

APPENDICES

Purbeck FDP Forum – 16 July 2010

The revised FDP proposals were consulted on through the Forest Design Plan Forum, which comprises a range of statutory consultees, NGOs and other stakeholders as listed below. Feedback from the public was also gathered through public consultation. The revised FDP proposals were subsequently amended to take account of the feedback received.

The Forest Design Plan Forum took place in July 2010. This involved outlining the purpose of the FDP and progress made to date, and presenting the proposals for the revised FDP. Attendees submitted their comments to the Forestry Commission during the round table discussion and in follow up correspondence.

In general, most participants were broadly happy with the plan proposals and there was no particular contention regarding any of the issues that were raised. Most discussions revolved around the advantages and disadvantages of increasing/decreasing the balance of woodland/heathland and maintenance issues. The conservation interest groups were very keen to see substantially more heathland than proposed while the timber and recreational groups felt that further heathland restoration should be limited. A summary of Forum Member comments is presented below.

As the Forestry Commission was aware that an EIA would be required to accompany the FDP submission, additional comments were also sought on the potential scope of the EIA. These are also summarised below. The Environmental Statement accompanying the FDP submission also addresses specific issues raised by consultees.

List of Organisations Attending

- Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust
- British Cycling Association.
- British Herpetological Society.
- Centre Ecology & Hydrology.
- Dorset AONB Partnership.
- Dorset County Council.
- Dorset Nightjar Project.
- Dorset Wildlife Trust.
- Euroforest Ltd.
- Forestry Commission.
- National Trust.

- Natural England.
- Purbeck District Council.
- RSPB.
- Southern Counties Enduro Club (SCEC).
- Southampton School of Biological Sciences.
- Wessex Conservation Grazing.
- Wool Parish Council.
- Bere Regis Parish Council.
- Dorset County Council.
- Other Specialists/Researchers

Summary of FDP Forum Member Comments

General Comments

In summary most were broadly happy with the plan proposals and there was no particular contention regarding any of the issues or proposed changes raised. Most discussions revolved around the pros and cons of increasing/decreasing balance of woodland/heathland and maintenance issues.

- Could future FDP maps show surrounding habitat for context in colour and could current structure and FDP proposals be included on single map for public consultation purposes?

Affpuddle & Moreton

- Pleased to see grazing now taking place in Moreton. Looking forward to seeing resolution of grazing issue in Affpuddle once planning decision regarding cattle grids is resolved.
- Some heathland blocks look isolated. Could more connectivity be created?
- Potential for more heathland but this site is lower priority than other Purbeck Heaths sites.
- Open habitats policy should provide policy context for step change in provision of heathland restoration which is not reflected in the plan.
- Consider replanting some of the open areas to provide sustainable woodland resource. Particularly important in new austere economic climate.

- Please do not sell to the MOD.
- Peel more trees back from Oakers Bog.
- Wooded Heath does not give details of timing and so is difficult to assess in the context of the plan.
- More management of woodland by natural regeneration.
- Retain all sandy rides and create more sandy traces for ground nesting bees and wasps.
- Restrict public access as it is threatening the heathland.
- In Moreton the re-planting and relatively modest proposals for more heath land corridors are welcomed. Is there any chance of requiring contractors to clear the worst of the brushings they create?

Puddletown

- More heathland creation. Further opportunities in most suitable locations such as the bottom of the ridge edge.
- Why not create bigger piece of heathland around the 3 Woolbarrows in the plantation as there is too much scrub to manage the way it is
- Provide a more obvious linkage between the two bigger pieces of heathland we have in Puddletown, providing the habitat is suitable.
- Cycling – need to raise awareness of issues between extreme cyclists & mountain bikers/family cyclists.
- Cycling - Proposition of having some sort of agreement with the group involved to formalise this activity.
- Proposition of leasing a piece of land to cyclists
- Proposition to have local people such as dog walkers or other users to informally control those people

- Question the requirement for Continuous Cover because it provides:
 - No connection to heathland as it stands so no link between existing heathland habitats -- not favourable to heathland species
 - No good to wildlife compared to a cycle of Clear fell / Replant cycles
- Issue with dog fouling enriching the side of the tracks which is not beneficial for heathland species. Disturbance to species such as nightjars.
- Is there a plan for more grazing units in Puddletown Forest?
- The control of rhododendron appreciated - good step to fight back *Phytophthora*
- These could be nice forests if they were not so badly infested with rhododendron. Is there no possibility of clearing this?

Hethfelton

- If gravel extraction takes place can we create more heath as a reserve?
- Need compensation for wildlife habitats
- Link with Nature after Minerals
- Some against mineral extraction from a landscape impact and public/community upheaval
- Hethfelton wood could provide mitigation for potential wind farm on private land in terms of screening.
- Need a joined up approach to restoration
- Is an important wood under character landscape assessment.
- Would prefer restoration to a heathland mosaic rather than plantation.
- Need rotation felling for structural diversity to continue.
- Elms – consider planting modern cultivars

- Broadly happy with proposed woodland composition but some would like more heathland.
- We were unaware of the sentence of death by gravel extraction hanging over these woods. We will enjoy them while we can.

Wareham

- Felling & habitat maps should/could be more specific in terms of dates. 20 years is too broad to make judgements.
- Still too much forest on the margins of mire in the main block. Not enough heath on rest for a 40-50 year plan.
- Agree that focus should be on Rempstone but Wareham Main Block is a major priority.
- Develop edges of Hyde Bog (similar to Morden Bog)
- Widen out mire corridors
- Woolsbarrow should have a landscape context that is heathland.
- Identify areas for longer term habitat creation. Do not restock now. Less concern about natural regeneration.
- Should there be trees on the slopes of Morden bog given dry context of the mire?
- Design Plan is moving in the right direction. Need to consider rate of change with focus on key areas such as mire edges.
- Good invertebrate habitat will be on hills and bare ground within heathland.
- Heathland alongside roads is vulnerable to fire. Consider options such as wet ditches or trees.
- Heather communities richer where it is already established under mature trees and heathland community is already there. These areas should be a priority for restoration
- SW Hyde (Lower Hyde) out of grazing unit to support rep/invert interest. Provides a useful control and need control areas.
- Do not want whole forest grazed.
- Grazing alone will not deliver the best heath.
- Removing *molinia* will increase cross leaved heath but *molinia* is also a beneficial habitat so need to maintain a balance.
- Monitor impact of grazing.
- Do not want so see any more engineered/metalled roads.
- Unknown SAMs are not the issue. It is the unknown archaeology that is the issue/concern. Need systems to mitigate.
- Hyde bog – there does not appear to be attention to landscape detail that exists around Morden Bog and it appears totally different. Will it eventually be managed to look the same as Hyde Bog e.g. from the view point.
- Concerned that increased recreational development/leisure development may be used to fund future heathland management.
- Tree cover around edges of housing is very important including views to front/foreground and background.
- Okay that FC is ahead of delivery but should not stop here.
- Some question why we are ahead of targets for heathland restoration. Are we not already ambitious enough as it is?
- If funding decreases should FC not build upon/maintain existing heathland sites rather than slow down.
- Others argue that the most significant areas of heathland are in the south and FC risk an increased financial burden if we maintain fragmented/mosaic type heathland within forests.
- HLS should not be sole source of management – no substitute for management with chainsaws.

- Areas around Parson's Pleasure (i.e. poor trees) leave and focus on areas where get best heathland
 - Although area should be grazed we need to know more about grazing impacts for example impact of different stocking numbers.
 - Need to link heathland.
 - Does increased heathland creation increase the possibility of it being converted to CROW?
 - Conflicting view between relative proportions of heathland/woodland balance. Conservation bodies want more/timber interests less.
 - Getting the public aware/involved is the major issue.
 - Income from recreational development could be considered to fund other projects.
 - Nightjars can be disturbed by dogs. Use creative options such cutting gorse to prevent dogs accessing the heath away from tracks.
 - The re-planting and relatively modest proposals for more heath land corridors are welcomed. Is there any chance of requiring contractors to clear the worst of the brushings they create?
- ### Purbeck Forest (Rempstone)
- Most stakeholders broadly supportive of heathland restoration at Rempstone given the issues with restocking and its location away from doorstep communities and low recreational pressure.
 - Some timber producers warned that timber resource needs to be sustained. Not keen to see further heathland restoration at Rempstone but understand the constraints of timber production on this site.
 - Some concerned at changing goalposts with regard to heathland restoration. Would like to see FC to hold ground for a specific long term target. How we get there could be dynamic but at least there would be a definitive end point.
 - Some would like to see restoration achieved in the next 10 years.
 - Some not keen on large open areas as shown on heathland on plan. Would prefer a more intimate mosaic similar to that developed at Wareham. It was felt this mosaic could include emergent broadleaf areas.
 - Would like to see a mix of trees up to 20-30% on open areas.
 - Some, not keen on northern retentions. It was considered odd to retain a screen to screen BP blocks and that BP should be managing their blocks more sympathetically. Dubious about need to screen drilling rigs and felt the views back to Poole harbour should be opened up.
 - RSPB would be supportive of even more heathland restoration at Rempstone including an 80%/20% split
 - Concern at tree loss at a local level in Purbeck & Dorset.
 - Concern at visual impact of tree loss from more distant views such as those from the other side of Poole Harbour. Would need to be compatible with surrounding landscape plans and strategies. Need to look at Purbeck landscape assessment. Landscape character of Rempstone area needs to be maintained.
 - Proposed restoration good for and compatible with AONB.
 - Need to give more consideration to northern edge and how that should be softened or graded into northern landscape E.g. buffer. Some question any need for northern retentions at all.
 - Still residual heathland potential and open areas within remaining trees.
 - Opportunities for studying the science of grazing with restoration and grazing management.
 - Several offers in help with grazing including NT and Jake Hancock.
 - This was once a wonderful area but has been reduced to islands of forest with uncrossable clear felled areas lacing between them. Now with the tree disease problems we accept that the forest future there is bleak. Please make greater attempts to encourage real heath land in its place.

EIA Scope

General comments:

- RSPB – assuming that the FC follows the EIA Scope for heathland restoration that they recently produced for Dorset then they have no further suggestions re scoping.
- Former Rights of Way Officer – observed that with substantial heathland restoration there is the potential for the whole land area to be designated as Open Access under CRoW. Andrew Nicholson confirmed that CRoW would be likely to be reviewed in 1-2 yrs and new areas designated, but that there is no fixed % woodland cover/open habitat that triggers designation (can be variable!). So possible implications for the Estates where we are the tenant.
- The restoration of heathland compromises the future land management options – several people made comments that would fall within this general description.

Below the comments are collated against the broad headings with comments repeated in more than one section where relevant.

Land use

- Rate of change – this may be important in the EIA as it will potentially mitigate effects of impacts (by spreading out over time).
- Increased antisocial behaviour – suggested increase in fires and motorbikes. Others in groups disputed this issue.
- Recreation may increase (and therefore disturbance issues) as the area becomes better publicised / promoted through tourism etc.
- Deer management – changing landscape and therefore use by deer needs to be considered. Cross-boundary management implications need to be included.
- Fire – increased fuel load if heathland, with associated increased risk to remaining trees. Trees should be retained in such a way as to serve as fire breaks on site.
- The restoration of heathland compromises the future land management options for this site – several people made comments that would fall within this general description.

(Costs of managing, implications for development close by, recreational use & disturbance, future need for trees and woods etc).

- Loss of timber production – in addition to loss of sustainable product also implications for FC income stream.

Ecology & Nature Conservation

- Grazing as a future management/maintenance tool – What type of heathland are you trying to achieve (intensity/breeds etc). This will have impacts on existing biota in ungrazed environment.
- Conservation of red squirrel – there is a proposal (albeit formative) to re-introduce red squirrel to broadleaf woodland in Purbeck. Be aware of potential, and of possible conflicting messages of felling woodland in one area whilst trying to establish woodland species close by.
- Economy of scale – will create a much bigger heathland unit in local landscape – ecologically more robust (including adjacent SSSIs) but importantly also cheaper per unit area to manage.
- Effects on adjacent SSSIs due to changed hydrology – whilst rate of run-off is likely to be similar the total volume of water leaving a heathland will be greater than if woodland. So increased volumes released from this area of catchment into adjacent wetland SSSI.

Landscape

- In the AONB management plan there is text specifically referring to Rempstone. So need to review this text and ensure that proposals complement what is written.
- Views, character and historic character needs to be included – not just views!
- DCC apparently had some previous concerns about screening of BP, so were historically resistant to some of the heathland restoration proposals on this basis. Andrew Nicholson will email contact details for BP's consultant landscape architect (working for Nicholas Pearson Assoc) so that we can forewarn BP of FDP proposals and check they have no concerns.

- Need to include users of Poole Harbour and inhabitants/visitors to the western edge of Poole as receptors in the EIA. They currently have a view that includes an attractive mix of woodland and heathland.

Cultural heritage

- DCC archaeologist observed the language in our draft scope needs amending. Not “existing” but “known” or “as yet undiscovered”.
- Possibility of discovering previously unrecorded features when removing tree cover.
- Reduced likelihood of damage to undiscovered features as less machinery movements across site in future when heathland.

Soil

- Unclear whether change in land-use will reduce soil erosion. Possible sediment release in to adjacent wetland areas/sensitive habitats.
- Ecological benefits of soil erosion must not be forgotten (invertebrates).

Water

- Effects on adjacent SSSIs due to changed hydrology – whilst rate of run-off is likely to be similar the total volume of water leaving a heathland will be greater than if woodland. Thus effect of increased volumes released from this area of catchment into adjacent wetland SSSI.

Climate

- Non-economic produce from felling (e.g. Brash) – can arisings be used off-site as biofuel rather than slowly releasing carbon on-site if left. Possibly within scope as would be likely to be left on-site if rotational conifer crops persisted.
- Loss of timber as store of carbon and renewable resource.

Air quality

No comments

Socio-economic

- Changes in employment and the production of saleable products from this area of land.

Noise

- Added to our provisional list by one person. Suggested possible noise from BP being heard by the people within Rempstone if many trees removed.

Public Consultation

On 18th September 2010, the Forestry Commission held a public consultation event on the draft FDP at the Sika Trail car park. The Sika Trail was selected because it was the best area to capture forest users. The event was advertised with notices placed at the entrances of all the Forest blocks within the Purbeck FDP and advertised elsewhere. The public were invited to fill in feedback forms or submit a letter.

In general the public were reasonably satisfied with the proposed FDP revisions and were supportive of the balance/mosaic of open and woodland habitats.

A detailed response was also received from representatives of Wessex Orienteering club who attended the Public Consultation who commented that *“As orienteering users of the forests, we are strongly in favour of retaining as much of the existing forested areas as possible.*

- 1. The fragmentation of the forest with un-crossable corridors of ‘heath land’ directly restricts orienteering which, in essence, is aimed at individual navigation off paths.*
- 2. The efforts we have observed in Dorset of replacing trees by heath appear to have achieved only gorse wildernesses, which benefit no-one.”*

Amendments to approved Forest Enterprise Plans

Forestry Commission and Forest Enterprise should agree baseline tolerance thresholds for operations in each District beyond which exchange of letter/map or formal amendment is required. Unless otherwise specified or agreed by the Forestry Commission, amendment will be by formal revision of the plan.

	Adjustment to felling coupe boundaries (1)	Timing of Restocking	Changes to species	Windthrow clearance (2)	Changes to road lines (3)
FC Approval normally not required	0.5 ha or 5% of coupe - whichever is less	Up to 2 planting seasons after felling	Change within species group e.g. evergreen conifers; broadleaves	Up to 0.5ha	
Approval by exchange of letters and map	0.5ha to 2ha or 10% of coupe - whichever is less			0.5ha to 2ha - if mainly windblown trees > 2ha to 5ha in areas of low sensitivity	Additional felling of trees not agreed in plan Departures of >60m in either direction from centre line of road
Approval by formal plan amendment	> 2ha or 10% of coupe	Over 2 planting seasons after felling	Change from specified native species Change between species groups	> 5ha	As above, depending on sensitivity

Notes on Tolerance Table

1. There are circumstances in which changes - of less than 0.5 ha for example - could have a dramatic visual effect. The above model does require a sensible approach to be taken by Forest Enterprise in notifying Forestry Commission when such cases arise. Local staff need to be sensitive to issues which may influence the situation (bearing in mind that small adjustments to felling coupes will not appear on the Public Register).
2. It is important that Forest Enterprise keep the FC informed about windblow clearance, which can be problematic in cases of public complaint, and in FC compliance monitoring. In some cases a modification of the proposals for the remaining area of the Plan may need to be submitted and approved. Clearance of blow should not require approval but will be needed for related standing trees.
3. It is recognised that roading proposals as marked on Road Plans are necessarily somewhat indicative, in that actual roading operations require to take account of features not always apparent at the time of roadline planning. Accordingly some leeway is acceptable to account for this.

