Angus Council

Comhairle Aonghais

Angus Forestry & Woodland Strategy 2024-2034

Strategic Environmental Assessment - Environmental Report

January 2024

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1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1.1 This is the non-technical summary of the Environmental Report which documents the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Angus Forestry & Woodland Strategy 2024 - 2034. SEA is concerned with the protection of the environment. It is a beneficial and thorough assessment process, which ensures that environmental considerations are taken on board at an early stage in the Strategy preparation process, to ensure forestry and woodland takes place in the right location with minimal environmental impact.

1.2 Section A159 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) introduces a requirement for Local Authorities to prepare a Forestry & Woodland Strategy. It is a requirement that the strategy identifies woodland of high nature conservation value.

1.3 It is intended that this Strategy provides the Council's policy in relation to forestry and woodlands for the period 2024 – 2034 and how Angus can contribute towards delivery of Scotland's Forestry Strategy.

SEA Assessment Methodology

1.4 SEA follows a systematic and thorough process, which allows environmental considerations to be integrated into the proposed Strategy, as well as, inviting comments and representations on the both the proposed Strategy and the Environmental Report from members of the public and stakeholders. SEA assesses and evaluates the likely significant impacts that the proposed Strategy may have on the environment. Dependent on the outcome of the assessment process, the SEA recommends mitigation and/or enhancement measures. This is to ensure that the plan is environmentally responsible and sustainable.

Alternatives

1.5 The Strategy does not include an assessment of alternatives. The different approches to addressing issues were discussed within the steering group and the strategy reflects those outcomes. For example, one of the options the steering group considered was that the expansion of woodland of high nature conservation value would be best achieved through natural regeneration of woodlands. This would create, more biodiverse and climate resilient woodland when compared to woodland creation through tree planting. Similarly, the steering group considered the options for allowing woodlands to regenerate in the context of deer grazing and supported the need for control of deer populations rather than a complete dependence upon fencing alone. In addition, this Report which has been prepared in parallel with the Strategy, has considered the alternative of no

action. This was considered within the Scoping Report which concluded as follows: .

- Much woodland of high nature conservation value may continue to decline through lack of management, with some woodland being progressively lost.
- Woodland of high nature conservation value would generally be less resilient to climate change;
- The benefits of native woodland networks would be unlikely to be achieved except locally.
- The emphasis may be on new forest and woodland sites rather than the management of native woodland;
- Wind and water soil erosion may be tackled locally on an ad-hoc basis only;
- Improvements to riparian vegetation would be most likely where existing projects are active;
- The role of woodland in mitigating flood risk may only be realised where existing projects are active;
- Carbon rich soils would likely be managed where targeted projects exist;
- Landscape qualities may be lost without a coherent strategy to take it into account when forestry proposals are being considered;
- Biodiversity and historic environment interest may be lost or damaged through lack of clear policy guidance;

1.6 Overall, the vision and objectives of the Strategy would be unlikely to be fulfilled in the absence of the Strategy.

Assessment Process

1.7 The Proposed Plan was subject to a 2-stage assessment. Stage 1 of the assessment process focussed on identifying whether the policies and were likely to have a significant impact on the environment. To assist with the Stage 1 assessment process, a series of SEA objectives, which were derived from the environmental baseline data and existing environmental issues and problems within Angus, were used to help determine if the Strategy was likely to have a significant impact on the environment, either positively or negatively. Only significant environmental impacts were taken forward to stage 2 of the assessment process.

1.8 The stage 2 assessment process analysed the likely significant environmental impacts in more detail. To assist the stage 2 assessment process, SEA criteria/checklist were developed, linking into the SEA objectives, but providing a wider scope to evaluate what the significant impact on the environment would be as a result of the polices and proposals.

Summary of the Environmental Impacts

1.9 Overall, when assessed together, the policies of the Strategy are likely to have significant positive impacts on the environment. Forestry and native woodland have significant positive impacts. They can address the twin climate and biodiversity crises by sequestering carbon, improving biodiversity and forming part of a scheme for natural flood management. Potentially adverse impacts upon peatlands, non-woodland biodiversity, landscape special qualities and the historic environment have been avoided by the policies within the Strategy.

Summary of Cumulative Impacts – Policies and Proposals

1.10 Cumulative impacts occur where individual impacts are added together. Within the Strategy, a number of policies will together result in cumulative impacts which are considered to be positive. The Strategy through different policies, encourages increased woodland and forestry. These include an expansion of woodland of high nature conservation value, productive native forestry in the uplands, montane woodland, riparian and floodplain forestry & woodland. Together, the overall result will be a more forested and wooded landscape. The Strategy includes a number of policies which act as checks and balances, to protect landscape special qualities, non woodland biodiversity, the historic environment and peatland. These include policy 8 which protects the historic environment, policy 4 for designated sites and non-woodland biodiversity, policy 10 for public access and policy 3, which does not support forestry on deep peat.

Synergistic Impact Assessment

1.11 Synergistic impacts occur when the combination of individual and unrelated impacts combine to produce a different impact to the sum of the individual impacts concerned. A number of positive synergistic impacts have been identified both with other plans, strategies and between different policies within the Strategy. All such impacts are considered to be positive.

1.12 An overall increase in forestry and woodland will lead to a corresponding rise in sequestered carbon. Actions to protect stored carbon within peatland compliments this policy and policies within this Strategy seek to prevent forestry and woodland damaging peatlands. This overall objective is supported by national strategies including Scottish Forestry Strategy and Scotland's climate change strategy. Together, they all have a synergistic positive impact of increasing stored and sequestered carbon.

1.13 Policies within the Strategy support native woodland in upland areas. This includes policies relating to woodland of high nature conservation value and productive forestry. Also closely related is the policy for montane woodland. These policies are supported by policies relating to deer management. Together they seek to encourage change which will increase biodiversity and create landscapes to address climate change. A more wooded upland will slow the flow of water through river catchments contributing towards natural flood management.

1.14 Natural flood management is an important part of addressing climate change and as well as upland forestry and woodland slowing the flow of water to our rivers, other synergistic policies relate to riparian woodland which creates resilient riverbanks, less likely to be damaged by storm events and reducing siltation of watercourses. This is further complimented by encouraging forestry and woodland on natural floodplains which again are able to slow the flow of water downstream, and absorb seasonal inundation without the erosion of soils.Together, these policies have a synergistic positive impact on natural flood management.

1.15 The management and expansion of woodland of high nature conservation value will increase biodiversity. Again, this is supported by deer management policy within the Strategy. It will also create nature networks and woodlands more resilient to climate change. The expansion and management of native woodland is supported by the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan 2016 – 2026 and the River South Esk Catchment Management Plan. It is also supported by national strategies including the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and Forestry Strategies. Together, these policies and action plans will have a synergistic positive impact on biodiversity.

1.16 The policy relating to management of deer numbers is similar to that within the Cairngorms National Park. Given the movement of deer populations across administrative boundaries, the overall success of managing deer populations will be increased by a similar approach in both areas. This is further complimented at a national level by actions to reduce deer populations which will together have positive synergistic impacts on deer population management.

Mitigation/Enhancement

1.17 Where the stage 2 assessments indicated that there were likely to be adverse impacts as a result of the policies and proposals within the Strategy, mitigation measures were proposed to reduce the overall environmental impact to an acceptable or negligible level for each of the environmental receptors that are affected. This has typically been through the use of additional policies to prevent unitended adverse impact on other interests such peatlands, designated sites, non-woodland biodiversity and the historic environment.

Monitoring

1.18 The Proposed policies and proposals that are likely to have significant environmental impacts are required to be monitored, to ensure that adverse and unforeseen impacts do not arise or can be easily identified and remedied. The proposed Monitoring Measures are provided below:

Table 1: Monitoring Measures

Environmental Issues to be Monitored	Objective of Monitoring	Target
Landscape	To monitor the impact of the Strategy on landscape of Angus	The special qualities of the Angus landscape are not eroded by inappropriate forestry or woodland. Monitored through anecdotal observation.
Biodiversity	To monitor the impact of the Strategy on the biodiversity of Angus.	Protection of woodland of high nature conservation value in Angus. Area felled or damaged through development. Increased biodiversity in Angus. Monitored through increase in area of woodland of high nature conservation value. No damage to designated sites within Angus as a result of forestry and woodland expansion and management. Monitored through anecdotal observation.
Population	Scoped out	n/a

Human Health	The Strategy should encourage accessible woodland in and around towns (WIAT)and smaller settlements. The Strategy should further encourage improved access within existing woodlands.	Will the Strategy increase accessible woodlands near where people live? Monitored through WIAT data. Will the Strategy improve accessibility in existing woodlands? Monitored through WIAT data.
Soil	To monitor the impact of the Strategy on soil resources within Angus.	To reduce the erosion of soils by water and wind. Anecdotal observation only as no scientific monitoring available. To address podzolisation of upland soils and improve pH and soil chemical balance in upland areas. Can be monitored through correlating National Forest Inventory and soil type datasets.
Water	To monitor the impact of the Strategy on the water environment within Angus.	To ensure that forestry and woodland contribute towards improved water quality in watercourses. Monitored through SEPA water quality records as an indicative surrogate.
Air	To monitor the impact of the Strategy on air quality within Angus.	Reduction in dust storms across lowland Angus as a result of wind erosion of soils. Anecdotal observation only as no scientific monitoring available.
Climate	To monitor the impact of the Strategy on	Contribute towards natural flood management. Monitored by area of forestry

	climate change within Angus.	and woodland within river catchments. Protect stored carbon within peatlands. Monitored by area of deep peat or important peatlands adversely affected by forestry. Increase sequestered carbon in forestry and woodland. Monitored by area of forestry and woodland in Angus as indicated by the National Forest Inventory.
Material Assets (restricted to public access)	To monitor the impact on public access and the availability of accessible woodland close to where people live in Angus.	Access to countryside is not restricted as result of forestry and woodland fencing. Anecdotal monitoring through access complaints. Increase in area of accessible woodland close to where people live in Angus. Monitored through WIAT data.
Historic Environment	To monitor the impact of the Strategy on cultural heritage within Angus.	All cultural heritage resources within Angus and their settings are protected from inappropriate forestry and woodland. Monitored through anecdotal observation.

2. INTRODUCTION

1.1 With the twin climate and biodiversity crises, it is more important than ever that our landscapes change significantly to address the challenges. There is an urgent need for significant land use change across Angus with a substantial increase in forestry and woodland.

1.2 The Forestry and Woodland Strategy is being prepared under Section A159 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended). The Forestry and Woodland Strategy is required to identify woodlands of high nature conservation value in Angus and also to set out the Council's policies and proposals for the development of forestry and woodlands; the protection and enhancement of woodlands; the resilience to climate change of woodlands; and the expansion of a range and types of woodlands for a wide range of benefits.

1.3 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF 4) is the Scottish national spatial strategy for Scotland. It sets out our spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments and national planning policy. It contains policies relating to climate change, biodiversity, soils and forestry & woodland. It requires that the Forestry & Woodland Strategy will form part of the evidence report for the next Local Development Plan for Angus.

1.4 The Angus Council Forestry and Woodland Strategy requires to undergo a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. SEA is concerned with the protection of the environment. It is a beneficial and thorough assessment process which ensures that environmental considerations are taken on board at an early stage in the Forestry and Woodland Strategy preparation process, to ensure that the Strategy has minimal environmental impacts.

1.5 SEA is in an integral part of, and will be taken into account throughout, the Forestry and Woodland Strategy process. At key stages, the public will be able to comment on the environmental assessment and all comments will be taken on board. The public will be able to see how their comments have influenced the SEA process, as SEA requires the environmental assessment to be transparent and accountable.

1.6 This Environmental Report sets out the assessment of the Forestry and Woodland Strategy. Details on proposed time periods for public consultation at each stage of the Forestry and Woodland Strategy process will also be provided. This will allow the Consultation Authorities to form a view on the proposed approach to the environmental assessment.

Contact Details

2.5 The main point of contact for the Forestry & Woodland Strategy and SEA is as follows:

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3. CONTEXT

Background

3.1 With the twin climate and biodiversity crises, it is more important than ever that our landscapes change significantly to address the challenges. There is an urgent need for significant land use change across Angus with a substantial increase in forestry and woodland.

3.2 The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) includes a requirement that each Local Authority produces a Forestry & Woodland Strategy.

3.3 National Planning Framework 4 is the Scottish national spatial strategy for Scotland. It sets out our spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments and national planning policy. It contains policies relating to climate change, biodiversity, soils and forestry & woodland. It requires that the Forestry & Woodland Strategy will form part of the evidence report for the next Local Development Plan for Angus.

3.4 The Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2020-2021 included tree planting and woodland creation targets as part of the implementation of Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029. Annual woodland creation targets were set out in the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan. Since 2021 they have risen yearly in steps from 12,000 hectares a year to 13,500 in 2021/22, to 15,000 for 2022/23. For 2023/24 it will rise to 16,500ha and in 2024/25 reach a target of 18,000 ha every year. The Angus Forestry & Woodland Strategy will provide a policy context for how Angus can contribute towards these targets and to the ambitions of Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029.

3.5 The requirement to produce a Forestry & Woodland Strategy and in particular, the requirement to identify and develop policies & proposals for woodland of high nature conservation value is supported by the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2026. The action plan includes actions to protect and expand forests and woodlands. It also seeks to maintain and expand native woodlands and encouraging natural flood management through planting of wet woodland.

Scope of the Forestry & Woodland Strategy

3.6 Section A159 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) introduces a requirement for Local Authorities to prepare a Forestry & Woodland Strategy. It is a requirement that the strategy identifies woodland of high nature conservation value. In addition, it should set out the planning authority's policies and proposals in their area, as to:

i. the development of forestry and woodlands,
ii. the protection and enhancement of woodlands, in particular woodland of high nature conservation value,
iii. the resilience to climate change of woodlands, in particular woodland of high nature conservation value.,
iv. the expansion of woodlands of a range of types to provide multiple benefits to the physical, cultural, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area,

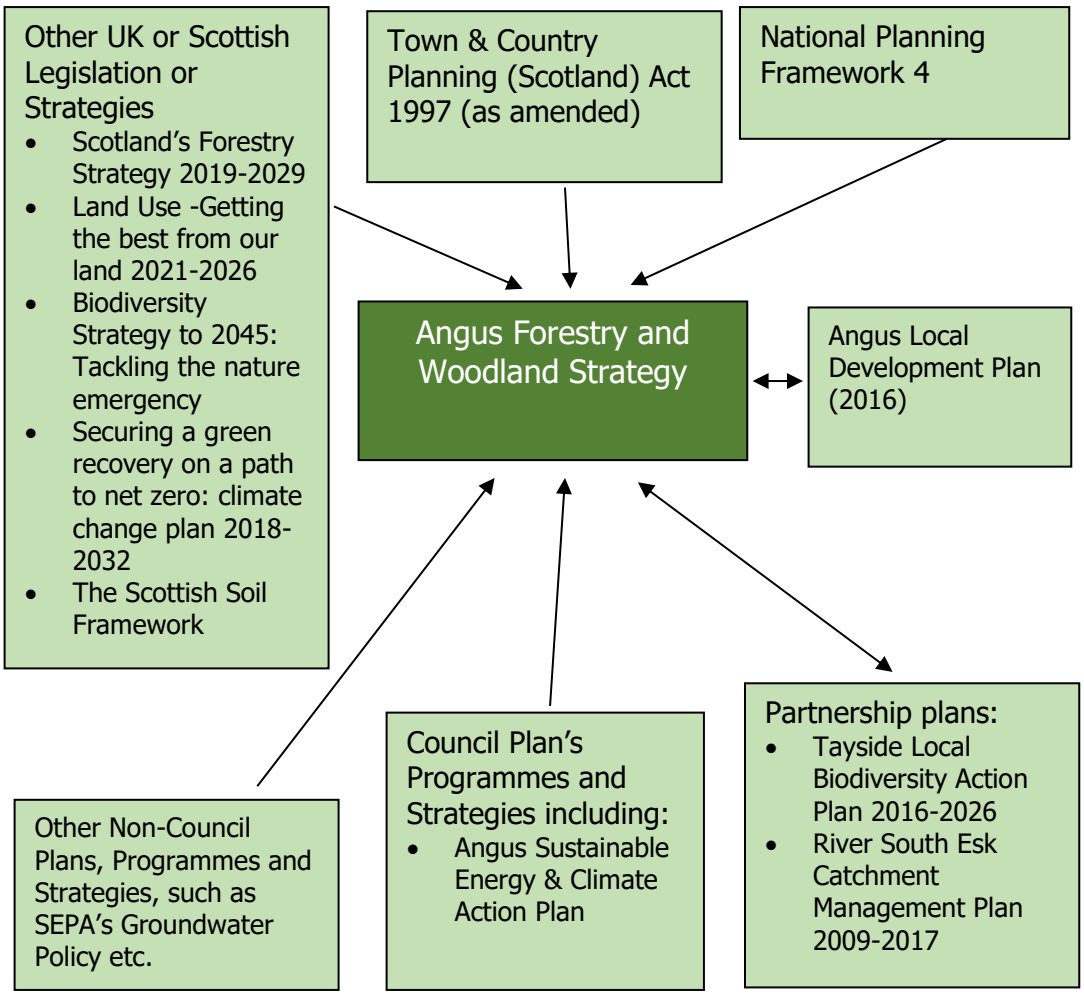
3.7 It is intended that the Strategy provides the Council's policy in relation to forestry and woodlands for the period 2023 – 2033.

4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OTHER PLANS, PROGRAMMES AND STRATEGIES (PPS's)

4.1 The Forestry and Woodland Strategy is influenced by wide range of European, National and Local Plans, Programmes and Strategies (hereafter referred to as PPS's) that the Strategy must take into account. Appendix 1 of this Environmental Report provides a list of the relevant PPS's that the Council envisages that has influenced the content of the Forestry and Woodland Strategy.

Hierarchy of Plan's, Programmes and Strategies

4.2 The Forestry and Woodland Strategy sits within a hierarchy of PPS's. Figure 1 below shows, in diagrammatical form, where the Forestry and Woodland Strategy is located within the hierarchy.



Environmental Protection Objectives

4.3 The environmental objectives that are contained within International, European UK and Scottish legislation, as well as, national advice and guidance, which are considered to be of the greatest relevance, will be taken into account when preparing the Forestry & Woodland Strategy. These are set out in Appendix B.

5. BASELINE ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

5.1 The collation of baseline environmental data is an important part of the SEA process as it provides a snapshot of the environment at that point in time; highlights existing environmental problems and issues; and can be used to predict the future impacts that the implementation of the Plan will have on the environment. It also directly informs the development of SEA objectives which the Forestry & Woodland Strategy will be assessed against.

Landscape

5.2 The Landscape Character Assessment in Scotland (NatureScot 2019) identifies 8 landscape character types (LCT) in Angus, with further sub-division of types within the glens and on the coast. In addition, landscape studies within Angus has further sub-divided Dipslope Farmland LCT into six sub-types and Low Moorland Hills into two. This has resulted in there being a total of 17 types or sub-types in Angus.

5.3 Settlement Landscape Capacity Studies (Angus Council 2015) have been undertaken for 11 settlements across Angus. This study includes further assessment of the landscape context of these settlements.

5.4 A study has identified a suite of four Local Landscape Areas for Angus (Angus Council 2023). The proposed areas to be designated are currently out for public consultation and it is intended that it will be further reported to committee for designation in due course . This study included an assessment of special qualities for all 17 landscape types and sub-types.

5.4 All this data is either held by the Council, or available through data sharing agreements.

Biodiversity

5.5 A range of sites in Angus have been recognised for their wildlife and geological interest. These include:

International Natural Heritage Designations:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's): Barry Links; Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary (part); River South Esk; River Tay.
- Special Protection Areas (SPA's): Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary; Loch of Kinnordy; Loch of Lintrathen; Montrose Basin& Cairngorms Massif (part).
- Ramsar Sites: Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary; Loch of Kinnordy; Loch of Lintrathen; Montrose Basin.

- Marine Protection Areas (MPA's): Outer Firth of Forth & Tay Bank Complex; Outer Firth of Forth & St Andrews Bay Complex; Firth of Forth Banks Complex

National and Local Natural Heritage Designations:

- 36 Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- 1 Local Nature Reserve.
- 14 Gardens and Designed La ndscapes.
- 16 Geological Review Sites (may also be designated SSSI).
- 28 Local Biodiversity Sites.
- 2 Local Geodiversity Sites.

The combined area of the above designated sites is around 4,100 ha.

- In 2023, 67.1% of natural features on designated sites are classified as in favourable condition
- 62,000ha of productive woodland in Angus. This equates to 70% of total woodland cover in Angus.
- Native woodland in Angus is 5,022 ha, which is 21.7% of the total woodland area or 2.3% of the total land area of Angus (2013).
- 681 ha of woodland now present is on ancient woodland sites, of which 61% is native woodland (2013).

5.6 The Strategy will take account of Important European species, as well as, important habitats and species identified by Scottish and UK governments. Habitat and land use survey information is sometimes only partial but is available through data sharing agreements with NatureScot.

Climate

5.7 It is predicted that summers will become warmer and drier whilst there will be an increase in precipitation in the winter months, which may be milder. It will also become stormier with more torrential rain events. This is likely to result in a reduction in snow cover which may melt more quickly combined with shorter periods when the ground is frozen in the uplands. On the lower ground there is predicted to be increased flows within watercourses. This pattern is likely to lead to a risk of increased erosion from upland areas and an increased frequency of flood events. The climate will become more favourable for woodland on higher ground and some pasture on lower slopes may become suitable for arable crops.

5.8 Angus is already experiencing impacts of a changing climate including increased risk of flooding and increased temperatures and likelihood of heatwaves.

5.9 Climate change can affect the two key sources of carbon: trees and soils, especially peat soil.

5.10 Another important consideration when calculating carbon emissions is the effect of carbon sinks. Carbon sinks are natural systems that absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. With grasslands, peatlands, productive and native woodlands, Angus has the potential to offset a significant amount of carbon emissions through the preservation and expansion of these natural assets.

5.11 Data on areas predicted to flood over different timescales produced by SEPA is available through data sharing agreement.

Soils

5.12 10% of Scotland's prime agricultural land is located in Angus and 40% of Scotland's class 1 Agricultural land is located in Angus. The best agricultural land is on lowland areas, particularly around Carnoustie. Large parts of Angus, particularly in the Angus Glens, but also across lowland areas is characterised by podzol soils. Carbon rich soils are most common in upland areas, but also along river riparian areas.

5.13 Data on soils is available online. NatureScot Important Peatlands and James Hutton Istitute peat depth mapping are both available through data sharing agreement.

Air

5.14 Lowland arable landscapes in Angus often have dust storms during spring which both leads to a loss of soils and creates poor air quality in areas where most Angus settlements are located. There are no known data records in this regard.

Water

5.15 The major rivers in Angus are North Esk, South Esk, Isla and Lunan Water. The River South Esk catchment is a resource of immense value to a variety of users, it is a source of drinking water, irrigation for crops, watering for livestock and acts as a basis for tourism, recreation, and salmon fishing.

5.16 In 2020, the status of surface water quality in Angus was found to be as follows:

- High quality – 8.6%
- Good quality – 49.38
- Moderate quality – 27.16%
- Poor quality – 13.59%

- Bad quality – 1.23%

5.17 Data from SEPA is available through data sharing agreements.

Historic Environment

Angus has a rich historic built environment of national, regional and local importance including:

- 370 Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- 2,067 Listed Buildings
- 19 Conservation Areas
- 14 Gardens & Designed Landscapes

There is also mapped non-designated areas of archaeological interest,which form part of the Historic Environment Record maintained by Aberdeenshire Archeaology Service on behalf of the Council These often cover large areas particularly within the Angus Glens and is regularly updated when new surveys are carried out often in response to proposals such as forestry. They represent varying levels of constraint dependant upon the remains and whether they are upstanding. All data is available through data sharing agreements.

Health (restricted to accessible woodland)

Access to accessible woodland close to where people live can increase physical and mental health. The Woodland Access Standard produced by the Woodland Trust suggests that residents of Angus have the second highest level of access to woodland in Scotland. This however remains modest with 53% of residents with access to a 2ha+ woodland within 500m and 54% with access to a 20ha+ woodland within 4km.

Material Assets (restricted to public access)

There is a right of access to land and water in Scotland under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. Angus Council has identified 309 Core Paths with a combined length of 513km which are published within the Angus Core Paths Plan 2010 (updated 2012 and 2016).

In addition, there are public rights of way and promoted path networks around the main settlements. The Angus Coastal Path extends along much of the Angus coastline often connecting with settlement path networks. Part of the Angus Coastal Path, between Monifieth and Arbroath is also the National Cycle Route 1. Other off-path routes are used to access features such as hills and rivers and are sometimes promoted in publications.

Forestry and woodland management usually include a need for fencing. Where deer numbers are high, this is deer fencing. Fencing can obstruct

public access, particularly for the less abled. It is therefore desirable that appropriate crossing facilities are included in any fencing proposals to avoid unduly restricting public access.

Existing Environmental Issues and Problems

5.23 This Environmental Report identifies the current environmental rural land use issues and problems that affect Angus, utilising the information that has been identified through an analysis of baseline data and environmental implications. When undertaking the assessment of the Forestry & Woodland Strategy, the Council will be able to predict whether the current environmental issues and problems will worsen, stabilise or improve through the implementation of the Strategy. The main environmental rural land use issues and problems facing Angus are:

- Woodland of high nature conservation value are often declining due to grazing pressure.
- Forest and woodland cover in Angus is below the national average in the context the government policy of increasing cover.
- Wind blown dust storms during spring most years in lowland arable landscapes leading to loss of soils and poor air quality.
- Water erosion of soils from arable fields, leading to soil degradation, sedimentation of water courses and deposition on public roads.
- The need to reinstate natural soil processes in areas subjected to podzolisation.
- Flood risk increasing due to climate change.
- According to River Woods, more than 50% of the riparian vegetation along Angus watercourses is in poor condition.
- Lack of stock shelter in upland pasture farming areas.
- The need to protect carbon rich soils to lessen climate change.
- The need to sequester carbon in trees to lessen climate change.
- Limited biodiversity in many upland landscapes due to improved pasture, muirburn and absence of woodlands.
- Limited biodiversity in many lowland areas due to intensive arable with fields often amalgamated and limited field boundary trees, hedges and woodlands.
- Need to diversify incomes, particularly in upland farming areas.
- The need to protect existing areas important for biodiversity.
- Need to improve river status.

Evolution of the Environment in the Absence of the Strategy

5.24 The SEA process is also required to assess the likely impact on the environment if the Forestry & Woodland Strategy was not implemented. It is

considered that, in the absence of any overall strategy, forestry and woodland management in Angus would still take place but would be less well attuned to environmental and other strategic objectives and priorities. In particular:

- Much woodland of high nature conservation value may continue to decline through lack of management, with some woodland being progressively lost.
- The emphasis may be on new forest and woodland sites rather than the management of native woodland;
- Wind and water soil erosion may be tackled locally on an ad-hoc basis only;
- Improvements to riparian vegetation would be most likely where existing projects are active;
- The role of woodland in mitigating flood risk may only be realised where existing projects are active;
- Carbon rich soils would likely be managed where targeted projects exist;
- Landscape qualities may be lost without a coherent strategy to take it into account when forestry proposals are being considered;
- Biodiversity interest may be lost or damaged through lack of clear policy guidance;

6 SCOPING OF ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ASSESSMENT

6.1 The purpose of SEA is to assess the likely significant impacts (positive or negative) that the plan will have on the environment. Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act, requires the Forestry & Woodland Strategy to be assessed against the following environmental receptors:

- Biodiversity;
- Population;
- Human health;
- Fauna;
- Flora;
- Soil;
- Water;
- Air;
- Climatic factors;
- Material assets;
- Cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage); and
- Landscape

6.2 It is considered that significant impact will not occur in relation to Population therefore this has been scoped out as it is not considered that the Strategy

will have significant impacts upon population. The remaining receptors provide the context for, and are directly related to, the development of SEA Objectives and the sub-criteria/questions to be used in the assessment process. However, impacts upon some receptors are limited and these include Human Health, Water, Air and Material Assets.

7 ALTERNATIVES

7.1 The Strategy does not include an assessment of alternatives. The different approches to addressing issues wiere discussed within the steering group and the strategy reflects those outcomes. For example, options the steering group considered that the expansion of woodland of high nature conservation value would be best achieved through natural regeneration of woodlands. This would create, more biodiverse and climate resilient woodland when compared to woodland creation through tree planting. Similarly, the steering group considered the options for allowing woodlands to regenerate in the context of deer grazing and supported the need for control of deer poulations rather than a complete dependence upon fencing alone. In addution, this Report which has been prepared in parallel with the Strategy, has considered the alternative of no action. This was considered within the Scoping Report which concluded as follows: .

- Much woodland of high nature conservation value may continue to decline through lack of management, with some woodland being progressively lost.
- The emphasis may be on new forest and woodland sites rather than the management of native woodland;
- Wind and water soil erosion may be tackled locally on an ad-hoc basis only;
- Improvements to riparian vegetation would be most likely where existing projects are active;
- The role of woodland in mitigating flood risk may only be realised where existing projects are active;
- Carbon rich soils would likely be managed where targeted projects exist;
- Landscape qualities may be lost without a coherent strategy to take it into account when forestry proposals are being considered;
- Biodiversity interest may be lost or damaged through lack of clear policy guidance;

8 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

8.1 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the Environmental Report to assess and evaluate the likely significant impacts that the Strategy will have on the environment. It is central to SEA that the assessment process and reporting of the findings are unbiased, robust, objective, transparent and ultimately easy to understand.

8.2 A two stage assessment process has been utilised for the assessment of the Strategy and this is based on significant experience of the Council's SEA expert's methodology. In order to reflect the diversity of the environment, the Council has grouped and defined the environment within five broad headings, as detailed in the table 2 below. These topics and receptors form the basis for stage 1 of the SEA assessment methodology.

Table 2: Environmental Topics and Receptors

Environmental Topics	**Receptors**
Natural Features	Landscape
	Biodiversity
	Climate
Natural Resources	Soil
	Air Quality (limited to wind erosion)
	Water
Historic Environment	Scheduled Ancient Monuments
	Gardens and Designed Landscapes
	Archaeological Sites/Areas
Social Environment	Health (limited to forest & woodland recreation)
	Material Assets (limited to public access)

8.3 The assessment methodology has an overall objective to '**protect and enhance the environment'.**

8.4 The assessment will focus on the spatial strategy, policies, proposals and development sites. It should be noted that only significant impacts will be assessed, which will be identified through Stage 1 of the assessment process. Stage 2 analyses the identified significant impacts in more detail. The assessment has been fully integrated with the plan preparation process.

Stage 1 – Assessment of Significance

8.5 The first stage involves using the SEA objectives constraints shown on the Council's GIS system as a sifting tool to identify significant impacts on the grouped environmental topics and receptors as described in Table 2. The judgement on what is considered to be a significant impact will be based on the following:

- Scale of the impact (geographic area and likely effects on the surrounding population);
- Duration of the impact (short, medium or long term);
- Reversibility of the impact;
- Environmental Sensitivities and Constraints of the area;
- Environmental value of the area;
- Potential for significant cumulative/synergistic impacts

The SEA objectives and the constraints shown on the Council's GIS system will be used to determine whether the identified impact is significant or not, using the baseline environmental data that has been collected and taking into account the existing environmental issues and problems listed in paragraph 5.23 of this report.

If the policies andproposals are considered not to have a significant adverse environmental impact then no further assessment will be required. All identified significant adverse environmental impacts will besubject of further assessment under stage 2.

Stage 2

8.6 Stage 2 will analyse and assess the identified significant impacts in greater detail using Matrix 2 below. The sub criteria/questions will be used to provide a more detailed assessment which teases out what the significant environmental impacts are in relation to each of the individual environmental receptors scoped into the assessment, as detailed in the receptors column in Table 2. At this stage, the assessment will also look at short, medium and long term environmental impact(s) and provide proposals to monitor significant environmental impact(s). Each box will also be colour coded to indicate whether the impact is significant positive (green), significant positive/negative (amber) or significant negative (red), or neutral/unknown impacts (white) to aid comprehension of the assessment results.

SEA Objectives and sub-criteria/questions

8.7 The proposed overall SEA objectives for each environmental receptor scoped into the assessment are detailed in Table 3 below. These have been slightly re-worded since the Scoping Report at the request of NatureScot and Historic Environment Scotland. To aid the overall SEA objectives, SEA

sub-criteria/questions, which are mentioned in the assessment methodology above, have been devised to provide a more detailed assessment of the spatial strategy/policy/proposal or sites which are considered to be significant as a result of the stage 1 assessment. The objectives and sub-criteria/questions are fully compliant with the requirements of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and are shown in table 3 below:

Table 3: SEA Objectives and Sub-Criteria/Questions

Environmental Receptor	SEA Objective	Sub-criteria/questions
Soil	The strategy should aim to protect carbon stored in soils. The strategy should encourage forestry and woodland planting to assist in reducing wind and water erosion of soils. The strategy should protect soils in accordance with NPF4 -policy 5 and the Scottish Soil Framework	Will the Strategy result in a net loss of carbon? Will the strategy reduce the likelihood of wind erosion of soils? Will the strategy reduce the likelihood of water erosion of soils? Does the Strategy have the potential to reverse the podzolization of soils?
Landscape	It is recognised that landscapes need to evolve to address the twin climate and biodiversity crisis. The strategy should encourage landscape change in a way which protects special qualities whilst at the same time mitigating effects climate change, creating more resilient landscapes with increased biodiversity.	Will the strategy adversely affect special qualities? Will the Strategy creates landscapes which are more resilient to mitigate the effects of climate change?
Biodiversity	The strategy should ensure that the integrity of all internationally designated sites within or adjacent to the EAC boundary are protected and preserved.	Will the Strategy lead to adverse impacts upon designated sites? Will the Strategy adversely affect protected species?

	The strategy should safeguard all European and nationally designated sites, habitats and priority species from adverse impacts, loss and fragmentation. The strategy should increase and protect biodiversity.	Will the strategy increase biodiversity? Will the strategy create green networks?
Air	The Strategy should encourage forestry and woodland in arable areas to reduce wind erosion of soils and thereby improve air quality.	Will the Strategy encourage forestry and woodland in lowland arable areas?
Water	The Strategy should avoid forestry or woodland undertaken in ways which result in the siltation of watercourses as detailed in the UK Forest Standard. The Strategy should increase water quality by reducing soil erosion and reducing peak flows in watercourses.	Does the Strategy avoid siltation of watercourses? Does the Strategy increase water quality?
Climate	The Strategy should mitigate effects of climate change, creating more resilient landscapes able to function in a warmer, wetter and stormier climate.	Will the Strategy help reduce flooding? Will the Strategy assist in mitigating flood events? Will the strategy result in more climate resilient woodlands and forests? Will the strategy increase sequestered carbon?
Historic Environment	The Strategy should safeguard cultural heritage sites and their setting from inappropriate forestry and woodland. The Strategy should encourage the retention and management of forests and woodland where they are	Will the Strategy result in the site or setting of designated sites being adversely affected? Will non-designated archaeological interest in be damaged as result of the Strategy?

	important to the setting of cultural heritage sites	
Health	The Strategy should encourage accessible woodland in and around towns (WIAT)and smaller settlements. The Strategy should further encourage improved access within existing woodlands.	Will the Strategy increase accessible woodlands near where people live? Will the Strategy improve accessibility in existing woodlands?
Material Assets	The Strategy should seek to ensure that public access is not unduly restricted by forestry fencing. This particularly includes core paths, public rights of way and other promoted routes. The Strategy should protect potential off-path routes for which there may be demand. These may include landscape features such as hills, rivers or archaeological sites and routes between such features.	Will the Strategy lead to the obstruction of access? Will the Strategy potentially improve access? Will the Strategy lead to the installation of crossing facilities at appropriate locations in forestry fencing?

9 ASSESSMENT RESULTS

9.1 This section provides a summary of the Stage 1 and Stage 2 assessment results of the Strategy. The full results and commentary for the Stage 1 Assessments are contained in Appendix D and for Stage 2 in Appendix E.

STAGE 1 ASSESSMENT RESULTS

9.2 As detailed in paragraph 8.5, the first part of the assessment process is to determine if the policies and proposals contained within the Strategy are likely to have significant impacts on the environment and require to be taken through to a Stage 2 Assessment. The full results of the Stage 1 Assessment can be found in Appendix D. Table 4 below provide a summary of the Stage 1 Assessment results.

Table 4: Summary of Stage 1 Results	**Key**	Yes – Stage 2 assessment									No – Stage 2 assessment
Policy	**Natural Features: Stage 2 Assessment (yes/no)**			**Natural Resources: Stage 2 Assessment (yes/no)**			**Historic Environment: Stage 2 Assessment (yes/no)**			**Social Environment: Stage 2 Assessment (yes/no)**	
	Landscape	Biodiversity	Climate	Soil	Air (limited to wind erosion)	Water	Scheduled Monuments	Gardens and Designed Landscapes	Archaeological sites/areas	Health (limited to forest & woodland recreation)	Material Assets (Limited to public access)
Policy 1: Woodland of high Nature Conservation Value	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Policy 2: Productive Forestry	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Policy 3: Climate Resilient Landscapes	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**
Policy 4: Biodiversity	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**
Policy 5: Montane Woodland	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**
Policy 6: Riparian Woodland	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**
Policy 7: Landscape, Wild Land Areas & Wildness	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**
Policy 8: Historic Environment	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**
Policy 9: Deer Management	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**
Policy 10: Forests, Woodland & People	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

STAGE 2 ASSESSMENT RESULTS

9.9 This section provides a summary of the Stage 2 assessments for the Proposed Plan vision, spatial strategy, policies, proposals and development sites that were likely to have significant impacts as a result of the Stage 1 assessment process. The summary results are presented below in table 5, with the full assessment tables being contained in Appendix E.

Table 5: Summary of Stage 2 Policy and Proposals Assessment Results	**Key:**	**Significant Positive = Green**				**Significant Positive/Negative = Amber**	**Significant Negative = Red**		**Unknown = White**		**Screened Out at Stage 1**
	Landscape	Biodiversity	Climate	Soil	Air	Water	Scheduled Monuments	Gardens and Designed Landscapes	Archaeological sites/areas	Health	Material Assets	Cumulative Impacts
Policy 1: Woodland of High Nature Conservation Value												
Original assessment	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**
After mitigation	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**
Policy 2: Productive Forestry												
Original assessment	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**
After mitigation	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**
Cumulative Impacts												
Cumulative Impacts	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive/ negative**	**Significant positive/ negative**
After Mitigation	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**	**Significant positive**

Cumulative Impact Assessment

9.11 Cumulative impacts occur where individual impacts are added together. Within the Strategy, a number of policies will together result in cumulative impacts which are considered to be positive. The Strategy through different policies, encourages increased woodland and forestry. These include an expansion of woodland of high nature conservation value, productive native forestry in the uplands, montane woodland, riparian and floodplain forestry & woodland. Together, the overall result will be a more forested and wooded landscape. The Strategy includes a number of policies which act as checks and balances, to protect landscape special qualities, non woodland biodiversity, the historic environment and peatland. These include policy 8 which protects the historic environment, policy 4 for designated sites and non-woodland biodiversity, policy 10 for public access and policy 3, which does not support forestry on deep peat.

Synergistic Impact Assessment

9.20 Synergistic impacts occur when the combination of individual and unrelated impacts combine to produce a different impact to the sum of the individual impacts concerned. A number of positive synergistic impacts have been identified both with other plans, strategies and between different policies within the Strategy. All such impacts are considered to be positive.

9.21 An overall increase in forestry and woodland will lead to a corresponding rise in sequestered carbon. Actions to protect stored carbon within peatland compliments this policy and policies within this Strategy seek to prevent forestry and woodland damaging peatlands. This overall objective is supported by national strategies including Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029 and Biodiversity Strategy to 2045: Tackling the nature emergency. Together, they all have a synergistic positive impact of increasing stored and sequestered carbon.

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9.21 Policies within the Strategy support native woodland in upland areas. This includes policies relating to woodland of high nature conservation value and productive forestry. Also closely related is the policy for montane woodland. These policies are supported by policies relating to deer management. Together they seek to encourage change which will increase biodiversity and create landscapes to address climate change. A more wooded upland will slow the flow of water through river catchments contributing towards natural flood management.

9.23 Natural flood management is an important part of addressing climate change and as well as upland forestry and woodland slowing the flow of water to our rivers, other synergistic policies relate to riparian woodland which creates resilient riverbanks, less likely to be damaged by storm events and reducing siltation of watercourses. This is further complimented by encouraging forestry

and woodland on natural floodplains which again are able to slow the flow of water downstream, and absorb seasonal inundation without the erosion of soils. Together, these policies have a synergistic positive impact on natural flood management.

9.24 The management and expansion of woodland of high nature conservation value will increase biodiversity. Again, this is supported by deer management policy within the Strategy. It will also create nature networks and woodlands more resilient to climate change. The expansion and management of native woodland is supported by the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan 2016 – 2026 and the River South Esk Catchment Management Plan. It is also supported by the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and Forestry Strategies. Together, these policies and action plans will have a synergistic positive impact on biodiversity.

9.24 The policy relating to management of deer numbers is similar to that within the Cairngorms National Park. Given the movement of deer populations across administrative boundaries, the overall success of managing deer populations will be increased by a similar approach in both areas. This is further complimented at a national level by actions to reduce deer populations which will together have positive synergistic impacts on deer population management.

Assessment of Alternatives

9.25 The SEA process is also required to assess the likely impact on the environment if the Forestry & Woodland Strategy was not implemented. It is considered that, in the absence of any overall strategy, forestry and woodland management in Angus would still take place but would be less well attuned to environmental and other strategic objectives and priorities. In particular:

- Much woodland of high nature conservation value may continue to decline through lack of management, with some woodland being progressively lost.
- Woodland of high nature conservation value would generally be les resilient to climate change;
- The benefits of native woodland networks would be unlikely to be achieved except locally.
- The emphasis may be on new forest and woodland sites rather than the management of native woodland;
- Wind and water soil erosion may be tackled locally on an ad-hoc basis only;
- Improvements to riparian vegetation would be most likely where existing projects are active;
- The role of woodland in mitigating flood risk may only be realised where existing projects are active;
- Carbon rich soils would likely be managed where targeted projects exist;
- Landscape qualities may be lost without a coherent strategy to take it into account when forestry proposals are being considered;
- Biodiversity and historic environment interest may be lost or damaged through lack of clear policy guidance;

Overall, the vision and objectives of the Strategy would be unlikely to be fulfilled in the absence of the Strategy.

10. Enhancement and Mitigation

10.1. Where the stage 2 assessments indicated that there were likely to be adverse impacts as a result of the policies within the Strategy, mitigation measures were proposed to reduce the overall environmental impact to an acceptable or negligible level for each of the environmental receptors that are affected. This has typically been through the use of additional policies to prevent unitended adverse impact on other interests such peatlands, designated sites, non-woodland biodiversity and the historic environment.

10.3 The SEA has influenced the Strategy, in terms of ensuring that the mitigation for potential adverse impacts are mitigated.

11. Monitoring

11.1 The policies and proposals that are likely to have significant environmental impacts are required to be monitored, to ensure that adverse and unforeseen impacts do not arise or can be easily identified and remedied. The proposed Monitoring Measures are provided below:

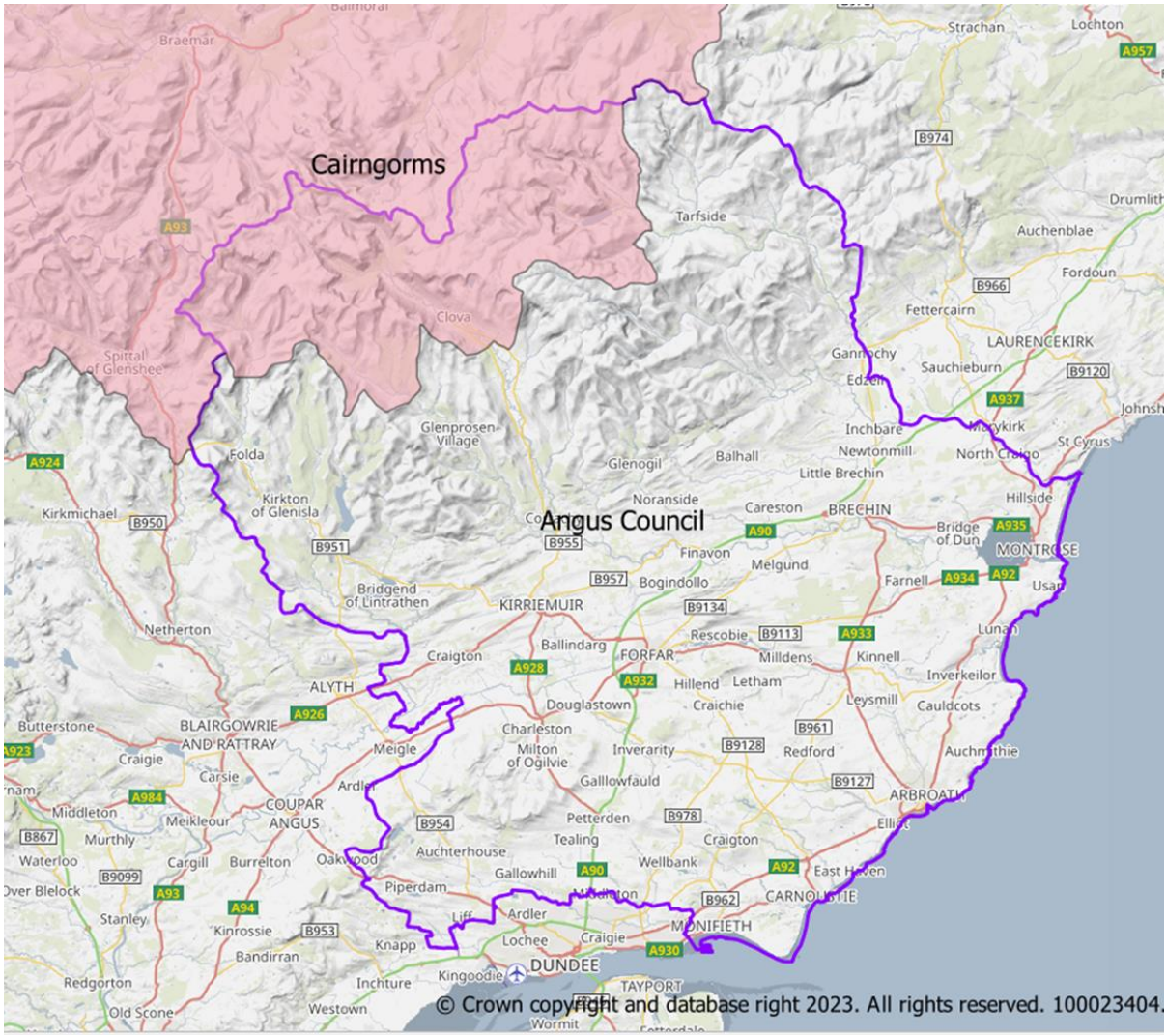
Table 1: Monitoring Measures

Environmental Issues to be Monitored	Objective of Monitoring	Target
Landscape	To monitor the impact of the Strategy on landscape of Angus	The special qualities of the Angus landscape are not eroded by inappropriate forestry or woodland. Monitored through anecdotal observation.
Biodiversity	To monitor the impact of the Strategy on the biodiversity of Angus.	Protection of woodland of high nature conservation value in Angus. Area felled or damaged through development. Increased biodiversity in Angus. Monitored through increase in

		area of woodland of high nature conservation value. No damage to designated sites within Angus as a result of forestry and woodland expansion and management. Monitored through anecdotal observation.
Population	Scoped out	n/a
Human Health	The Strategy should encourage accessible woodland in and around towns (WIAT)and smaller settlements. The Strategy should further encourage improved access within existing woodlands.	Will the Strategy increase accessible woodlands near where people live? Monitored through WIAT data. Will the Strategy improve accessibility in existing woodlands? Monitored through WIAT data.
Soil	To monitor the impact of the Strategy on soil resources within Angus.	To reduce the erosion of soils by water and wind. Anecdotal observation only as no scientific monitoring available. To address podzolisation of upland soils and improve pH and soil chemical balance in upland areas. Can be monitored through correlating National Forest Inventory and soil type datasets.
Water	To monitor the impact of the Strategy on the water environment within Angus.	To ensure that forestry and woodland contribute towards improved water quality in watercourses. Monitored through SEPA water quality records as an indicative surrogate.

Air	To monitor the impact of the Strategy on air quality within Angus.	Reduction in dust storms across lowland Angus as a result of wind erosion of soils. Anecdotal observation only as no scientific monitoring available.
Climate	To monitor the impact of the Strategy on climate change within Angus.	Contribute towards natural flood management. Monitored by area of forestry and woodland within river catchments. Protect stored carbon within peatlands. Monitored by area of deep peat or important peatlands adversely affected by forestry. Increase sequestered carbon in forestry and woodland. Monitored by area of forestry and woodland in Angus as indicated by the National Forest Inventory.
Material Assets (restricted to public access)	To monitor the impact on public access and the availability of accessible woodland close to where people live in Angus.	Access to countryside is not restricted as result of forestry and woodland fencing. Anecdotal monitoring through access complaints. Increase in area of accessible woodland close to where people live in Angus. Monitored through WIAT data.
Historic Environment	To monitor the impact of the Strategy on cultural heritage within Angus.	All cultural heritage resources within Angus and their settings are protected from inappropriate forestry and woodland. Monitored through anecdotal observation.

Appendix A: Map of Angus



Appendix B: Main Plans, Programmes and Strategies used to inform the development of the Strategy

Plan, Programme or Strategy	Main/Key Issues of the Document	Implications for the Strategy
International		
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands	The Ramsar Convention was agreed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971 and the UK Government signed up to the Convention in 1976. There are 4 Ramsar Sites within Angus, all of which are SSSI designated.	The Strategy should protect their designated interest.
European		
EU Habitats Directive	The Directive requires the protectionof species and habitats listed in the Annex's to the Directive by the identification and classification of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).	The Strategy is required to protect SACs from loss or damage.
EU Water Framework Directive	The Directive is a broad strategy for the management of water and includes a requirement for all EU Member States to ensure that they achieve good ecological status for all surface and ground water by 2015 and to limit the quantity of groundwater extraction in order to protect ecology. The Directive requires the production of River Basin Management plans as a key way of achieving the aims of the Directive.	The Strategy should ensure that there is no degradation of water bodies, no adverse impacts on the water environment and should support sustainable water management practices.
EU Birds Directive	The Directive relates to all naturally occurring birds in the wild within the European Union and addresses the protection - through the	The Strategy is required to protect SPAs from loss or damage.

	identification and classification of Special Protection Areas - management and control of these species and identifies rules for their exploitation. The provisions apply to birds, their eggs, nests and habitats	
European Landscape Convention	The European Landscape Convention (ELC) is a Council of Europe treaty that highlights the importance of all landscapes and commits signatories to their care and planning. The UK signed up to the convention in 2006, Signatories to the Convention have undertaken to recognise landscapes in law, to develop landscape policies and protection and to integrate landscape into its regional and town planning policies and in its cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies, as well as in any other policies with possible direct or indirect impact on landscape. In addition, signatories have undertaken to analyse, characterise and assess landscapes taking into account the value placed upon them by the general public; and to define landscape quality objectives for the landscapes.	The content of the treaty underpins landscape character assessment and the identification of Local Landscape Areas in Angus, which included a description of special qualities. These will all inform the Strategy.
National Legislation, Plans Policies and Strategies		
Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004	The Act places a duty on public bodies in relation to conservation of biodiversity and increases protection for SSSI's	Will be an important underlying principle of the Strategy
National Planning Framework 4 (2023)	Contains policies relating to climate change, biodiversity, soils and forestry & woodland	The policies within NPF4 will be taken into account in the Strategy which will form part of the evidence report for the forthcoming Local

		Development Plan 2.
Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029	Contains the Government's policies and proposals in relation to forestry and woodland in Scotland	The Council's Strategy will implement the national Strategy locally.
UK Forestry Standard (2017)	The UKFS defines standards and requirements, is a basis for regulation and monitoring, and sets guidelines for sustainable forest management. It also recognises that forests have environmental, economic and social objectives.	The UKFS (2017) is a key document in ensuring that adverse environmental effects are avoided or mitigated. (It is currently under review)
Land Use -Getting the best from our land 2021-2026	The Strategy sets out the Scottish Government's vision, objectives and policies to achieve sustainable land use in the context of the twin climate and biodiversity crises. It refers to Scotland's Forestry Strategy and uses landscapes to describe land use as a holistic systems view. It refers to urban forestry, on farm woodland, agroforestry and their role in expanding green networks. It reinforces a commitment to increase woodland in order to deliver net-zero.	The land use strategy will inform the strategy
Biodiversity Strategy to 2045: Tackling the nature emergency.	The biodiversity strategy sets out our clear ambition for Scotland to be Nature Positive by 2030, and to have restored and regenerated biodiversity across the country by 2045. An outcome is that forest and woodland management will have led to sustainable natural regeneration; a greater diversity of woodland species; increased woodland cover with a healthy understorey, enhanced woodland connectivity; and improved integration of trees into other land uses. In	The Biodiversity Strategy supports the management and expansion of native woodland supporting policies within the Strategy in relation to Woodland of High Nature Conservation Value.

	addition, Riparian woodland will have expanded reducing the average temperature of our rivers and burns, leading to increases in freshwater fish species and other wildlife.	
Securing a green recovery on a path to net zero: climate change plan 2018-2032	The Climate Change Plan sets out the Scottish Government's pathway to our new and ambitious targets set by the Climate Change Act 2019. The Plan sets out that this will require that appropriate land be moved out of farming as we currently understand it into forestry and peatland.	The Plan supports the expansion of forestry but emphasises the importance of peatland restoration.
The Scottish Soil Framework (2009)	The Scottish Soil Framework sets out the vision for soil protection in Scotland, and formally acknowledges the important services soils provide to society. It emphasises the role of soils and lists a number of actions.	The Framework is becoming out of date and many of the actions within it have now been progressed.
Scottish Landscape Character Types Map & Descriptions (NatureScot 2019)	The original Tayside Landscape Character Assessment published in 1997 has been updated and incorporated within a single national assessment. This assessment describes the character of types within Angus. It formed the baseline for the Angus Local Landscape Areas study.	The assessment forms a baseline for describing landscape within Angus and will likely form part of the mapping in relation to the categorisation of land areas.
The Right Tree in the Right Place (Scottish Forestry 2010)	The publication provides Scottish Government advice to planning authorities on planning for forestry and woodlands. It supports Scottish Ministers' desire to see a significant expansion in woodland cover, delivering multiple benefits to society.	The advice within the publication will inform the development of the strategy. It does however pre-date the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and therefore does not include advice specifically relating to the requirement to identify woodland of high nature conservation value.
Guidance Strategic Environmental Assessment (NatureScot)	NatureScot guidance	

Guidance – Policy Summary (NatureScot)		
Guidance – Strategic Environmental Assessment – Landscape Considerations (NatureScot)	NatureScot guidance in relation to landscape.	Provides guidance on assessing effects on landscape.
Guidance – Biodiversity & Geodiversity Consideration (NatureScot)	NatureScot Guidance in relation to biodiversity and geodiversity.	Provides guidance on assessing effects on biodiversity and geodiversity.
Framework for Nature Networks in Scotland - Draft	The draft of the Framework for Nature Networks in Scotland to be consulted on as part of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy Delivery Plan consultation.	The draft Framework supports the creation of nature networks. Woodland of High Nature Conservation Value will be an important part of the Angus Nature Network.
Our Past, Our Future is Scotland's national strategy for the historic environment for the period 2023-2028.	Scotland's strategy for the historic environment.	The Strategy sets out the national priorities in relation to the historic environment.
Angus Council Plans and Strategies		
Angus Local Development Plan (2016)	The Plan include indicates that ancient semi-natural woodland is an irreplaceable resource and should be protected from removal and potential adverse impacts of development. The council will identify and seek to enhance woodlands of high nature conservation value. It also contains policy content which to protect and retain trees and woodland. It supports woodland creation where they accord with the Woodland & Forestry Framework (2011).	The Plan supports the Strategy and in particular Woodland of High Nature Conservation Value. It further supports forest and woodland expansion.

Angus Core Paths Plan (2010)	The Plan designates a series of Core Paths across Angus. Although access rights apply to most land, many people prefer to use paths. A well-marked, clearly defined system of core paths will encourage people to enjoy the outdoors. Suitable provision of core paths can also assist in managing access, particularly over agricultural land. Core paths plans should be 'sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area'. Core paths form the basic framework of paths, linking with other access provision.	Core Paths are an important part of the way the public take access. The Plan will inform policy within the Strategy, particularly in relation to the potential of forestry fencing to obstruct access and the need for suitable crossing facilities.
Angus Sustainable Energy & Climate Action Plan (2021)	The purpose of the Action Plan is to support Angus in its commitment to sustainable development, environmental management, and the transition to a low carbon economy.	Forestry and woodland are a part of a low carbon economy, and the Action Plan supports and promotes woodland expansion in the "target" areas within Angus identified in the Angus Woodland & Forestry Framework (2011).
Angus Local Landscape Areas (consultation draft 2023)	The draft proposes 4 Local Landscape Areas for Angus.	The draft includes an assessment of special qualities for all landscape character types within Angus, which will assist in assessing effects upon landscape. Landscape guidance is provided for the 4 areas proposed for designation which will be of further assistance.
Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2026	The Action Plan includes actions to protect and expand forests and woodlands. It further seeks to maintain existing native woodland and the planting of native woodland. It encourages the natural flood management through the planting of trees and the maintenance restoration and improvement of existing wet woodlands. It supports urban trees and encourages the protection, restoration and enhancement of Ancient Woodland. It	The Action Plan supports the Strategy, particularly in relation to the management and expansion of woodland of high nature conservation value and their contribution towards green networks

	further supports woodland expansion as part of green networks.	
River South Esk Catchment Management Plan 2009-2017	The management plan includes actions to create riparian woodland and the management of floodplains including increasing riparian woodlands.	The Management Plan supports the increase in riparian woodland.
Angus Woodland & Forestry Framework (2011)	The Framework provides guidance on forestry and woodland within Angus.	The Framework is significantly out of date.

APPENDIX C: CONSULTATION AUTHORITY RESPONSES RECEIVED IN RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE MAIN ISSUES REPORT AND THE COUNCIL'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION

Consultee	Consultee Response	Council Response
Scottish Environment Protection Agency	Thank you for your consultation which was received by SEPA on 28 August 2023. In accordance with Section 9(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 we have reviewed the screening report using the criteria set out in Schedule 2 of the Act. In regard to our main areas of interest (air, water, soil, human health, material assets and climatic factors) **we agree with the conclusions of the screening report** that the proposed Forest and Woodland Strategy is **unlikely to have** significant environmental effects. Although we are of the view that significant environmental effects are unlikely, it is for the Responsible Authority to make a formal determination taking into account the consultation responses received. If you would like to discuss this consultation response, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or via our SEA Gateway at sea.gateway@sepa.org.uk	The comments of SEPA are appreciated and duly noted.

Scottish Natural Heritage	Thank you for your scoping report consultation on the Angus Forestry and Woodland Strategy, sent to the Scottish Government SEA Gateway on 28 August 2023. Our comments on the scope and level of detail to be included in the environmental report and on the duration of the proposed consultation period are set out below. **Scope of assessment and level of detail** Subject to the specific comments set out in the annex to this letter, we are content with the scope and level of detail proposed. **Consultation period for the environmental report** We note that a period of 6 weeks is proposed for consultation on the environmental report and strategy and we are content with this proposed period. **Concluding remarks** I hope these comments are helpful. Please note that this response is in the context of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and our role as consultation authority. We understand that we will be separately consulted on our views regarding the environmental report and the strategy. Should you wish to discuss this response further, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or via the NatureScot SEA Gateway at sea_gateway@nature.scot. The advice in this letter is provided by NatureScot, the operating name of Scottish Natural Heritage.	The comments of NatureScot are appreciated and duly noted.
	General approach We are pleased that the strategy will seek to address the twin climate and biodiversity crises. We would like the strategy to take a more ambitious approach to	Noted and implemented.The climate change importance has been emphasised in the Strategy with

	ensure the enhancement of woodlands and resilience to climate change of woodlands given the strategy will be in place for the next 10 years.	additional content regarding the climate change resilience of woodlands.
	Relationship between other plan's programmes and strategies The scoping report provides a useful list of plans, programmes and strategies which may influence or be integrated with the strategy. We support that policies within National Planning Framework 4 and the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy will be taken into account. We note that the strategy will consider how woodlands and forestry can expand green networks. We suggest that the strategy should also consider how it can support and develop nature networks. We have draft guidance that may be helpful in guiding how the strategy could contribute to increasing habitat connectivity in Angus: https://www.nature.scot/doc/framework-nature-networks-scotland-draft#Summary+table+of+delivery+principles.	Accepted. We have added the draft Framework relating to Nature Networks to the list in appendix B.
	Baseline information It is not clear on some of the sources of baseline data that will be used as organisations instead of specific sources are listed for some topics. Data and information on key protected areas across Scotland is available on our SiteLink webpage: https://sitelink.nature.scot/home. This provides information on the site boundaries and designated features.	Noted and information will be accessed direct from SiteLink where it is not already available on our GIS system via data sharing agreement with NatureScot and other governmental organistaions. The most pertinent documents have also been considered and added to the list in appendix B.

	Other sources of data within NatureScot's remit can be found on our website: https://www.nature.scot/doc/strategic-environmental-assessment.	
	Significant issues A range of designated sites and protected areas have been identified in Angus. There is no detailed information or consideration of any likely impacts of the strategy on these sites. Where there are any likely significant effects of the strategy on the protected areas should be noted. In Appendix 1, the European Habitats Directive is referenced. In Scotland, the Habitats Directive is translated into specific legal obligations by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994. This piece of legislation is usually known as the Habitats Regulations. You may wish to consider opportunities to combine the earlier stages of SEA and Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA), where appropriate, even though the differing requirements mean that the two assessments cannot be fully integrated. If the HRA is undertaken in parallel with SEA, it is important that the findings of both appraisals are separately and clearly documented and that the record of the HRA uses the correct terminology. Our webpage explains the necessary stages in the process: https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/planning-and-development/environmental-assessment/habitats-regulations-appraisal-hra. It is mentioned at section 5.2 that '*impacts on some receptors are limited and these include human health, water, air and material assets.*' It is not clear from the information set out in the scoping report why	Thank you – Consideration of Natura 2000 sites has been an important consideration in developing the Strategy. A separate Habitat Regulations Appraisal has been undertaken in parallel with this Environmental Report and NatureScot will be consulted at the same time as this Report. Accepted. The detail within both the Strategy and the assessment within this Environmental Report has hopefully explained the inter-

	the impacts on these environmental receptors are considered limited. It is also important to consider the inter-relationship with other environmental receptors such as water and biodiversity. It is noted that information on priority species and habitats will be collected. This should include reference to European protected species.	relationship between different receptors. Noted and added
	SEA objectives *Soil* – It is important that strategy should consider not only planting but also felling to ensure that this is planned and implemented in a way to minimise soil loss. *Air* – The strategy should consider that with the incidence of droughts fire risk is increased. Design and location of forestry should take into account minimising this risk both in terms of location and layout, for example, keeping back from roads to avoid fire risk from discarded cigarettes and including firebreaks in planting design etc. *Water* – We recommend that the design of new plantations needs to take account of increased rainfall intensity in the future through planting design and felling/harvesting plans to avoid soil loss and siltation of rivers. *Climate* – We suggest that the question sub-criteria/question *'Will forests and woodland continue to thrive despite a changing climate?'* should be changed to *'Will the strategy result in more climate resilient woodlands and forests?'*	Much of this is contained within the UK Forest Standard referenced within relevant sections of the Strategy, but the need for further strategy content on these matters will be considered following consultation. Wording changed as requested.

	Assessment methodology The proposed assessment methodology has an overall objective to '*protect, and where appropriate, enhance the environment'*. Given the twin climate change and nature crises we support enhancing biodiversity wherever possible	
Historic Environment Scotland	**Scoping Report** Thank you for your consultation which we received on 28 August 2023 about the above scoping report. We have reviewed this in our role as a Consultation Authority under the above Act. This letter contains our views on the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the Environmental Report. Please note that our view is based on our main area of interest for the historic environment. **Scope and level of detail** It is our understanding that the Angus Forestry and Woodland Strategy will set out the policies and proposals for the development of forestry and woodland in the area. We note that the historic environment has been scoped into the assessment as woodland management and expansion has the potential for significant effects on the historic environment resource. On the basis of the information provided, we are content with this approach and are satisfied with the scope and level of detail proposed for the assessment, subject to the detailed comments provided in the attached annex.	The comments of HES are appreciated and duly noted. Thanks and the comments have been duly noted.

	Consultation period for the Environmental Report We note that a 6-week consultation on the Environmental Report and relevant documents is proposed and we can confirm that we are content with this timescale. Please note that, for administrative purposes, we consider that the consultation period commences on receipt of the relevant documents by the SEA Gateway. We hope this is helpful. Please contact us if you have any questions about this response. The officer managing this case is Andrew Stevenson who can be contacted by phone on 0131 668 8960 or by email on andrew.stevenson2@hes.scot.	Noted with thanks
	Baseline Environmental Data We welcome the baseline information provided here for the historic environment. In terms of the numbers quoted for designations we would note that our records show that there are the following: LISTED BUILDINGS IN ANGUS CATEGORY A 81 CATEGORY B 965 CATEGORY C 1021 TOTAL 2067 The commentary regarding elements of double counting is noted and this is particularly the case for listed buildings where one designation may cover a number of individual assets. Locational information for these sites can be found on Historic Environment Scotland's Portal which also presents Geographic Information System datasets that can be downloaded.	Thank you for the clarification

	The recognition of the importance of considering undesignated sites is welcomed and we note that the Sites and Monument Record will hold important baseline information on this resource. Consideration is also given in this section to the implications of the strategy for the historic environment baseline. As noted, woodland and forestry land management has the potential for both positive and negative effects on the historic environment resource. It is therefore welcomed that the proposed SEA Objectives reflect this through both seeking to avoid harm (through either physical damage or detrimental impacts on setting) and retaining and enhancing woodland that contributes to the setting or has significance for the historic environment.	Thank you. We have also been in discussion with the Aberdeenshire Archeaollogy Service Historic Environmenr Records
	Scoping of issues to be included in the assessment As noted above we agree that the historic environment should be scoped into the assessment as some strategy components have the potential for significant environmental effects.	Noted and included in assessment.
	Assessment Methodology We note that a 2 stage Matrix approach is proposed for the assessment. The first stage is proposed for sifting strategy content in order to focus further detailed assessment on potential significant effects. This Stage 2 will then consider such significant effects together with proposed mitigation and how these will be monitored/enhanced. This approach is sound but it will be important that the reasoning behind components of the strategy being scoped out is clearly explained. Furthermore, as with all assessment approaches that utilise matrices, adequate	

	commentary to set out the rationale behind presented findings is of particular importance.	
	SEA Objectives and Sub Objectives We are content with the SEA Objective proposed for the historic environment. In terms of the Sub Objectives that will be used to test strategy content we would simply advise that the first sub objective be altered to read: Will the Strategy result in the site or setting of designated sites being adversely affected? as this would be pertinent for historic environment assets if present within proposed expansion areas.	Noted and changed as requested in table 3
	Plans Programmes and Strategies In terms of relevant plans, programmes and strategies for the historic environment we would point to the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland and the newly published Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland: Our Past Our Future.	Thanks - added to appendix B

APPENDIX D: FULL STAGE 1 POLICY AND PROPOSAL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Policy 1: Woodland of High Nature Conservation Value		
Components	**Will there be an Environmental Impact?**	**Significant Impact (Yes/No/Don't Know) Why? If no, could the impact become a significant cumulative or synergistic impact (yes/no) why?**
Natural Features	The policy will have positive impacts upon landscape, biodiversity and climate. Native woodland is often an important component of landscape and proposals which maintain, manage, expand and connect this resource will generall be positive. Similarly, native woodland is of high nature conservation value and therefore this will have positive impacts for biodiversity. Increased woodland cover means increased carbon storage and can greatly assist in natural flood management by slowing the flow of water through the landscape.	Yes, there are likely to be significant impacts on landscape, biodiversity and climate climate but they will be positive. Where woodland expansion may theoretically have adverse impacts, there are policies in place for example to undertake wader impact assessments or eagle impact assessments. Similarly, there are policies which protect deep peat from inappropriate woodland expansion. Scoped in to Stage 2 assessment **Cumulative Impacts** This policy will have significant cumulative impacts which will all be positive. Most policies encourage increased forestry and woodland cover and together they will lead to a noticeable increase in tree cover in Angus. **synergistic impacts** Significant positive synergistic impacts are likely to occur. This policy supports native woodland and this policy will combine with policies 2, 4, 5, 7 & 9 to enable the transformation of upland areas. This policy supports native woodland management & expansion and will have significant positive

		synergistic impacts with policies 3, 6 & 9 to create climate resilient riparian and floodplain woodlands.
Natural Resources	The policy will have positive impacts on soil, air and water. Woodland stabilses the banks of water-courses and reduces silt input to them during storm events. Native woodland in particular can reverse podsolisation of soils improving soil pH, chemical balance and restoring fertility. Lastly, woodland can reduce wind erosion of soils in arable areas, which also can help prevent dust storms in arable landscapes which adversely affect air quality.	Yes, there are likely to be significant positive impacts on soils, air and water. Scoped in to stage 2 assessment **synergistic impacts** Synergestic impacts will occur with policies 2, 3 5, 9 &10.
Historic Environment	There are unlikely to be any impacts on the historic environment.	No - Policy 8 within the Strategy seeks to avoid adverse impacts upon the historic environment. Significant adverse impacts are therefore not considered likely. Scoped in to stage 2 assessment
Social Environment	There is likely to be positive impact on health due to a reduction in dust storms.	No - Policy 10 within this Strategy should mean that adverse impacts in terms of accesssability are avoided whilst providing positive impacts through the provision of accessible woodland. Scoped in to stage 2 assessment

Policy 2: Productive Forestry		
Components	**Will there be an Environmental Impact?**	**Significant Impact (Yes/No/Don't Know) Why? If no, could the impact become a significant cumulative or synergistic impact (yes/no) why?**
Natural Features	The policy will have positive impacts upon landscape, biodiversity and climate. Native	Yes, there are likely to be significant impacts on landscape, biodiversity and climate climate but

	productive forestry is encouraged on species poor upland heath, which should lead to improved biodiversity. Increased productive forestry cover means increased carbon storage and can greatly assist in natural flood management by slowing the flow of water through the landscape. Mixed species and non clear fell systems are encouraged to improve climate change resilience. Where woodland expansion may theoretically have adverse impacts, there are policies in place for example to undertake wader impact assessments or eagle impact assessments. Similarly, there are policies which protect deep peat from inappropriate woodland expansion.	these will be positive. Adverse impacts are avoided through other policies within the Strategy (policies 1, 3, 4 & 7). Scoped in to stage 2 assessment. **Cumulative Impacts** This policy will have significant cumulative impacts which will all be positive. Most policies encourage increased forestry and woodland cover and together they will lead to a noticeable increase in tree cover in Angus. **Synergistic Impacts** Significant positive synergistic impacts are likely to occur. This policy supports native woodland in upland areas and this policy will combine with policies 1, 4, 5, 7 & 9 to enable the transformation of upland areas.
Natural Resources	The policy will have positive impacts on soil, air and water. Native productive forestry in particular can reverse podsolisation of soils improving soil pH, chemical balance and restoring fertility. Lastly, forestry can reduce wind erosion of soils in arable areas, which also can help prevent dust storms in arable landscapes which adversely affect air quality.	Yes, there are likely to be significant positive impacts on soils, air and water. Synergestic impacts between protection of soils from wind erosion and adverse air quality would result in positive impacts for health. Scoped in to stage 2 assessment.
Historic Environment	There are unlikely to be any impacts on the historic environment.	No - Policy 8 within the Strategy seeks to avoid adverse impacts upon the historic environment. Significant adverse impacts are therefore not considered likely. Scoped in to stage 2 assessment

Social Environment	There is likely to be positive impact on health due to a reduction in dust storms.	No - Policy 10 within this Strategy should mean that adverse impacts in terms of accesssability are avoided whilst providing positive impacts through the provision of accessible woodland. Scoped in to stage 2 assessment

Policy 3: Climate Change, Sustainability & Resilient Landscapes		
Components	**Will there be an Environmental Impact?**	**Significant Impact (Yes/No/Don't Know) Why? If no, could the impact become a significant cumulative or synergistic impact (yes/no) why?**
Natural Features	This policy will ensure that there are positive impacts in relation to biodiversity and climate. The policy generally supports forestry and woodland which will address climate change which can include increased landscape resilience where forestry and woodland contribute towards natural flood management by flowing the flow of water through the landscape. Woodland can mitigate ,climate change impacts upon water-courses by regulating water temperature and creating flood tolerant riparian zones and flood plains. Lastly, the proposal discourages forestry and woodland on deep peat which may compromise the storage of carbon within these soils.	Significant impacts are likely to be positive. Scoped out from stage 2. **Cumulative Impacts** This policy will have significant cumulative impacts which will all be positive. Most policies encourage increased forestry and woodland cover and together they will lead to a noticeable increase in tree cover in Angus. **Synergistic Impacts** This policy supports climate resilient landscapes and will have significant positive synergistic impacts with policies 1, 6 & 9 to create climate resilient riparian and floodplain woodlands.
Natural Resources	The policy will have positive impacts on soil, air and water. The policy will support forestry and woodland to reduce wind blown and water soil erosion and will thereby reduce siltation of watercourses.	Significant impacts are likely to be positive. Scoped out from stage 2.
Historic Environment	There are unlikely to be any impacts on the historic environment.	No significant impacts. Scoped out from stage 2.

Social Environment	Unlikely to have impacts upon the social environment.	No significant impacts. Scoped out from stage 2.

Policy 4: Biodiversity		
Components	**Will there be an Environmental Impact?**	**Significant Impact (Yes/No/Don't Know) Why? If no, could the impact become a significant cumulative or synergistic impact (yes/no) why?**
Natural Features	The policy will have positive impacts upon landscape, biodiversity and climate. It will protect important non-woodland biodiversity interests. It will have positive impacts on biodiversity in species poor upland landscapes. Increased productive forestry & woodland cover means increased carbon storage and can greatly assist in natural flood management by slowing the flow of water through the landscape.	Significant impacts are likely to be positive. Scoped out from stage 2. **Cumulative Impacts** This policy will have significant cumulative impacts which will all be positive. Most policies encourage increased forestry and woodland cover and together they will lead to a noticeable increase in tree cover in Angus. **Synergistic Impacts** Significant positive synergistic impacts are likely to occur. This policy supports native woodland in upland areas and this policy will combine with policies 1, 2, 5, 7 & 9 to enable the transformation of upland areas.
Natural Resources	The policy will prevent negative impacts upon soils, air and water. In relation to policy 4(e), native woodland in particular can reverse podsolisation of soils improving soil pH, chemical balance and restoring fertility.	Significant impacts are likely to be positive. Scoped out from stage 2.
Historic Environment	Unlikely to have any impacts upon the historic environment.	No significant impacts. Scoped out from stage 2.

Social Environment	Unlikely to have impacts upon the social environment.	No significant impacts. Scoped out from stage 2.

Policy 5: Montane Woodland		
Components	**Will there be an Environmental Impact?**	**Significant Impact (Yes/No/Don't Know) Why? If no, could the impact become a significant cumulative or synergistic impact (yes/no) why?**
Natural Features	The policy will have positive impacts upon landscape, biodiversity and climate. The creation of montane woodland will enhance biodiversity, soften edges in landscapes which typically have higher wildness and will help address climate issues with natural flood management and reducing soil erosion	Significant impacts are likely to be positive. There are however safeguards in place to require an eagle impact assessment where there may be impacts on the Special Protection Area. Scoped out from stage 2. **Cumulative Impacts** This policy will have significant cumulative impacts which will all be positive. Most policies encourage increased forestry and woodland cover and together they will lead to a noticeable increase in tree cover in Angus. **Synergistic Impacts** Significant positive synergistic impacts are likely to occur. This policy supports the creation of montane woodland in upland areas and this policy will combine with policies 1, 2, 4, 7 & 9 to enable the transformation of upland areas.
Natural Resources	The policy will have positive impacts on soil, air and water. Montane woodland will likely protect soils from erosion on upland areas that are sometimes over-grazed and burned vegetaion.	Significant impacts are likely to be positive. Scoped out from stage 2.

Historic Environment	Unlikely to have any impacts upon the historic environment.	No significant impacts. Scoped out from stage 2.
Social Environment	Unlikely to have impacts upon the social environment.	No significant impacts. Scoped out from stage 2.

Policy 6: Riparian Woodland		
Components	**Will there be an Environmental Impact?**	**Significant Impact (Yes/No/Don't Know) Why? If no, could the impact become a significant cumulative or synergistic impact (yes/no) why?**
Natural Features	The policy will have positive impacts upon landscape, biodiversity and climate. It will enhance riparian biodiversity and will reinforce landscape character by visually strengthening the route of watercourses. It will make rivers more resilient to climate change by strengthening riverbanks and providing shade for watercourses which will become of increased importance with a warming climate.	Yes there will be significant but positive benefits. Scoped out from stage 2. **Cumulative Impacts** This policy will have significant cumulative impacts which will all be positive. Most policies encourage increased forestry and woodland cover and together they will lead to a noticeable increase in tree cover in Angus. **Synergistic Impacts** This policy supports riparian woodland and will have significant positive synergistic impacts with policies 1, 3, & 9 to create climate resilient riparian and floodplain woodlands.
Natural Resources	The policy will have positive impacts on soil and water. It will have no impact on air. It will protect against soil erosion and reduce sediment input to watercourses.	Yes there will be significant but positive benefits. Scoped out from stage 2.

Historic Environment	Unlikely to have any impacts upon the historic environment.	No significant impact. Scoped out from stage 2.
Social Environment	Unlikely to have impacts upon the social environment.	No significant impacts. Scoped out from stage 2.

Policy 7: Landscape, Wild Land & Wildness		
Components	**Will there be an Environmental Impact?**	**Significant Impact (Yes/No/Don't Know) Why? If no, could the impact become a significant cumulative or synergistic impact (yes/no) why?**
Natural Features	The policy will have positive impacts upon landscape. It will protest the special qualities of landscape.	Yes, there will be significant positive impacts. Scoped out from stage 2. Significant positive synergistic impacts are likely to occur. This policy supports the protection of wildness in upland areas and this policy will combine with policies 1, 2, 4, 5 & 9 to enable the transformation of upland areas.
Natural Resources	Unlikely to have impacts on soils, water and air.	No significant impacts. Scoped out from stage 2.
Historic Environment	Unlikely to have impacts on historic environment.	No significant impacts. Scoped out from stage 2.
Social Environment	Unlikely to have impacts on the social environment,	No significant impacts. Scoped out from stage 2.

Policy 8: Historic Environment		
Components	**Will there be an Environmental Impact?**	**Significant Impact (Yes/No/Don't Know) Why? If no, could the impact become a significant cumulative or synergistic impact (yes/no) why?**
Natural Features	The policy will have positive impacts upon landscape through the protection of historic landscapes from	Yes, there will be significant positive benefits. Scoped out from stage 2.

	inapprppriate forestry and woodland. It will have no impact on biodiversity and climate.	
Natural Resources	The policy will have no impacts on soil, water and air.	No significant impacts. Scoped out from stage 2.
Historic Environment	The policy will have no impacts upon the historic environment. It will however protect it from inappropriate forestry and woodland.	No significant impacts. Scoped out from stage 2.
Social Environment	No impact	No significant impacts. Scoped out from stage 2.

Policy 9: Deer Management		
Components	**Will there be an Environmental Impact?**	**Significant Impact (Yes/No/Don't Know) Why? If no, could the impact become a significant cumulative or synergistic impact (yes/no) why?**
Natural Features	The policy will have positive impacts upon landscape, biodiversity and climate. The policy will lead to natural tree lines thereby protecting wildness, improving biodiversity and assisting natural flood management by slowing the flow of water through the landscape.	Significant impacts are all considered to be positive. Scoped out from stage 2. **Cumulative Impacts** This policy will have significant cumulative impacts which will all be positive. Most policies encourage increased forestry and woodland cover and together they will lead to a noticeable increase in tree cover in Angus. **Synergistic Impacts** Significant positive synergistic impacts are likely to occur. This policy supports the supports deer management in upland areas and this policy will combine with policies 1, 2, 4, 5 & 7 to enable the transformation of upland areas.

		This policy supports deer management and will have significant positive synergistic impacts with policies 1, 3 & 6 to create climate resilient riparian and floodplain woodlands.
Natural Resources	The policy will have positive impacts on soil, air and water, by reducing soil erosion and thereby redce sedimentation of watercourses.	Significant impacts are all considered to be positive. Scoped out from stage 2.
Historic Environment	The policy will have no impacts on the historic environment.	No significant impacts. Scoped out from stage 2.
Social Environment	Reduced deer fencing in the landscape will generally improve public access in the countryside.	Significant impacts are all considered to be positive. Scoped out from stage 2.

Policy 10: Forests, Woodland & People		
Components	**Will there be an Environmental Impact?**	**Significant Impact (Yes/No/Don't Know) Why? If no, could the impact become a significant cumulative or synergistic impact (yes/no) why?**
Natural Features	This policy will improve the landscape setting of settlements and will where it includes new woodland, will also contribute increased biodiversity close to where people live. Increased recreational opportunity close to where people live will reduce the need to travel by vehicle thereby contributing towards addressing climate issues.	Yes, there are likely to be significant impacts on landscape, biodiversity and climate climate but they will be positive. Scoped out from stage 2. **Cumulative Impacts** This policy will have significant cumulative impacts which will all be positive. Most policies encourage increased forestry and woodland cover and together they will lead to a noticeable increase in tree cover in Angus.
Natural Resources	The policy will have positive impacts on soil, air and water. Forestry and woodland can reduce wind erosion of soils in arable areas, which also can help	Significant impacts are all considered to be positive. Scoped out from stage 2.

	prevent dust storms in arable landscapes which adversely affect air quality in settlements. This is particularly valuable close to settlements.	
Historic Environment	There are unlikely to be any impacts on the historic environment.	Policy 8 within the Strategy seeks to avoid adverse impacts upon the historic environment. Significant adverse impacts are therefore not considered likely. Scoped out from stage 2.
Social Environment	Improved access in the wider countryside and increased accessible forestry and woodland close to settlements will have positive impacts.	Significant impacts are all considered to be positive. Scoped out from stage 2.

Proposal 1: Woodland of High Nature Conservation Value		
Components	**Will there be an Environmental Impact?**	**Significant Impact (Yes/No/Don't Know) Why? If no, could the impact become a significant cumulative or synergistic impact (yes/no) why?**
Natural Features	Project undefined – scoped out	n/a
Natural Resources	Project undefined – scoped out	n/a
Historic Environment	Project undefined – scoped out	n/a
Social Environment	Project undefined – scoped out	n/a

Proposal 2: Forests, Woodland & People		
Components	**Will there be an Environmental Impact?**	**Significant Impact (Yes/No/Don't Know) Why? If no, could the impact become a significant cumulative or synergistic impact (yes/no) why?**
Natural Features	Project undefined – scoped out	n/a

Natural Resources	Project undefined – scoped out	n/a
Historic Environment	Project undefined – scoped out	n/a
Social Environment	Project undefined – scoped out	n/a

APPENDIX E: FULL STAGE 2 POLICY AND PROPOSALS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Key:	Significant Positive = Green	Significant Positive/Negative = Amber	Significant Negative = Red	Unknown = White

Policy 1: Woodland of high Nature Conservation Value			
	Receptor	Analysis of the Significant Environmental Impact	Mitigation/Enhancement and their Likely Impacts
Natural Features	Landscape	Woodland of high nature conservation value is commonly an important landscape component in many landscape types in Angus. Many are progressively being lost due	An assessment of special qualities was carried out as part of the identification of Local Landscape Areas in Angus. This assessment forms an appendix to the Strategy. Policy 7

		to grazing pressure or positive active management. Landscape quality would therefore be eroded over time.	seeks to avoid woodland where it would adversely affect special qualities.
	Biodiversity	The management and expansion of woodland of high nature conservation value will overall increase biodiversity. It will increase species diversity and habitat connectivity. Importantly, it will increase biodiversity in upland areas. Many are progressively being lost due to grazing pressure or positive active management. Riparian woodland will increase biodiversity in watercourses. Undertaken inappropriately, it could damage sites designated or undesignated which have significant existing biodiversity interest. These could for example, include the designated interest of Natura 2000 sites, sites important to breeding waders or other habitats with significant biodiversity interest.	The Strategy must ensure that there are no adverse effects on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites within Angus. The Council as 'Competent Authority' has carried out an HRA. It has concluded that the Strategy will not have a significant effect on the conservation interests for which the Natura 2000 sites have been designated. Accordingly, an Appropriate Assessment is not considered necessary. The UK Forest Standard includes a series of standards which are intended to avoid unacceptable adverse impacts upon biodiversity. In addition, the Strategy includes specific policy to ensure that unacceptable adverse impacts will not occur. these are contained within policy 4 and include requirements for the undertaking of eagle impact assessments in relation to the Cairngorms Eagle SPA and for a wader impact assessment to be carried out where proposals are close to areas important for breeding waders.
	Climate	Increased woodland cover means increased carbon storage. It can greatly assist in natural flood management by slowing the flow of water through the landscape. With increased stormier weather due to climate change and increased likelihood of flood events, the management and expansion of woodland of	The UK Forest Standard does not support woodland planting on deep peat. This is further supported by policy 3 in the Strategy.

		high nature conservation value in riparian areas will increase the resilience of the river banks preventing erosion and sedimentation of watercourses. Similarly, native woodland on areas predicted to flood and flood plains will increase landscape resilience. All these natural flood management benefits will contribute towards reducing the effects of flood events on settlements in Angus. Stored carbon in peat soils is important in responding to the climate crisis. Woodland has the capacity to dry peat and thereby release stored carbon.	
Natural Resources	Soil	Native woodland in particular can reverse podsolisation of soils improving soil pH, chemical balance and restoring fertility. Inapprpriately undertaken, woodland management and expansion can damage or erode soils.	The UK Forest Standard includes standards which are intended to avoid unacceptable adverse impacts upon soils.
	Air	Woodland can reduce wind erosion of soils in arable areas, which also can help prevent dust storms in arable landscapes which adversely affect air quality.	Not required
	Water	Woodland stabilses the banks of water-courses and reduces silt input to them during storm events. Inappropriately undertaken woodland management and expansion can adversely afftect the water environment.	The UK Forest Standard includes standards which are intended to avoid unacceptable adverse impacts upon water.

Historic Environment	Scheduled Monuments	Inappropriate woodland could impact upon scheduled monuments and their setting.	Adverse impacts prevented by policy 8 – Historic Environment
	Gardens and Designed Landscapes	Inapproppriate woodland could impact upon historic gardens and designed landscapes.	Adverse impacts prevented by policy 8 – Historic Environment
	Archaeological Sites/Areas	Inappropriate woodland could impact upon archaeological sites/ areas and their setting.	Adverse impacts prevented by policy 8 – Historic Environment
Social Environment	Health	No adverse impacts predicted	N/A
	Material Assets	Inappropriate fencing could restrictadversely impact publc accessScreened out at Stage 1 Assessment	Adverse impacts prevented by policy 10 – Forestry, Woodland and People.
Short Term Impacts		When considered in the context of the Forestry Standard and the policies within the Strategy together, all impacts are considered likely to be overall positive.	
Medium Term Impacts			
Long Term Impacts			

Policy 2: Productive Forestry			
	Receptor	Analysis of the Significant Environmental Impact	Mitigation/Enhancement and their Likely Impacts
Natural Features	Landscape	Woodland important landscape component in many landscape types in Angus. However non-native conifer forestry plantations can if designed inappropriately, erode special	An assessment of special qualities was carried out as part of the identification of Local Landscape Areas in Angus. This assessment forms an appendix to the Strategy. Policy 7

		qualities, particularly in upland unenclosed landscapes with higher wildness characteristics.	seeks to avoid woodland and forestry where it would adversely affect special qualities. The UK Forest Standard details how forestry can be integrated into the landscape.
	Biodiversity	The management and expansion of productive forestry has the capacity to increase biodiversity or have a neutral effect. It can increase species diversity and habitat connectivity. Importantly, when native species are used, it can increase biodiversity in upland areas. Undertaken in the wrong areas, it could damage sites designated or undesignated which have significant existing biodiversity interest. These could for example, include the designated interest of Natura 2000 sites, sites important to breeding waders or other habitats with significant biodiversity interest.	The Strategy must ensure that there are no adverse effects on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites within Angus. The Council as 'Competent Authority' has carried out an HRA. It has concluded that the Strategy will not have a significant effect on the conservation interests for which the Natura 2000 sites have been designated. Accordingly, an Appropriate Assessment is not considered necessary. The UK Forest Standard includes a series of standards which are intended to avoid unacceptable adverse impacts upon biodiversity. In addition, the Strategy includes specific policy to ensure that unacceptable adverse impacts will not occur. These are contained within policy X and include requirements for the undertaking of eagle impact assessments in relation to the Cairngorms Eagle SPA and for a wader impact assessment to be carried out where proposals are close to areas important for breeding waders.
	Climate	Increased woodland cover means increased carbon storage. It can greatly assist in natural flood management by slowing the flow of water through the landscape. With increased stormier weather due to climate change and increased likelihood of flood events, the	The UK Forest Standard does not support woodland planting on deep peat. This is further supported by policy 3 in the Strategy.

		management and expansion of woodland of high nature conservation value in riparian areas will increase the resilience of the river banks preventing erosion and sedimentation of watercourses. Similarly, native woodland on areas predicted to flood and flood plains will increase landscape resilience. All these natural flood management benefits will contribute towards reducing the effects of flood events on settlements in Angus. Stored carbon in peat soils is important in responding to the climate crisis. Woodland has the capacity to dry peat and thereby release stored carbon.	
Natural Resources	Soil	Native woodland in particular can reverse podsolisation of soils improving soil pH, chemical balance and restoring fertility. Inapprpriately undertaken, woodland management and expansion can damage or erode soils.	The UK Forest Standard includes standards which are intended to avoid unacceptable adverse impacts upon soils.
	Air	Woodland can reduce wind erosion of soils in arable areas, which also can help prevent dust storms in arable landscapes which adversely affect air quality.	Not required
	Water	Woodland stabilses the banks of water-courses and reduces silt input to them during storm events. Inappropriately undertaken woodland management and expansion can adversely afftect the water environment.	The UK Forest Standard includes standards which are intended to avoid unacceptable adverse impacts upon water.

Historic Environment	Scheduled Monuments	Inappropriate forestry and woodland could impact upon scheduled monuments and their setting.	Adverse impacts prevented by policy 8 – Historic Environment
	Gardens and Designed Landscapes	Inapproppriate forestry and woodland could impact upon historic gardens and designed landscapes.	Adverse impacts prevented by policy 8 – Historic Environment
	Archaeological Sites/Areas	Inappropriate forestry and woodland could impact upon archaeological sites/ areas and their setting.	Adverse impacts prevented by policy 8 – Historic Environment
Social Environment	Health	No adverse impacts predicted	N/A
	Material Assets	Inappropriate fencing could restrictadversely impact publc accessScreened out at Stage 1 Assessment	Adverse impacts prevented by policy 10 – Forestry, Woodland and People.
Short Term Impacts		When considered in the context of the Forestry Standard and the policies within the Strategy together, all impacts are considered likely to be overall positive.	
Medium Term Impacts			
Long Term Impacts			