

Teams Meeting

Attendees
<p>Forestry England Board: Ian Gambles, Julia Grant, Tristram Hilborn, David Hodson, Peter Latham, Jennie Price, Gurch Randhawa, Mike Seddon, Chris Simpson, Sir William Worsley (Chair)</p> <p>Guests: Clare James (Item 5), PK Khaira-Creswell (Item 6), John Stride (Item 6) Andrew Stringer (item 7) James Simpson (Item 7)</p> <p>Secretariat: Rachel Mackintosh</p>

Agenda items

1. Welcome | Item Lead: Sir William Worsley

The Chair welcomed members to the eighth full meeting of the Forestry England board, held via Teams video call. There were no apologies.

The Chair reported on his engagements since the last meeting with ministers, DEFRA team, and sector partners, and his own visit to Grizedale Forest. Together with Mike, he was looking forward to welcoming Minister Goldsmith to the New Forest in November.

Declarations of Interest

There were no additional declarations made.
It was noted that Chris Simpson’s declaration had been completed.

Approval of Board minutes

The following sets of minutes were approved.

1. Forestry England Board meeting 4.06.2020
2. Forestry England Board extraordinary meeting 14.08.2020
3. Forestry England Board extraordinary meeting 17.09.2020

Matters arising not appearing elsewhere on the agenda.

- Forestry England Board meeting 4.06.2020: an update was provided on progressing access to Uswayford Forest
- Forestry England Board extraordinary meeting 17.09.2020: a concern was registered on the minute recording it usual practice that auditors may make changes to the annual report after the approval of the final report. It was agreed that this would be taken to ARAC to discuss.

Action Items	Person responsible	Deadline
Discussion item to be raised at ARAC on the practice that auditors may make changes to the ARA after final approval.	Julia Grant / Chris Simpson	26.11.20

The updated action log was reviewed and agreed. It was noted that the majority of actions had been closed, of the five remaining:

- Action 22 would be incorporated into a discussion on new audiences to be schedule in the first half of 2021 - agreed to be closed
- Actions 32 and 33 would be on the next agenda for the December meeting - agreed to be closed
- Actions 51 and 52 are due to come to the Board in February - to remain open.

2. CEO report

| Item Lead: Mike Seddon

Mike highlighted the following points in the CEO's report:

- The proposed investment of funds into Forest Holidays had been approved by Treasury. Mike will take this forward with Forest Holidays on behalf of the LLP.
- The negotiations with CCC were being taken forward with a valuation of the Camping in the Forest business.
- The first zero carbon rating energy performance certificate for the estate has been received for the Delamere visitor centre.
- Forestry England is, for the third time, a finalist in the licencing awards for the Shaun the Sheep glow trail.

Mike extended thanks to all colleagues across the business for the material improvement in finances. Discussions with Defra for additional funds continue to address shortfall on the pre-covid budget and the deferred £5.7M of programmes work.

The following issues were raised by members and discussed:

- The brand awareness work in progress on levels of awareness of Forestry England against sector comparators, as distinct from Forestry Commission.
- The new visitor demographics seen over the last six months, including:
 - The reach to new demographics that can be built on, recognising the role of frontline staff who are giving new visitors a wonderful experience.
 - The uptake of membership from new visitors was evidence that there was a commitment to return to the forests.
 - How far the current engagement plan extends to include these new visitors.
 - 3 Year plan must have a strategic aim to increase inclusiveness of access.
 - A comment on the appropriateness of clothing was picked up a means of identifying new visitors. Board noted such visitors should be welcomed, shown what they can do in their current attire and indicate what would be open to them in alternate clothing,
 - The analysis on new visitors requested.
- Assurance was sought on the robustness of chosen corporate partnerships, the partnership criteria will be shared.
- Update was provided on Plant and Seed Supply, including the plans of the new Head of department to meet the potential offered by the England Tree Planting programme.
- Questions were asked on the way forward for the expansion of the estate:
 - Mike confirmed that whilst the ministerial steer was for a leasehold model for expansion, this did not rule out Forestry England purchasing land but the transactions would require ministerial approval.



- Mike confirmed that there was a leasehold model that had been developed and was being tested with potential partners, but could not be fully marketed until there was both Defra and HMT approval of the Nature for Climate Fund.

Health & Safety report

Discussion was deferred to Item 5 on the agenda.

Risk Management

It was confirmed that this risk register had been to the September ARAC for review. The new risk around the Camping in the Forest business was confirmed. ARAC also asked that risks are revisited on the impact of covid-19 on recreation income and large events. It was noted that this would be done for the next meetings of ARAC and Board.

Performance Scorecard

Tris drew attention to:

- Average accident rates
- Net provider score above benchmark with insight showing high levels of satisfaction
- Car park income was double that on the covid-19 budget.
- Membership - initially numbers were hard hit by covid-19 but strongly recovered, with over half sold in the first quarter to first time members.

Board discussion included:

- The Chair welcomed reporting on the new KPIs as giving good oversight of the organisation.
- It was noted that the scorecard did not tell the story of the increased number of new visitors coming to the forests and therefore was different data needed? Tris will take this forward.
- A question was asked whether the carpark income figures reflected an increase in volume or duration. Tris noted the analysis is available and will be shared.

Action Items	Person responsible	Deadline
Send new visitor analysis to Jennie Price	Tris Hilborn	8.12.20
Send partnership criteria to Board members	Mike Seddon	8.12.20
Investigate the visitor data in the scorecard needed to reflect the rise in new visitors.	Tris Hilborn	8.12.20
Send the analysis of car park income to Chris Simpson	Tris Hilborn	8.12.20

3. Finance Report

| Item leads: David Hodson

David took the Board through the month 5 financial report reporting that:

- Significant work by staff, strong trading conditions and managing cost pressures means income is better than the covid “likely” scenario plan by £6.8M, this includes £3.1M on timber sales, and £3.2M on visitors. It was noted that the visitor numbers does place additional pressures on staff to provide the services safely.
- Costs have been managed with programmes deferred, however the strong position has enabled some road construction and repair to be reinstated earlier than planned. The overall expenditure is still below plan, and the increase in civil



engineering is reflected in the variances but is forecast to come back into plan by the end of the year.

- A deficit of £8.6M is forecast which is £6M better than the covid ‘likely’ budget. Included in this figure are savings delivered by the organisation of £1.4M to afford the reduction in ASL, and the unplanned Covid expenditure for cleaning, temporary toilets etc of £1.8M. There has been unplanned grant income received for specific projects.
- The approval of the Defra investment committee to the additional funding of Forest Holidays was noted, conditional on the organisation prioritising reserves over new investments.
- Forestry England is waiting for confirmation of bids as part of the Spending Review and Nature for Climate Fund before building proposed additional programmes into business plans.

The Board discussion included:

- The Chair welcomed the report, and also the presentation of information in waterfall charts.
- In response to a question on whether the benefit in the reductions of receivables was permanent by pointing to the proactive stance taken by finance on debtors which confirmed that this was an underlying improvement of the position.
- The Chair noted how encouraging the position was compared to where the organisation was three months ago.

4. ARAC report

Item Lead: Julia Grant

Julia reported that:

- The ARAC in September was very focused on the two sets of accounts for Forestry Commission and Forestry England.
- The Board was reminded of the extra effort that was going into audit planning to Covid proof the organisation should it have to go through a similar scenario as this year and whether the June 21 deadline for accounts could be met.
- There was a discussion on the “going concern” issue, which as part of government was less of a concern for the Commission than for the auditors.
- Risks had been discussed as reported by Mike in Item 2.
- The minutes of the September meeting would be circulated to the Board when they were ready.

Mike confirmed that the ARA had been now laid in Parliament, and the link would be circulated to Board members.

A discussion took place on how best to connect the Board to its sub-committee, the ARAC. It was agreed that:

- Julia would prepare a short, written report to the Board for each meeting with ARAC minutes when available, circulated as Board papers.

Action Items	Person responsible	Deadline
Circulate link to ARA to Board members	Rachel Mackintosh	8.12.20
Julia to receive a prompt to prepare a written ARAC report	Rachel Mackintosh	26.11.20



5. Health & Safety 6 month report

Item Lead: Clare James

Clare introduced the Board to the new incident reporting system dashboard and the management information that she can draw down from it. She said this will support the work in progressing the health and safety culture of the organisation, it gives visibility to the reporting and investigation of incidents enabling challenge.

The Board discussion covered:

- The new reporting system was greatly welcomed.
- RIDDOR reporting should include 0 reports in months that occurs.
- Actions being taken support people currently not reporting incidents. It has been identified that local reporting systems are in use, and there needed to be encouragement for all to use just the new system.
- The high number of cycle / trail incidents amongst members of the public noted, question asked if enough was being done on site by staff and partners? Ongoing management effort in this area would be supported by the audit on trail safety in the audit 20/21 programme.
- Questions and assurance were sought on the chainsaw audit.
- The work to progress health & safety culture was welcomed by the Board, both for staff, and to convey to public through actions of staff that this is an organisation who genuinely cares. A paper on culture will be brought to a future Board meeting.

6. 3 year plan

Item Lead: PK Khaira-Creswell

PK introduced the paper explaining that it built on the previous discussions with the Board and the Executive Team. Three core themes had been identified through these discussions and so now working to build on these.

The Board discussion included:

- The Board liked the ambition, confidence, inspiration, and aspiration shown.
- The people and wellbeing strand needed to be developed further identifying what the plan wanted to do and the change it wanted to affect. Further clarity was needed on the human / nature connection and what that would look like. It was noted that the with the new visitors visiting the income had gone up. It was important to build on this so the offer was inclusive and genuinely making a change to connecting to a broader range of society beyond those who we are marketing to.
- A question was asked if the organisation had the resources and skills to deliver on the ambitions in the health and wellbeing strand. This needed to be linked to business planning for both wellbeing and the people and inclusivity areas.
- There needed to be a strand that was strengthened around the financial resilience and outstanding organisation elements of the strategic objectives to ensure the organisation was planning for issues such as post covid economic shocks and changes in the external environments.
- It was proposed having a focus on excellence in core business was one of the ways in which the plan would feel grounded, then with step-change in a few areas identified.

- There was a request that the golden thread that takes us through from purpose, strategic objectives, high level themes and local district plans to be robust.
- Generally felt that 5 years would be a better timeframe.
- It needs to look at messages for internal and external audience and keep intertwining the message that we can deliver greater public benefit with an expanded estate.

7. Vision for Nature

**Item Lead: Andrew Stringer /
James Simpson**

Andrew introduced the paper outlining thoughts towards a biodiversity strategy which had at its core fully functioning ecosystems and asked the Board for a steer if these were the right plans.

In the Board discussion that followed there was wide support for the plans set out and the direction of travel. The discussion noted:

- The restoration of PAWS took inspiration from woods of the past but was looking to the future climate and recognising the need for regional variance to grow strong woods for the future.
- Identification and understanding of the barriers to deliver the scale, diversity, connectivity and collaboration needed to deliver the strategy and how the Board could help overcome these.
- The importance of collaborative partnerships with other landowners was at the centre of the forestry and land management model, to enable work across and have impact on larger landscapes. This included working with government initiatives and organisations e.g with Natural England and the National Parks.
- The concept of fully functioning ecosystems, being able to work on a landscape scale sets us apart from other organisations.
- The requirements of UKWAS standard would be exceeded through these plans.
- The scale of the nation's forests and therefore potential for truly meaningful wild core areas is what sets us apart from other NGOs and at every opportunity we must take this message out, including to ministers and use Wild Ennerdale as an example of what can be achieved.

AOB
None

Future Meetings

It was noted that it was highly possible that the Board would not be able to meet face to face until summer 2021. However, it would be considered if a day visit to Thames Beat was possible in line with covid restrictions and with no overnight stay. A decision will be made nearer the time.

The meeting ended at 12:25



Paper Title: CEO Report

Under the freedom of information act 2000, exempt information this paper has been withheld from publication as per Section 43(2): Prejudice to commercial interests.

**If you wish to request this paper please contact Rachel Mackintosh at
Rachel.mackintosh@forestryengland.uk**



Forestry England



Strategic Performance Scorecard

2020-21 Q1

August 2020

Our Performance Evaluation Framework identifies 3 levels of performance evaluation for Forestry England.

This scorecard presents those measures that we have developed within the scorecard structure so far and updates on measures currently identified as our Strategic and Delivery Measures. We are continuing to develop how we will report on the annual KPIs, aiming to do so for the first time for the 2020/21 financial year end.

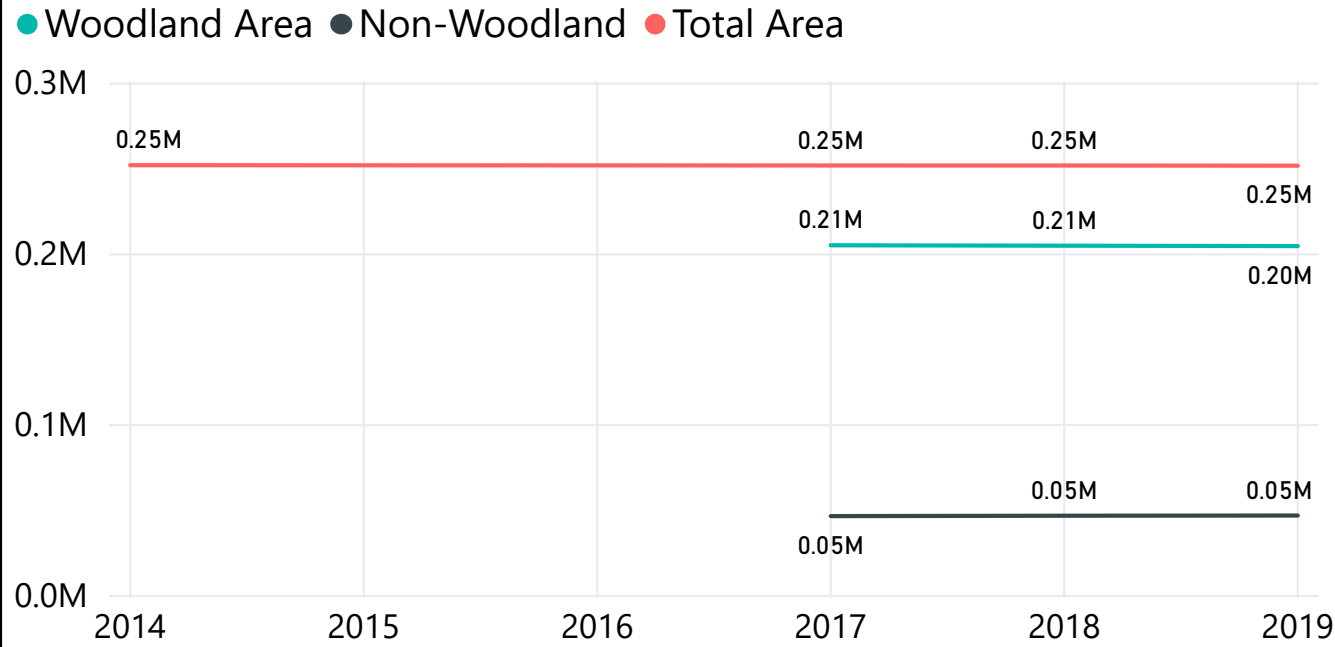
We will continue to develop the content of this Strategic/Delivery Measures Scorecard as we develop the strategic direction (the 3 year plan) of Forestry England over coming months.

Section 1: Key Performance Indicators

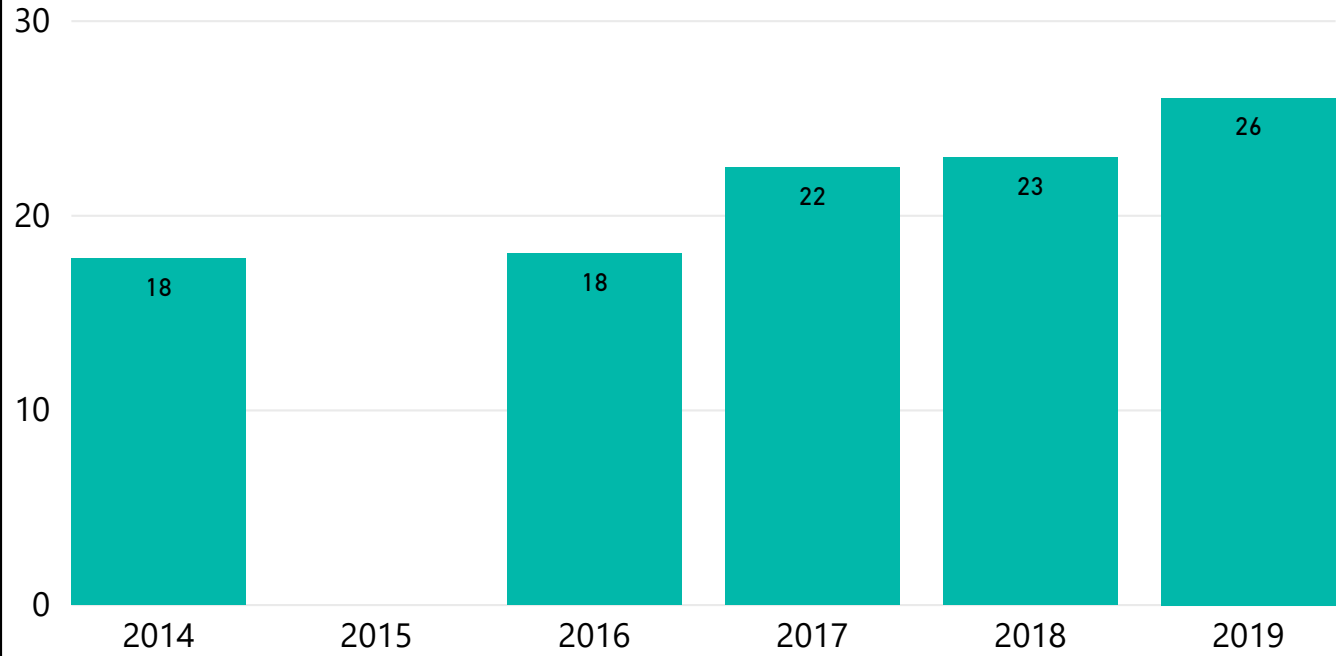
The following measures provide insight into the delivery of our purpose and key policy requirements. They are published annually and comprise of:

Size of the estate	Not updated for this scorecard
Extent of self-finance	Not updated for this scorecard - not yet included
Public engagement	Not updated for this scorecard - not yet included
Public and staff safety	Updated
Total calculated natural capital value	Not updated for this scorecard

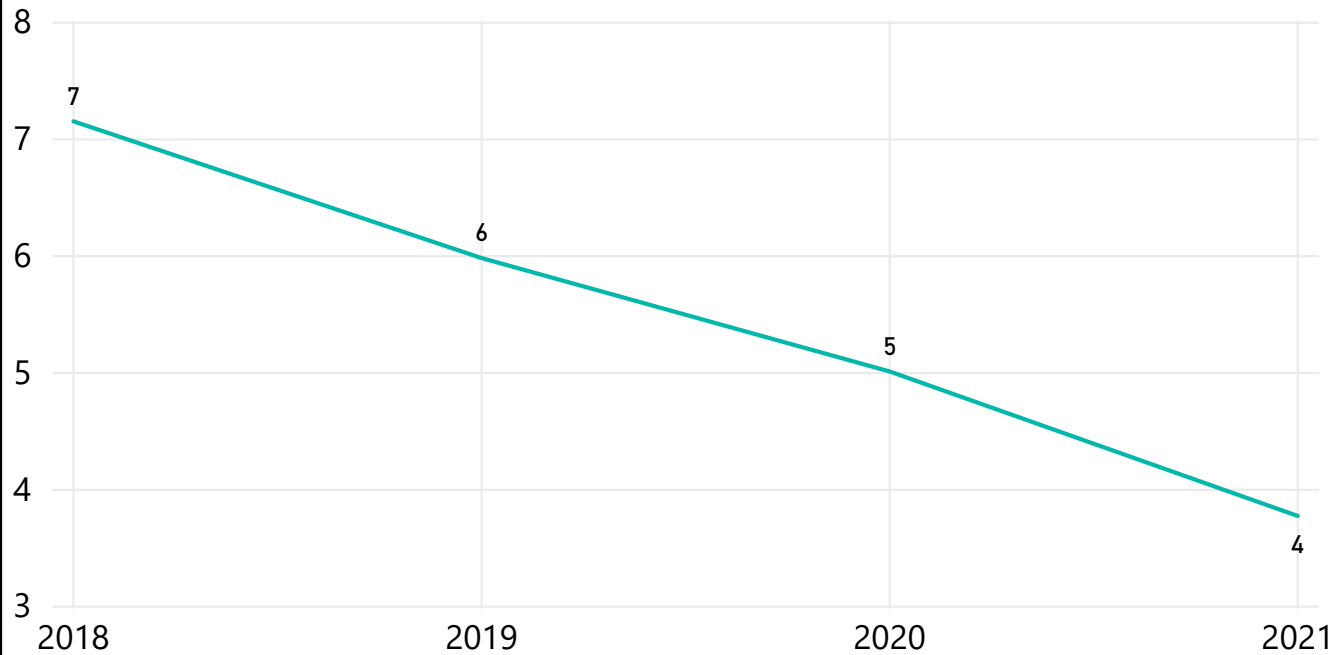
Size of the estate



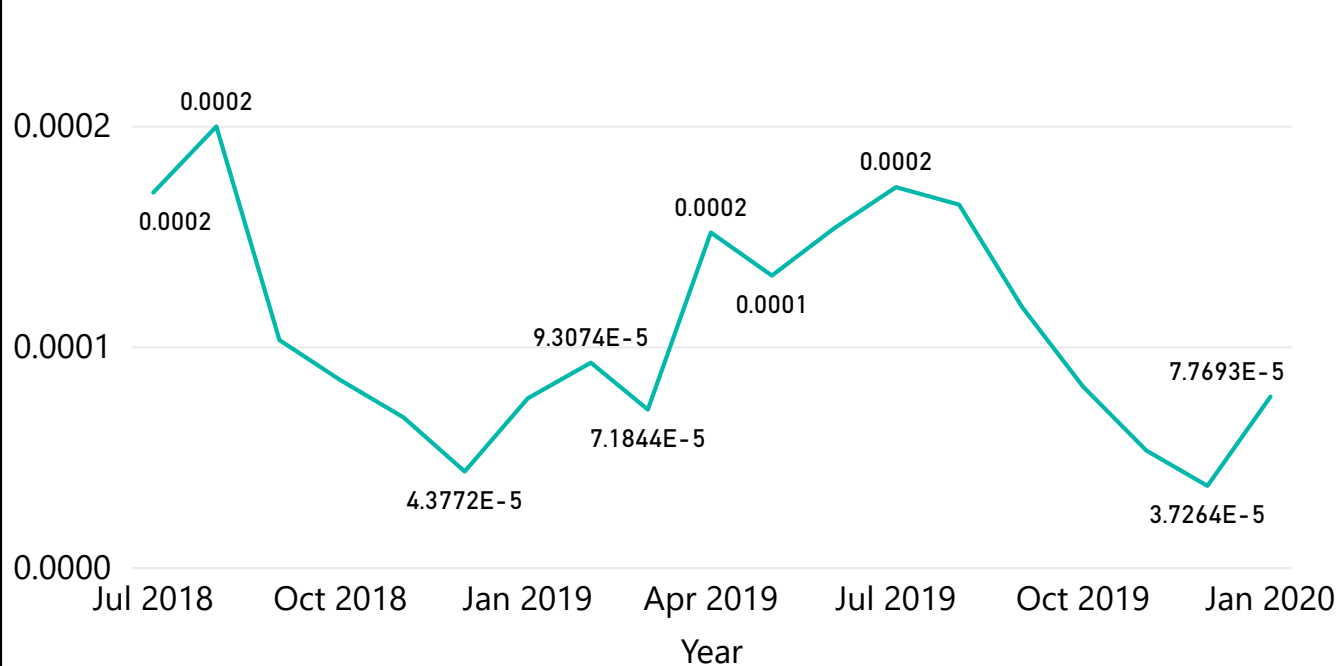
Total Net Natural Capital Assets by Year (£b)



Average of Staff Accident Rate (per 100,000 hours)



Public Accident Rate (%)



Section 2: Strategic Measures

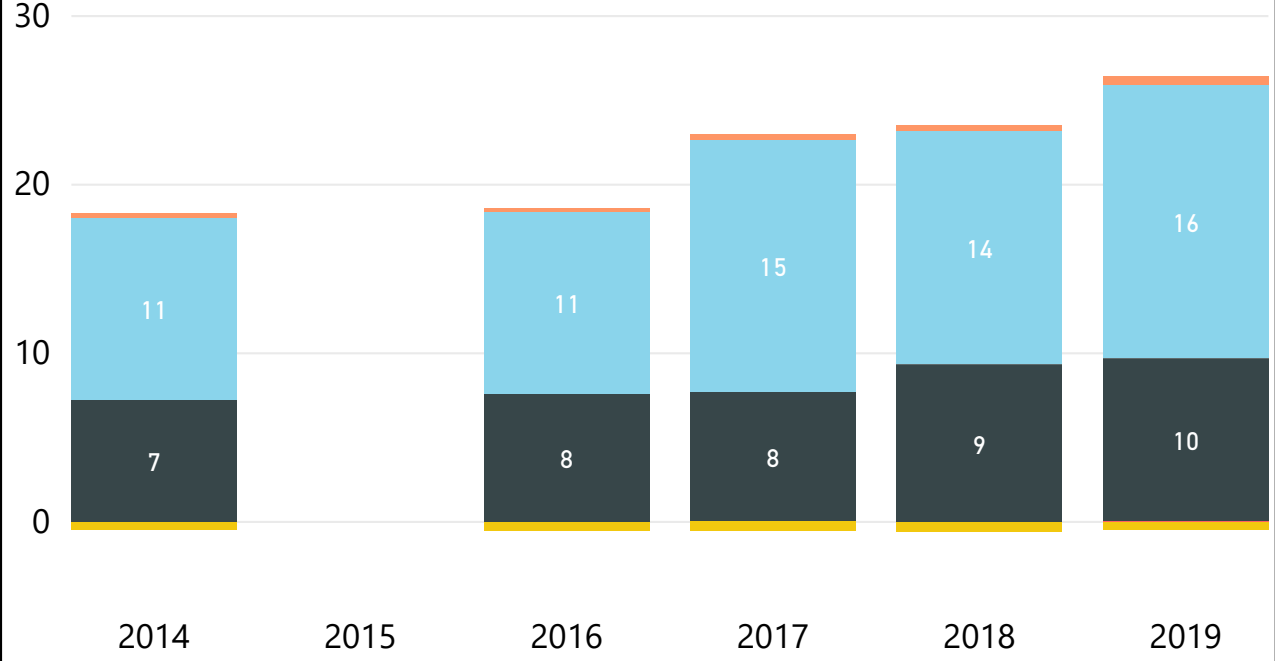
The following measures provide insight into the delivery of medium term strategy (under development as the 3 year Plan). They are presented quarterly and comprise of:

Breakdown of natural capital value	Not updated for this scorecard
Planting trends	Not updated for this scorecard - not yet included
Condition of sites protected for nature conservation	Not updated for this scorecard - not yet included
Condition of sites protected for historic cultural value	Not updated for this scorecard - not yet included
How people engage with the nation's forests	Not updated for this scorecard
Diverse people	Not updated for this scorecard
Public awareness	Updated
Customer satisfaction	Updated
Business sustainability	Not updated for this scorecard - not yet included
Diverse forests	Not updated for this scorecard
Employee turnover	Updated
Employee absence	Updated
Employee headcount	Updated
Visits to the nation's forests (hubs and whole estate)	Updated
Membership	Updated
Timber production	Updated

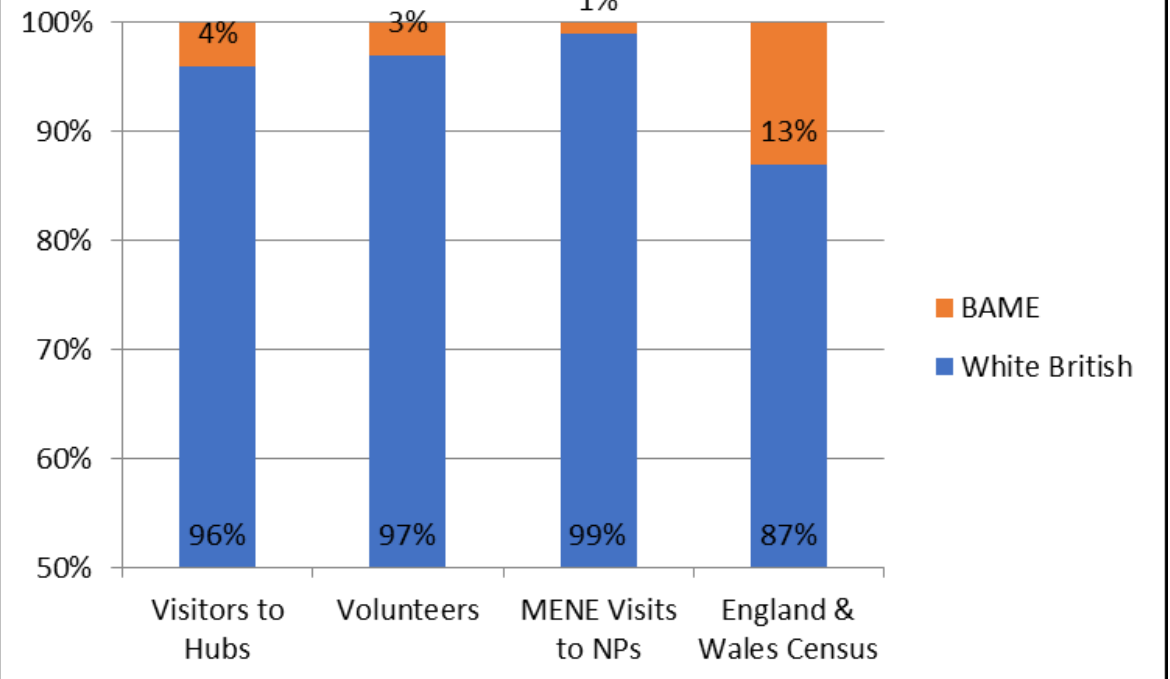
Through the evolution of this scorecard the measures will be presented through the strategic objectives

NCA Value Breakdown by Year (£b)

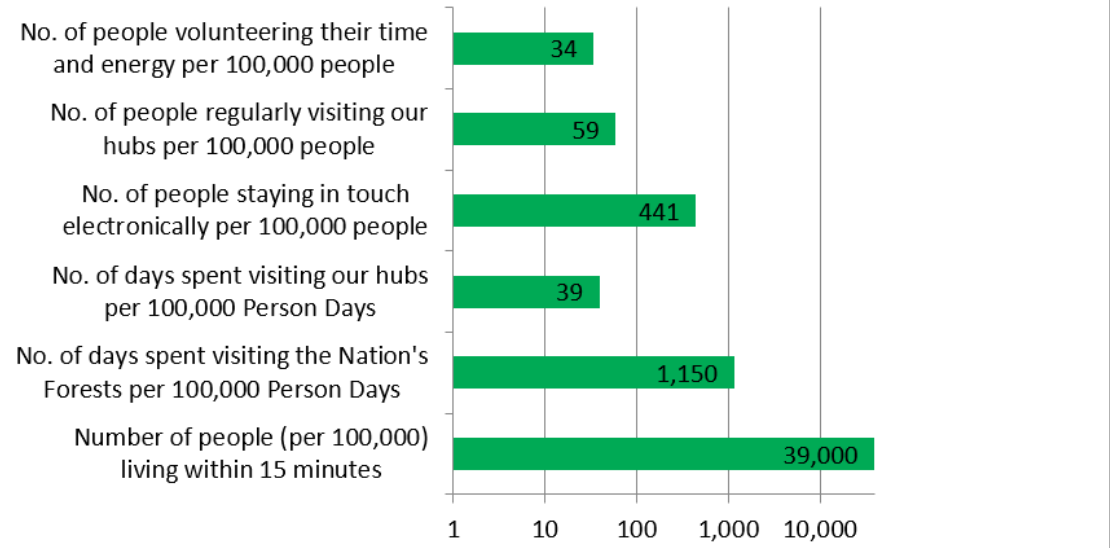
Minerals Carbon Sequest... Food Maintenance ... Plant & Seeds Recreatio... Timber



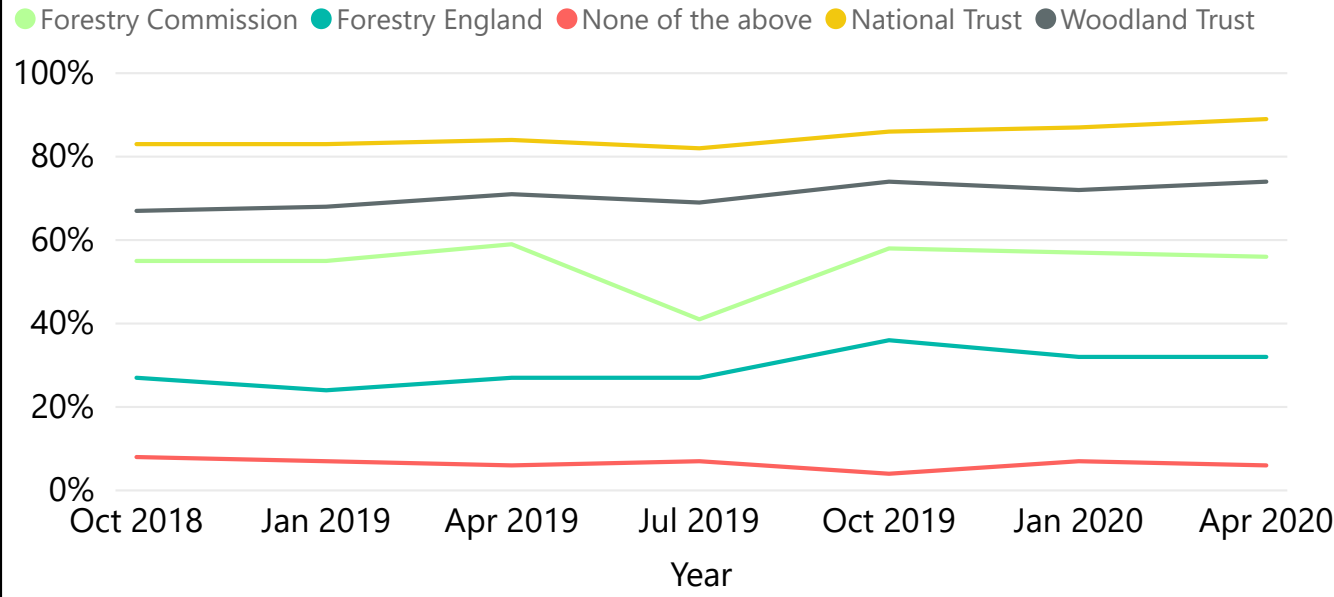
Ethnic Diversity of Connected People



Connection Choices

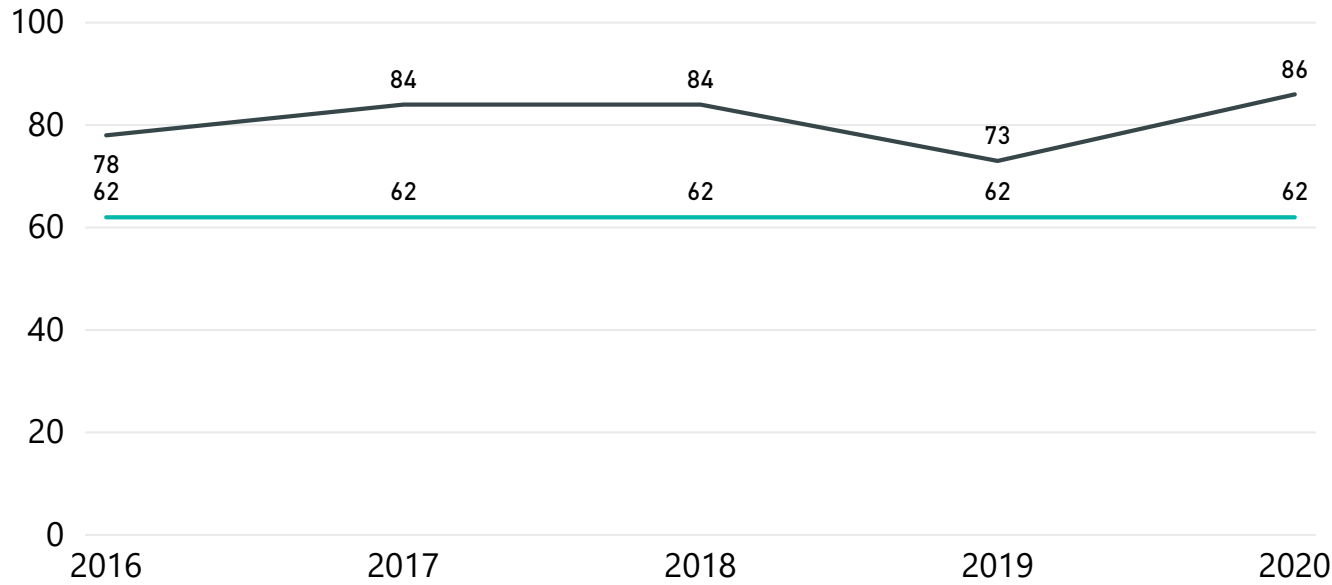


Awareness of Leading Land Managers in UK

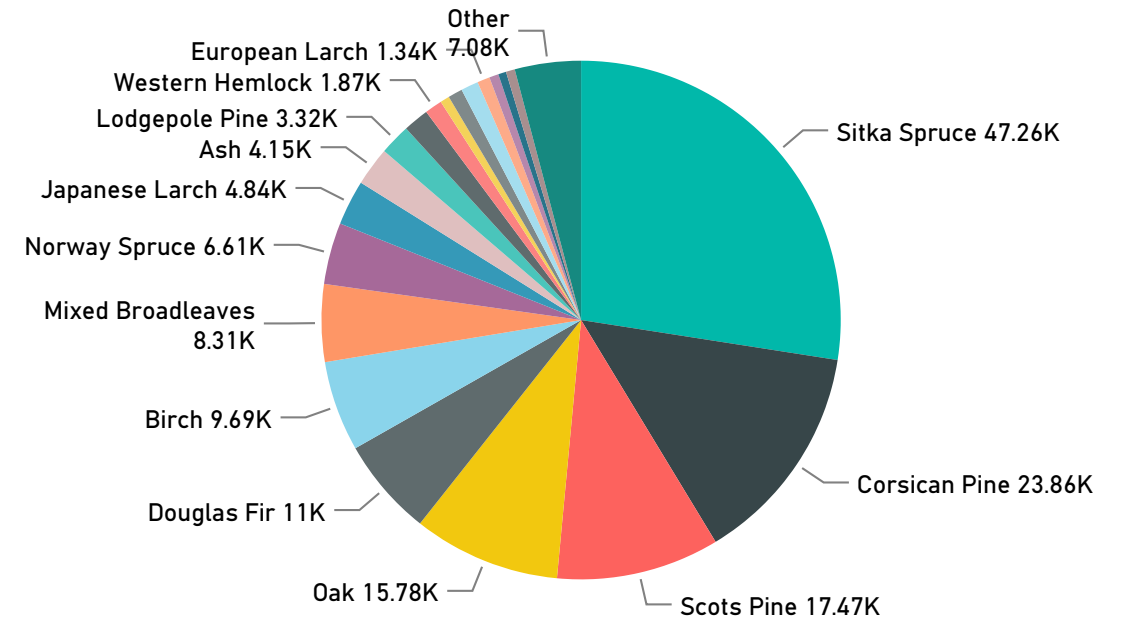


Customer satisfaction: Net Promoter Score - 23 Main Hubs

● Department/Specialty Stores (Highest ave scoring In... ● 23 Main FE Hubs

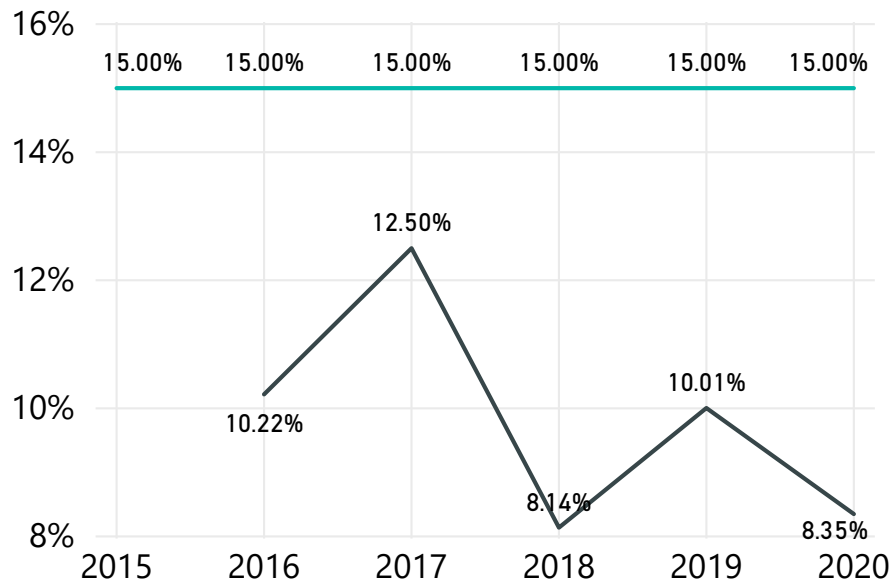


Diverse forests - Tree species Diversity



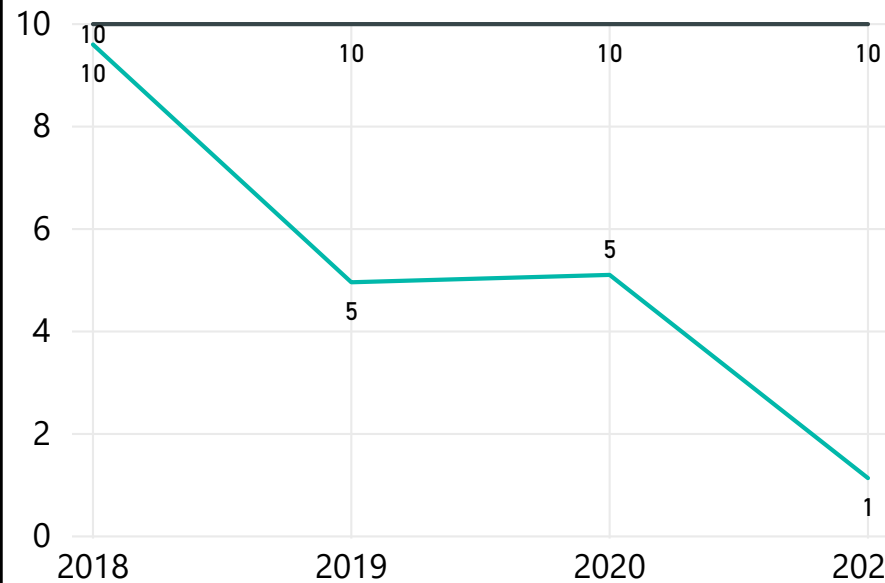
Employee Turnover

● UK Average Turnover ● Turnover Rate



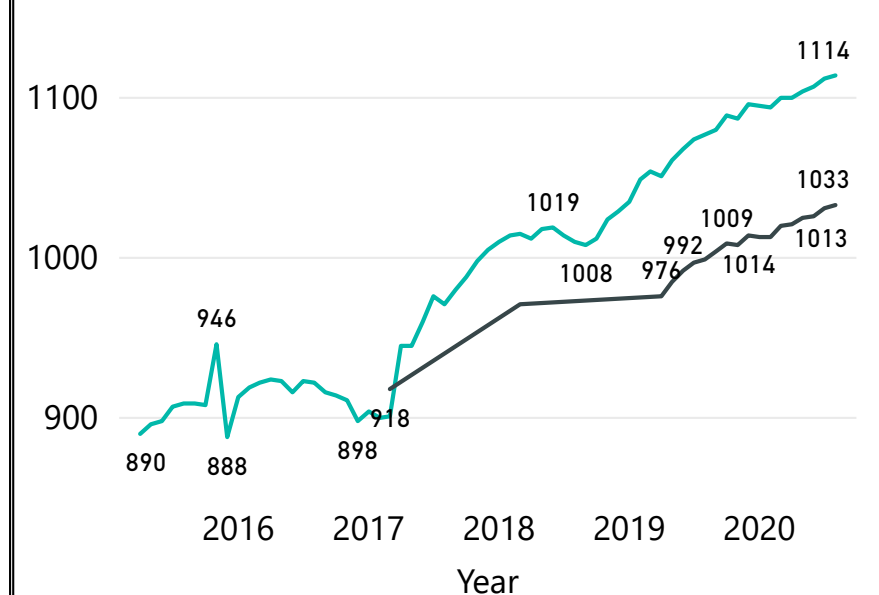
Employee Absence

● Sick Days per Employee ● Average of Public Se...

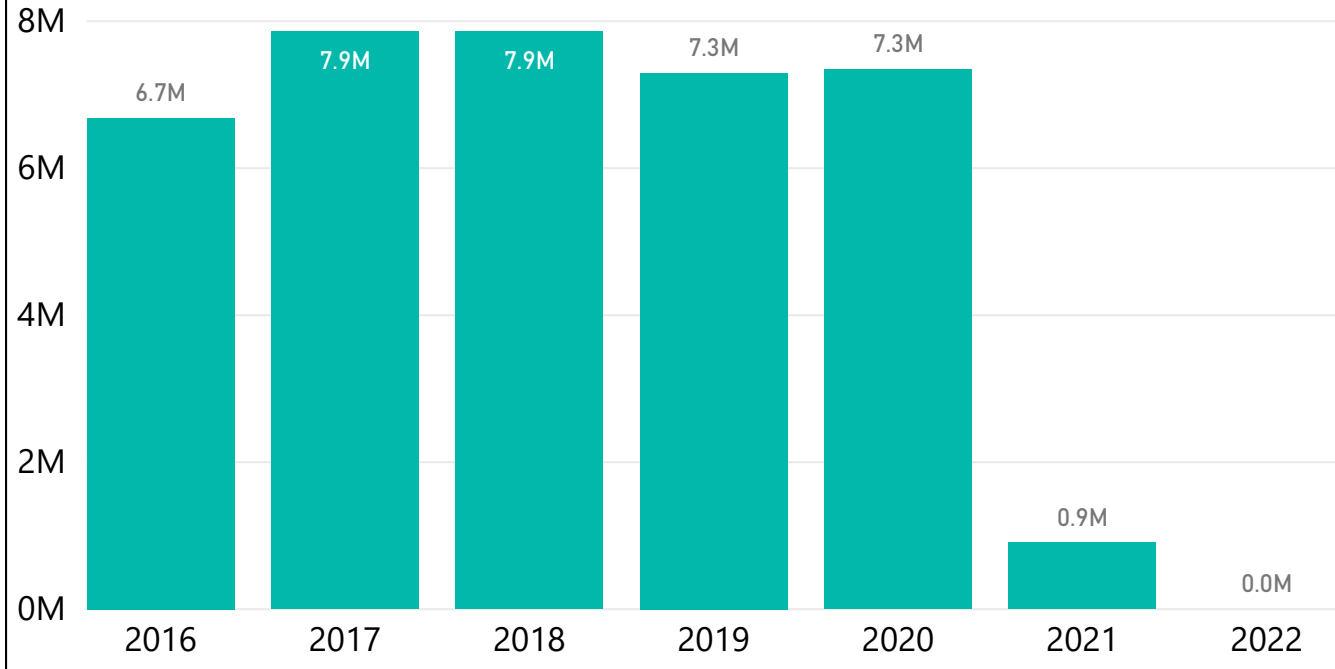


Employee Head Count and Total FTE

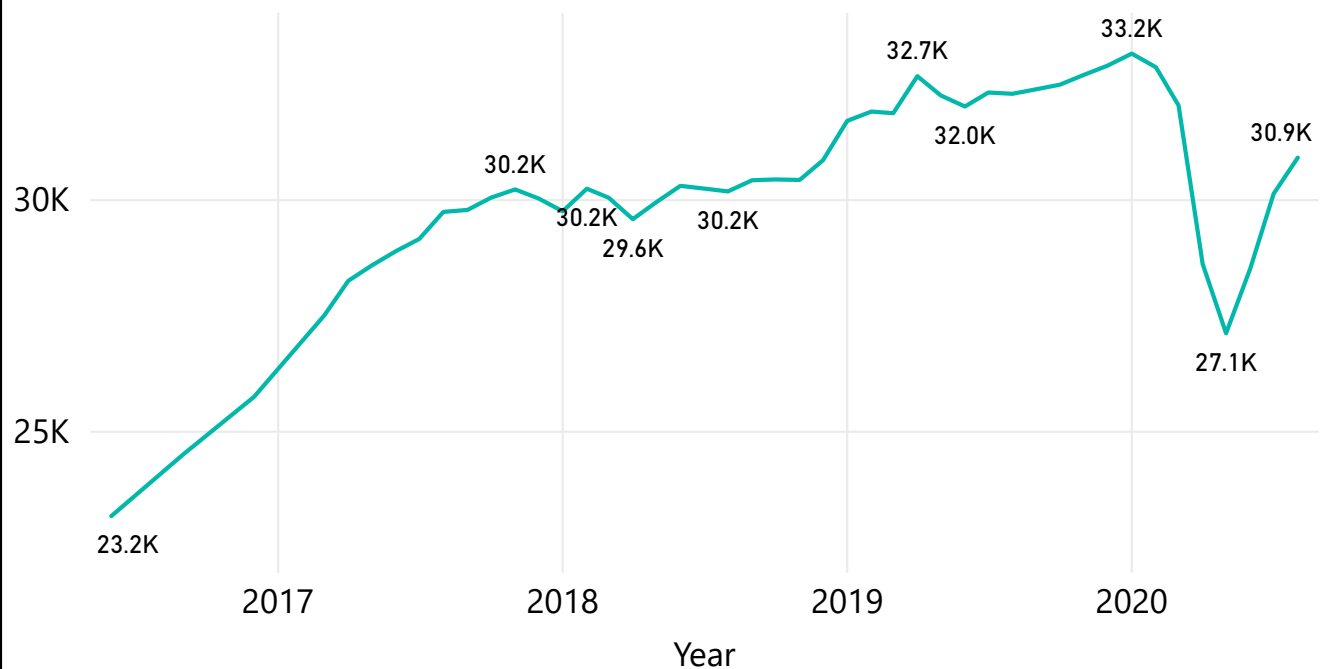
● Staff Head Count ● Total FTE



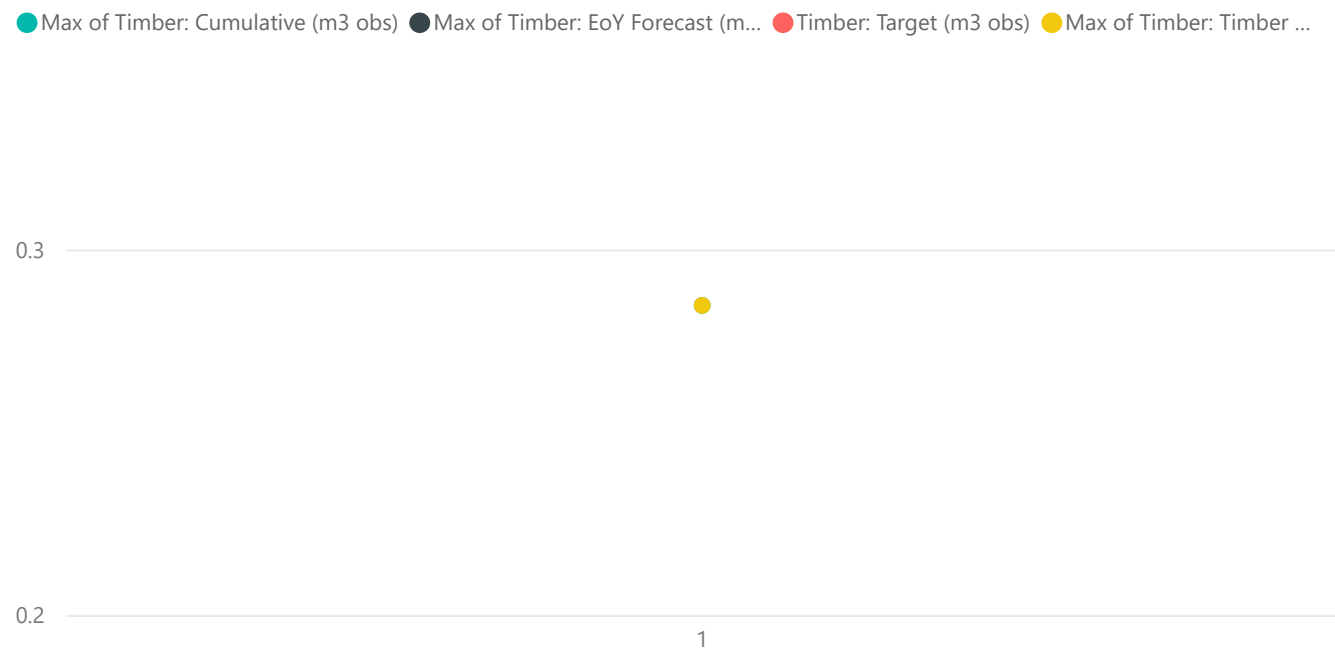
Esitimated Visits to Hubs by Year



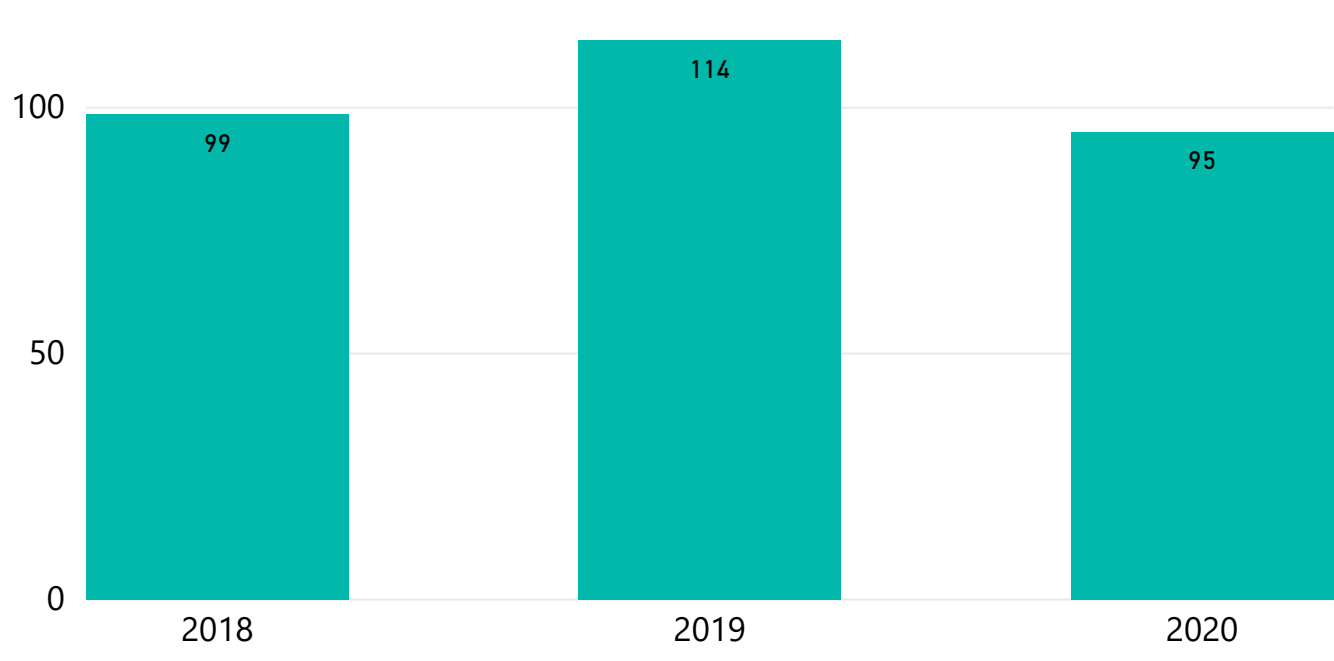
Local Membership



Timber Production



Number of volunteer work years by Year



Additional measures:

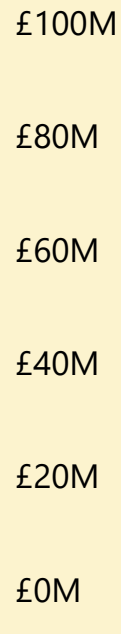
The following measures have been included in previous scorecards and so are included here for information.

They may or may not be included in future versions and consist of financial measures:

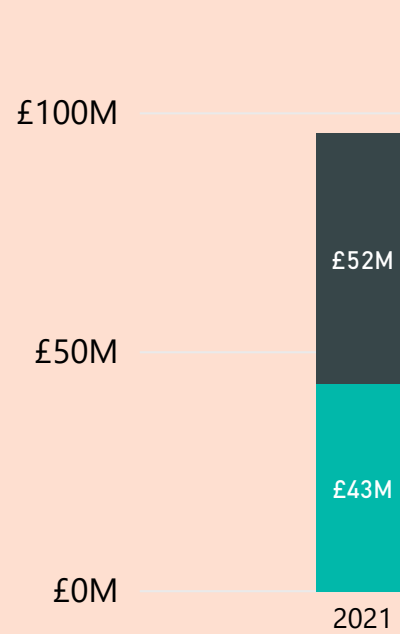
Income: Budget



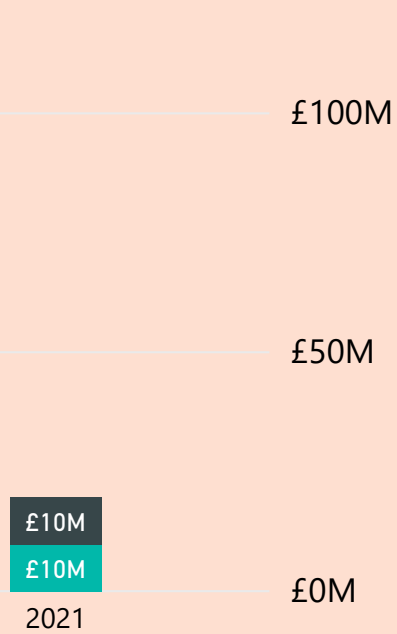
Income: Actual



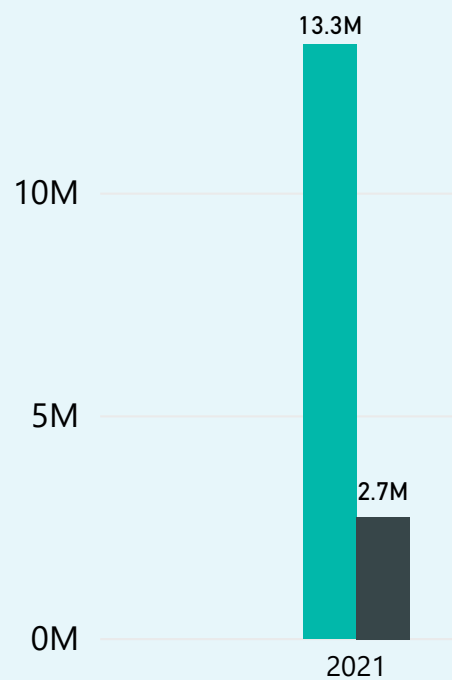
Expenditure: Budget



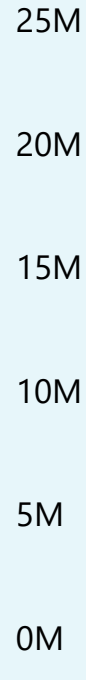
Expenditure: Actual



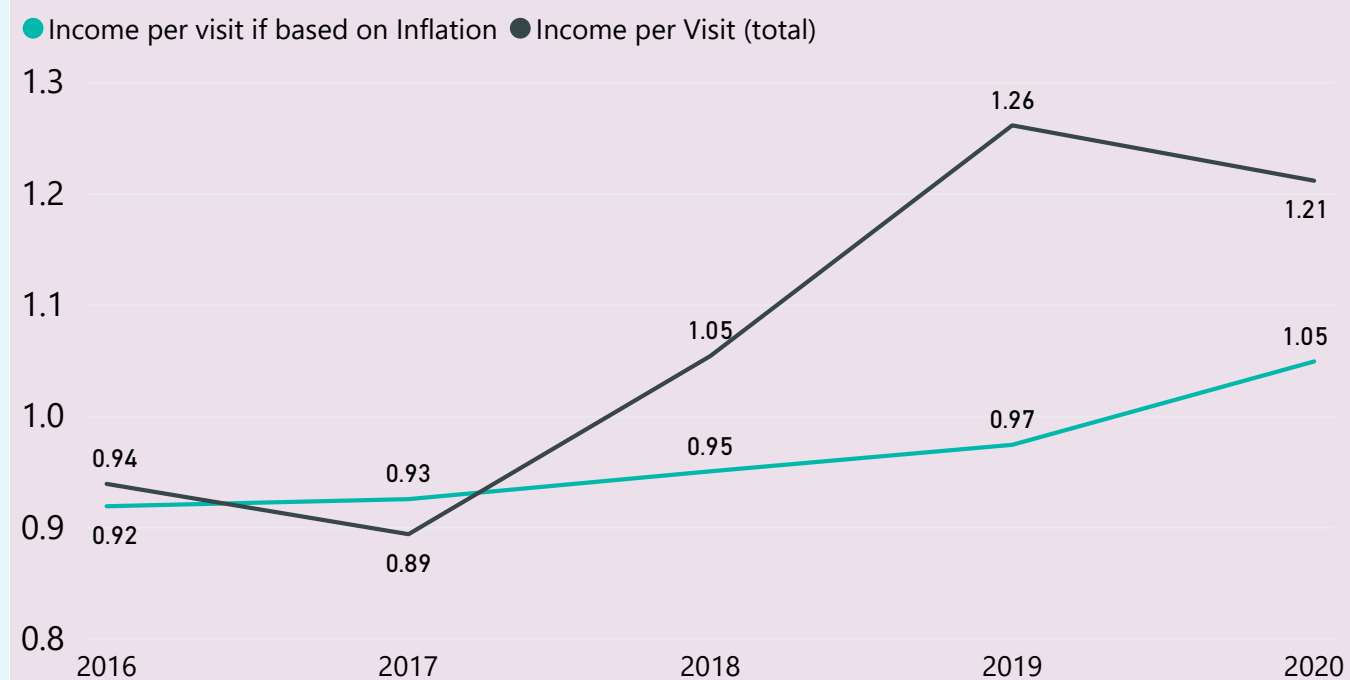
Capital Expenditure (£)



Capital Receipts (£)



Entrance Income per Visit (£)





Paper Title: Forestry England Finance Report

Under the freedom of information act 2000, exempt information this paper has been withheld from publication as per Section 43(2): Prejudice to commercial interests.

**If you wish to request this paper please contact Rachel Mackintosh at
Rachel.mackintosh@forestryengland.uk**

Paper Title: Forestry England 3 Year Plan
Author/Presenter: PK Khaira-Creswell and John Stride

Paper Requirement

Decision Required	For Approval	Steer required	Information Only	Commercially Sensitive
		X		

Purpose and Recommendations

This paper provides an update to the Board on the developing 3 Year Plan following previous engagement with the Board and other senior leaders within Forestry England.

The paper requests that the Board provide further steer about content of the plan as we develop it towards its finalisation and launch, which will be co-ordinated to respond to the publication of the England Tree Strategy. The 3 year plan will be effective from 1st April 2021-24.

1. Background

Our work puts us in the unique position of thinking in 100-year timeframes, but that means staying agile as the world changes at an ever-increasing rate. We know we cannot stand still to stay relevant and thriving. We must be responsive and keep evolving as well as being steady and long term in our approach for the precious landscapes and natural heritage assets we look after for the nation. Many of the aspirations, and intentions we intend to set out in this plan will be realised and deepened over the coming decades. The plan should express that we work best when continuing to think in our long-term timescales while delivering for both the societies of today and tomorrow.

The development of a 3 year Plan for Forestry England has been commissioned by the Board. This Plan will:

- Set aspirations for what we want to achieve and prioritise over the next 3 years; responding to societal demands and providing a longer-term direction for delivery of Forestry England’s Purpose
- Provide clear, measurable outcomes that allow us to evaluate performance and impact effectively
- Be relevant to all teams and their work
- Communicate Forestry England Strategic objectives and how we will deliver them to external stakeholders
- Tell our story, for the next 3 years

3 Year Plan

Reaching our 100th year and reflecting on the world and its challenges has given us the opportunity to be ambitious about evolving our organisation and make a generational step change in our impact on society through the work we do. We aspire to deliver for people, for nature and for the economy.

We will use this plan to identify the key outcomes we want to achieve, focusing on the programmes, resources and activity required to make it happen, harnessing the power of our extraordinary expertise, creativity and professionalism. This can lead Forestry England to greater success, becoming a household name; to being the organisation universally understood and valued for connecting everyone to the nation’s forests.

Our strategic objectives help us set a course over the long term; the 3 year Plan captures direction, pace and priorities for delivering superb forests, enabling us to continue on our journey to being an outstanding organisation. Our delivery models provide a focus for the action which will take us forward over the short and medium term.

Superb forests provide valuable benefits for people, nature and the economy. In order to provide the greatest value, Forestry England must respond to the most pressing demands of society. Through earlier discussions, these have been identified by the Forestry England Board and senior leadership as the climate emergency, the biodiversity crisis and the need to deepen nature connection to support people’s health and well being.

Impact and progress will be evaluated through the Performance Evaluation Framework approved by the Board in early 2020. This consists of our Key Performance Indicators as well as strategic and delivery measures.



Figure 1: How the 3 Year Plan relates to the business and performance evaluation of Forestry England

The 3 Year Plan helps define our longer-term intentions and the prioritised actions we will take in response to the key themes, in order to achieve the strategic objectives (in bold below). This Plan:

- Tells us what we can do to deliver **superb forests**, providing benefits to society, expressed as **increased natural capital value**;
- Identifies the actions we will take to be an **outstanding organisation** that is resilient and **financially sustainable**;
- This is our **story to tell**: what we are doing to connect everyone with the nation’s forests, delivering for people, nature and the economy.

2. Discussion

Developing the content

Through recent months, discussions with the Forestry England Board, Executive Team and Senior Leadership Team have supported the development of content of the 3 Year Plan, refining the identified supply and demands. This has led to the following outcomes related to the 3 key themes as set out below. During development of the narrative and communication of the Plan, these can be brought to life and expressed in evocative ways to capture the imagination, garner buy-in and drive impact.

Climate emergency	Biodiversity crisis	Human nature connection
<p>Mitigate - Expansion of the nation’s forests, and collaborating in partnerships which stimulate woodland expansion more widely, is one of the most effective ways to increase the absorption of greenhouse gases</p> <p>Maintaining and improving the quality of our soils and freshwater habitats will increase their capacity to absorb greenhouse gases</p> <p>The nation’s forests are well placed within catchments to provide flood risk alleviation through the installation of</p>	<p>Protected - Biodiversity protected and the natural capital value of our forests secured through the improving condition of our protected sites (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and the protection of species throughout all our operations.</p> <p>Forestry England commits to zero waste to landfill by 2033, supported by full adoption of whole lifecycle costs in procurement decisions.</p>	<p>Inclusive - Forestry England can provide increasingly diverse opportunities and raise awareness for everyone in society to experience the benefits of contact with the nation’s forests.</p>

natural flood management systems		
Adapt - Continued diversification of appropriate tree species and silviculture within the nation's forests will support their resilience and sustainability for future generations.	Restored - Using the principles of Forest Landscape Restoration, we aim to boost biodiversity recovery in the nation's forests by strengthening natural processes that we need in our bigger, better, and more connected forests.	Engaging - Through active engagement Forestry England can support more people from across society to access deeper nature connections, supporting their increasing their health & well being through access, volunteer engagement, education, development of supporters and digital interactions.
Reduce - Forestry England commits to net-zero emissions arising from its activities by 2033	Resilient - the environmental pressures on our future forests are uncertain, but we can maximise the flow of ecosystems services from them by ensuring they are resilient to the pressures, changes, and disturbances we know the future holds.	Closer - Expansion and realignment of the nation's forests can bring them closer to all communities, providing more opportunity for greater diversity and numbers of people able to access the benefits.

Figure 2: Long term outcomes for Forestry England and the nation's forests in relation to the Key Themes

Further discussion has allowed us to refine the 3 Year Plan outcomes above to identify work areas which can relate to the timescale of the 3 Year Plan (figure 3):

Climate emergency	Biodiversity crisis	Human nature connection
Expanding the Nation's Forests	Expanding the Nation's Forests	Expanding the Nation's Forests
More resilient forests and landscapes	Improving soil, ancient woodland, freshwater, open and habitat quality	Attracting new and diverse customers and audiences
Improving habitat, soil, and water quality	Improving the quality of our most precious wildlife sites	Growing understanding, support, involvement and participation with the Nation's Forests
Mitigating climate impacts beyond our boundaries (e.g. natural flood management)	Creating wild areas	Improving the health of our nation

3 Year Plan

Treading lightly on the planet (reduce our carbon emissions)	Restoring lost and threatened species	Providing the highest quality of experiences
Producing sustainable timber for the nation	Treading lightly on the planet (reduce our waste to landfill)	Enhancing the cultural heritage and features of the Nation's Forests

Figure 3: 3 Year Plan work areas which can provide the basis for measurable targets

We ask for your steer on the above outcomes and work areas to support prioritisation.

If the Board agrees that the outcomes and work areas are the right ones, then a suite of measures would be developed alongside them to track progress, examples of these can be found in the appendix.

Affordability

Once agreed we propose linking the over-arching plan outcomes and work areas to Business Unit annual business planning and long-term financial modelling to support the Districts and other units to resource delivery effectively. Affordability will depend upon business units achieving a balance of income generation from multiple sources including commercial enterprise through our timber, recreation and estates businesses; individual giving through membership and legacies; and 3rd party funding including the ASL, sponsorships and partner funding with the operational and capital expenditure needed to deliver. We propose linking the 3 Year Plan outcomes to the business planning process in the following way:

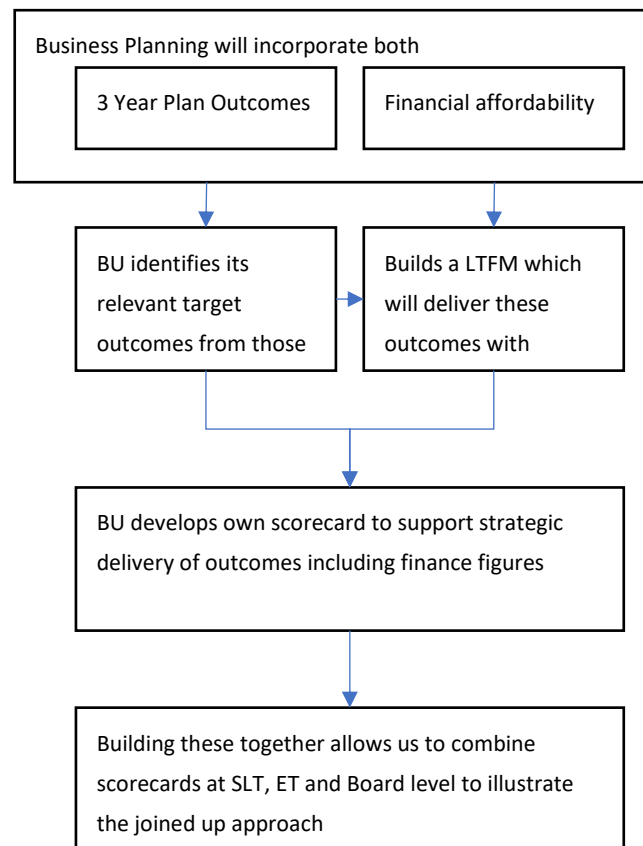


Figure 5: Connecting the 3 Year Plan to the business planning process

Developing the narrative

The purpose of the 3 Year Plan is to:

- Provide direction for delivery by Forestry England
- Provide clear, measurable outcomes that allow us to evaluate performance effectively
- Be applicable to all teams and all work
- Communicate Forestry England Strategic objectives and how we will deliver them to external stakeholders
- Tell our story through our plan for the next 3 years

In order to deliver these effectively, it is important to tell the story of the Plan with simplicity and clarity.

This paper seeks to progress towards confirming the content of the Plan around which such a narrative can be written. Importantly the narrative needs to recognise sustainable forest management as the bedrock of our work.

Next Steps

Following this Board, we intend to follow the broad timetable below:

3 Year Plan

October	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refine content and narrative in consultation with Forestry England senior leadership• Develop design and communications plan• Engagement with FCTU• Align outcomes with 2021-22 business planning process to ensure it is well embedded from the start
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Circulate draft plan text for comment - Board, SLT, ET• Test 3 Year Plan design and communications plan• Develop tools to support future business planning based on learning from current round
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equality impact assessment gateway• Final draft plan for discussion and sign off by Board
January to March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share final plan with Forestry England senior leadership ahead of publication• Internal and external launch (timing subject to England Tree Strategy)
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan start date - 1st April 2021

The detail above provides you with the potential content of the 3 Year Plan. We seek from the Board a view on whether:

1. The suite of outcomes and work areas are correct?
2. Prioritisation is required, and if so, what criteria are used?

3. Resource implications

1. Progress made so far has been led as a project in the Corporate Affairs Team with the support of the Executive Team;
2. Continuing the process will continue to be as a project, resourced by the Corporate Affairs Team with some additional design team input required.
3. A broad initial analysis of affordability has been shown in figure 4 where this is available for the individual outcomes. However, by linking the Plan outcomes to the business planning process, affordability will be built into the implementation of the Plan.
4. Measures attributed to outcomes may require some development but this is largely already in place.

5. Risk Assessment

No organisational risk associated with this proposal at this time.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

Not applicable to the proposal at this time.

7. Communications

Communications will be needed in order to update key stakeholders in this process, including:

- Executive Team update of Board response

3 Year Plan

- Senior Leadership Team as part of wider consultation during later development stages.
- Wider internal and external communications come at a later stage

Appendix - Example measures for the 3 Year Plan Outcomes.

We already have identified targets and measures for many of the work areas, for example those targets stated within the Woodland Creation Programme or the 25 Year Environment Plan.

In many cases, we also have historical spot or trend data available to help guide us towards realistic and aspirational targets for the timescale of the 3 Year Plan.

This has allowed us to develop the following which outlines the measures which will support evaluations of 3 Year Plan aspirations (from figure 3) as well as potential realistic and stretch targets for your consideration.

Outcome	Current (2019-20)	Trend	Long term target	Realistic 3 year target	Stretch target
Woodland creation ¹	47 hectares	N/A	2360 hectare by 2024-25 ²	1,400 hectares (WCP)	1540 hectares (WCP+10%)
Soil quality	Establish baseline measure by end of 3 year plan				
Freshwater quality	Establish baseline measure by end of 3 year plan				
Peatlands quality	Establish baseline measure by end of 3 year plan				
Open habitats quality	Establish baseline measure by end of 3 year plan				
Natural Flood management	Develop and apply a technical methodology for assessing potential within Forest Design Plan renewals.				
Resilience Index	Measure being developed in partnership with FR and F&LS which includes tree species diversity and habitat connectivity				
Reduced net emissions	3,076 Tonnes CO ₂ e	-16% over 5 years	Net zero by 2033 ³	2,768 (-10%)	2,460 (-20%)
Reduced waste to landfill	31% of waste sent to landfill	Flatline	10% by 2030 ⁴ (0% by 2033 ²)	25% of waste sent to landfill	20% of waste to landfill
Renewable energy generation	~1% of electricity consumption self-generated through renewables	Flatline	50% of electricity consumption on self-generated through renewables by 2026 ⁵	30% by 2024	40% by 2024
Improved protected	37%	Flatline	75% by 2043 ⁶	39% (+5%)	41% (+10%)

¹ Resourcing dependent on external funding

² Woodland Creation Programme targets

³ Forestry England Energy & Infrastructure Strategy

⁴ Government target

⁵ Forestry England Energy & Infrastructure Strategy

⁶ Defra 25 Year Environment Plan

3 Year Plan

site (SSSI) condition			(+38% = 1.5%/year)		
Reduce PAWS that are <20% native	22,349 hectares	-18% in 5 years	0% by 2040 ⁷	20,114 (-10%)	17,879 (-20%)
PAWS Priority Restoration Areas	Establish baseline measure				
Develop Wild Core Areas	*Wild Ennerdale area?	N/A	6,000 hectares in 4 years ¹	4,500 hectares (75% of total)	600 hectares (100% of total)
Deliver species reintroduction	1 per Forest District either in planning or in implementation phase	Ongoing trend of 1 per Forest District	Retain ongoing trend of 1 per Forest District	1 per Forest District either planned or in implementation	Average of 1.5 per Forest District either planned or in implementation
Increase total estimated visits	235,000,000	Average ~220,000,000 over past 3 years	300,000,000 by 2027 ⁵	247,000,000 (+5%)	259,000,000 (+10%)
Increase estimated visits to hub sites	7,300,000	7,420,000 average over 5 years	10,000,000 by 2030 ⁵	7,665,000 (+5%)	8,030,000 (+10%)
Increase volunteer support	95	Average 102 years per year over past 3 years	150 years by 2050 (one for every year of FC existence) ⁵	105 years	110 years
Increased supporters (members)	33,200	+10% over 2 years	50,000 by 2050 (+1.5% per year) ⁵	34,860 (+5%)	36,520 (+10%)
Greater diversity of customers	~3.5% BAME compared to 13% census	Flatline	Reflecting society accurately by 2030 (+10%) ⁵	6.5% (+3%)	8.5% (+5%)
Increased customer satisfaction (NPS)	81	Average of 81 over past 3 years	85 by 2030 ⁵	83 (+2)	85 (+4)
Customer Satisfaction	Establish measure in line with Institute of Customer Service				

⁷ No formal external drivers or internal policy position. Proposed for discussion.

3 Year Plan

Improved historic features condition	TBC but from ~5% on Heritage At Risk Register	Flatlined	0 on At Risk Register by 2030	4% on Heritage At Risk Register	2% on Heritage At Risk Register
More Social Prescribing Programmes ⁸	Establish baseline measure				
Increased number of people engaged in specific health & wellbeing activity ⁹	Establish baseline measure				
Recreation benefits to society measure ¹⁰	Potential measure being developed to evaluate overall health & wellbeing benefits to society				
Public awareness of Forestry England	31%	Flatlined	90% (in line with National Trust)		
Public understanding of Forestry England	32%	Flatlined	TBC		
Forestry England's relevance to the general public	54%	Flatlined	TBC		
Trust in Forestry England	63%	Flatlined	TBC		

Figure A1: Proposed measures with possible realistic and stretch targets

Key to the table above	Higher likelihood of achieving without increased investment. Ability to affect change in 3 years is strong; resources and work required included in business as usual	Good likelihood of achieving without increased investment. Ability to affect change in 3 years is good; will need some additional resource or changes to normal working	Less likelihood of achieving without increased investment. Ability to affect change in 3 years is weak; will need some additional resource and changes to normal working
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⁸ The number of formal Social Prescribing partnership programmes in place

⁹ How many people are engaged in activities we offer to support health & wellbeing including Active Forests and volunteering.

¹⁰ The over-arching value of benefits provided to people from recreation within the nation's forests

The above table provides the measures, some available, some in need of development, identified as being most relevant to the outcomes and work areas identified in figures 2 and 3 of the main document.

As the colour coding suggests, the likelihood of implementing the change required to achieve the outcome varies. This is due to many factors including the forest planning and management cycle.

A possible solution to this is for the 3-Year Plan to include some specific tangible delivery outcomes alongside longer term aspirations. We could use the timeframe of the Plan to lay the infrastructure and foundations for achieving these aspirations, stating this clearly in the Plan as an outcome in itself.

This list is relatively large and would benefit from prioritisation both of the outcomes and the work areas.

BOARD PAPER

Paper Title: **Protected, restored, and resilient biodiversity across the nation’s forests**
Author/Presenter: Andrew Stringer

Paper Requirement: For information and steer on Forestry England’s ambitious approach to restoring biodiversity across the nation’s forests

Decision Required	For Approval	For Steer	Official/Commercial Sensitive
		X	

Executive Summary of key points and action required

- Forestry England are a lead deliverer of biodiversity restoration projects in England. For instance, across our 68000 ha of SSSIs, 98.6% are in favourable or recovering condition (in comparison to 79% in 2011), and 37.6% are in favourable condition (in comparison to 8.8% in 2011). We have also restored a quarter of all our 42,000 ha of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) to native woodland, and since 2013 have created over 2000 ha of biodiversity-rich open habitats.
- All historical conservation efforts in the UK have failed in halting overall biodiversity decline.
- Forestry England’s vision moving forwards is to rebuild biodiversity is through the restoration of **Fully-Functioning Ecosystems**.
- We can deliver these through bigger, better, more connected habitats.
- We have a variety of current delivery mechanisms which will continue, including open habitat restoration, plantation on ancient woodland site restoration, and species reintroductions.
- To deliver the step-change for biodiversity needed, we propose to scope and establish **Wild Core Areas** at the heart of our major forest landscapes.
- Our proposals will come together in a new biodiversity delivery plan for the nation’s forests, with the highlights being included within our new 3-year plan.

The following recommendations are presented for consideration and approval:

1. To agree the development of a Biodiversity delivery plan for Forestry England, which would also inform our new 3-year plan.
2. To consider and provide views on the proposed approach to the Biodiversity plan, the areas of focus, and particularly the use of Wild Core Areas as a key part of the new plan.

Core messages for the non-executives to promote

- Forestry England is one of the largest deliverers for biodiversity in the country.
- Forestry England has ambitious plans to deliver a step-change in biodiversity restoration.
- As the largest land-manager in England we plan to enhance our work at the cutting edge of conservation science, to deliver a quantifiable reversal in the fortunes of wildlife across the nation’s forests.

Content

1. Purpose and context

Background: The UK has lost more biodiversity than many other countries in the world, being ranked 189th of 218 countries assessed on a Biodiversity Intactness Index ¹. The recent UK State of Nature report showed that 13% of species are at immediate risk of extinction from the UK ².

Forestry England have 68000 ha of SSSIs, 98.6% of which are in favourable or recovering condition (in comparison to 79% in 2011), and 37.6% are in favourable condition (in comparison to 8.8% in 2011). In certain areas we are sector leaders. For instance, 89% of our 9000 ha of lowland heathland SSSIs are in favourable condition. Also, 77% of our 8000 ha of upland bog SSSIs are in favourable condition, against a national average outside the nation's forests of 9%.

We also have 42,000 ha of plantations on ancient woodland sites. We started restoring these in the early 2000s, and committed to restoring all sites in 2007. 24% of PAWS has now been restored to >80% native canopy cover. Furthermore, we have 42,000 ha of biodiversity-rich open habitats, which have increased by over 2000 ha since we launched our open habitat restoration policy in 2013.

Valuable habitats are delivered through our forest plans, as well as a range of pioneering conservation projects. For instance, the award-winning restoration of 29km of New Forest streams, the award-winning reintroduction of white-tailed eagles to the Isle of Wight, and the cutting-edge conservation success at Wild Ennerdale. We have a variety of strong and fruitful relations with local and national conservation partners. Partnering with conservation NGOs on projects helps deliver a range of benefits including increasing project expertise, increased communication channels, and engagement outside the nation's forests.

In 2019 we attempted to directly monitor species in the nation's forests for the first time. Initial data suggested that while biodiversity in the nation's forests was doing better than national averages, species were still in decline.

All historical conservation efforts in the UK have failed in halting biodiversity decline. We must build on what has gone before us, and be better, bolder, and more adventurous.

Forestry England's strategic approach:

At the core of the Forest and Land Management (FLM) delivery model (see fig. 1) are Natural Capital Value, Forest Landscape Restoration, and Forest Resilience. We do many things to protect our natural capital value, such as through our network of protected sites. We also have numerous protected species across the estate, and ensure they are protected during forestry operations through our Operational Site Assessment procedures. While protection is important, we must now be bolder with active restoration of what has been lost. This

Restoring Biodiversity

paper concentrates on the restoration of biodiversity, which sits within the Forest Landscape Restoration part of the delivery model.

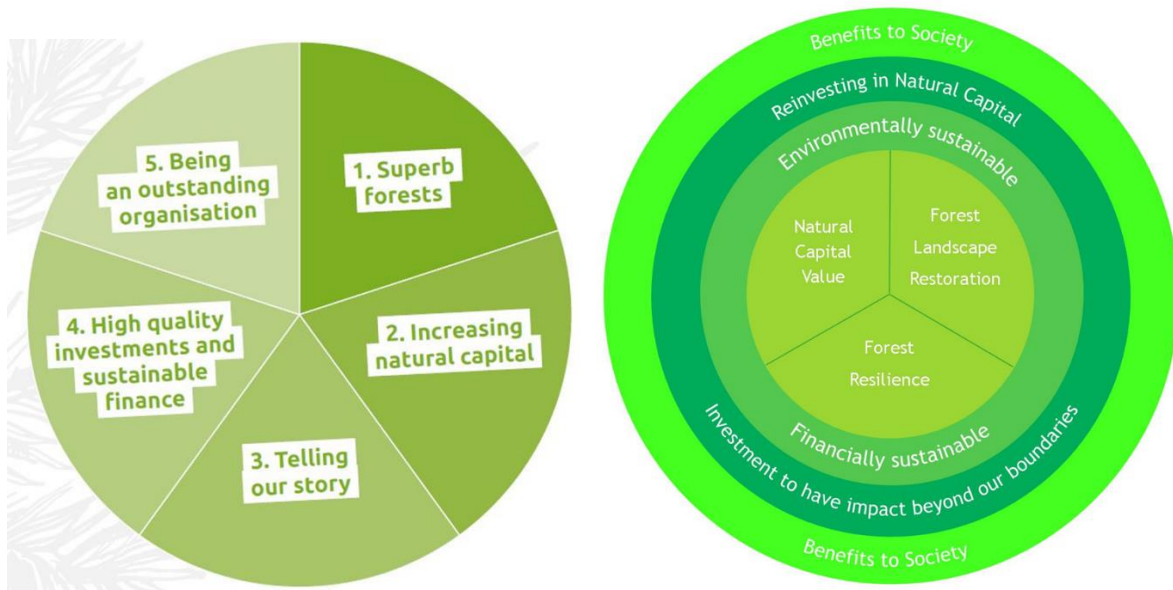


Figure 1. The strategic objectives, and the Forest & Land Management delivery model.

Vision

The fundamental principle for restoring biodiversity in the nation's forests is the restoration of **Fully-Functioning Ecosystems**. This means prioritising conservation action not for the management of single species, but for the restoration of the natural processes which create a woodland ecosystem. For instance, we prioritise species reintroductions not by rarity, but by which species will have the biggest positive impact on ecosystems. We can combine recent scientific discussion on restoring natural processes^{3,4} with the Lawton principles of *bigger, better, more connected* habitats⁵, to argue that a fully-functioning ecosystem consists of three core elements:

1) Bigger habitats: There is currently a disconnection between the amount of habitat that we provide, and the amount of habitat biodiversity needs to thrive. We will work to prioritise our effort where we can achieve a habitat landscape that extends to >12000 ha in size⁶. Five of our existing forest landscapes extend to this scale (Kielder, North Yorkshire Moors, Thetford, Forest of Dean, and the New Forest), and we can prioritise other landscapes to meet this scale. Furthermore, our woodlands do not sit in isolation; they are part of a wider habitat network that can be integrated through the Nature Recovery Network.

2) Better habitats: Diversity - This includes a diversity of species, and a diversity of size and structure. However, species have a range of impacts on their environment, and many species create habitat or opportunities for others. For instance, beavers are natural wetland coppice workers, predators such as pine martens naturally balance prey populations, and cattle can disperse seeds across a landscape, manage open habitat, and poach the ground creating opportunities for ground flora. To ensure species and trophic complexity, a diverse

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range of species from all trophic levels should be present within an ecosystem, from large herbivores, to dung beetles, through to predators.

Disturbance - Disturbance comes in many forms, from wildlife felling trees and poaching the ground, through to forestry operations opening the canopy and cutting rides. Disturbance creates dynamism and provides opportunities for wildlife to flourish. Too little disturbance creates climax habitats that change little and may provide few opportunities for species colonisation (e.g. Lady Park Wood National Nature Reserve). Too frequent disturbance does not allow species to recolonise and natural succession to occur after the disturbance event. Intermediate levels of disturbance are recognised as those that maximise biodiversity ⁷.

3) More connected habitats: Landscape connectivity is the connection of habitats across large areas, allowing individuals to move, populations to link, encouraging meta-populations to thrive. For Forestry England, we aim to improve connectivity internally, through well planned forests. We also connect externally, across landscapes. This can be achieved by working in partnership with neighbouring landowners, and Defra's Nature Recovery Network can be used as a catalyst to facilitate this.

Delivery

Many of the current activities we do to help restore nature can evolve in the future to help better deliver fully-functioning Ecosystems:

- **Improvement programme - Integrated Planning:** Aims to deliver better and more connected habitats through our forest plans, including work to integrate Forest Development Types and Natural Capital decision-making tools into our planning process.
- **Improvement programme - Portfolio Review:** Targeting future acquisition/leasehold sites towards establishing bigger and more connected landscapes, to help deliver Forest Landscape Restoration including biodiversity gain.
- **Open habitats:** Our 2013 Open Habitats policy committed us to increasing the amount of open habitats on the estate from 16.8% in 2013, to 21.1% by 2060. In 2020 we stand at 17.7% open habitat, with 2079 ha created since 2013.
- **Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) and Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS):** ASNW is a biodiversity rich man-made habitat, managed for centuries most commonly through coppice with standards. In 2007 we committed to restoring all of our PAWS to resilient biodiverse woodlands. The easily restored sites have all been achieved, and we are now evolving our guidance to assist districts with restoration.
- **Naturalistic Forest Grazing:** Naturalistic grazing has been successfully implemented in several locations, most notably in Wild Ennerdale, and is a technique we can deploy more widely to actively restore biodiversity. Grazing delivers seed dispersal, soil poaching, and open habitat management. Naturalistic grazing has different goals from traditional grazing, for instance in the New Forest and Forest of Dean (which uses much higher densities).
- **Species reintroductions:** We are a sector leader in species reintroductions, with every district currently proceeding with at least one species reintroduction project. These range from beavers, pine martens, and white-tailed eagles, through to water voles, pool frogs, chequered skipper butterflies, and white-faced darter dragonflies. All are partnership projects with environmental NGOs.

2. Discussion

Targeted 3-year delivery plan - Biodiversity Delivery Plan

The key recommendation is to create a Biodiversity Delivery Plan. The plan will include a variety of actions to improve and implement our delivery mechanisms. Below I describe key areas of the plan and highlight whether they are a continuation of an existing programme (BAU) or a new proposal to be investigated (NEW).

Sites of Special Scientific Interest:

- The plan will include the work we do for protected sites. In particular it will focus on maintaining and improving the condition of our SSSIs, in line with the 25 Year Environment Plan commitment to improve to 75% by 2042 (BAU).
- The plan will also explore how we can deliver significant gains to the condition of our SSSIs, for instance by focusing on how ambitious projects on our largest SSSIs in Thetford and the New Forest can be resourced (NEW).

Open habitats:

- Deliver the 125 ha of open habitat creation expected by the end of 2023 (BAU).
- We will renew and evolve our policy to create Open & Dynamic Habitat Networks, which value both permanent and transient open space, and links these through watercourses, rides, and dedicated corridors. We will also update our delivery profile in light of current forest plans (NEW).
- We are currently investigating the accuracy of the sub-compartment database (which we use to estimate the quantity of open-habitat in the nation's forests). We will investigate better ways to monitor open habitats (i.e. remote sensing) (NEW).

Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) and Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS):

- Consultation and introduction of PPG3 - restoring ancient woodlands (BAU).
- Development of Forest Development Type handbook specifically for ancient woodlands (NEW).
- Develop GIS map to highlight which PAWS have the greatest abundance of ancient woodland flora, to highlight areas to prioritise restoration (NEW).
- We have worked 1497 ha of PAWS per year over the last three years, and expect these improvements to allow us to work >2500 ha per year from 2023 (BAU).
- Investigate better ways to report on the success of PAWS restoration (i.e. remote sensing). For instance, an index of restoration based on whether a site has met Forestry Commission standards of restoration, rather than the area of PAWS worked each year, may be a useful further measure of success. While 24% of PAWS has now been restored to >80% native canopy cover, 54% of PAWS still has <20% native canopy cover. We are currently considering whether we should aim for all PAWS to be restored to >20% native canopy cover by 2030 (NEW).

Species reintroductions:

- Continued delivery of projects within district (BAU)
- Develop PPG or Approach Statement, to maintain momentum, assisting districts with species priorities, project development and delivery (BAU).

Wild Core Areas (NEW):

Defra's 25 Year Environment Plan gives us the framework to be ambitious, highlighting commitments to habitat creation and species reintroductions. Forestry England have the rare ability in the UK to deliver landscape scale projects over the long term. To deliver a step-change for wildlife, we propose to establish *Wild Core Areas* within our forest landscapes. Wilding¹ devotes an area to the restoration of natural processes. This means looking to the past, to identify what natural processes are missing, to guide the creation of future ecosystems. Wilding has delivered impressive results; delivering an abundance of wildlife not usually seen when utilising traditional conservation practices. These areas would:

- Contain a focus on restoring natural processes, such as re-meandering watercourses, higher levels of deadwood, and tree veteranisation.
- Be managed with Low Impact Silvicultural Systems - we cannot reintroduce the mega-herbivores that would open canopies, increase light-levels, and allow the woodland floor to flourish. We must manage to ensure these crucial missing natural processes are maintained, and that these areas remain sustainable.
- Naturalistic forest grazing restored; low-density populations of cattle and ponies across large areas (>1000 ha).

We are currently a pioneer and leader of forest wilding in the UK at Wild Ennerdale. Wild areas would do the most good at the heart of our forest landscapes, with knock-on benefits for the entire forest landscape. However, we have several projects ready to go outside of these areas. Within 3 years our ambition is to:

- Forest Landscape Restoration: In our five forest landscapes >12000 ha (Kielder, North Yorkshire Moors, Thetford, New Forest, Forest of Dean), establish 1 (Newtondale - Yorkshire Moors) wild core area and investigate the feasibility of establishing within all.
- Wild partnerships: Establish one wild area outside of these landscapes, utilising partnerships with neighbouring landowners to deliver at scale. Immediate potential is found at Dunwich, while numerous opportunities exist elsewhere (e.g. Upper Derwent).

While delivering for biodiversity, these areas would also provide multiple further benefits including:

- Improve resilience across the estate for both productive woodlands and biodiversity⁸. In particular we would expect these sites to be more resistant to pests (more biodiverse places are more likely to hold predators of future pests) and diseases (due to genetic variability), as well as soils potentially more resistant to drought (due to increased dung beetle activity).

¹Wilding/rewilding/landscape-scale ecosystem restoration, all have very similar meanings³. Here we use the term 'Wilding' to denote the step-change in delivery for nature conservation, and to help communicate that step-change to external stakeholders.

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- Create a variety of new opportunities for increasing ecosystem service delivery as well as diversifying our income streams. For instance, public enthusiasm for wild areas could drive an increased visitor interest, and recreation in areas of greater biodiversity leads to greater wellbeing benefits⁹.
- Offers a potential business opportunity - opportunities include day visits and a dedicated ecotourism offer (guided walks/wildlife hides).
- This offers a huge opportunity to capture the public imagination inspired by recent publications on wilding¹⁰ and to Tell Our Story, establishing Forestry England as a conservation pioneer.

3. Recommendations

The following recommendations are presented for consideration and approval:

1. To agree the development of a Biodiversity delivery plan for Forestry England, which would also inform our new 3-year plan.
2. To consider and provide views on the proposed approach to the Biodiversity plan, the areas of focus, and particularly the use of Wild Core Areas as a key part of the new plan.

4. Resource implications

- An uplift in funding for SSSIs is needed to increase our current rate of restoration to favourable condition. We have bid for an uplift as part of SR20, and if unsuccessful will continue to seek funding through a variety of sources.
- PAWS restoration and open habitat creation are both funded as business-as-usual.
- Species reintroductions are funded through business-as-usual internal funding (often through in-kind support), and external funding on a project-by-project basis.
- The ability to establish wild core areas is subject to new funding. As part of SR20, we are bidding for £6.9M to scope and establish wild core areas. We expect there to be a variety of public and private funding mechanisms that would cover the maintenance costs over the long term. These would include working with partners who could access ELMs. If SR20 doesn't provide funding, we would investigate other sources, accepting that this would alter the delivery timeframe.

5. Risk management - not applicable to this paper

6. Equalities analysis - not applicable to this paper

7. Communications

Restoring Biodiversity

There are no immediate communications activities required as a consequence of decisions associated with this paper. Existing internal communication channels are being used to engage key members of staff in the development of the concepts outlined.

8. Attachments

Please list any documents attached as appendices here.

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22/9/2020