

# A design brief for the Fleet Basin Land Management Plan

Covering an area of 5780 hectares, the Fleet Basin Land Management Plan (LMP) area is located approximately ten km southwest of New Galloway in Dumfries and Galloway. The plan area generally comprises a mixed age class conifer plantation interspersed with large open space areas and more modest areas of broadleaf woodland. It is part of Scotland's national forests and land owned by Scottish Ministers on behalf of the people of Scotland and managed by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS).

The Fleet Basin LMP defines the management prescription for the next ten years (2021-31) and presents the vision for the long-term management of the area. The primary management objectives of this plan focus on sustainable timber production, the removal of infected larch, Red Squirrel habitat management, water quality within the Fleet catchment and peatland restoration..

A concept map has been produced to complement this design brief and presents the proposed key management objectives.

The concept for the LMP focuses on delivering relevant national policy and has been developed around the following key drivers:

- Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029
- Forestry and Land Scotland Corporate Plan 2019-2022
- Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan 2018-2032
- Scotland's National Peatland Plan 2015

The plan will contribute to the first three outcomes of the Forestry and Land Scotland Corporate Plan as shown in the following table. (Outcomes 4 and 5 relate to the organisational structure and business performance of FLS; operational actions not relevant to this plan have been greyed out.)

Outcomes from the FLS corporate plan	Operational Actions for delivery under Outcomes include:	LMP Actions / Prescriptions
<b>Outcome 1: Supporting a sustainable rural economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing the national forests and land in accordance with the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) to ensure that timber and other products produced by FLS are guaranteed to be from a sustainably managed resource</li> <li>• Developing our forest planning processes to ensure long-term sustainable productivity of the national forests and land</li> <li>• Providing a sustainable supply of timber to Scotland’s timber processing sector</li> <li>• Implementing the Restocking Strategy for the national forests and land and develop a new plant and seed supply strategy</li> <li>• Supporting Scottish tourism and the visitor economy through the provision of visitor attractions</li> <li>• Supporting commercial activity on the national forests and land including agricultural management, rural housing and renewable energy opportunities, all of which help to sustain rural communities</li> <li>• Contribute to the local economy by maintaining core timber production and providing an appropriate roads infrastructure</li> <li>• Support the venison processing sector through our deer management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a land management plan which meets UKFS and UKWAS requirements and (where feasible) guidelines</li> <li>• Contribute to production forecast commitments through revised felling and thinning plans that includes the potential for standing crop deforestation for peatland restoration</li> <li>• Design management coupes for enhanced stand stability and to provide a sustainable mature woodland element (potential seed/food resource for Red Squirrel) for the plan area</li> <li>• Increase the use of Natural Regeneration in our restocking, specifically in areas in and around any relict Ancient Woodland sites</li> <li>• Enhance productive yield and improve species resilience against potential pests and disease through species selection appropriate to the site</li> <li>• Initiate identified peatland restoration projects to re-establish priority bog habitats</li> <li>• Implement road construction and upgrade/ maintenance programme to service proposed harvesting operations</li> <li>• Manage the resident deer population as per FLS regional strategy with the wildlife team resource and external contractors (to effectively manage browsing damage risk)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Outcome 2: Looking after Scotland's national forests and land</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing the national forests and land to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity</li> <li>• Maintaining and enhancing our work on peatland restoration</li> <li>• Collaborating with partners on integrated landscape scale approaches to habitat management and restoration</li> <li>• Taking specific conservation actions for vulnerable priority species (e.g. Red Squirrel, Black Grouse and Eagle)</li> <li>• Delivering an increased contribution towards the Scottish Government's renewable energy targets</li> <li>• Supporting policy development and research and act as a testbed for new and innovative approaches to forestry and land management</li> <li>• Developing an asset management approach to the historic environment within Scotland's forests and land</li> <li>• Working with neighbouring land managers to undertake landscape-scale control of ground flora and improve habitats</li> <li>• Continue to implement the Larch Strategy in order to reduce the rate of expansion of <i>Phytophthora ramorum</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and enhance status of SSSI sites (Lea Larks and Cairnmore of Fleet) within and adjacent to plan area</li> <li>• Work with partners/neighbours on landscape scale Black Grouse, Red Squirrel and Water quality projects</li> <li>• Manage open water bodies, watercourses and private water supplies within LMP unit in keeping with UKWAS standards, Water Framework Directive and Forest and Water guidelines</li> <li>• Maintain and improve water quality and limit the impact of surface water acidification on acid sensitive catchments by facilitating broadleaf riparian planting, maintaining and expanding open buffer areas and controlling water movement through the site</li> <li>• Create additional permanent open habitat at elevation across the plan area</li> <li>• Define and implement peatland restoration (or peatland native woodland alternative) through felling and subsequent re-wetting programmes</li> <li>• Maintain and enhance core / priority lek and nesting areas for Black Grouse (priority species) through additional habitat creation</li> <li>• Maintain and enhance a priority area for Red Squirrel (priority species) (plan area forms significant part of Red Squirrel stronghold site)</li> <li>• Control invasive species as per FLS and regional INNS guidelines (specifically Grey Squirrel, American Signal Crayfish)</li> <li>• Increase area of native BL throughout plan area for added biodiversity, targeting a permanent BL woodland infrastructure along riparian zones and around any relict Ancient Woodland sites</li> <li>• Incorporate Research and Development into Land Management Plans including monitoring of <i>P. ramorum</i> retaining any ongoing research plots, and allowing for new study sites to be created as opportunities allow</li> <li>• Manage minor heritage features as per FLS, UKFS and HES guidelines</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Outcome 3: National forests and land for visitors and communities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining walking and biking trails to promote fun in the outdoors, focussing on improving entry level experiences for everyone to enjoy and gain health benefits</li> <li>• Continuing to remove barriers to ensure that people from all backgrounds can and do access the full range of benefits of the national forests and land</li> <li>• Enabling outdoor learning and encouraging schools and community groups to make use of the national forests and land</li> <li>• Facilitating renewable energy opportunities in order to encourage community benefits</li> <li>• Incentivising renewable developers to offer community ownership opportunities in renewable energy developments on the national forests and land</li> <li>• Continuing to engage communities in decisions relating to the management of the national forests and land</li> <li>• Continuing to support community empowerment by enabling communities to make use of the national forests and land to benefit their communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and enhance forest views internally along cycle routes and externally from county road access and surrounding open hill</li> <li>• Maintain general accessibility for block</li> <li>• Facilitate energy infrastructure as required by national policy</li> <li>• Continue to consult and work with local communities and stakeholders through the Land Management plan process</li> </ul>

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