

Appendix D.2. Stakeholder Engagement

During the development of this Land Management Plan, we have consulted publicly, including with local community representatives and stakeholders known to have an interest in the forest.

Table 1: summary of the issues that were raised during initial, final, and face-to-face Consultation.

Consultation Stage	Organisation	Comments	Response
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	SEPA	- The Plan should maximise opportunities to improve the riparian zone along main rivers, burns and small tributaries to encourage native broadleaf planting and follow the principles as outlined in the Riverwoods Initiative. - Reference should be made to the “Know the Rules Booklet” by contractors and managers - Discuss water management at Pre Commencement Meetings (PCM) - Review Private Water Supplies (PWS) - Soil & Water management - Brash management - Restrictions to fish passage	- The LMP review and FLS operational plans address these comments - FLS manages its soil and water as per the most up to date UKFS guidelines and its own operational guidance documents and Standard Operations Procedures (SOPs), which are based on best practice, factoring in site specific conditions and weather conditions.
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Nature Scot	The land covered by the Mearns Forest LMP does not appear to have connectivity with any protected area designated for nature conservation interests. As such we have no specific comments to make.	None required

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Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Aberdeenshire Council: Aberdeenshire Archaeology Service	- The Historic Environment Record is available online (free of charge) at https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/smrpub/ - this includes a map search facility. - I attach the ALGAO: Scotland guidance on peatland restoration and the historic environment. - There are various Scheduled and undesignated archaeology/historic environment sites within the LMP area, including those recorded on the HER, which should be incorporated into the Management and Operational plans for management in line with UKFS/SF guidance	- Collated records which are based on the FLS Forester Web heritage layers (included as separate Appendix). Shared ALGAO: Scotland advice with peatland forester. - FLS GIS system has an extensive record of archaeological records
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Aberdeenshire Council Forestry	- I do not have any further specific issues to raise in relation to this plan. - Is there considerations to individual species in LMP? Aware that there is a record for Northern Damselfly in a pond within Fetteresso Forest which is locally rare and worthy of conservation effort and is there scope through this plan to look at opportunities to create other suitable ponds within the wider forest?	FLS are looking to expand the network of ponds where the damselfly are present. This will create new habitat for species expansion.
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Aberdeenshire Council - Local Authority Roads Dept	No response	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Aberdeenshire Council -PWS contact	No response	None required

Consultation Stage	Organisation	Comments	Response
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Historic Environment Scotland	- Two Scheduled Monuments in forest: SM4857 & SM6437. We welcome that both monuments are highlighted on the Mearns Context Map. - Care should be taken during vehicle movements - The scheduled areas would benefit from the careful removal of trees and the creation of an appropriate unplanted buffer zone around them, in line with UKFS guidance. - Although neither of the above monuments have had recent condition monitoring visits by us, the management problems of self-seeded trees and other woody growth within the scheduled areas, as visible on aerial coverage, are likely to persist and their control by approved means is advised. - We welcome that the Future Habitats & Species Map shows Clochanshiels, cairns, houses and field systems 500m ESE of (SM4857), and an appropriate buffer, in an area of open ground. We note that the scheduled area for SM6437 Cowie Line, pillbox and earthworks 945m SW of Stonehouse is shown as being partly in open ground and partly in an area of Native Mixed/Other Broadleaves. We recommend that the scheduled areas, alongside an appropriate unplanted buffer zone, be left as open ground, in line with UKFS guidance. - We recommend that the locations and extents of the monuments are shown on all forest maps to ensure that no accidental damage occurs within the scheduled areas in the course of forest operations	- Shared advice with FLS Environment Team who are responsible for managing these sites and arranging any Scheduled Monument Consents, where required. The regen will be assessed and options to remove considered, along with appropriate permit submissions. - The Scheduled Monument sites will have buffers of a minimum of 20m around them - Our Forester Web operations' maps highlight the Scheduled Operations - FLS have raised the location of SM6437 with SSEN so they and their contractors should be fully aware of its location and the site footprint.

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		We welcome the inclusion of 'regen management' as a secondary objective for the land management plan. We recommend that the management plan makes provision for regular monitoring and control of regenerating trees, other woody growth and bracken on the monuments and within their buffer zones. It is important to manage and maintain open ground in line with UKFS guidance.	
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	SSEN	No comments (discussions ongoing via new Hurlie sub-station, 275kV to 400kV wayleave expansion on existing powerline & Glendye new powerline).	None required as discussions ongoing over utility developments
Initial Scoping (no comment in Final Consultation)	National Gas	National Gas Transmission does not object to the proposed works as long as their conditions are met, including a Risk Assessment Method Statement (RAMS).	National Gas provided advice on conditions to work in proximity to gas utility assets, and document shared with harvesting team.
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Scottish Water	- A review of our records indicates that there are no Scottish Water drinking water catchments or water abstraction sources, which are designated as Drinking Water Protected Areas under the Water Framework Directive, in the area that may be affected by the proposed activity. - A review of our records indicates that there are no Scottish Water assets (including water supply and sewer pipes, water and waste water treatment works, reservoirs, etc...) in the area.	None required

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Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	RSPB	- Biodiversity is not listed as an objective. The LMP should consider the wildlife and habitats present and ways to improve the future biodiversity of the forest. - We are aware that many species of birds are present in this area including raptors as well a variety of red and amber listed Birds of Conservation Concern. - In addition to FLS's own records, it would be worth obtaining a search of species records from NESBReC as some Biodiversity Action Plan species (local and national) will be present. Management of the forests for some of these species could make a difference to their conservation status. - In general, in terms of forest structure and composition, working towards a much higher pine and broadleaf component, together with expanded open ground habitats (managed and unmanaged) would be ideal. - Opportunities to expand wetlands through ditch blocking or pond creation and retaining and expanding open water and fringing marsh should be a priority across the forest and not just along the Northern boundary. Creation of large and small ponds to hold standing water could have multiple benefits for a range of wildlife as well and water management within the wider landscape. - Opportunities to restore peatland on FLS and across boundaries is welcomed. - A wider network of managed open spaces should be built into the forest design plan	- Biodiversity is now included as a secondary objective in the Mearns LMP - Avian information and advice provided by consultees has been shared with the FLS Environment Team. - FLS obtains environmental data from an extensive range of sources - The proportion of pine will increase over the course of this LMP - There are limited opportunities for wetland expansion in Mearns, but there are proposals in place to expand a network of ponds for aquatic species. - FLS are planning peat restoration at Hill of Gothie and Goyle Hill - Planting of broadleaves in many riparian areas has been incorporated into the LMP. These incorporate open ground areas. - There is no standalone biodiversity plan document

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		• A more varied and wider network covering the riparian zone, mixed with scattered broadleaf planting, would greatly improve the forests' habitat zones • Requested if a standalone biodiversity plan has been developed.	
Initial Scoping (no comment in Final Consultation)	Fred Olsen Renewables	• Comments about Sitka Spruce regen under wind turbines and the height of the regen. • Welcome the proposal of broadleaf planting under turbines, but FLS need to consider open ground and proximity to turbines. • Dependent on options for future repowering of windfarm once current lease expires, but appropriate species should be considered. • Need to consider bats in the long term plans for 10 - 20 years from now, if in the future taller wind-turbines are installed.	• Proposals shared with Fred Olsen renewables • Planting areas will factor in open ground element
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland	• Plant appropriate broadleaves • Separate out broadleaves in data presentation • Reference should be made to the Local Nature conservation Site (LCNS) • Welcome PAWS restoration proposals and peatland restoration • Consideration should be made to land management on adjacent land holdings • Concern over INNS – namely Rhododendron and Western Hemlock	• Broadleaf area will be increased in the LMP • Reporting of broadleaves species has been split up in LMP submission, so more species detail included. • LCNS is referenced on the maps • FLS looking to manage Rhododendron and Western Hemlock

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		Raised concerns about Sitka Spruce regen amongst broadleaves.	
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Aberdeen University	- Red List & Amber List bird species present - Manage forest to create mosaic of open areas, including clearfells. While CCF will support/encourage some of these species, others avian species require large patches of open ground with scrub and young trees (especially broadleaf). A mosaic of habitat management will be optimal. - Improve areas for amphibians, including where they are present on existing sites. Consider provision of additional ponds and creation of other areas for standing water	- LMP will see a mosaic of habitats through felling and restock operations over the 10-year plan period. - Proposals for the pond network to be expanded and a felling permission associated with this work has been submitted.
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Thistle Wind Partners	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Confederation of Forest Industries	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Saving Wildcats	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final	Auchenblae Community Council	- Concerns over flooding in the village, including the maintenance of infrastructure - Hope that the forest can include flood mitigation	The flood risk to Auchenblae is recognised given that FLS manage over 44% of the catchment. Felling proposals

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Consultation and at Auchenblae event		- Concern over loss of amenity in the forest now FLS have removed formal recreation. Would like to see improvements. - Would like to see better communications with community regards works / events leading to closures within the forest - FLS should not be selling / leasing of land to developers without community Consultation - Members of the community and Auchenblae Community Council pleased to see Flood risk concerns have been looked at and considered in Felling and Restock proposals in the final LMP submission.	will factor in this risk in the felling phases and restocking plans. These will be reviewed by the FLS Resilience Manager. - Riparian areas will be improved which can help lead to small reductions in peak overland flow speeds during high intensity rainfall events. - FLS have no plans to increase investment in recreation facilities in this forest, given the finite recreation budget we hold. - Shared comments with internal FLS teams regards improving engagement with the local community and recreation users. - The selling and leasing of land is a commercial business decision. There is scope for members of the public and community groups to comment via the formal Local Authority planning process.
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Stonehaven & District Angling Association (SDAA)	- Keen to see removal of weir at Hobseat - SDAA provided their River Cowie walkover report which has been shared with the FLS Environment Team.	- Passed on comment about the removal of the weir at Hobseat to FLS Environment team. - Cowie walkover report shared with FLS Environment Team, who found it very useful. There are proposals for broadleaf planting in some riparian areas.

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Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Crathes, Drumoak & Durris Community Council	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Mearns Community Council	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Stonehaven & District Community Council	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	British Horse Society Scotland	- Mearns has value as a safe, off-road place to ride horses and could be further enhanced by improved parking for horse boxes. - There have been occasional reports of incidents between cyclists and equestrians - Careful management may be needed to avoid conflicts between different groups of access takers. - Requested that on Secondary Objective 6 Recreation – that FLS liaise with local user group and their representative bodies. - Recommended that FLS engage with Developing Mountain Biking Scotland to help reduce conflict between the equestrian and mountain biking communities.	- There are currently no plans to enhance parking facilities for horse boxes given the aforementioned limited recreation budget. - The FLS recreation team do raise issues around conflict between different user groups and their respective representatives, to highlight issues. - The FLS Forest Liaison team shared BHSS good practise for road users advice with SSEN - Guidance for Drivers of Large Vehicles. - FLS do engage with different stakeholder representative bodies, and we do encourage contact regionally via our

Consultation Stage	Organisation	Comments	Response
			enquiries.east@forestryandland.gov.scot for local site specific and regional issues. FLS already engage with Developing Mountain Biking Scotland.
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Grampian Rally	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Midsummer Cycling Sportive	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Aberdeenshire Trails Association	Organisation is making mountain bikes more aware of responsibilities and trail building and looking at recreational development	Working on sustainable trails plan in conjunction with FLS.
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Aberdeenshire Enduro Series	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Ramblers Scotland	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation and at	Swanley Livery	- Concern over Hurlie sub-station development and potential loss of equestrian access - Make Hill of Swanley accessible during potential Hurlie sub-station development	Advised access issues during any potential sub-station development should be raised through Aberdeenshire Council Planning Department, SSEN and FLS.

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Auchenblae event		Raised issues about excess speed of some forest road users	The FLS Forest Liaison team shared BHSS good practise for road users advice with SSEN - Guidance for Drivers of Large Vehicles.
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Boganraith Equestrian	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Brook Forestry	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Fountain Forestry	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	RTS Ltd	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Scottish Woodlands Ltd	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Tillhill	No comment	None required

Consultation Stage	Organisation	Comments	Response
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Police Scotland	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Mountain Rescue	None required	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Carriage drivers	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	COTAG 4x4 group	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Stonehaven Running Club	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Scottish Endurance Riding Club	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Buchan Off-Road Drivers Club	No comment	None required

Consultation Stage	Organisation	Comments	Response
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Stonehaven Cycling Club	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Drumtochty Castle	No comment	None required
Initial Scoping	Private	Concern over water supply	FLS estate team are engaging directly with this party.
Initial Scoping	Private	Scout groups at Auchenblae and Stonehaven use forest for skills and hiking. Stonehaven High School use forest for sponsored walks	None required but discussed with FLS Recreation team their use of the forest, as unbeknown previously.
Initial Scoping	Private	More broadleaves, less conifers	More broadleaves will be planted in LMP.
Initial Scoping and Final Consultation	Private	Why is it now such an involved process to get permission for orienteering events on FLS land? We do no damage compared to daily dog-walkers	Shared comment with FLS Recreation team.
Initial Scoping	Private	Current felling-please note there are sanctioned trails (mountain bike) close by	Shared comment with FLS Harvesting & Recreation team. Recreation Team liaise with Aberdeenshire Trails Association
Initial Scoping	Private	World class mountain-biking	Shared comment with FLS Recreation team about the value placed on this the forest for mountain biking.

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Initial Scoping	Private	Red deer control	Shared comment with FLS Wildlife Management team. FLS manage deer but neighbouring land owners manage at different levels and the block is not fully fenced.
Initial Scoping	Private	There used to be alternative access to Goyle Hill from here to here. Now lost. It was good for circular walk.	Shared comment with FLS Recreation team regards this comment about loss of formal promoted recreation. The finite FLS budget for recreation limits the ability to support and manage routes.
Initial Scoping	Private	More Douglas Fir	Appropriate site conditions for Douglas Fir are limited, but there is a small increase in Douglas Fir over the next 20 years.
Initial Scoping	Private	Walking route from Auchenblae Church to top of Strathfinella Hill. Recreation Access currently restricted due to Arwen windblow.	There are plans to clear this windblow early in Phase 1 of the LMP. Raised awareness of the recreational use of this area with the FLS Recreation Team.
Initial Scoping	Private	Oak on suitable sites, birch or Norway Spruce as a nurse.	More oak will be planted in North & South Drumtochty, as part of the PAWS restoration. Pine is a more appropriate nurse crop species for Mearns and the soil types.

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Initial Scoping	Private	Reinstate drovers road - very overgrown	FLS Recreation Team informed but challenging due to budget constraints
Initial Scoping	Private	Sanctioned mountain bike trail completely destroyed by the felling 23/24. The brash left in this entire area has rendered the area useless.	Shared comment with FLS Harvesting & Recreation team. This was an Arwen clearfell site and the site had to be made safe to all users. Whilst some mountain bike routes are sanctioned for use, formal mountain bike group representatives recognise the need for commercial forestry requirements and the need to make clearfell sites safe, including for restocking operations.
Initial Scoping	Private	Signs saying "No Access - Forestry Ops" - add note to say no operations at weekend or after hours	This comment was shared to see if this could be facilitated. However, there are occasions when some contractors do undertake work at the weekend.
Initial Scoping	Private	Plastics! Can you consider when you protect "hard wood saplings" you stop using the plastic tubes - each square has a plastic window which shatters on frosty days and scatters plastic into the ground. Also the tubes are rarely removed, restricting trees, or removed and piled up and left. All the plastic in the ground is damaging wildlife, moss etc...Washed into rivers and so on.	- Under UKWAS 5 (2.12.3) and UKFS 5 (requirement 24) we must programme the removal of redundant materials - FLS policy is to specify conventional tree tubes and guards where appropriate, record their location, and budget and programme for their removal and recycling

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			Regions will record all tree tube and guards deployed within the new “Tubes” layer in Forester Web GIS– this will be inputted at the time of update for planting or on identification of existing tubes.
Initial Scoping	Private	FLS should not be facilitating the industrialisation of NE rural Scotland with substations, hydrogen BESS etc... against wishes of community.	- Given the powers granted via the Electricity Act we are limited to the extent we can push back on National Infrastructure developments. - By working with developers, it should help to reduce the extent of negative impact of proposed utility expansion.
Initial Scoping	Private	This area (SSEN - Hill of Swanley) should not be industrial / energy development for the benefit of others abroad.	Given the powers granted via the Electricity Act we are limited to the extent we can push back on National Infrastructure developments.
Initial Scoping	Private	Concern that proposed power station cuts off access to wider forest area for walkers, bikers, riders.	Given the powers granted via the Electricity Act we are limited to the extent we can push back on National Infrastructure developments.
Initial Scoping	Private	Make continued access to Hill of Swanley while Utility expansion work going on.	Shared with FLS Recreation Team and Forest Liaison Team. Forest Liaison Team have raised this with SSEN.

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Initial Scoping	Private	Upper Swanley - Trees block light Nov - Feb. Concerned re water supply if major sub-station encroaches too near.	- Aspect of land limits ability to change the light. - Advised to raise water supply issue with Aberdeenshire Council Planning Department as they will be assessing the Planning Application. - FLS advised SSEN of the neighbours concerns regards water supply and yield.
Initial Scoping	Private	When clear-felling try and protect existing paths & trails. What is a treated like a “building site to the forestry sector” is an area where people live, exercise etc...	- Shared comment with FLS Harvesting & Recreation team - Clearfell sites will often look unsightly given the nature of felling activities. - The management of brash is taken on a coupe by coupe basis and depends on several factors, including butt-rot risk.
Initial Scoping	Private	Thinning by Roads. More natural planting near woods. Don’t plant in rows.	- Thinning decisions are taken on several factors including crop age and the long-term objective for the coupe. - Depending on the ground-preparation operations, on many commercial planting sites contractors may be restricted to line planting.
Initial Scoping	Private	Please consider the forest not just as a harvesting site but for recreation too. We love the forest and although it's commercial, we should be considering community recreation.	Recreation will remain informal under current recreation budgets, but FLS do encourage public access and it is a

Consultation Stage	Organisation	Comments	Response
			consideration in our felling, restocking and civil engineering operations.
Initial Scoping	Private	Specific paths for horses, biking - that are protected when harvesting (Swanley, Fetteresso)	- Recreation will remain informal under current recreation budgets, but FLS do encourage public access - FLS harvesting operations are predominately in commercial conifer stands and in addition to income considerations, stand stability and public safety are considered. - FLS FLO team to discuss with utility developer about enabling equestrian and cycling access during proposed utility expansion operations.
Initial Scoping	Private	Bossholes Stables & Farms - well water. Area used for horse riding, dog walking. Fences still in need of repair since Storm Arwen. Please repair. Fallen trees restricting access etc...etc...	- Raised with FLS Forest Management & Stewardship, Harvesting & Recreation teams. - Fence repairs imminent
Final Consultation	Private	Pleased to see flood risk taken into account in Mearns LMP Scenario design	None required
Final Consultation	Private	- Concern over current CF coupe post felling. Believe too much brash and dead wood has been left on site and it is unsightly in front of consultees property. - Asked if they can remove excess timber for own use. - Don't want tree tubes used. Would like large conifer rather than all NMB. - Note, this coupe is in the PAWS area.	- Site reviewed and amount of brash and deadwood left on site deemed appropriate. - Advised FLS no longer offer scavenger licenses - The clearfell area in question is within a PAWS site, so native mixed broadleaves

Consultation Stage	Organisation	Comments	Response
			are considered the appropriate restock species. Fencing options will be reviewed at the time of operations.
Final Consultation	Private	Some cut logs have fallen into roadside ditch. Can we remove.	Local FLS harvesting team advised
Final Consultation	Private	- Pleased Upper Bervie catchment is getting more broadleaves. - Scout groups at Auchenblae and Stonehaven Use Forest for skills & hiking. Stonehaven High School use forest for sponsored walks. Can the scouts remove tree guards as it will help with their badges.	Advised by FLS recreation that removal of tree guards volunteering is unlikely.
Final Consultation	Private	Would like to see more mountain biking and a similar set-up to Glentress.	Advised as unlikely given costs and highlighted that Glentress does not make money, even though is in proximity to the central belt and higher footfall.
Final Consultation	Private	Pleased to see more broadleaves being planted in the forest.	None required
Final Consultation	Private	Would like to see MTB trails better protected. Some trail-builders have lost trails.	Advised by FLS Recreation that FLS try to aim to keep approved routes which have been formally approved.
Final Consultation	Private	Deer control	FLS Wildlife Management Team to discuss with neighbours.

Consultation Stage	Organisation	Comments	Response
Final Consultation	Private	Heras fencing. Can we remove it?	Raised with FLS Harvesting team
Final Consultation	Private	Signage - Is it possible to review parking signs	Shared comment with FLS Recreation team.
Final Consultation	Private	Signage - can we install horses beware signs at gates	Shared comment with FLS Recreation team.
Final Consultation	Private	Area near trig point may have a SSEN powerline going over it, destroying the picnic area and impacting view.	Discussed with SSEN FLO and advised to discuss with SSEN.
Final Consultation	Private	Walking route Auchenblae Church to top of Strathfinella Hill. Pleased to see the windblow will be removed and access opened.	None required
Final Consultation	Private	Oak on suitable sites, birch or NS as a nurse. One coupe is being trialled in North Drumtochty.	None required
Final Consultation	Private	Pleased to see increase in species diversity, by more mixed conifers and nurse crops.	None required
Final Consultation	Private	Like the riparian planting with broadleaves.	None required
Final Consultation	Private	Pleased to see an increase in broadleaves, particularly the planting of broadleaves rather than Sitka around Midhill windfarm.	None required

Consultation Stage	Organisation	Comments	Response
Final Consultation	Private	Open ground areas filling up with conifers. Would like to see better management of these areas so they remain open.	Discussed with FLS Forest Management team.
Final Consultation	Private	SSEN & Utilities. Can FLS do more to push-back on utility expansion.	- Advised that whilst we aim to minimise the impact on FLS operations, FLS have limited potential to do so as this fall under Net Zero and Energy Security Strategies and will fall to the National Planning Framework. - Ongoing discussions with utility companies
Final Consultation	Private	There is an informal path at gate adjacent to Drumtochty Castle.	Shared comment with FLS Recreation team.
Final Consultation	Private	Signage for adopted trails.	Shared comment with FLS Recreation team, but these are unlikely to be signed.
Final Consultation	Private	Can we limit parking at West Cairnbeg.	Shared comment with FLS Recreation team.
Final Consultation	Private	Welcome the greater species diversity.	None required
Final Consultation	Private	Resident slightly concerned of flood risk in new plan, particularly with regard to local park.	Felling and restock LMP Phase 1 & 2 coupes reviewed by FLS Resilience Manager.

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Final Consultation	Private	Concern of sub-station expansion.	FLS explained we do not know the final footprint yet as we only know the Planning Application Notice (PAN) area submitted to Aberdeenshire Council Planning Dept.
Final Consultation	Private	Pleased that some areas of new broadleaf planting will be protected with fences rather than guards.	None required