

Information for Forestry Project Consultees

1. What is scoping?

Scoping is an early part of the consultation process designed to identify any issues that should be considered when preparing the Forest Plan or woodland creation proposal. Individuals and organisations may hold important information about the forest, for example the location of archaeological features, water supplies, protected species or habitats, or other potential impacts on neighbours or local communities. Scoping will assist the Forest Manager in the preparation of the forestry project by identifying these issues early so that they can be discussed and, where possible, mitigation measures agreed.

2. Why have I been asked to comment?

The Forest Manager will seek to involve a wide range of people and organisations who may have an interest in the forest. There is no obligation to respond, however if you do not, we will understand this to mean you have no objections or comments to make. If you do not wish to be included, your details can be removed from the scoping list.

3. How will my comments be treated?

Comments received will be recorded in an 'Issues Log' and summarised in a 'Scoping Report' which will be sent to the regulator, Scottish Forestry*. To comply with GDPR and protect sensitive information, personal details and sensitive locations will be redacted and comments will be attributed only by stakeholder type (e.g. "Neighbour 1"). Confidential information will only be shared with relevant statutory authorities where required.

4. How do I access the scoping information and what does it contain?

Scoping information is either sent directly or accessed via the link provided in the scoping letter to the Scottish Woodlands website, where maps and supporting documents can be downloaded as PDFs. A paper copy is available if online access is not possible. The scoping material usually includes a summary of the proposed project—such as a Long-Term Forest Plan, Felling Permission, or New Woodland Creation Application—along with a brief description, the consultation period, and a Concept Map showing initial proposals, constraints, and opportunities. This reflects early due-diligence work; further details will follow once scoping is complete and feedback has been gathered.

5. How do I comment?

Comments can be submitted in any format, including email or post, using the contact details provided. If there is a particular issue which is better to discuss on site, then the Forest Manager will try to meet you there in person.

6. When do I need to respond by?

The scoping period usually lasts 30 days unless otherwise notified in the scoping information. This period is defined to ensure that forestry projects can continue to make progress within a reasonable timescale. Consultation dates are provided in the scoping letter. Some issues may need further investigation but raising them early helps identify matters requiring later discussion. Scoping aims to highlight significant issues rather than resolve them fully at this stage.

7. What happens once the scoping period has concluded?

After the scoping period is over, we will review all the comments we have received and consider potential measures to resolve or mitigate as far as reasonably possible any issues that have been raised. We cannot promise to fully satisfy all concerns, but we will work with respondents to try and find the most satisfactory and amicable solution for both sides.

8. What about Forest Certification?

Where scoping is undertaken for a Long-Term Forest Plan, it may also inform forest certification requirements. Forest Plans are prepared to align with the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS). Following approval, the forest may be considered for inclusion in the Scottish Woodlands Forest Certification Group Scheme, which is subject to independent annual audits, providing assurance of responsible and sustainable management.

9. Why do we need to cut down trees?

The UK is less than 20% self-sufficient in timber and imports around 32 million tonnes of timber and timber products each year. As one of the world's largest timber importers, the UK has a significant international timber footprint. Increasing the supply of domestically grown timber helps reduce reliance on imports, supports national infrastructure needs, and strengthens local timber and construction industries, providing long-term employment. Often, the trees were planted as a managed timber crop and have now reached maturity. They will be harvested and processed at modern sawmills into a wide range of timber products. Almost all material is used, with smaller timber and sawdust forming products such as MDF and chipboard. These long-life products store the carbon absorbed by the trees, helping to reduce climate impacts. If left unharvested, the trees are increasingly vulnerable to windblow. Harvesting will be carefully planned and/or phased over a 20-year period to minimise landscape change and local impacts.

10. Will the forest be replanted?

The Forest Plan, or restocking design, will set out how the forest will be replanted and/or regenerated, usually with increased species and structural diversity. To ensure successful establishment of the new trees, ground preparation will usually be carried out to ensure that each tree is provided with a suitable planting site that will ensure the growth of the tree, and protection from browsing animals, weeds and pests. Pesticides are used only where necessary as part of an Integrated Pest Management approach. New trees are typically well established within five years.

11. What about wildlife and important habitats?

Forestry projects include those which are focused primarily on biodiversity as well as projects which produce timber resources and a variety of mixed projects tailored to the landowner objectives. Productive forests support a wide range of wildlife, including a variety of bird species suited to mixed conifer and broadleaf habitats, birds of prey, otters, red squirrels, bats, badgers, pine marten, water voles, and wildcats etc. The forestry project proposal will identify important species and habitats and describe how they will be protected and, where possible, enhanced. Native woodlands can contribute towards expanding nature networks, areas of ancient woodlands, or restore degraded woodlands sites.

Prior to any major operations, wildlife surveys will be carried out. As far as practicable, we will aim to minimise any negative effects though intensive operations such as timber harvesting or large scale afforestation inevitably involves a level of change to the local landscape. Where required, environmental impact assessments, species protection plans or other wildlife licenses will be obtained. You are encouraged to share any relevant wildlife information during the scoping process. Sensitive information will not be made public.

Sources of further information on public consultation and forestry projects

- Scottish Forestry – Forestry Engagement and Consultation Processes
<https://www.forestry.gov.scot/publications/forestry-engagement-and-consultation-processes>
- LTFP Applicant Guidance – PDF Available on Scottish Forestry's Website
<https://www.forestry.gov.scot/publications/long-term-forest-plan-applicant-guidance>
- CONFOR - Engagement with Local People and Communities
<https://www.confor.org.uk/news/latest-news/new-good-practice-guide-for-engaging-communities-in-new-woodland-creation-launched/>

Long-Term Forest Plan

Planning Process and Scoping/Consultation



What is a Long-Term Forest Plan?

In Scotland, a Forest Plan is a strategic management plan approved by Scottish Forestry that sets out 20-year management goals and 10-year actionable proposals for a forest. It includes plans for felling, replanting, improving biodiversity, water quality, and landscape, and grants permission to carry out the specified activities in the first 10 years.

1) Initial Forest Plan Preparation

- Forest Plan Management Objectives are agreed by the client and Forest Manager
- Initial background research is completed. Looking specifically at sensitive features and site conditions.
- Forest Concept Map is created.

2) Due Diligence

Scoping / Consultation

- Any required surveys are completed
- Further background research and site walkover survey if required.

- Stakeholders are identified (e.g. NatureScot, SEPA, and adjacent residential neighbours) and a method of engagement is agreed with Scottish Forestry (also referred to as scoping or consultation).
- Engagement is commonly through email or letter but may also be a site visit or meeting.
- The concept is presented, and stakeholders can offer any relevant information (e.g. location of private water supplies and historic features) and raise any issues, concerns, or opportunities felt important to be considered.
- Generally, 30 days are allowed for responses. Responses are reviewed and compiled into a report, which is reviewed by Scottish Forestry.
- This stage is a review of concept information and not a final plan.

3) Development / Drafting

- The Forest Manager will begin writing up the forest plan and drafting proposals.
- Maps will be created to show felling and restocking proposals. Along with other relevant maps.
- The drafted LTFP will be submitted Scottish Forestry for approval. Further changes to the plan may be required following feedback from Scottish Forestry

4) Review

- Statutory consultation (Scottish Forestry Public Register)
- Meeting all rules, regulations, and good practice guidelines

- The final proposal is posted onto Scottish Forestry's Public Register for 28 days to allow for comment.
- Public Register <https://forestry.gov.scot/publicregisterlegacy>
- Stakeholders may request access to the full plan for review
- At this stage, the plan is screened by Scottish Forestry as being compliant with UKFS, however additional comments from stakeholders can result in changes to the plan before approval.
- The applicant must tell scoping stakeholders that the application is now on the Public Register.

5) Approval

- The plan is approved by Scottish Forestry, giving legal authorisation to carry out the proposal