

Age Diversity 2016

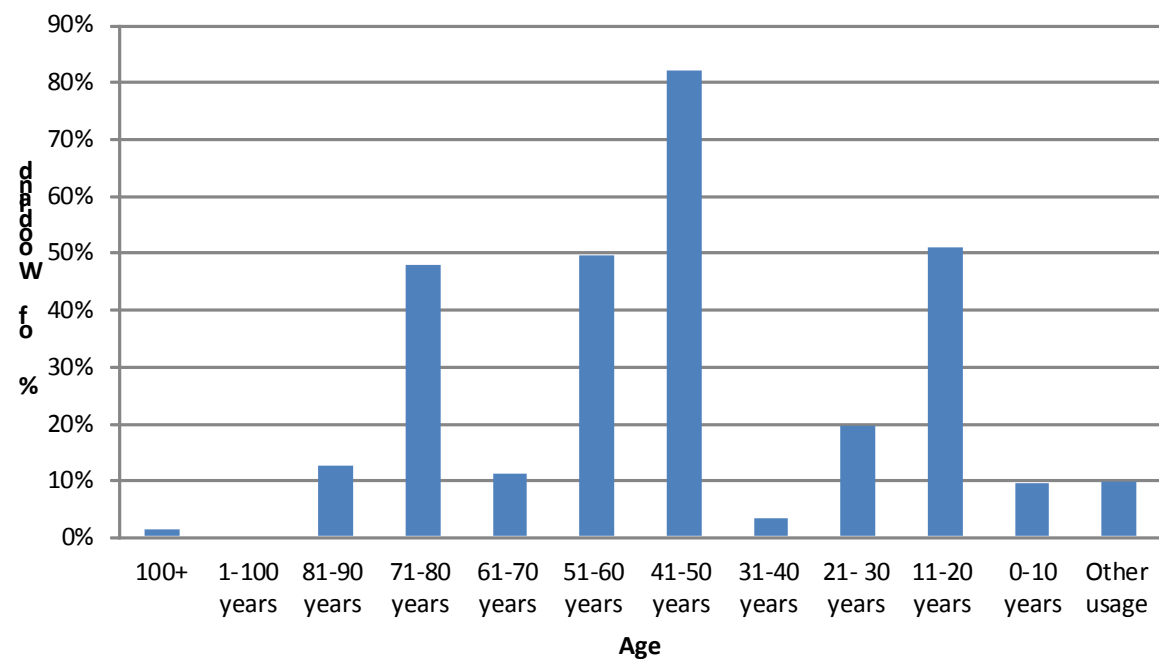


Chart shows the trees across the woodlands, separated into their different age classes.

Semi Natural Scoring

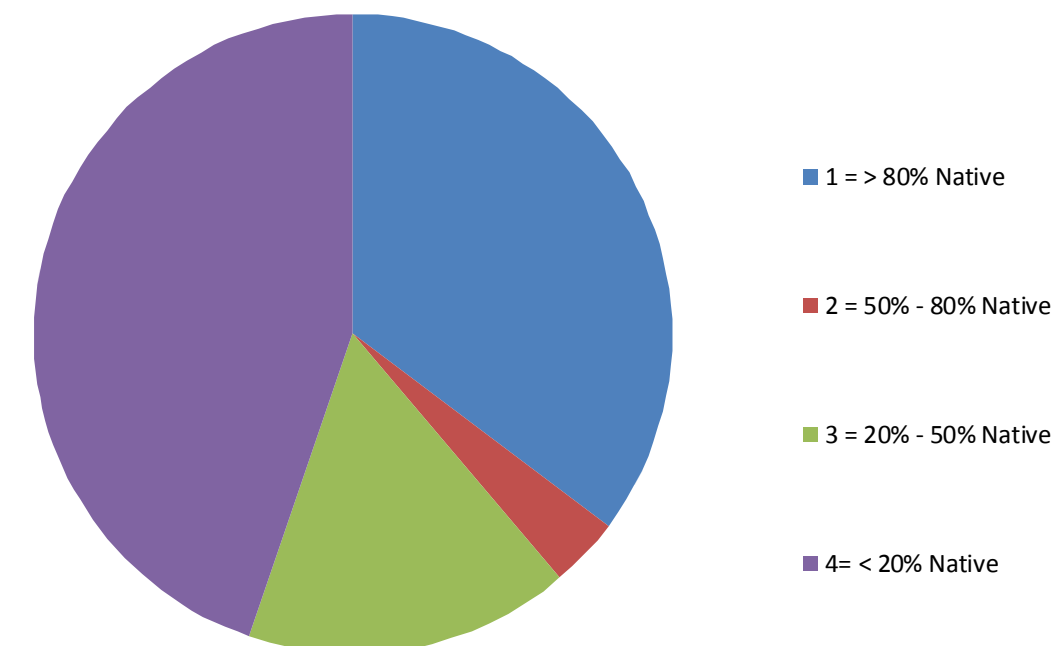


Chart shows the percentage of native species in the ancient woodland areas.

Species Diversity 2016

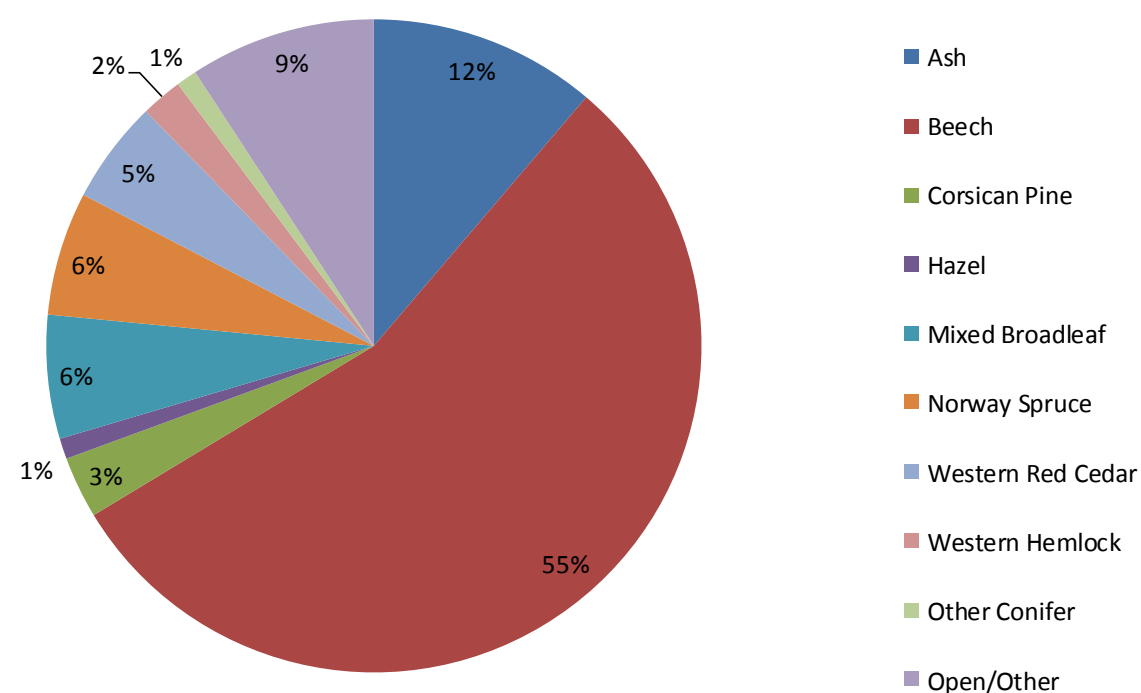


Chart shows the main components of the woodlands which are greater than 1% of the total area.

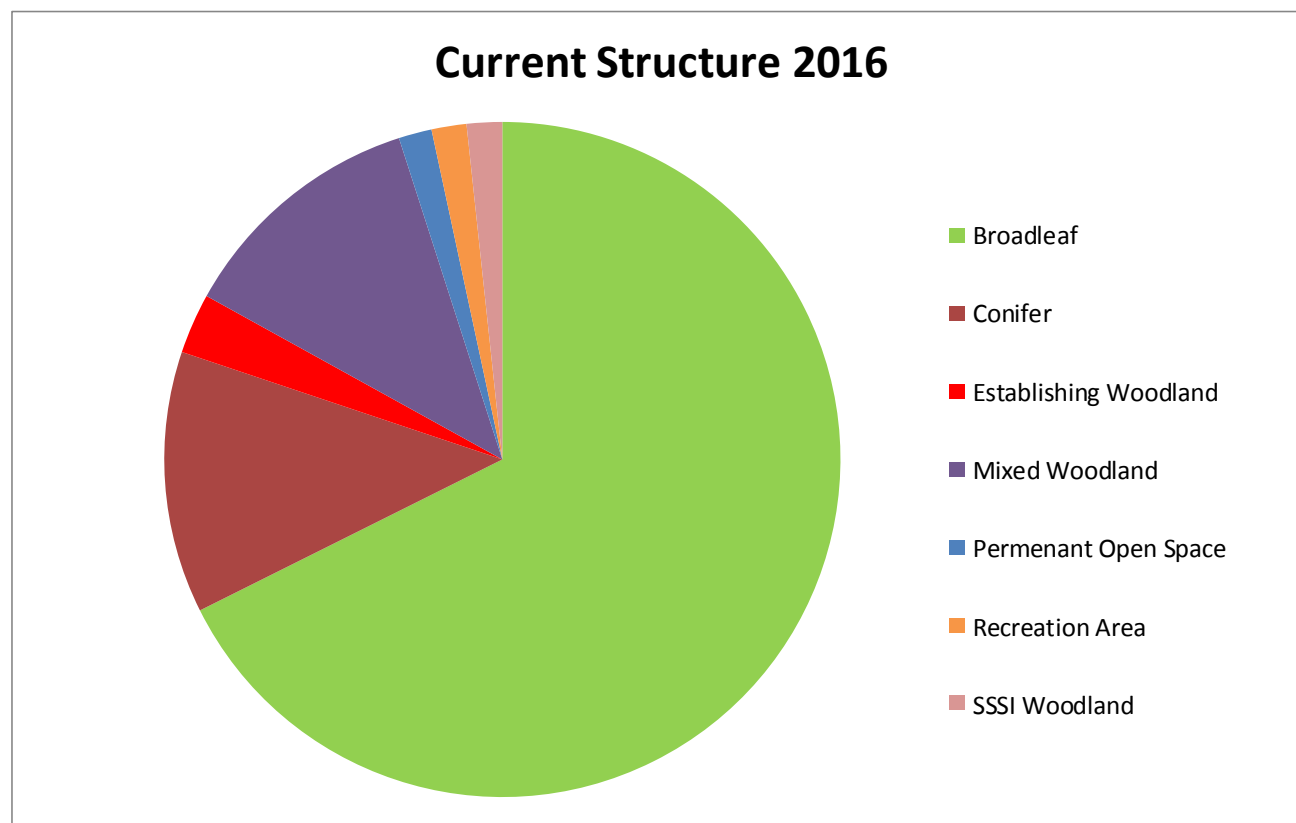


Chart shows the current structure of both woodlands separated into broad habitat types.

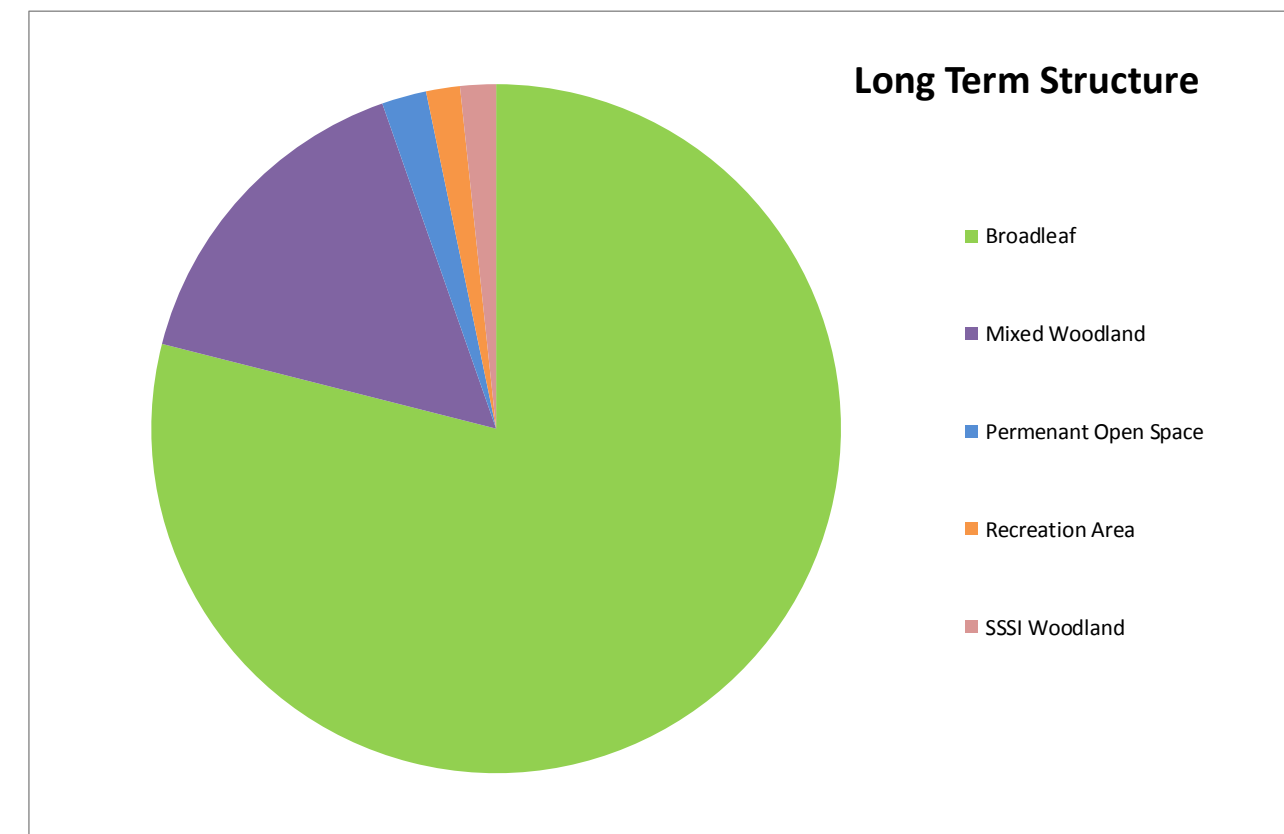


Chart shows the Long Term structure of both woodlands (100 years) separated into broad habitat types.

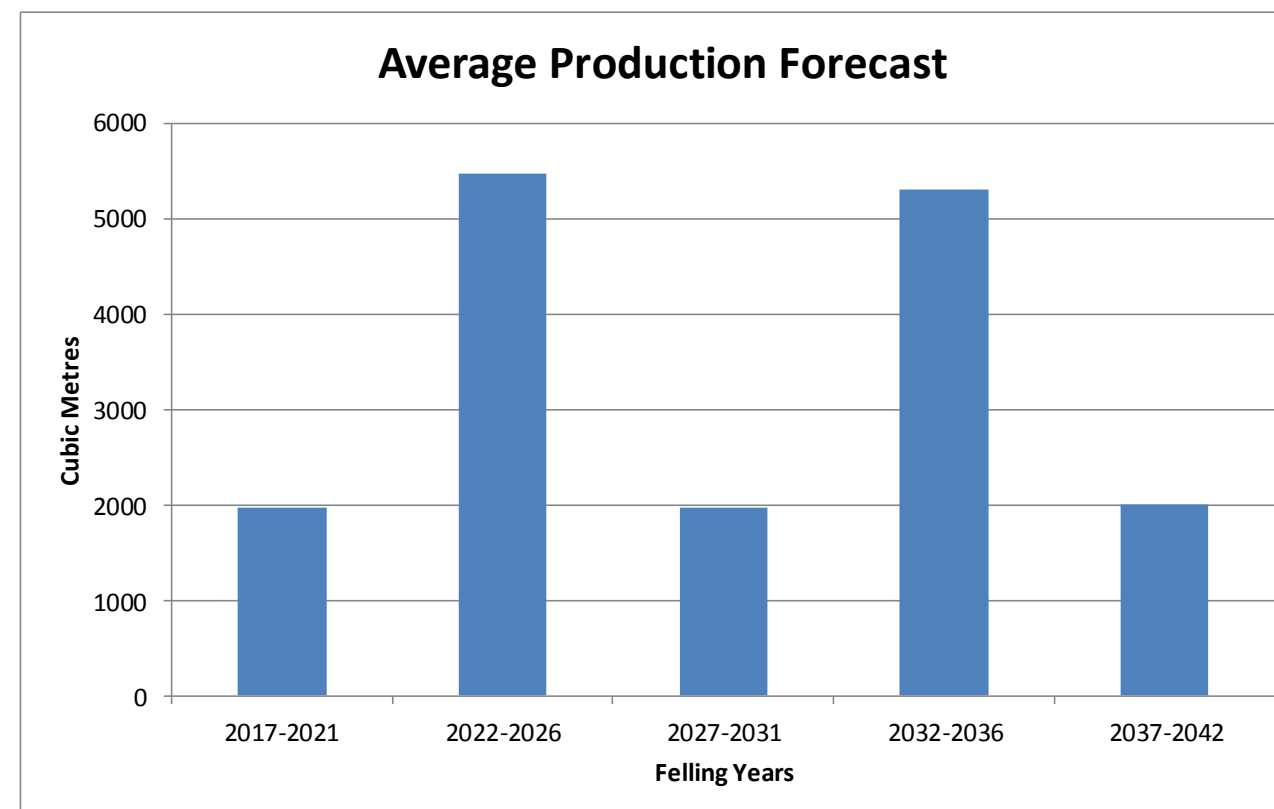


Chart shows the average volume of timber in 5 year intervals.

COUNTY: WEST SUSSEX SITE NAME: WEST HARTING DOWN

DISTRICT: CHICHESTER

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Local Planning Authority: CHICHESTER DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Ref: SU 763180 Area: 13.9 (ha.) 34.3 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 197 1:10,000: SU 71 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1980 Date of Last Revision: ₤

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985 Date of Last Revision: ₤

Other Information:

Reasons for Notification:

An area of mature woodland on the Upper Chalk of the South Downs, which is chiefly composed of mature yew *Taxus baccata* trees, many of which are over one hundred years old. Developing yew scrub and small areas of chalk grassland are also features of the site.

Approximately half the site is pure yew forest. Yew is considered to be a tree of secondary woodland representing a seral stage between open downland and an as yet unknown, final woodland type. The dense canopy of the yew precludes the development of any ground flora although the trees themselves support the lichen *Hypogymnia physodes*. The woodland in the rest of the site consists of yew with mature ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and whitebeam *Sorbus aria*.

There is a small area of coppiced hazel *Corylus avellana* in the south-west with some yew. Under these more open canopies a ground flora has developed of violets *Viola* species, barren strawberry *Potentilla sterilis*, enchanters nightshade *Circaea lutetiana* and slender false-brome grass *Brachypodium sylvaticum*.

Moss floras are also well developed in places. Remaining areas of chalk grassland support a typical downland flora which includes rock rose *Helianthemum nummularium*, carnation sedge *Carex flacca*, perforate St Johns wort *Hypericum perforatum*, salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor* and the dominant grasses red-fescue *Festuca rubra*, tor grass *Brachypodium pinnatum* and common bent *Agrostis capillaris*. Scattered scrub occurs throughout the grassland but there are also two belts of dense scrub which have colonised the downland. Yew is prominent in this scrub but hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* also occur.

A wildfire risk assessment is an evaluation of the likelihood of a wildfire occurring and the severity of damage it might cause if it does occur.

Forest/woodland name; QECP, Head Down Plantation, Ditcham and West Harting Down.					
What are the Fire Hazards?	Who/what might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to manage the risk?	Initial Risk Rating	What else do you need to do?	Revised risk rating
Large blocks of coniferous woodland.	General Public and emergency services	Long term plan to diversify the make up of the blocks, creating mixed species woodlands and restoring appropriate areas back to native woodland.	Medium	Evaluate high risk compartments and consider ways of speeding up the change of species makeup. Evaluate fuel loading during regular intervals. Consider building fire tower to monitor woodland.	
Fires spreading from the road and rail network adjacent to the blocks.	General Public and emergency services	The majority of the road and rail network is either bordered by open space or low risk broad-leafed woodland.	low	Increase vegetation management to reduce fire risk. A verge clear of vegetation should be 3.5m either side of access routes.	
Fires spreading from residential properties adjacent to the blocks	General Public and emergency services	The majority residential properties are bordered by open space or low risk broad-leafed woodland.	low	Actively engage with owners about the risks of fire to both the PFE and their property to create an awareness of fire safety.	
Fires spreading from formal recreation areas (BBQ's/ campfires etc.).	General Public and emergency services	Interpretation both onsite and online discourages BBQ use. Rangers patrol at peak times and fixed stand BBQ's are available to hire in a low risk formal area.	low	Maintain low risk formal recreation areas and consider extra firebreaks on rolling review programme.	
Fires spreading from powerlines and underground utilities (gas pipes).	General Public and emergency services	Any powerlines that go through woodland blocks already have a mandatory exclusion zone, free of high risk vegetation	low	Conduct ad-hock checks on the state of wayleave vegetation, contacting the relevant utility companies when appropriate.	

Objective	Proposed Actions to Meet Objective	Ref	Output year 10	Monitoring	Indicators of Success
Maintain and increase the native composition of ancient semi-natural woodland.	Invasive and non native species will be monitored and managed accordingly to ensure the quality of ASNW is not degraded.	1a 1b	Maintained percentage of native tree species within ancient woodland sites Any invasive or non-native plant species found In ASNW are recorded and managed accordingly with a pre-sumption of eradication.	Semi-Natural scoring via sub compartment database at years 5 and 10 Recording during Operational site assessments with appropriate action taken.	Ancient semi-natural woodland areas will show a maintained semi-natural score of '1' at years 5 and 10 No recorded invasive or non-native species present within ASNW.
Initiate restoration of planted ancient woodland sites to native and honorary native woodland.	Managing PAWS area under a shelter wood system, favouring the retention of native broadleaves will help to reduce the non native component of these areas.	2	Increased percentage of native tree species within ancient woodland sites.	Semi natural scoring via sub compartment database at years 5 and 10.	Plantation on ancient woodland areas will show an increasingly native semi natural score at years 5 and 10.
Take opportunities to increase the nature conservation value of existing habitats and enhance and support the development of open space.	Implementation of the accompanying SSSI plan as agreed with Natural England. During management interventions, opportunities for corridor widening and wider habitat enhancement will be taken in line with the SSSI management plan to increase the structural diversity of woodland edges and provide connecting habitats for key species to disperse.	3	Opportunities are identified at Operational Site assessment (OSA) stage, acted upon and recorded within this plan. Achieve and maintain favourable condition in all SSSI units.	OSA checks at implementation stage. Natural England rolling condition assessments	A record of identification of opportunities, assessment of feasibility and fulfilment if appropriate. Natural England's favourable condition table scoring and comments

Work with partner agencies to provide, maintain and enhance where possible the recreational capacity of the woodland.	Look at increasing the accessibility of footpath and trails in the woodlands with a process of vegetation management around key areas. Safety checks of car parks and trails continued as per OGB 1 and 42.	4	Opportunities are identified at Operational Site assessment (OSA) stage, acted upon and recorded within this plan.	OSA checks at implementation stage. A record of identification of opportunities, assessment of feasibility and fulfilment if appropriate.	A record of identification of opportunities, assessment of feasibility and fulfilment if appropriate.
Maintain and increase the species and age diversity of the woodland.	Managing non ancient woodland areas as mixed woodland allows the woodland to support a greater species diversity. This will benefit disease and climate resistance as well as adding to the aesthetic variation. The development of natural regeneration at various stages, will break up the currently rigid age structure	5a 5b 5c	Maintained number of tree species. Increased age diversity. Evidence of natural regeneration occurring.	Query sub compartment data base at year 5 and 10. Query sub compartment data base at year 5 and 10. Query sales and recording package at year 5 and year 10.	At least the same number of different tree species present at year 10 Improved age diversity at year 10 Increased successful establishment of natural regeneration.
Control invasive plant species and reduce their impact across the sites.	Conduct regular monitoring of invasive plant species, reacting appropriately when threats are identified.	6	Opportunities are identified at Operational Site assessment (OSA) stage, acted upon and recorded within this plan.	OSA checks at implementation stage.	A record of identification of opportunities, assessment of feasibility and fulfilment if appropriate.
Provide a regular supply of quality timber to support local employment and local timber processing industries.	Regular management will provide a sustainable supply of wood products to the industry.	7	Wood products supplied sustainably to industry in line with the production forecast.	Query sales recording package at year 5 and year 10.	Wood products supplied to the timber industry in line with production forecast whilst fulfilling other objectives.

Ref	Comments year 5	Success?	Comments year 10	Success?
1a				
1b				
2				
3				

Ref	Comments year 5	Success?	Comments year 10	Success?
4				
5a				
5b				
5c				

Ref	Comments year 5	Success?	Comments year 10	Success?
6				
7				

Ancient Woodland

A classification for woodland which has been in continuous existence from before AD 1600 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and or from 1750 in Scotland.

Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

The trees and other plant species within an ancient woodland site appear to have arisen naturally rather than having been planted and are predominately (>80%) native to the site and surrounding area.

Compartments/Sub Compartments

Sections of woodland used to delineate and plan management.

Road and ride edge management

A network of internal road and ride margins that will be managed in a sympathetic way to increase the structural diversity of the woodland and provide connecting habitats for key species.

Clear-fell

Cutting down an area of woodland typically greater than 0.25 hectares.

Reserve Shelter Wood System

Woodland management system whereby the forest canopy is maintained at one or more levels without clear felling, generally being no single interruption of tree cover of more than 0.25 hectares with a maximum of 2 interruptions of this size per hectare. Residual seed trees are left for an extended period of time after the new forest has been established.

Opportunities to enhance the existing areas of natural regeneration will be taken along with increasing woodland edge habitat by scalloping ride and road edges for the benefit of biodiversity.

Mixed Woodland

Woodland consisting of a fairly even mixture of broadleaf and conifer species.

Native (and honorary-native)

The trees making up the woodland are part of England's natural (or naturalised) flora. Determined by whether the trees colonised Britain without the assistance of humans since the last ice age (or in the case of 'honorary' native were brought here by people but have naturalised in historic times) ; and whether they would naturally be found in the part of England.

Native woodland

Woodland predominately made up of tree species that would naturally be found on that site.

Natural regeneration

The process of allowing a cleared area of woodland to regenerate naturally by the germination and development of seeds found within the soil on site. These may still require some protection from overbearing plant species and mammal browsing. Some enrichment planting may also be necessary or desirable in areas where natural regeneration is showing limited success or in order to diversify the species range of the woodland.

Plantation on an ancient woodland site (PAWS)

The trees within an ancient woodland site appear to have been planted. These species may or may not be native to the site and surrounding area.

Open Habitat

An area of ground that will have tree cover <5% and support a range of site suitable species.

Research Plantation

Woodland that is being used to run an experiment managed principally by the research arm of the Forestry Commission.

Yield Class

The maximum average rate of volume increment which a particular stand can achieve per hectare.

SSSI Woodland

Woodland managed under a separate SSSI plan, in this case enhance and develop mature Yew woodland with a mosaic of open space and scrub habitats.

Recreation Area

An area of woodland which is managed with recreation as the core focus. The woodland will still be managed but operations should be to enhance the recreational aspects of the area.

Establishment Phase

Areas of woodland that following a harvesting operation are being left to naturally regenerate from seeds found within the soil on site or have been planted.

Priority Ecological Area's

Areas of woodland and open space managed to promote site specific priority key species.

This Forest Plan has been influenced by various key policy statements and guidance documents as listed below.

Government Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement—January 2013

This document sets the direction of travel for forestry policy within England and is the reference point around which main aims and objectives of forestry and woodland management are designed.

The statement sets out the following key objectives, in priority order:

Protecting the nations trees, woodlands and forests from increasing threats such as pests, diseases and climate change.

Improving their resilience to these threats and their contribution to economic growth, peoples lives and nature.

Expanding them to increase further their economic, social and environmental value.

Strategic plan for the public forest estate in England

This plan sets out the direction and goals for the public forest estate in England and indicates the actions we will be taking to achieve these between now and 2020. Our ambitions are long term and we will use a normal cycle of review over 5 years to embed these in local forest plans and ways of operating.

Our mission for the estate.

To work with others to keep the Pubic Forest Estate as a special place for wildlife, people to enjoy and businesses to thrive—and achieve this by adopting a strategy that integrates all the three drivers of sustainable land management; economy, people and nature.

Our Vision and Overall Goal

“To secure and grow the economic, social and natural capital value of the public forest estate for the people of England”

South District Forest Strategic Plan

The strategic management plan is a Forest Enterprise District Level document that informs local Forestry Commission Staff about the management direction of the Public Forest Estate and the associated policies. The Forest Plans are a key mechanism for delivering policies on the ground.

Open Habitat Policy, 2010

This is Government policy on how to decide when to convert woodland to open habitat in England.

United Kingdom Forestry Standard

The UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) is the reference standard for sustainable forest management in the UK. The UKFS, supported by its series of guidelines, outlines the context for forestry in the UK, sets out the approach of the UK government to sustainable forest management, defines standards and requirements, and provides a basis for regulation and monitoring.

UK woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)

An independent certification standard for verifying sustainable management in the United Kingdom.

Keepers of Time

This policy statement celebrates the importance of our native and ancient woodland and sets out a basis on which to achieve the following vision.

“Ancient woodlands, veteran trees and other native woodlands are adequately protected, sustainably managed in a wider landscape context, and are providing a wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits”

Managing ancient and native woodland in England: Practice Guide

This practice guide has been produced to help practitioners translate what measures and practical action can be taken to protect and enhance our ancient and native woodlands and guides implementation of the approaches to management and restoration trialled in woods around the country.

Managing deadwood in forests and woodland 2012

A practice guide encouraging owners and managers to develop a strategic approach to deadwood with an emphasis on working with natural processes.

Choosing stand management methods for restoring planted ancient woodland sites, 2013.

A practice guide showing different silvicultural methods for restoring planted ancient woodland sites.

European Landscape convention

The European landscape convention—also known as the Florence convention, - promotes the protection, management and planning of European landscapes and organises European co-operation of landscape issues.

UK Biodiversity Action Plan (1995): a national strategy for biodiversity conservation establishing a list of key habitats and species for which habitat and species action plans (HAPs and SAPs respectively) would be prepared. Key habitats and species later re-worded as Priority Habitats and Species.

List of Habitats and Species of Principal Importance in England: includes 56 habitats and 943 species referred to as Section 41 Habitats and Species – established under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

Biodiversity 2020: a strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services: this document builds on the Natural Environment white paper and sets out the strategic direction for biodiversity policy across both land and sea between 2011-2020:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services>

The South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan 2014-2019

South Downs National Park Authority. [online] Available at <<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-work/key-documents/partnership-management-plan/>> [accessed May 2016].

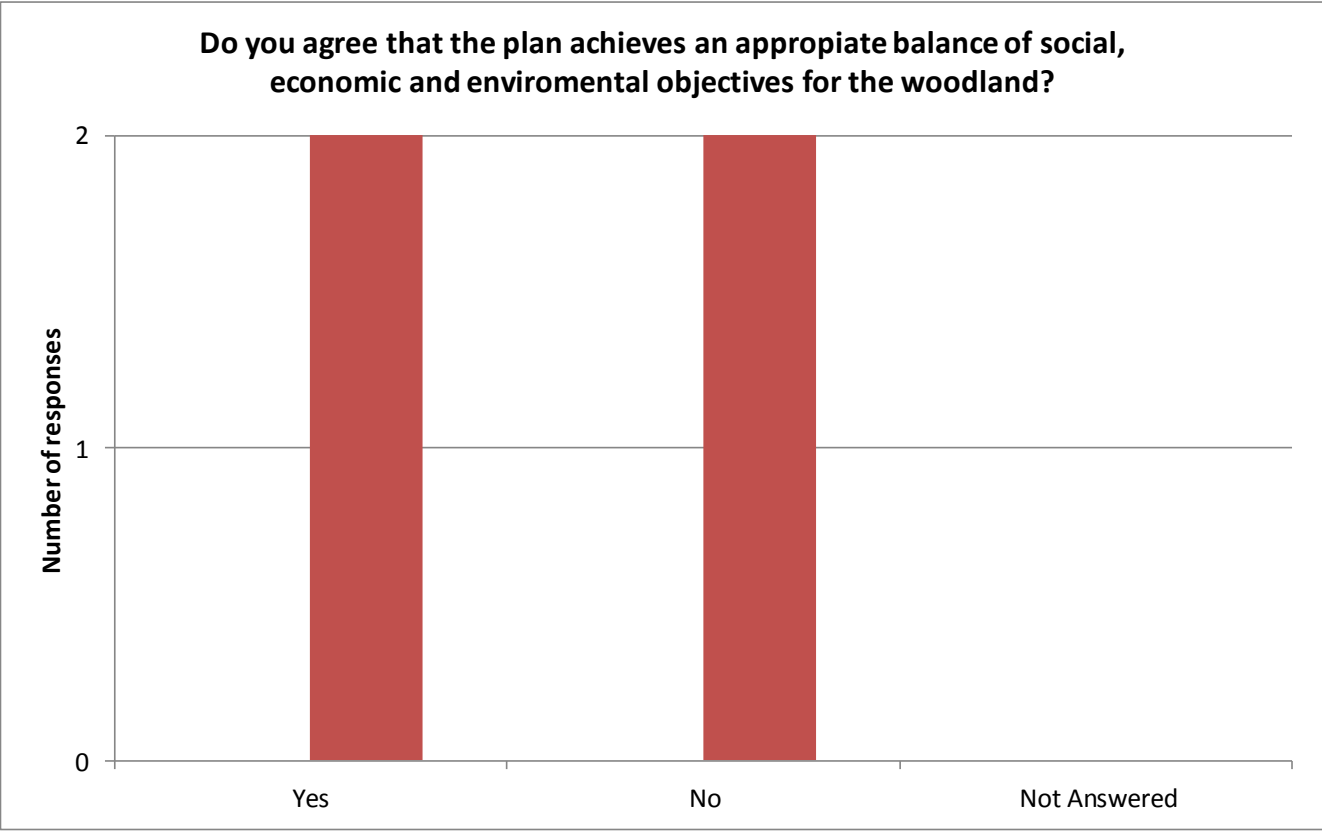
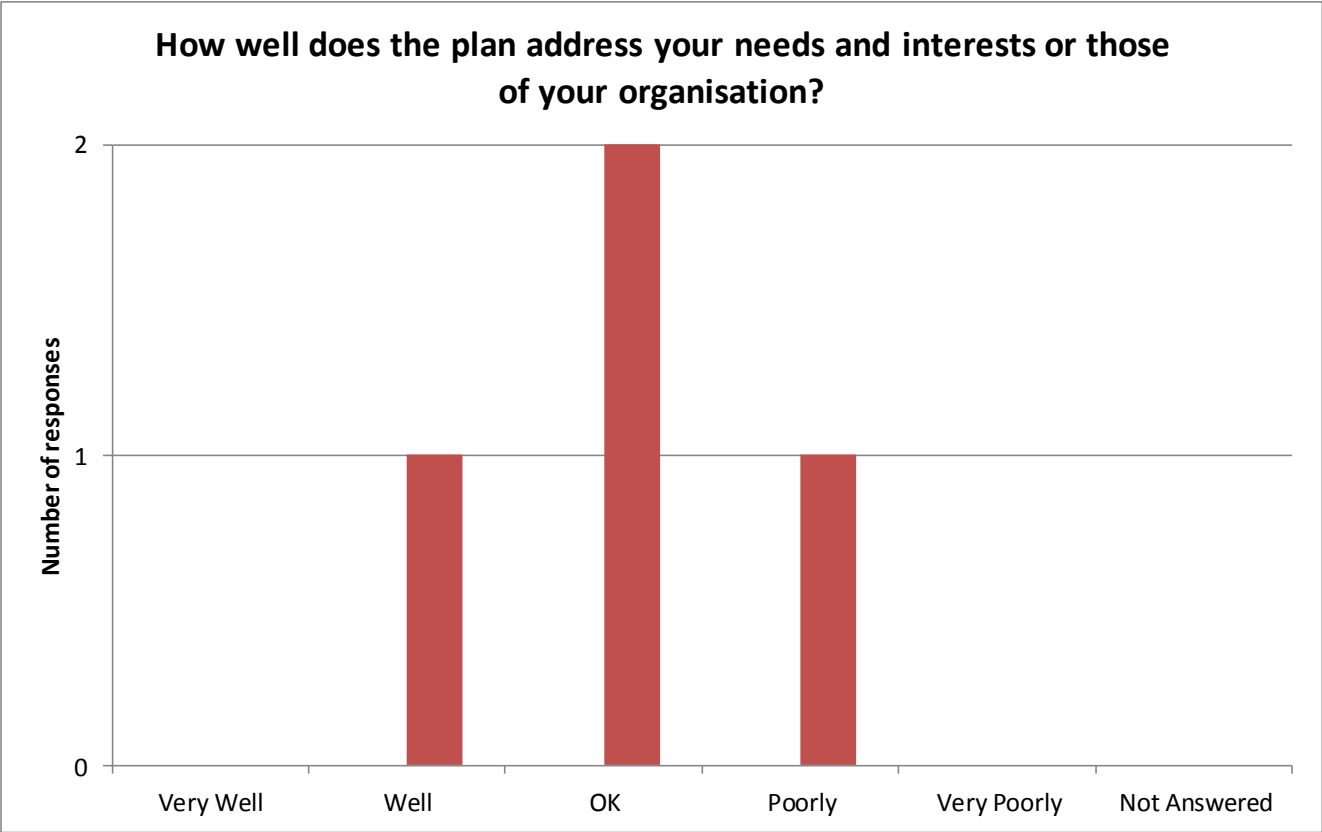
The forest plan proposals are being consulted on over three main stages:

Stage 1: The woodland owners

Stage 2: Stakeholder Consultation **3rd October—7th November 2016**

Environment Agency	Butterfly Conservation	Natural England	Hampshire County Council	West Sussex County Council	Chichester District Council	East Hampshire district Council	West Sussex District Council	Sussex Wildlife Trust	RSPB
Harting Parish Council	Clanfield Parish Council	Rowlands Castle Parish Council	Buriton Parish Council	National Trust	Sussex Bat Group		The Woodland Trust	Ancient Tree Forum	Botanical Society of the British Isles
British Dragonfly Society	British Mycological society	Buglife	Bumblebee conservation Trust	Fresh Water Habitats Trust	People trust for endangered species	Plantlife	Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre	Hampshire Biodiversity Record Centre	The Deer Initiative
BSW Timber Group									

Stage 3: Wider public consultation via the Forest Services Public Register



Stakeholder	Re- sponse Date	Response	FC Follow Up
West Harting Parish Council	24/10/16	I do not think that carbon capture and floods should be graded together and trees and their importance has not really been addressed.	<p>Many thanks for taking the time to comment on the Forest Plan for South Downs 1.</p> <p>The forest plan is a strategic document and needs to strike a balance between its dual roles of a working file and including enough detail to inform decision making, therefore some areas are necessarily brief.</p> <p>All FC woodlands are certified to the UK Forest standard which is the reference standard for sustainable forest management in the UK. The document is rather large but should address your concerns regarding the importance of trees carbon capture and floods in Forestry Commission Woodland Management. A link to which can be found below.</p> <p>http://www.forestry.gov.uk/ukfs</p> <p>Following appropriate revision's the next stage of the Forest Plan consultation will be submission to the Forest Service's Public Register. I will be in touch when the plan is available for further comment.</p>

Stakeholder	Response Date	Response
Limewood Working Group	26/10/16	<p>Dear William,</p> <p>I note the South Downs Forest Plan is up for revision and out for consultation.</p> <p>I would draw to your attention to two small rare tree populations of special interest.</p> <p>1. On the edge of Hundry Copse, at the foot of War Down at SU733204 there are three native large leaved lime trees, comprising one 76bhd maiden and two ancient stools with five huge stems, the tallest of which is 36.5m. Another stem has a tight 'V' fork, so is vulnerable to wind damage. The two stools sit on Hundry Copse's Woodbank, forming a significant ecological and heritage feature. Between the Woodbank (the FC ownership boundary?) and the adjacent field's stock fence, self layering of LLI has occurred, with two successful progeny and more struggling in the shade of the parent. Please ensure this rare vegetative propagation is conserved. I note Hundry Copse is PAWS, carrying a beech plantation. Should you be planning to thin or fell this crop, please create a 35m wide arc around the LLI, where the BE are given special treatment by a light crown thinning not exceeding 15% of stems. As part of this operation, please give the lime a light 'halo' by removing the three nearest beech. A fourth LLI, which probably snapped off in the Oct '87 gale is now dead. It had weak regrowth three years ago.</p> <p>2. There is a further population of c. 12 native limes at The Miscombe at SU762196, sitting significantly on the County boundary. I recollect these are both large and small leaved lime. One lime, in a risky state, was felled three or four years ago. Do please conserve this group in a similar manner to the first group. Should you have to fell any more because of the proximity of the hair-pin bend on the County road, please protect the highly palatable regrowth with deer netting.</p> <p>Regarding West Harting Down SSSI, Peter Norton of the Ancient Yew Group and I inspected the yew woodland there also three or four years ago. From some 2,000 yews we found only a handful of seedlings. We know FC/NE are monitoring this dilemma with deer exclosures but having now inspected yew woodland in Surrey, W Sussex, Hants and Wilts, it is clear that the lack of seeding is a standing problem of recent decades. May I recommend that further deer exclosures are erected where there are any light pools but additionally some are also protected with rabbit netting and some with mouse netting. Peter and I are conducting an experiment in Wiltshire, protecting the only real population of yew seedlings we have found across these counties with mouse/rabbit mesh guards (not shelters). There is a high mouse or vole presence and along with slugs and snails we suspect their predation as much as deer. We are also monitoring the affect of degrees of shade.</p> <p>I sincerely hope you are able to accommodate the above comments and recommendations.</p>

FC Response—Limewood Working Group

Many thanks for taking the time to comment on the South Downs 1 Forest Plan.

I was not aware of the presence of specific Lime trees so thanks for bringing these my attention. I will highlight the presence of these in the revised document. I have also spoken to the wildlife ranger for the area who has confirmed that before an area of woodland is worked, as part of the FC’s OPS1 Operational Site Assessment planning process, veteran trees including boundary features are highlighted and specific prescriptions are drawn up where appropriate.

Regarding the SSSI area in West Harting Down, as you mentioned we are working with our colleagues in Natural England to ensure that this area moves from an unfavourable recovering status to favourable. The deer enclosures set up have had limited success and your suggestion of adding further rabbit and mouse netting could be a solution.

The second stage of the consultation process is the Forest Service’s public register, I will be in touch when the plan has been revised and is available for further comment should you wish to do so.

Stakeholder	Response Date	Response
Southdowns National park Authority	4/11/16	<p>As the protected landscape is a vital consideration in your plans, and the FC has a duty to work with us, it is a surprise to us that we were not listed as one of the statutory consultees for this plan, and would have welcomed the opportunity to feed into this plan revision at an earlier stage than this.</p> <p>Despite this we generally welcome this plan revision and the general principles set out within it, particularly the efforts to increase the species diversity, including increasing the broadleaf component, the intention to enhance biodiversity and restore PAWS, and the objectives around providing public access.</p> <p>We do have some additional and specific comments, however, not least that we hope that that we will be able to work closely with the FC on the implementation of this plan.</p> <p>Historic Environment</p> <p>Lidar survey has shown the heritage richness of this area so we would encourage you to work closely with us to ensure that this data is taken into account, both when long term planning and conducting operational site assessments prior to running harvesting ops.</p> <p>We would also like to request that archaeological assessments are undertaken (much hasn't yet been ground-truthed) as part of the OSAs and the resulting data shared with us and with the HER for the county/district concerned.</p> <p>It is not clear from the plan how restocking schemes will take into account areas of archaeological sensitivity and/or any mitigation actions that may be taken when planting on or near sensitive sites. We would like to seek further clarification on how cultural heritage has been considered in more detail and would welcome dialogue on this.</p> <p>Rights of Way and access</p> <p>In the People section, mention is made of the South Downs Way, hangars Way and Staunton Way. we would add the Shipwrights Way to the this list. The Shipwrights Way is a long distance route for Walkers and Cyclists beginning at Bentley Station and going through Alice Holt (FC) site before finishing some 60 miles later in Portsmouth. Links below the main page and relevant section maps.</p> <p>https://www3.hants.gov.uk/shipwrightsway/shipwrightsway-route.htm</p> <p>http://documents.hants.gov.uk/ccbs/countryside/shipwrightsway-section7.pdf http://documents.hants.gov.uk/ccbs/countryside/shipwrightsway-section8.pdf</p> <p>It is good to see Objective 4 - relating to enhancing recreational opportunities and enhancing accessibility. A good idea too to plan for identifying opportunities and to record when these have been implemented. There will be opportunities to enhance recreational access through QECP improvements. We would suggest FC work with HCC and local stakeholders to identify possible projects if they haven't already done so.</p> <p>We note in the introduction for people that there is an issue with horseriders mis-using a footpath at West Harting Down to connect with the South Downs Way. Perhaps one possible solution would be to seek higher rights on this section, upgrading the footpath to bridleway. The footpath there links with other bridleways forming a nice circular ride.</p>

Stakeholder	Response Date	Response
Southdowns National park Authority continued	4/11/16	<p>Forestry General</p> <p>We welcome the FC's intention to increase the species diversity within these blocks, including undertaking PAWS restoration. We would, however, like to echo your objective to continue to supply timber to local markets, and that it is vital that in the execution of this plan, that the FC ensures that quality timber remains a prime objective into the future, especially when growing broadleaves.</p> <p>To this end, it is not clear specifically within the plan, how you will be controlling pests (e.g. squirrels and deer) to ensure that quality timber can be realised in the future? We would also be very keen to work with the FC on a landscape deer management group and would be keen to discuss this with you in due course.</p> <p>In terms of the PAWS restoration, we would encourage the FC to carry out in depth condition surveys for remnant features, and especially survey and recording of veteran trees. We would be very keen to work with the FC on the recording of veteran trees, and identifying management issues, and feeding that into a wider national park assessment of veteran tree condition. Specimen trees near to man hub areas are mentioned, but we would also encourage planting/recruitment of specimen trees for the future as part of ongoing management.</p> <p>In terms of species selection, we would encourage careful consideration of species and provenance selection, considering impacts of climate change, but also if there were opportunities to plant disease resistant specimens, e.g. elm and ash, if and when they become available.</p> <p>In terms of native species control, it is understood that you will be pro-actively controlling species such as rhododendron ponticum, but it is not clear from the detail set out in the plan, quite what approach will be taken to do this- more about monitoring?</p> <p>In terms of landscape impact, we would welcome careful consideration of felling coupe sizes, and planning the size and shape of these carefully. It is understood that you will be in compliance with UKWAS and the forest standard on this, but it is vital that the impact of felling coupes is considered both when drawing up longer term plans, and immediately prior to running harvesting ops. We would also encourage Low Impact Silvicultural Systems to increase structural diversity and regenerate stands, while minimising landscape impact. There is a hint towards the types of silvicultural systems that might be used to deliver the vision, but we would welcome dialogue with you to look at how these systems might work out in practice.</p> <p>We would also like to seek assurance how the FS water guidelines will be met as this is not clear from the plan? Again it is presumed that these guidelines will be adhered to but it is not clear from the plan in its consultation form.</p> <p>In terms of wider biodiversity, there are limited specific actions detailed in the consultation, but we would be keen to encourage careful targeting of deadwood habitat creation to maximise the benefit of a variety of species. We would also encourage active open space management, and would be keen to explore opportunities for encouraging heathland and chalk grassland species within this, as appropriate- particularly where it may benefit target species and/or link existing habitats.</p> <p>Finally, in terms of infrastructure, it is not clear from the plan what infrastructure enhancements might be required, if any, in order to deliver this plan? We would encourage the FC to engage with us and the other relevant planning authorities, at an early stage to ensure that landscape and environmental impacts are minimised by any infrastructure upgrades in the future.</p>

FC Response—South Downs National Park Authority

Many thanks for taking the time to comment on the South Downs 1 Forest Plan.

It was remiss of me to not include the SDNPA in the consultation and for that I apologise, however it's great that you have been able to respond. It is important that you feel you had adequate time to feed in to the plan and to this extent do let me know if you would like any additional time.

On another note, in a previous consultation for the woodlands around Rogate/Liphook area I was liaising with different contacts from the National Park and I'm anxious to make sure I have the right details for future consultations. In particular for the forest plan that covers Alice Holt Forest which will start at the end of the month, so if you could let me know who the best person is that would be great.

I'm glad to hear that the SDNPA welcomes the plan revision and the general principles. Regarding your comments and suggestions many of them are taken into account during our OPS 1 Operational Site Assessment process. This is drawn using guidance from the UKFS and forms part of our requirements as a UKWAS certified organisation. The forest plan is a strategic document and therefore the level of detail is a consequence of this.

You mention needing further clarification on range of issues from the historic environment to silvicultural systems; if you would like to meet up and discuss anything further do please get in touch.

Stakeholder	Response Date	Response
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust	7/11/16	<p>Thank you for consulting the Wildlife Trust on this Forest Design Plan, we welcome the opportunity to comment. We note that this consultation includes three woodlands within Hampshire and one in West Sussex. Whilst we acknowledge that wildlife does not conform to county boundaries, in order to avoid any overlap with our colleagues in West Sussex, we have limited our comments to those woodlands in Hampshire only.</p> <p>Objectives for the South Downs Phase 1:</p> <p>As we have stated above, we welcome the opportunity to comment on this design plan and applaud the Forestry Commission in their desire to find an appropriate balance between nature conservation, public recreation and the timber industry. However, we consider that with the exception of Point 3, which seeks to “take opportunities to increase the nature conservation value of existing habitats and enhance and support the development of open space” and point 6 which looks to “Control invasive non-native plant species and reduce their impact across the sites” the objectives are primarily focused on the management of relatively intensive plantation woodland.</p> <p>As a general comment we are pleased to see the move towards native broad-leaved woodland restoration and management where that is applicable. However, it is noted that prior to 1928 the areas known as the Holt and War Down, in Queen Elizabeth Country Park, supported a mixture of chalk grassland, native scrub and yew woodland, as such we would like to see a vision of restoring these areas to a mosaic of those habitat types. Currently the medium and long-term vision maps suggest that these areas will be managed as “mixed woodland” and “managed native woodland”, respectively. As you will be aware the Wildlife Trust is the owner and manager of Coulter’s Dean SSSI. The restoration of some areas to chalk grassland within this plan will improve connectivity with other chalk grassland sites and their resilience for the future.</p> <p>We also note that whilst the objectives seek to increase the nature conservation value of the existing habitats, the plan proposes to provide minimal dedicated areas for wildlife and areas of open space are identified in many cases for recreation. In such instances it is likely that only the most resilient and adaptable species will thrive whereas rarer and more specialist ones will be lost as a result of management choice and impacts of recreational pressure, such as nutrient enrichment and trampling. We would therefore like to see a more balanced plan which considers the existing and historic nature conservation value of the area and seeks to maintain and enhance those features.</p> <p>We welcome the objective to control invasive non-native plant species and reduce their impact across the site.</p> <p>The above advice is given based on the information made available at this time and may change should further or amended details be submitted. We trust that you will find our comments helpful in determining and if you wish to discuss these matters further, please do not hesitate to do so. I also ask that you keep the Trust informed of the progress and outcome of this forest plan.</p>

FC Response—Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trusts

Many thanks for taking the time to comment on the South Downs 1 Forest Plan.

The objectives try to find an appropriate balance between the Forestry Commissions responsibilities to the timber industry, nature conservation and recreation. It is with regret that in some cases those objectives will not align completely with NGO's such as the wildlife trust. In light of this the FC cannot support your advice to restore areas of Holt & War Down back to a mosaic of chalk grassland, scrub and yew woodland. The area is not designated and many of the broadleaf stands in the woodland are over 80 years old and are now providing important habitats in their own right. However where this mosaic is present already in the woodlands we will aim to conserve and enhance this habitat, a process that has already been started in the SSSI area in West Harting Down.

Regarding the provision of open space within the woodlands, the road and ride network will be managed to provide connecting habitats for enhanced biodiversity creating a scalloped and graded structure, this goes in tangent with the permanent open space created in many of the blocks already. Additionally the plan seeks to use low impact silvicultural systems across all the woodland areas. This will create a rolling programme of temporary open space creation which will support a variety of flora and fauna.

Following appropriate revision's the next stage of the Forest Plan consultation will be submission to the Forest Service's Public Register. I will be in touch when the plan is available for further comment.

Stakeholder	Date	Response
Butterfly Conservation	10/11/16	<p>I am writing to provide Butterfly Conservation's comments towards the Forest Plan review for Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Head down Plantation, Ditcham Wood and West Harting Down.</p> <p>The South Downs is a nationally important landscape and is home to a relatively high number of locally and nationally important butterfly and moth species. Butterflies and moths are indicative of a wide range of invertebrates, and the presence of these threatened species within the landscape is indicative of the wider health of the habitats therein.</p> <p>The species of greatest relevance and highest conservation concern within this landscape are summarised on the attached map. The priorities are derived from Butterfly Conservation's new Regional Action Plan for South East England 2016 to 2025, which highlights priority species specific to this part of the South Downs landscape. Most of these butterflies and moths are identified as species of principal importance for biodiversity conservation under Section 41 (S41) of the NERC Act 2006, and were previously highlighted as Priority species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.</p> <p>The species of butterfly and moth highest priority are highlighted as being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duke of Burgundy (S41, UKBAP) • Drab Looper (S41, UKBAP) • Striped Lychnis (S41, UKBAP) <p>The outline actions for the priority species are included on the attached summary sheet and there are more detailed but very accessible factsheets available at:</p> <p>http://butterfly-conservation.org/3545/butterfly-factsheets.html http://butterfly-conservation.org/3538/2/moth-factsheets.html</p> <p>As with most invertebrates, sunlight, warmth and absence of shade will be important elements that are required by butterflies and moth and by the plants on which they rely. A rich and complex habitat structure is also required to provide different niches required at the various stages of their life cycle. It is therefore important that the management of the woodland here provides a network of diverse open spaces and structural diversity, with good ecological connectivity. The edges of these woodlands also provide important and extensive areas where the management of the woodland can complement (and be complemented by) the management of the habitats outside the woodland. We hope that the woodland edges will be managed to provide a 'soft', 'porous' and varied transition from open grassland, through scrub to high forest.</p> <p>We hope that many of the actions included on the summary sheet will be specifically included within your plan and evidenced in the delivery and monitoring over the coming years. Butterfly Conservation will be happy to work with the Forestry Commission to plan and target specific works; a species-targeted approach will be most effective to deliver the most significant benefits for these species. To evidence the impact of management, we would also like to see inclusion of a structured survey and monitoring programme across taxa. Butterfly Conservation would be willing to work with the Forestry Commission to establish this.</p> <p>Butterfly Conservation remains keen to work with the Forestry Commission, other with other conservation partners, land managers and the local communities to help conserve and enhance the habitats and species within this area and across the Forest District.</p>

Stakeholder	Date	Response
Butterfly Conservation	10/11/16	<div><div><p>Butterfly Conservation Saving butterflies, moths and our environment</p></div><div><p>Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Head down Plantation, Ditcham Wood and West Harting Down</p><p>Actions and Opportunities for Priority Butterflies & Moths</p><div><p>High priority butterflies:</p><div><p>Purple Emperor Retain and increase numbers of fallows of a varied age mix within woodlands, with crown in full or partial shade.</p></div><div><p>White-letter Hairstreak Encourage suckering and regrowth of Elms; Plant disease resistant Elms, in sunny sheltered spots.</p></div></div><p>Grassland and clearings</p><div><p>Silver-spotted Skipper Maintain and improve a sparse short sward containing Sheep's Fescue, with flowers nearby and small patches of bare ground.</p></div><div><p>Dark Green Fritillary Maintain, enhance and extend a violet rich grassland sward, with small patches of scrub.</p></div><div><p>Chalk Hill Blue Maintain, enhance and extend grassland and Horseshoe Vetch. Use winter grazing to enhance the sward. Encourage the spread of Vetch by seeding into the turf in</p></div><div><p>Small Blue Maintain or enhance existing sites, providing bare ground to encourage colonization by Kidney Vetch. Mowing seed into sparse sward, scrapes, or bare ground. Avoid spring or summer grazing and control rabbit numbers if necessary.</p></div></div><div><p>Grizzled Skipper & Dingy Skipper Maintain, enhance and extend a sparse sward containing long stems of Common Bird's-foot Trefoil / Horseshoe vetch (for Dingy Skipper) and/or a high density of Agrimony, Creeping Cinquefoil, and Wild Strawberry (for Grizzled Skipper) in a varied height sward, with patches of bare ground and abundant nectar plants such as Bugle. Ensure grazing is not too heavy.</p></div></div> <div><p>HIGHEST PRIORITY BUTTERFLIES & MOTHS</p><div><p>Duke of Burgundy Conserve and enhance herb-rich grassland. Produce mosaic of young scattered scrub over relic grassland and in bays of scrub edges. Light cattle grazing from late summer to winter is ideal.</p></div><div><p>Drab Looper Employ coppicing or other disturbance to create open, sheltered, sunny ride edges where Wood Spurge can form in large abundant stands.</p></div><div><p>Striped Lychnis Encourage or sow Dark Mullein in unshaded areas on rough downland, fields that have recently been left fallow, also on verges and embankments, in woodland rides and clearings.</p></div></div> <div><p>Map showing the locations of Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Head down Plantation, Ditcham Wood, and West Harting Down. The map includes various geographical features, roads, and a scale bar (0 to 1 km). Key locations marked include War Down, Holt Down, Gravel Hill, Cycle Plantation, Oakham Bottom, Glass Brow, Ditcham School, West Harting Down, and Sussex Border Path. The map also shows surrounding villages like Ditcham, Harting, and West Harting.</p></div> <div><p>Produced from Butterfly Conservation's Regional Action Plan 2016. © Crown Copyright and database rights 2016. Ordnance Survey 1002201. Reproduction is subject to conditions.</p></div>

FC Response—Butterfly Conservation


Many thanks for taking the time to comment on the South Downs Forest Plan and I am happy to include your feedback as part of the consultation.

The information on Lepidoptera you have kindly provided will help to inform our management decisions in the woodland and I will amend the document to include reference to this.

Your offer of working with the FC to plan targeted works and monitoring programmes is welcome and I will pass this on to the Beat staff and District ecologist to consider in the future.

The second stage of the consultation process is the Forest Service's public register, I will be in touch when the plan has been revised and is available for further comment should you wish to do so.

Member of the Public	14th November 2016	<p>Dear Sirs, Thank you for inviting the public to have their say about the Forest Design Plan Objectives concerning South Downs Phase1.</p> <p>Looking at plan for the Queen Elizabeth Park and South Harting, I notice that an alarmingly large area of woodland east of the park has been ear marked for clear fell. In the park itself, a further though smaller number of areas are either marked for clear fell or for limited intervention management. Many trees have recently acquired red spots, indicating, no doubt that they are to be felled in the near future.</p> <p>When the west side of the park was exposed to extensive and rather messy thinning some two years ago, I wrote a letter to the Forestry Commission. The reply I received explained why the thinning had happened and seemed to imply that no further thinning was intended for the next 7 years. Looking at the proposed plan, I get the impression this is now unlikely.</p> <p>In view of the importance of woodland for recreational purposes as well as for the reduction of greenhouse gases caused ever increasing number of vehicles, it would seem be advisable to be less drastic in he reduction of tree cover.</p>
FC Response	12th January 2017	<p>Thank you for your letter dated the 14th November 2016 regarding the consultation for the South Downs 1 Forest Plan and many thanks for taking the opportunity to read and comment on the proposals. I apologise for the time it has taken to respond as the letter has only just reached me.</p> <p>Regarding your concerns about clear-felling, there are no areas in the plan that are to be clear-felled in a traditional sense, rather management favours the use of continuous cover forestry systems. This 'close to nature' approach has been deemed appropriate because of the large amounts of native woodland across the forest blocks and the freely regenerating nature of the understory. Management will look to transform where appropriate even aged plantations to an irregular forest structure over the long term. These lower impact systems aim to provide a balance of objectives, a sustainable timber resource as well as safeguarding important habitats and improving the woodlands resilience into the future.</p> <p>The areas under the hatching are where this transformation is going to take place in the first years of the plan and the rest of the woodland will be thinned on an appropriate rotation. In the case of conifers this is approximately 5 years and for broadleaves 10. The red spots on the trees are most likely part of this process.</p> <p>You mention the purpose of woodland for recreational purposes; this is considered as part of pre-operational planning and forms part of the Forestry Commissions approach under the UK Forestry Standard, to which more information can be found on the following website, www.forestry.gov.uk/ukfs</p> <p>Although the consultation ended on the 7th November, I am will still include this as part of the public record.</p>

<p>Natural England</p>	<p>18th January</p>	<p>I've taken a quick look at the Design plan and have a few comments. One of the key things is that the SSSI boundary is wrong as you can see from the shape. I've just snipped the outline from our system here</p>  <p>It's also hard to tell from the map of map of habitat restoration and felling if anything is planned within the SSSI as the whole area (albeit wrong outline) is covered in the blue and white to designate SSSI and no other detail is visible.</p> <p>I noted the commitment to maintain rides, glade and clearings particularly for butterflies and moths, which is great. However, Natural England's Integrated Site Assessment, carried out in 2016 noted that there is a very serious issue with deer browsing and that there was no regeneration of yew (I'm told that yew isn't poisonous to deer). I imagine this is impacting on ground flora too although the assessors did find some good woodland ground flora and it may have been too early for chalk species.</p> <p>I'd be interested in any proposal you may have regarding the yew regen, the proposal to clear some areas for it are welcomed but without sustained culling or possibly fencing we may not be able to secure the young growth of yew which is needed.</p> <p>I'd also like a bit more clarification on what is being done for the Striped Lychnis and Drap Looper, I think BC have a project bid in for the latter but their local lead is away until the end of Feb so I can't find out anything more.</p> <p>Hope this is helpful,</p>
<p>FC Response</p>	<p>19th January 2017</p>	<p>Many thanks for getting in touch regarding the Forest Plan revision for the South Downs 1.</p> <p>Please find a response to the comments below.</p> <p>SSSI Boundary – thanks for pointing out the boundary error in the current structure map this has now been rectified. The boundary in the later maps (medium structure, long term, habitat & felling) has been extended and represents our desire to increase and manage this habitat as it grades into the woodland in the north of the SSSI. In deed in practice this is already being managed in this way.</p> <p>The detail of the specific management for the area will be in the forthcoming updated SSSI plan that our ecologist will be producing for approval later this year and the plan refers to this in the legend.</p> <p>I have also added further detail to the biodiversity text section about what was done in the past and how future management interventions in the surrounding woodlands will provide opportunities to maintain and enhance the habitat for which is its notified.</p> <p>Regeneration of Yew – We are aware of the deer pressure and my wildlife colleagues achieve remarkable results with limited resources. We will continue to manage and monitor the situation closely and work with surrounding landowners where possible.</p> <p>To date there have also been fenced areas erected in the SSSI area to facilitate the regeneration of yew however this was unsuccessful. It could be argued that whilst deer pressure is a factor it's not so clear cut and there are other issues that are impeding the regeneration. A number of recent journal articles point this to be the case and list other factors such as water availability, the production and predation of viable seed and the effect of stand dynamics i.e. over excessive shading and increased competition.</p> <p>Regarding specific management of Striped Lychnis and Drap Looper, this will be achieved via by appropriate management of our internal ride and road network. The detail of which will be in the operational planning documents drawn up prior to an intervention and reference is made to this in the text of the document.</p>

Forestry Commission (Forest Services 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 Re-stocking	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 wind-blown 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.