

# Borgie

## Land Management Plan revision brief

### Introduction

This document gives an outline for the Land Management Plan (LMP) revision of the forests, waterbodies and open ground managed by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) within the extent of our property at Borgie, by Bettyhill, Sutherland. In this brief the proposed vision and background will be outlined and the project timeline proposed, with the aim of ensuring all stakeholders are informed of the revision process, the potential changes to management, and have the ability to feed in to the process at an early stage.

This document is accompanied by 5 maps;

**Map 1 – Location**

**Map 2 – Key features**

**Map 3 – Management coupes (to be revised)**

**Map 4 – Restocking species (to be revised)**

**Map 5 – Issues and opportunities - Scoping**

### 1. Project scope

This LMP revision will result in the new plan that will run from 2024-2034. The new plan will realign with the any changes in strategy, policy and guidance implemented over the last decade. FLS will ensure the new plan is in line with [Scotland's Forestry Strategy](#) (2019-2029), [Forestry and Land Scotland's Corporate Plan](#) (2022-2025). It will be delivered in accordance with the [United Kingdom Forestry Standard](#) (UKFS) and the [United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard](#) (UKWAS).

The main focus of the revision will be changes to our felling and restocking proposals – the current (old) proposals can be seen in maps 3 and 4. We will also be reviewing our approach to the management of designated and environmentally valuable sites, tree health, civil engineering work and engagement with local communities. This is to be updated through both internal and external consultation as well as desk and site based research.

The LMP process can be split up in four stages; scoping, drafting, consultation, final plan submission. Currently Borgie is in the Scoping stage. At this stage FLS is looking for input from stakeholders regarding their concerns and plans relating to the Borgie block.

Community Asset Transfer Scheme (CATS) applications, community agreements, renewable agreements and leases will not be part of the LMP revision but FLS is welcoming comments or ideas. These will be processed alongside the LMP revision and where necessary might influence one another.

## 2. Background

The block of Borgie is situated in north Sutherland, North Highlands, about 5km southwest of Bettyhill. It is not contiguous with other FLS blocks (**Map 1 – Location**).

The block covers a total of 3129ha of which approximately 961ha (31%) is productive forest, 1699ha (54%) is open ground and 305ha (10%) is currently lying fallow, awaiting either restocking or conversion to peat bog.

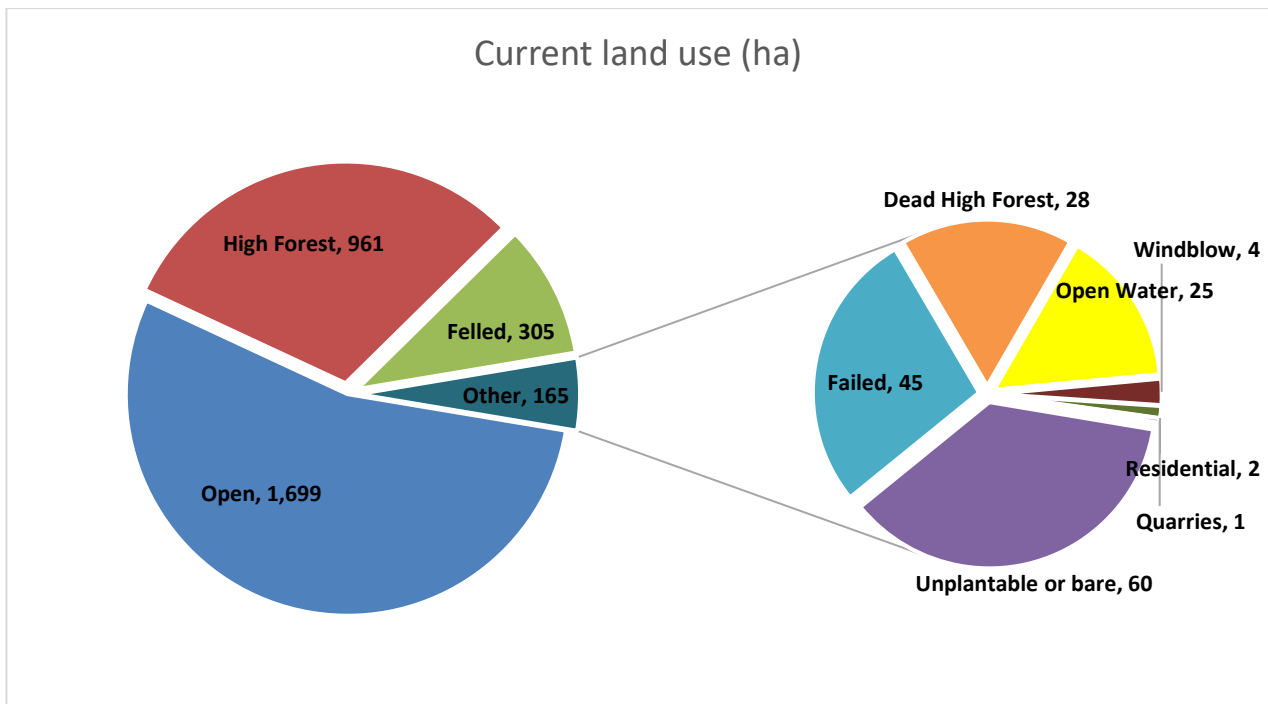


Figure 1: Current land use in the Borgie LMP area

The soils throughout the block are generally of low fertility, high moisture, and shallow rooting depth. This reduces the range of suitable species (**Figure 2**) and quality of the harvested end product. There are better soils scattered around the block, which we will target for productive species.

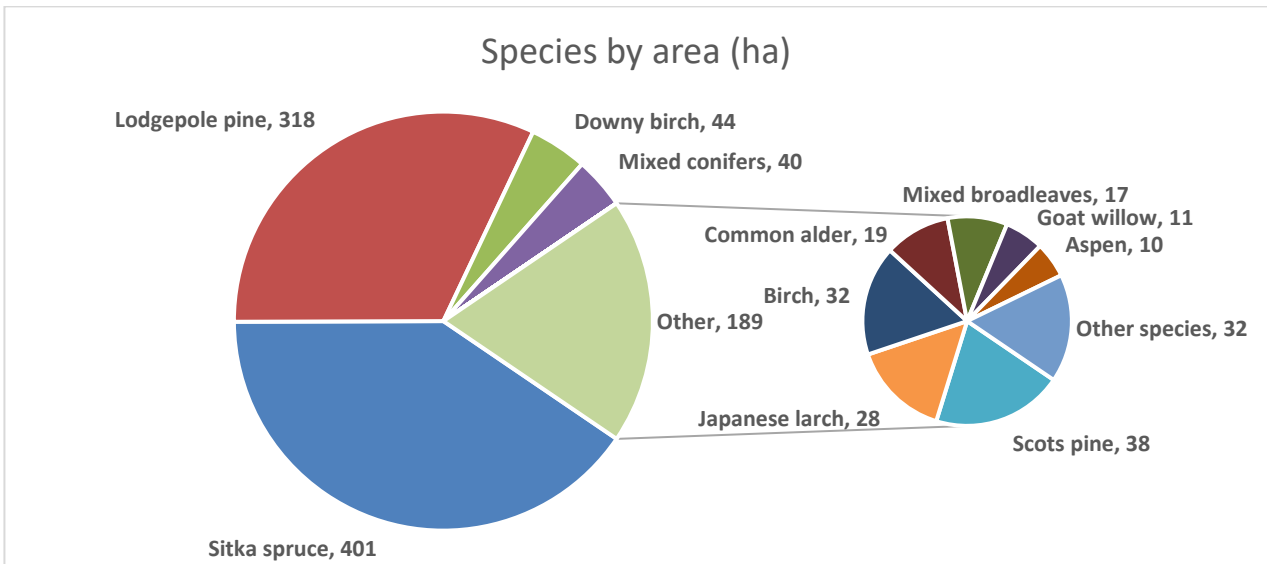


Figure 2: Current Species Composition in percentage of the forested land in the Borgie LMP Area

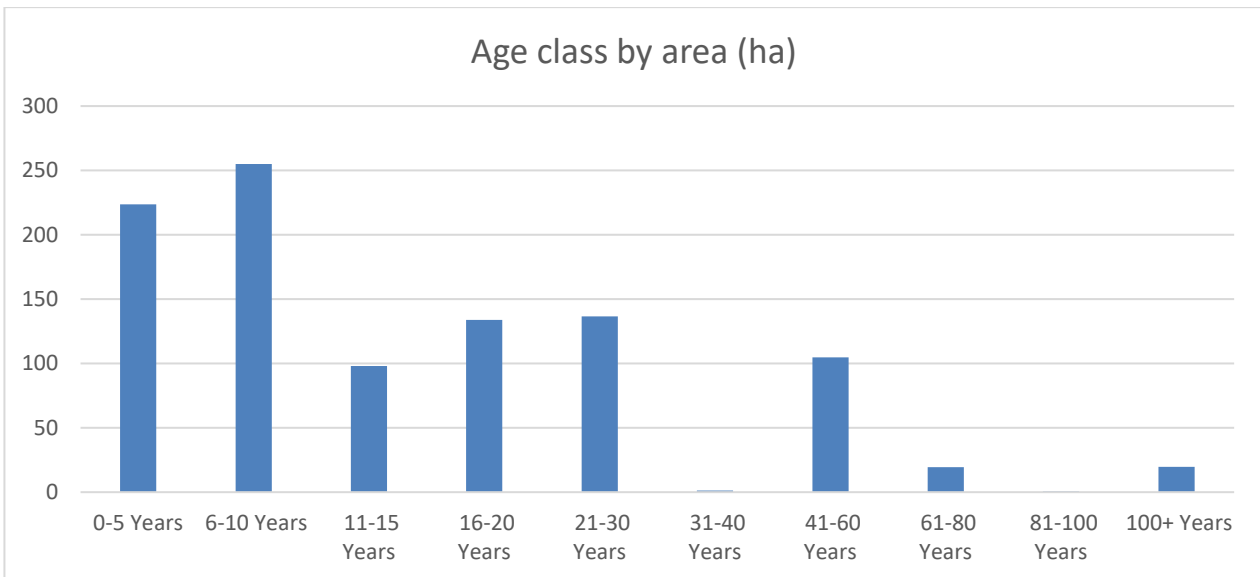


Figure 3: Age distribution per hectare for forested land in the Borgie LMP area

The following designated sites are in the Borgie LMP area:

- Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands - SPA/SAC/SSSI/Ramsar
- West Borgie - SSSI
- West Strathnaver - SSSI
- Remnant ancient birch woods - ASNW
- Cracknie souterrain – Schedule monument

### 3. Draft Vision

#### 10 Year vision

*By 2035 all of the ground suitable for peatbog restoration will have been identified, and much of the felling required prior to restoration will have either happened or be programmed to happen.*

*Peatland edge woodland be well on the way to establishment, providing a new habitat type in the landscape, and softening the visual change from bog to forest.*

*Native broadleaves and conifers will increase in coverage across the site – both on the niche habitats in the peatbogs which support them, and in the productive stands in the southern end of the block.*

*The watercourses in the plan area will benefit from the ongoing establishment of riparian woodland – native species will fringe the water, providing shading and a buffer to forestry operations.*

#### **50 Year vision**

*The restoration of the peat bogs will be complete, and the land will be actively storing carbon whilst also providing a habitat for numerous species. The peatland edge woodland will provide further cover and integrate the two landscape types together. The productive stands will continue to grow fibre and pallet wood, but from a larger range of species, in more sensitively designed coupes. The watercourses and lochs will be clean and healthy, due to the establishment of riparian woodland, function peat bogs, and more sensitive forestry practices. The mosaic of habitat types will benefit wildlife, and increase space for nationally protected species.*

## 4. Key Issues and Opportunities

During the internal scoping a variety of issues and objectives have been identified. These are shown spatially on **Map 5 – Issues and Opportunities – Scoping**.

- Work with neighbours to reduce deer numbers and expand woodland habitat where opportunities arise.
- Continued and improved protection of protected species, such as eagles, water voles and freshwater pearl mussels.
- Target peatland restoration to deliver greatest benefit to landscape hydrology.
- Expand native woodland areas to protect existing ancient woodland and to expand into niches currently underserved ie montane woodland, riparian planting.
- Working out a suitable thinning regime that will balance the risk of windblow and poor initial economics with long term stand health and an improved end product.

## 5. Time Frame

What	When
Scoping	October 2024
Draft Plan Completion	December 2024

What	When
<b>Consultation</b>	February 2025
<b>Review Draft</b>	February 2025
<b>Internal Review</b>	February 2025
<b>Submission</b>	March 2025