



## A design brief for the Gala Lane land management plan renewal

The Gala Lane management unit covers a 3,671 ha area located approximately 12 km south of Dalmellington in East Ayrshire and 7 km west of Carsphairn in Dumfries and Galloway. It is part of Scotland's national forests and land owned by Scottish Ministers on behalf of the people of Scotland and is managed by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS).

The Gala Lane land management plan (LMP) defines management prescriptions for the next ten years (2024 - 2034) and presents a long term vision of the area. The key management objectives in this plan will focus on sustainable timber production in addition to improving woodland resilience and environmental quality.

A draft concept map has been produced to complement this design brief. It presents draft management objectives and highlights key opportunities and constraints. 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 2022 - 2025
- Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.

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.

FLS Corporate Plan Outcomes	Operational Actions for delivery include:	Land Management Plan Actions / Prescriptions
<b>Outcome 1: Supporting a sustainable economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Investing in the long term sustainable productivity and resilience of the national forests and land, in the face of a changing climate.</li> <li>● Developing our forest planning processes to ensure long-term sustainable productivity of the national forests and land.</li> <li>● Bringing a sustainable supply of timber to market through the Timber Marketing Framework.</li> <li>● Continuing the implementation of the new plant and seed supply strategy.</li> <li>● Investing in slope stabilisation at key points on the transport network... and in reducing flood risk in key catchments identified by SEPA.</li> <li>● Supporting Scottish tourism and the visitor economy through the provision of visitor attractions and quality recreation sites.</li> <li>● Marketing venison to offset some of the high costs of deer management.</li> <li>● Working to release value from rural development opportunities in areas of Scotland where this is needed, for reinvestment in the national forests and land e.g. rural housing.</li> <li>● Working proactively with our tenants and stakeholders to identify potential added value opportunities.</li> <li>● Bringing opportunities for further renewable energy projects to the market and helping to facilitate the development of projects which achieved planning consent.</li> <li>● Engaging commercially with network operators to facilitate the delivery of priority power grid infrastructure and digital and mobile connectivity projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create a land management plan which meets UK Forestry Standard and UKWAS requirements.</li> <li>● Optimise timber yield and quality through sound management prescriptions and coupe design, with due consideration given to future climate conditions and forest structure.</li> <li>● Where appropriate, target felling and thinning to promote an increased area of low impact silvicultural management.</li> <li>● Enhance long-term productivity by selecting suitable tree species and restocking in line with regional goals for diversity, resilience and adaptation.</li> <li>● Where appropriate, use natural regeneration to supplement restocking.</li> <li>● Implement a forest road maintenance/construction programme and develop quarries to service site operations such as harvesting.</li> <li>● Recognise the site's importance for local recreation/tourism by facilitating responsible site access via forest roads and the Core Path network.</li> <li>● Manage the resident deer population safely, efficiently, and as per the regional strategy to facilitate successful woodland establishment and support the venison processing sector.</li> <li>● Work with partners throughout the planning and delivery processes to better understand and, where practicable, realise valuable aims for the site.</li> <li>● Recognise the potential for renewable energy and other infrastructure opportunities and work with partners to facilitate their development/management if applications are submitted and approved through the planning process.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome 2: Looking after Scotland's national forests and land</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Helping the Scottish Government to meet forest and woodland creation targets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify areas of peatland through the planning process and manage as per Scottish Forestry guidance.</li> </ul>

FLS Corporate Plan Outcomes	Operational Actions for delivery include:	Land Management Plan Actions / Prescriptions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing our contribution to the Peatland Action programme.</li> <li>• Managing the national forests and land to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.</li> <li>• Taking targeted action to maintain and bring designated sites into favourable condition.</li> <li>• Taking targeted action for vulnerable priority species (e.g. red squirrel, capercaillie, and black grouse).</li> <li>• Implementing the asset management approach to the historic environment within Scotland’s forests and land.</li> <li>• Implementing a programme to improve the resilience of the national forests and land to the impacts of climate change and tree health threats.</li> <li>• Continuing to implement the FLS Deer Management strategy while working in partnership with others to support the Scottish Government’s response to the Independent Panel’s recommendations on deer management in Scotland.</li> <li>• Continuing to implement the Larch Strategy in order to reduce the rate of expansion of <i>Phytophthora Ramorum</i>.</li> <li>• Continuing to respond to and pre-empt Statutory Plant Health Notices by taking action to monitor, contain and slowdown outbreaks of pests/diseases.</li> <li>• Maintaining healthy forests by applying biosecurity procedures and monitoring tree and plant health.</li> <li>• Analysing the cumulative impacts of current plans for managing the national forests and land and testing whether our management is on the right track given the potential impact of future scenarios (e.g. climate change).</li> <li>• Collaborating with partners on integrated landscape-scale approaches to habitat management and restoration, using our capabilities to complement and support the work of others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage and protect open waterbodies, watercourses and drinking water supplies relevant to the plan area as per the UKFS and UKWAS.</li> <li>• Determine the influence of the forest on acid sensitive catchments and follow UKFS guidance to revise felling and restocking plans as necessary.</li> <li>• Work to protect and improve the condition of the designated sites, such as the Merrick Kells SSSI/SAC and Loch Doon SSSI, as per the agreed Designated Site Management Plans.</li> <li>• Maintain and enhance areas for priority species by planting a range of tree species, incorporating open space (including bog and upland habitats), and improving habitat linkage.</li> <li>• Maintain and enhance deadwood habitat by targeting any expansion in areas where the benefit to biodiversity will be greatest.</li> <li>• Manage archaeological features as per the UKFS, and FLS Regional Historic Asset Management Plan.</li> <li>• Mitigate potential impacts of climatic change and tree health threats by restocking with suitable tree species, diversifying the forest (species richness and age structure), and by utilizing silvicultural systems suitable for site conditions.</li> <li>• Interrogate various future scenarios throughout the planning process to help safeguard forest and open habitats from the potential impacts of climatic change.</li> <li>• Continued deer management as per the FLS South Region Deer Strategy, with a focus on protecting palatable species.</li> <li>• Continue to control invasive species and apply biosecurity procedure as per FLS guidance.</li> <li>• Work with partners to identify feasible opportunities for landscape scale habitat management and restoration.</li> </ul>

FLS Corporate Plan Outcomes	Operational Actions for delivery include:	Land Management Plan Actions / Prescriptions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting policy development and research, and acting as a testbed for new and innovative approaches to forestry and land management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conform to designated Landscape Character Types and work to incorporate the aspirations of local forest and woodland strategies.</li> <li>Appropriately incorporate Forest Research experiment site(s) into planning and operational processes and, should opportunities allow, be open to the creation of new sites.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome 3: Scotland's national forests and land for visitors and communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing and implementing a new Communities Strategy.</li> <li>Implementing the Visitor Services Strategy.</li> <li>Developing a strategic approach to wider participation in the management of the national forests and land.</li> <li>Removing barriers to and actively encouraging broader participation with visits to the national forests and land by people who are care experienced, of low socioeconomic status and/or from protected characteristic groups.</li> <li>Enabling outdoor learning and encouraging educational and community groups to make use of the national forests and land.</li> <li>Engaging with communities to identify benefits in decision making relating to the management of the national forests and land.</li> <li>Empower communities to make innovative use of the national forests and land including for social and economic recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic, contributing to a just transition to a new green economy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to consult with local communities, businesses, and stakeholders through the land management planning process; consider their aspirations and how the land management plan can support them.</li> <li>Enhance key views from visitor zones (i.e. Carrick Forest Drive), from across Loch Doon, and along primary transport routes.</li> <li>Continue to encourage responsible public access in the spirit of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.</li> </ul>