



Elchies: LMP Summary

The Forest of Elchies is located just north of the small village of Archiestown, within Speyside and overlooked by Ben Rinnes, the tallest peak in Speyside. It is close to the A95 trunk road, which leads to the south and incorporates part of the renowned Malt Whisky trail.

The forest block covers 1,501.6 hectares (ha) comprising of high moorland forest in the north that descends to a pastoral landscape in the south, with the elevation ranging from 150 m – 300 m.

Analysis of the available information has led to the following objectives for Elchies.

Objective (what we want to achieve)	Critical Success Factor
Restore deep peat and priority habitats to maximise their carbon sequestration and storage potential.	Peat areas are identified, and a programme of restoration works have started.
Production of high-quality timber within targeted location based on site conditions with no additional input (e.g. fertiliser and additional drainage).	Undertake the planned thinning and felling programme during the plan period to increase the quality of the timber and to meet the production targets.
Management to enhance plant health and to minimise the impact of existing Dothistroma Needle Blight (DNB) via targeted thinning and monitoring of potential <i>Phytophthora ramorum</i> vulnerable crops on timber production.	Undertake planned thinning to minimize the impact of DNB on the existing crop. Monitoring for <i>Phytophthora ramorum</i> .
Enhance the riparian network with high density native broadleaf planting, protect private and commercial water supply points and pipelines.	Riparian networks that are felled within the plan period have been, or are planned to be, restocked with native woodland and open ground. Non-native conifer regeneration will be removed where feasible.
Facilitate the development of Rothes III windfarm farm via selective felling.	Felling programmed to coincide with wind farm infrastructure installation.
Enhancement of habitat suitable for return of Capercaillie and Black Grouse.	Successful restoration of peatland and enhancement of riparian network.

The proposed management operations that will result from the objectives are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: proposed management operations 2025-2035.

Proposed Operations	Area (ha)	Area (%) of Elchies
Felling	438.2	29.2
Thinning	168.6	11.2
Restocking	148	9.9
Deforestation	358.7	23.9
New woodland creation	0	0.0
New Road Construction	0	0.0

Between 2025 and 2035, 438.2 ha are scheduled for felling, and are identified as Phase 1 and Phase 2 management coupes.

80% of the coupes to be felled are to enable the restoration of UK BAP habitat, Blanket Bog. Additional felling will facilitate:

- the construction of the Rothes III windfarm.
- timber production.
- quarry expansion, and the
- opening of the Cairn Cattoch viewpoint.

Scots Pine and Sitka Spruce are the two largest species components of Elchies, currently making up 56% of the forest, with low levels of Native Mixed Broadleaves (6.2%). However, over the next 20 years, the percentage of Sitka Spruce will decline, with an increase in Native Mixed Broadleaves and open space because of proposed peatland restoration and riparian habit enhancement (Table 2).

Table 2: change in species composition over the next 20 years (2023 - 2042).

Tree Species	Current (2025)	Current (2025)	Year 10 (2035)	Year 10 (2035)	Year 20 (2045)	Year 20 (2045)
	Area ha	%	Area ha	%	Area ha	%
Larch	63.9	4.3%	45.2	3.0%	20.8	1.4%
Lodgepole Pine	282.0	18.8%	149.6	10.0%	86.5	5.8%
Mixed Conifers	21.2	1.4%	16.5	1.1%	14.7	1.0%
Native Mixed Broadleaves	94.2	6.3%	176.7	11.8%	226.7	15.1%
Open	196.0	13.1%	511.4	34.1%	636.1	42.4%
Scots Pine	370.0	24.6%	352.6	23.5%	352.9	23.5%
Sitka Spruce	474.3	31.6%	249.6	16.6%	163.9	10.9%
Total	1501.6	100%	1501.6	100%	1501.6	100%

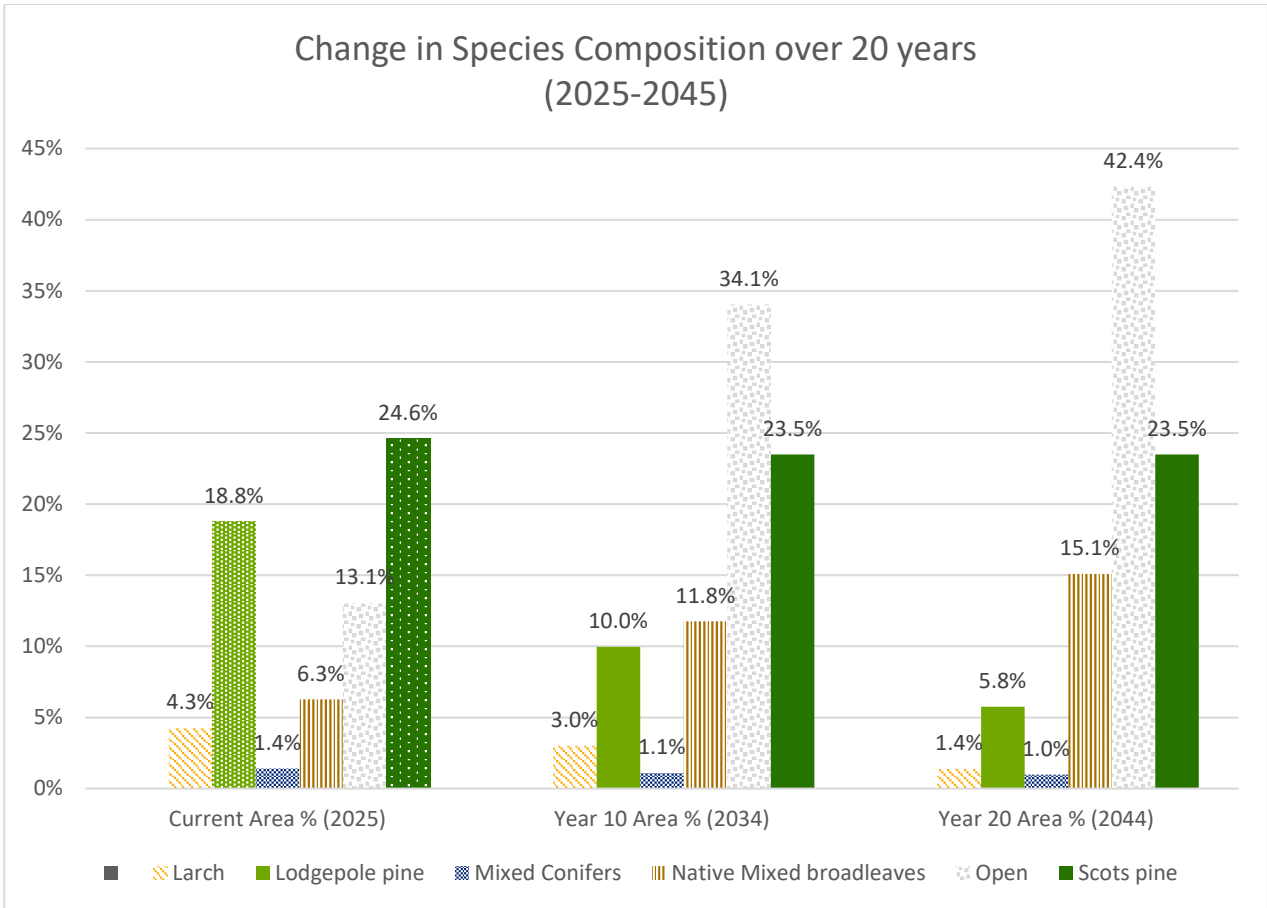


Figure 1: Change in species composition over the next 20 years (2025-2044).