

Angus Forestry & Woodland Strategy 2024-2034

Strategic Environmental Assessment - Post-Adoption Statement
April 2025



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

2. Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 2.1 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 (the '2005 Act') requires public bodies in Scotland to carry out SEA on their plans, programmes and strategies. SEA is a way of examining plans, programmes and strategies as they develop to identify any significant effects they may have on the environment. It ensures that environmental considerations are taken into account. SEA also aims to build in mitigation measures, to avoid or minimise any potentially significant adverse effects on the environment and look for opportunities to enhance a strategy's- environmental performance.
- 2.2 This SEA process began with the production of a Scoping Report which was submitted to the SEA Gateway on 28 August 2023. Representations received from the SEA Consultation Authorities (Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Historic Environment Scotland (HES)) to the scoping stage, helped to inform the content of the draft Strategy and the following stages of the SEA process. The Consultation Authorities were generally supportive of the approach outlined in the Scoping Report and provided useful feedback. Comments from the Consultation Authorities were incorporated into the final assessment methodology and the SEA [Environmental Report](#).

- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 The assessment and production of the SEA Environmental Report progressed in parallel with the preparation of the draft Strategy. Following consultation on the draft Strategy and associated Environmental Report, full details of the comments submitted by individuals and organisations were collated and an analysis carried out of the consultation responses.
- 2.6 Details of the consultation responses and analysis, please see Appendix 1 of the [committee report](#)
- 2.7 This Post Adoption Statement concludes the SEA process and sets out those ways in which the findings of the SEA Environmental Report, and the views expressed by consultees have been taken into account.
- 2.8 Section 18(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 sets out the information that should be included in the Post Adoption Statement. This can be summarised as:

- how the environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan, programme, or strategy;
- how the Environmental Report has been taken into account;
- how the opinions of consultees have been taken into account;
- the reasons for choosing the strategy as adopted, in light of the other reasonable alternatives considered; and
- the measures to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan, programme or strategy.

3. Integration of Environmental Considerations into the Strategy

- 3.1 The preparation of the Forestry & Woodland Strategy was undertaken alongside collation of information to inform the content of the strategy. This involved establishing as best we could existing spatial data on environmental sensitivities. As example, these included:

- environmental designations;
- peatlands;
- biodiversity
- native woodland
- ancient woodland
- soils

- water quality
- forestry
- historic environment
- environmental issues
- land use

3.2 A key consideration was how a strategy could promote forestry and woodland expansion and meet the vision of the strategy without adversely affecting other environmental considerations. This was achieved through careful spatially zoned policies supported by a range of policies designed to avoid or mitigate adverse environmental effects.

3.3 The SEA process assisted in identifying environmental considerations and the feedback from consultees was an important part of that process through both the Scoping Report and Environmental Report stages of the process.

3.4 The SEA process also helped identify environmental issues not specifically directly related to forestry and woodland, but where they could achieve environmental improvements. These included addressing climate change and the contribution of forestry and woodland to addressing climate change and assisting in natural flood management. Other wider environmental issues highlighted which can be addressed by forestry and woodland include water and wind soil erosion, river water quality and the podzolization of soils.

4. Main Findings of the SEA

4.1 The Environmental Report concluded the following:

Summary of the Environmental Impacts

4.2 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.

Cumulative Impact Assessment

4.3 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 nonwoodland

biodiversity, policy 10 for public access and policy 3, which does not support forestry on deep peat.

Synergistic Impact Assessment

- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 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.
- 4.7 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.
- 4.8 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.
- 4.9 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.

5. Angus Forestry & Woodland Strategy and Environment Report Consultation Feedback

5.1 Public consultation on the Angus Forestry & Woodland Strategy 2024-2034 and the Environmental Report took place between 19 January and 1 March 2024.

5.2 The consultation was promoted on the Engage Angus portal and through regular posting on the Council's social media channels. Both the Strategy and an interactive digital map which supports the Strategy were available on Engage Angus. Details of the consultation were also emailed direct to 27 organisations, or a message left on their contact page on their website. These organisations included those who represent forestry, landowners, farmers, sporting interests and deer management. Additional optional questions on the Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report and the Habitats Regulations Appraisal were also included as part of the consultation and information on these is set out in Appendices 2 and 3 respectively of the [committee report](#).

5.3 In addition, the Strategic Environmental Assessment – Environmental Report was also on the site and was sent to the Consultation Authorities (NatureScot, SEPA and Historic Environment Scotland) for consultation as per legislative requirements. The Environmental Report was also advertised in The Courier newspaper on 19 January 2024.

5.4 There were 57 responses to consultation on the strategy itself and Appendix 1 of the [committee report](#), summarises and groups the 57 responses into themes; provides the proposed response to them from the Council; and any appropriate changes proposed to be made to the Strategy. Appendix 1 sets out each individual response in detail, who made that response, respondent identification number, questions asked, and responses colour coded to response themes. This has been created from data received on Engage Angus in relation to the consultation.

5.5 A brief summary of the responses to the consultation are set out below:

- Support for vision, objectives, and the ten policies and two proposals varied slightly but they were all supported by between 60% and 90% of respondents with the policy for Historic Environment being supported highest at 89.3%.
- The consultation attracted responses from a wide range of interests including forestry, nature conservation, countryside sports, deer management, countryside access and the general public.
- Strong opposite opinions on the balance between woodland for nature conservation and productive forestry.
- Strong opposite opinions on deer data and management.
- Strong support for woodland and forestry as a mechanism to help natural flood management.

5.6 A summary of the proposed changes to the Strategy, in response to these comments, are summarised below:

- A statement has been added to section 5.2 indicating that the focus of woodland expansion should be away from prime agricultural land except where it meets the policy expectations of the Strategy.
- Small changes to wording and statistics to correct or update and increase clarity and understanding for on topics which can be technical in nature and increase emphasis.
- Updating glossary to assist understanding.
- Updating of policy wording and supporting text to ensure consistency with statutory requirements particularly in relation to designations and protected species.
- Additional clarification and amendments included in relation to the protection of countryside access routes (section 5.10) and expansion of Woodland of High Nature Conservation Value in relation to distances for natural regeneration and for sites currently Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (Section 5.1)
- Change of wording in relating to deer numbers for clarity (section 5.9)
- Small changes to executive summary to reflect changes elsewhere in Strategy.
- Addition of appendix 3: Statement of Participation

5.7 A full list of comments and changes to the Angus Forestry & Woodland Strategy, Environmental Report & Habitat Regulations Appraisal are included Appendix 1 to the [committee report](#). Comments from the three statutory consultees contained within table 34 of the appendix.

5.8 Both documents have been updated in accordance with Appendix 1 of the committee report and are available along with the [Angus Forestry & Woodland Strategy 2024-2034](#) on the council's website. The responses to the Environmental Report from the three statutory consultees is included below, together with the council response:

Consultation Authority	Response	Council Response
Historic Environment Scotland	<p>Part 1: Angus Forestry & Woodland Strategy</p> <p>We welcome the preparation of this strategy and its recognition of the important contribution of the designated and undesignated historic environment to Angus' cultural identity and landscape and the need for decision making in relation to forestry and woodland to take account of this. To this end we welcome the creation of Policy 8: Historic Environment which aims to identify and safeguard historic environment assets from the effects of proposals such as woodland expansion. We note that the environmental assessment of the potential of the strategy to significantly impact on historic environment resources relies on the appropriate application of this policy to mitigate impacts.</p>	Duly noted with thanks.
NatureScot		

	<p>We are pleased that the Strategy seeks to address the twin climate and biodiversity crises however, we would like the strategy to take a more ambitious approach to reflect the urgency of the crises. The Strategy has an opportunity to help address the twin climate and biodiversity crises as it covers a key period over the next 10 years.</p> <p>There are only two proposals currently identified in the Strategy. The Strategy would benefit from more specific proposals. Identifying specific actions is also recommended as targeted action will ensure that the benefits of the Strategy are realised and enable it to deliver for the twin crises and be more meaningful for Angus. We do recognise and appreciate that many actions will require a co-ordinated approach. We suggest the production of an action plan to accompany the Strategy could provide more locational guidance and actions and should be explored.</p> <p>The policy wording should be strengthened and expanded and include an enhancement section for biodiversity, riparian woodland, montane woodland, Woodland of High Nature Conservation Value (WHNCV) etc. We recommend proposals could be included to implement biodiversity enhancement for example for riparian woodland. This could also support and link to Nature Networks and 30x30 contributing to increasing habitat connectivity in Angus.</p> <p>It would be helpful for the Strategy to contain a summary explanation of how the online map/maps referenced in the Strategy were created, e.g. what data/information was used, the methodology and limitations etc. This would enable readers to better understand what the maps show/are unable to show and how the maps might be used. We recommend this is included in an appendix to the Strategy.</p> <p>We suggest the Strategy needs to be clearer in setting out the importance and urgency of deer management. Deer populations need to be urgently reduced as it is one of the biggest limiting factors across many of the policies in delivering the biodiversity objectives. Angus Council should set out what is proposed to reduce high deer numbers.</p>	<p>It is considered that the Strategy contains ambition and that the role of woodland and forestry is strongly emphasised in addressing the twin climate and biodiversity crises. The statutory requirement is that the council produces a Strategy and contains the Council's policies on forestry and woodland. It is not an action plan, but will provide a strong policy foundation for actions either through the action programme of the forthcoming Local Development Plan or through action plans including Local Biodiversity Action Plan or the River South Esk Catchment Management Plan.</p> <p>Nature Networks are currently being developed for Angus, and it is recognised that the Strategy includes policies which will underpin these from a woodland perspective.</p> <p>Discussed below.</p> <p>The word urgent has been included as requested below. However, the statutory responsibilities for deer management and control lies with NatureScot. The Council has no powers in this regard and we hope that NatureScot can assist in meeting the policy</p>
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	<p>We have included detailed comments on the Strategy in Annex 1.</p> <p>Executive Summary There is a lot of repetition here with other sections in the Strategy. The Executive Summary should be kept simple and highlight the key points/messages the Strategy intends to convey.</p> <p>‘It is generally considered that a red deer population of around 5 animals per km² would enable native woodland to regenerate naturally’ – given the highly degraded state of much of the natural heritage in Angus currently. Herbivore densities need to be lower than this to allow the habitat to recover. Once it has recovered then this sort of density could be sustainable.</p> <p>Section 1 – Introduction There is no mention of the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Appraisal and how this has shaped the Strategy. It is recommended that this is included.</p> <p>It would be helpful to understand what the previous Angus Forestry and Woodland Strategy achieved and what has changed since then. Was there a monitoring strategy in place and what were the results of this? We suggest this could be summarised in this section.</p> <p>As Angus County Boundary overlaps with the Cairngorms National Park it would be</p>	<p>aspirations contained within the Strategy.</p> <p>The Executive Summary has been reviewed and small changes made, but no repetition found.</p> <p>The strategy has reduced the deer density ambition to 2-5 deer per square kilometres in line with latest Scottish Forestry guidance.</p> <p>This has been added to the Strategy. The following text: “The Strategy has been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment and a Habitat Regulations Appraisal”.</p> <p>Reference to the previous framework has been included in the introduction</p> <p>“The Strategy applies to the part of Angus for which Angus Council is planning authority. Therefore the part of Angus within the Cairngorms National Park is covered by the Cairngorms National Park Forest Strategy. This is the first statutory Forestry & Woodland Strategy for Angus, but it replaces the non-statutory Angus Woodland and Forestry Framework (2011). It is intended that the Angus Forestry & Woodland 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”.</p>
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	<p>beneficial to explain relationship/synergies with this Strategy and the Cairngorms National Park Forestry Strategy. This could be included here and/or in section 4. There is some consideration for example in section 1.16 of the Environmental Report which discusses the relationship between the approach to deer management which may be helpful to include in the Strategy too.</p> <p>Section 2 – Vision Having targets here for what Angus will be like in 2034 may strengthen this vision especially given the urgency of the twin climate and biodiversity crises. What is the vision for Angus in 2034?</p> <p>Section 3 – Objectives Objective 1 – we support the significant expansion of WHNCV. We recommend replacing ‘encourage’ with ‘increase’ to use more positive/enabling language. The wording/language in the Strategy could be much stronger to reflect the urgency of the biodiversity and climate crises. Objective 5 – we are unclear what Angus Council is proposing to address here as trees and woodlands already do absorb carbon and mitigate effects of climate change. Objective 6 – ‘productive forestry’ should include native hardwoods as well as coniferous plantations.</p> <p>Section 4 – Policy Background Under the heading ‘Tackling the Nature Emergency – Scottish biodiversity strategy to 2045’ include emerging Local Nature Conservation Sites, 30x30 and Nature Networks. How is 30x30 and Nature Networks frameworks integrated within the Strategy?</p> <p>Section 5 – Policy Guidance Box 1 – Native Woodland Survey of Scotland, Angus (2013) – this section summarises this report however, we recommend there is a discussion of these findings because they should inform actions. The main priority habitat types listed are upland birch woods, native pine woods and wet woodland. We note that native pine woods are not a key habitat</p>	<p>The relationship with the Cairngorms Nation Park Forest Strategy has been added.</p> <p>We have not created targets specifically for Angus other than contributing towards the national targets.</p> <p>Requested change made to objective 1.</p> <p>“through increased area” added.</p> <p>The objective is not specific as worded therefore includes both hardwood and softwood species. Preference to keep wording succinct.</p> <p>This section relates to policy background and designations are discussed in 5.4. Emerging proposals are not included.</p> <p>Comments noted with interest. However this box is a summary copied from the report, therefore would be inappropriate to modify content.</p>
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<p>type in Angus. We advise that the ravine ash/elm woodlands and the upland oak woodlands which have been degraded into birch woodlands are also key priority habitat types.</p> <p>Map 2 – it is difficult to differentiate between the colours here, if possible, contrasting colours would make it easier to see the different categories. It would be helpful to understand how the expansion zones were identified and how these will be delivered? It does not seem to be a very significant area and we suggest this could be a much more ambitious area given there is only 3.35% WHNCV in Angus.</p> <p>Under section titled ‘Opportunities to expand woodland of HNCV’ it is mentioned that ‘substantial opportunities exist to expand native woodland’. What are these opportunities and how can Angus Council ensure these opportunities are implemented? The wording of the policies here should be consistent with NPF4 Policy 6. Policy 1(a) – as there is a very low % of WHNCV in Angus this should be more strongly worded in line with wording in NPF4 to e.g ‘proposals will not be supported where they result in any loss of WHNCV’. Policy 1(h) – we are pleased that this is included however, recommend that commercial non-native woodland should not be planted within at least 100m of WHNCV.</p> <p>Proposal 1 – We support this proposal but delete wording ‘explore constraints’ as we already know what these are and ‘if required’ as the Strategy has already identified that a project is needed to achieve this. Can Angus Council help co-ordinate/deliver a project? We recommend the proposal sets out what project will achieve this.</p> <p>Section 5.2 – Productive Forestry – many of these are not just confined to</p>	<p>It probably is in part the scale of the map in the Strategy. The online map viewer should hopefully be helpful. We will however review colours in the future.</p> <p>The opportunities are explained in the paragraph which follows the text.</p> <p>Change to wording in Strategy changed as requested.</p> <p>We have discussed this in detail with Scottish Forestry who will operationally be implementing the Strategy. This has been considered alongside the 50m natural regeneration zones for WHNCV, which we resolved to a description of “at least 50m”. Excluding forestry for 100m may have unintended consequences of preventing the creation of forest and woodland habitat networks. In balance, we have left- them at 50m.</p> <p>We are unsure of the full list of constraints and whether we will have an ability to address them. The feasibility and objectives of such a project would follow exploratory discussion. The text has been amended to frame the proposal as “explore the feasibility of the project”.</p>
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	<p>productive woodland but native expansion/regeneration too.</p> <p>Section 5.3 – Climate Resilient Landscapes – ‘Forests and woodlands have significant potential to mitigate climate change through carbon sequestration’ - There is also opportunity to increase resilience and sequester more carbon through planting and restoration and stewardship of hedges and areas of agroforestry/orchards/wood pasture. There has been little mention of these in the body of the Strategy but this is something Angus Council could support.</p> <p>The cutting and management of hedgerows and verges is something Angus Council has direct responsibility for and reducing cutting could enhance carbon sequestration and biodiversity value and reduce costs.</p> <p>Section 5.4 – Biodiversity – the HRA should be cross referenced here in relation to European sites.</p> <p>Designated sites and priority species – the wader species are not just found in Glen Clova but wider Angus Glens.</p> <p>Section 5.5 – Montane Woodland - moorland management too is important. How much of Angus upland is managed as a shooting estate?</p> <p>Policy 6 – how will deer be addressed in riparian woodlands? We support montane and riparian policies. Can there be a proposal linked to enhance existing and significantly increase amounts of both?</p> <p>Section 5.9 – Deer management and Fencing – ‘deer populations should be managed’ should be reworded to ‘urgently reduced’</p> <p>‘around 5 animals per km²’ – we suggest this needs to be less than 5 for at least 20 years. It is also about ecosystem restoration and not just enabling woodland to regenerate naturally.</p>	<p>Agreed – we do not see an absolute distinction between productive and native woodland.</p> <p>Hedges and verges are beyond the scope of this Strategy, but silvopature and silvoarable have been added to the supporting text within the Strategy.</p> <p>The text in relation to waders has been made more generalised also a result of comments from RSPB. Upland heath has been added to the list of potential wader habitats. We are not aware of the area managed as shooting estate.</p> <p>The policy is not specific to the uplands. There is little data on lowland deer populations. Given the statutory responsibilities of NatureScot in relation to deer management and control, we would seek the support of NatureScot in addressing deer issues in general.</p> <p>Suggested wording included. We look forward to NatureScot assisting in the implementation of this policy.</p> <p>The Strategy text has been amended to 2-5, which accords with latest Scottish Forestry guidance. The Strategy already states “Reduced deer densities will also allow upland vegetation to recover, reduce erosion and create more resilient landscapes able to adapt to and mitigate effects of climate change”.</p>
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	<p>Policy 9 – this should be worded to be more proactive and urgent as this is critical.</p> <p>Proposal 2 – Angus Council should consider the issue of limiting access for wildlife protection in some woods. What proposals is Angus Council going to develop and implement that increase the quantity and quality of accessible woodland in Angus?</p> <p>Section 6 – Area Guidance Include ‘and enhance their biodiversity value.’</p> <p>Other areas with low sensitivity – connectivity is important here native tree lines, shelterbelts, hedges etc. ‘important peatlands’ – this wording should be changed to ‘peatland, carbon-rich soils and priority peatland habitat’ in line with NPF4.</p> <p>The map – what data and methodologies used? An explanation of each of the categories on the map and the source of the datasets would be beneficial to include in an Appendix to the strategy.</p>	<p>“Urgent” added to policy 9.</p> <p>The Council is currently developing management plans for council owned woodland. Your suggestion is noted.</p> <p>Text added as requested.</p> <p>The mapped categories have been derived in discussion with NatureScot. These are described in the supporting text. Other carbon rich soils outwith those categories have not been mapped under that category. In the uplands these are likely to have been captured in the category “mountain and plateaux”, Policy 5 of NPF4 relates specifically to development.</p> <p>The descriptions of each category include the source of data used as necessary.</p>
<p>Scottish Environment Protection Agency</p>	<p>No submission in respect to Strategy.</p>	

6. Reasons for selecting the Strategy as adopted

6.1 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.

6.2 The Strategy does not include an assessment of alternatives. The different approaches to addressing issues were 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 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.
- 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;

7. Monitoring

7.1 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 in table 1:

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	<p>The Strategy should encourage accessible woodland in and around towns (WIAT) and smaller settlements.</p> <p>The Strategy should further encourage improved access within existing woodlands.</p>	<p>Will the Strategy increase accessible woodlands near where people live? Monitored through WIAT data.</p> <p>Will the Strategy improve accessibility in existing woodlands? Monitored through WIAT data.</p>
Soil	To monitor the impact of the Strategy on soil resources within Angus.	<p>To reduce the erosion of soils by water and wind. Anecdotal observation only as no scientific monitoring available.</p> <p>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.</p>
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.	<p>Contribute towards natural flood management. Monitored by area of forestry and woodland within river catchments.</p> <p>Protect stored carbon within peatlands. Monitored by area of deep peat or important peatlands adversely affected by forestry.</p>

		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.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The council is content that the level and scope of the SEA is proportionate and that, given the high-level nature of the Strategy, it has been pitched at the appropriate level.
- 8.2 This Post Adoption Statement concludes the SEA process, setting out the ways in which the findings of the SEA Environmental Report and the views expressed during the consultation on the SEA Environmental Report, as well as on the draft strategy, have been taken into account within the finalised Strategy.