

## Project Proposal

Business Reference Number:		Case Number:	
Application name:	Forestry and Land Scotland: Pencloe Land Management Plan amendment - Pencloe Farm New Woodland Creation		

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The Woodland Creation Operational Plan allows you to show that you have carefully considered all of the relevant impacts and effects that the work you are proposing might have on the environment, and where appropriate the measures you intend to take to mitigate any adverse effects.

The Operational Plan, including the issues log at Annex 2, can be used to record any pre-application work completed ahead of submitting your woodland creation application (e.g. discussions with stakeholders, site assessment results, etc.).

The Woodland Officer will take account of the details you have given in this Plan when they assess your application and it will also help them to decide on a score for your application.

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You must complete this Woodland Creation Operational Plan and submit it with your Forestry Grant Scheme Woodland Creation application.

The amount of supporting information you give will depend on the scale, location and nature of your application. You should give sufficient detail so that we can properly assess the work you propose. Your local Scottish Forestry (SF) [Conservancy office](#) will be able to provide you with further advice about this.

Please note that the Woodland Officer who will assess your application may request further information or clarification about the details you give in this Operational Plan, especially those that may have an environmental impact on the site.

***When you have completed your Woodland Creation Operational Plan, save the document to your computer and then upload to your on-line application.***

## General Assessment

The information in your Operational Plan should be based on a thorough assessment of the site. Please complete the following:

Describe the management objectives for the site.

- Establish a new productive and resilient woodland for the sustainable supply of timber.
- Increase biodiversity provision through well-connected forest habitat networks of native broadleaf species and riparian zone improvements. Protect areas of Priority Open Habitat by removing grazing and retaining as open ground.
- Protection and conservation of heritage features in accordance with the Regional Historic Asset management plan.

See **Appendix 1** for the Management Plan Brief and **Appendix 2** Analysis and Concept map and **Appendix 3** Key Features, Issues and Constraints map

Provide a description of the planting site.

The Pencloe Woodland Creation site is located in Glen Afton, around 4 km to the south of New Cumnock, East Ayrshire. Formerly Pencloe Farm, the landholding of around 153.35 ha adjoins the existing Pencloe forest block managed by Forestry and Land Scotland. This Woodland Creation scheme will be incorporated into the adjacent Pencloe Land Management Plan (LMP) area once approved.

Pencloe is part of a distinctive upland glen landscape of rolling hills and sloping valleys created by glacial erosion, important in the local landscape. Some remnant ancient woodland exists, mostly on private land, along the north-western boundary with some native woodland remnants found also up the Lochingerroch Burn. Both of these features would benefit from safeguarding and enhancement.

Native woodland proposed in this acquisition will provide much needed diversity at the landscape scale when the whole of Pencloe and surrounding forests are considered. With the resultant ecosystem likely to have much higher inherent biodiversity due to the existing network of native trees within the area.

The woodland creation site can be characterised into three main areas. Firstly, the low ground north west of Pencloe House, visible from the public road it contains a few scattered individual trees and a small amount of ASNW on the steeper banks at the south-western edge. Secondly, the south-eastern area of Carcow Burn that has native woodland trees along the steep sided river banks with patches of flushes and base rich grasslands. Thirdly, Lochingerroch Burn riparian area contains restricted native woodland remnants, particularly in upper reaches.

There are some important habitat considerations within the site that include small areas of priority habitats of Upland flush fen and swamp, Blanket bogs, Hay meadows and Lowland acid grassland. Three watercourses and their tributaries traverse the site that flow into the Afton water. Priority habitats will be protected or enhanced throughout this woodland creation proposal.

An independent Historic Environmental Assessment and Survey (see **Appendix 4**) of the site has revealed fifteen historic sites within the former Pencloe Farm area; these include sheep folds, quarry sites, enclosure banks and rig blocks. Many of these are not well preserved or have been removed with only six historic environment sites attributed with local significance. Three sheepfolds contribute to the local historic nature of the landscape. A further three component elements of enclosure banks and associated rig block are also ascribed local importance. These will be protected with a minimum 5 m buffer and retained within a managed open area to be conserved in accordance with the FLS Regional Historic Asset Management Plan.

Provide details of discussions with neighbours, local communities and consultees. For Community Councils and neighbours please evidence who was contacted, date and method of contact used (e.g. meeting, leaflet drop, letter etc.) Where reasonable, you may just identify street names (e.g. larger urban areas).

There are no residents at Pencloe Farm House. A consultation email was sent out to all relevant stakeholders, and their responses are detailed in the attached table (**Appendix 5**). In summary, there are no issues rising from stakeholders that require any amendments to the proposed planting.

You must carry out a site-based assessment of soil and vegetation to match species choice with the particular site. Refer to ([ESC-DSS](#)) during this process.

List the site surveys undertaken to inform tree species selection. For example: soil survey, soil depth survey, vegetation survey.

The site was initially surveyed with ESC, but as the soil survey resolution for the area is not detailed (JHI 1:250 000), the site information provided by ESC has limited value. A soil survey of the proposed planting site was carried out in 2019. Small pockets of peat soils (9b Tussocky Molinia Bog and 8b Juncus articulates or acutiflorus bog) are present on the site with the remainder mostly surface water gleys or upland brown earths. A map detailing the soils is appended (**Appendix 6**).

An open habitats survey was completed by the FES Open Habitats Ecologist in 2019 which is appended to this document (**Appendix 7 (a, b and c)**). The survey identified small areas of priority habitats of Upland flush fen and swamp, Blanket bogs, Hay meadows and Lowland acid grassland, all of which will be protected or enhanced as part of this proposal.

A native woodland ecological survey was completed by the FES Native Woodland Ecologist in 2019 which is appended to this document (**Appendix 8**). The survey identified that the ancient woodland along the north-western boundary is regionally significant and, although most is on private ground, it's location and quality strongly suggests that we should create a significant native woodland buffer that will in itself,

no doubt become a rich native woodland ecosystem in time. Similarly, there are native woodland remnants up the Lochingerroch Burn that belong to the NVC community W9 and this feature deserves to be safeguarded and enhanced.

Please indicate the climatic suitability of the site for the tree species you have chosen. Use the [Scottish Forestry Map Viewer](#) - see the 'FGS Climatic Site Suitability' data.

With reference to the FGS Climatic Site Suitability data, soils survey and expert opinion from ecology experts and local FM foresters the proposed planting indicates the following species suitability:

Very suited/suitable (depending on location): Sitka spruce. W7, W9 and W11 native woodland.

Suitable/marginal (Depending on location): Norway spruce, Douglas Fir, Downy birch, Wild cherry, Rowan and Common Alder.

Woodland Strategy: Describe how your proposal fits with the Local Authority woodland strategy.

The proposal site lies within the Ayrshire and Arran Forestry and Woodland Strategy area, which is highly supportive of appropriate woodland expansion. The majority of the site lies within the 'more accessible preferred land' classification of the strategy. The Pencloe site lies within an area identified as 'wider range of opportunities' for energy forests, due to its relatively low economic distance between biomass source and potential users. Therefore, short rotation softwood could contribute to maintaining biomass supply. The plan area also lies within areas identified as 'areas with the potential to contribute to woodland habitat networks' as well as 'opportunities for new mixed woodland'. Small areas of isolated ancient woodlands exist in the vicinity of the plan area. Incorporation of native woodland or mixed species within the plan area will create and enhance woodland habitat networks.

In areas where wildfire is a risk to the woodland describe how you will address the risks and how this has been considered in the woodland design. Refer to [Building wildfire resilience into forest management planning](#) for information.

Wildfire risk for the Pencloe site is currently low. Climate Change guidance for the south west of Scotland suggests that significant change to this rating over the period of the plan is unlikely. However, the proximity of a dwelling (Pencloe Farm house) to the proposed plan area requires suitable wildfire risk management. Therefore, to minimise the risk to human life and property from fire, smoke and heat, mitigation options have been considered in the proposed plan. Open spaces surround the dwelling as part of the design plan that incorporate habitat management with mixed broadleaf plantation. These areas will also act as an appropriate firebreak in the low likelihood of a wildfire starting and maintain an overall low wildfire risk for the plan area.

If applying for the productive conifer options please use the Timber Transport Forum – [Agreed Routes Map](#) and confirm the sites timber route classification i.e. agreed, consultation, severely restricted, excluded or no classification.

Pencloe New Woodland Creation will not require additional road construction at this time. The main haulage exit is the C90 Glen Afton road (NS 6197 0979), which is a consultation route; therefore the Ayrshire Roads Alliance and Timber Transport Group will be consulted accordingly. Dialogue with New Cumnock and Glen Afton Community Council's will be sought to discuss haulage hours and frequency.

New ATV tracks may be required along new plantation coupes adjacent to open ground, but careful consideration will be given to their absolute need and location. Though none are currently planned, where required, they will be constructed by removing topsoil and levelling the surface with a drain on the top side and will be a maximum of 2m wide. No trees will be planted within 5m of the track centre and riparian zones will be avoided.

If applying for the Native Woodland options please use the 'Native Woodland Habitat Network' map in the 'FGS Target and Eligibility' folder on the [Scottish Forestry Map Viewer](#) and describe the habitat network zones your application is within i.e. primary, secondary or out with the habitat network.

## Sensitive Areas & Potential Impacts

### Sensitive Areas:

- National Nature Reserve or Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- National Park
- World Heritage Site
- Scheduled Ancient Monument
- National Scenic Area
- Natura sites – Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Special Area of Conservation (SPA)
- Land on which there is a Nature Conservation Order
- Deep peat soil

### Potential Impacts:

- Population & Human Health
- Biodiversity
- Land, Soil, Water, Air, Climate
- Material Assets, Cultural Heritage, Landscape

List any **Sensitive Areas** and any **Potential Significant Impacts** relating to your site, including appropriate mitigation (**refer to Annex 1**). Detail any surveys completed to inform this assessment.

*For complex cases the Issues Log (**Annex 2**) can be used to record this instead.*

*(Scotland's Environment Web Land Information Search*

*<https://www.environment.gov.scot/maps/land-information-search/> is a useful resource which may help you identify some of the constraints within your site).*

With the exception of discrete areas of deep peat soils, there are no Sensitive Areas as listed above, within or adjacent to the proposal site.

Three distinct areas of peatland vegetation habitats have been identified by the Open Habitats survey within the new woodland creation plan area (**Appendix 7a , b and c**). However, the soil survey indicates deep peat is limited in extent within a matrix of peaty surface water gleys. The most extensive area of sensitive habitat is denoted by survey polygon number 8 (11.72 ha with 55% blanket bog), followed by polygons 16 and 10 (0.68 ha and 1.00 ha with a blanket bog component of 35 and 5%, respectively. Although these areas are not in good condition (owing to overgrazing) they will remain unplanted and managed as open space with no drainage as per the ecologist recommendations to protect this habitat from further potential degradation.

Blanket bog habitats have been identified by their dominant vegetation types; however, soil surveys indicate peat coverage is discontinuous within a matrix of peaty surface water gleys. These areas and will remain protected from forestry activities as managed open areas. Furthermore, the hydrological unit as a whole has been considered in the adjacent areas to prevent forestry activities from having a negative impact to this priority habitat. The planting design, in consultation with FLS ecologist

and peatland expert have been designed to protect these sensitive areas.

All areas of deep peat to be excluded from the planting areas. Areas of deep peat deemed unmappable, less than 0.25ha, will be identified by peat probing during site preparation works. Identified areas will remain uncultivated and stocking increased elsewhere to maintain appropriate stocking density.

Open habitats survey completed by an independent open habitats ecologist September 2019 which identified priority habitats.

A breeding bird survey (BBS) was carried out following standard methodology for two site visits one in the early part of the season (5th May 2021) and one later in the season (8th June 2021).

A mammal walkover survey was carried out on 8th June 2021

Independent ecological appraisal was conducted July 2021 using the Open Habitats Survey as a base map and in reference to the Breeding Bird and Mammal surveys carried out earlier in the year.

Please see below in the **Issues Log: Biodiversity** for a discussion on the main issues identified. Please also see **Appendices 7 (a, b and c) Open Habitats and Appendix 10 Ecological Appraisal** for full details of these surveys and accompanying reports.

***Please ensure that any maps or survey reports that have been produced to support your application are uploaded to the online application system.***



## Management Operations

### All Applications

Having assessed the site please provide information about how you are going to establish the new woodland.

**Ground Preparation:** Describe the method that you will use, including dimensions. Where you propose multiple ground preparation techniques then you must identify these on a map.

Ground preparation will comply with the Forestry Commission Guidelines 'Cultivation of Soils for Forestry' (Bulletin 119).

The aim is to provide a suitable planting location for tree establishment and growth while minimizing visual and hydrological impacts.

All areas will have individual (discontinuous) mounding where machine access is possible. Manual planting will be utilised in any areas unsuitable to machine access such as riparian native woodland and wet woodland areas.

**Drainage:** Identify any existing drains/watercourses and provide information relating to new drains.

Existing watercourses are detailed on the Key Features map (**Appendix 2**). Three burns run approximately south to north through the site with a few unmapped smaller channels feeding into it, possibly only seasonally active, these will all be protected from cultivation operations and chemical applications as per UKFS Forest & Water and Forestry & Water Scotland guidelines (stand-off distances determined by watercourse width). Flat planting will be used in the areas identified as native riparian woodland buffer planting and wet woodland areas of birch and willow.

Given the dominant soil types, it is anticipated some drainage will be required, though will be kept to a minimum. Where new drains are required, these will be installed to no greater than 3.5% slope and run across the slope. No drains will be installed within the hydrological unit of the blanket bog areas, to ensure their continued function. No drains shall discharge directly into watercourses as per UKFS Forest & Water guidelines.

**Protection:** Describe how the site will be protected. For example: fencing, tree guards/shelters and pest management.

Append a deer management plan if required. You should refer to the [Deer Management Best Practice Guide](#) and the [Joint Agency statement on deer fencing](#). You may be asked to submit a checklist from the Joint Agency guidance (May 2010).

Rabbit, Roe and Red deer are potential browsing pests in the locale. Deer numbers will be controlled through the FLS regional deer management plan.



## Planting; please provide the following:

- Species to be planted and percentage of each. (Please use the components area table to record hectares planted).
- Describe the nursery stock and planting method to be used.
- Confirm if you will be planting vegetatively propagated Sitka spruce.
- For native woodland creation specify the [Seed Source Zone](#).

This woodland creation proposal will not be subject to grant application and therefore the category under which these fall for the purposes of grant receipt is not included.

## Species percentages:

Species	Area	
	Ha	%
Mixed Broadleaf	44.99	29.34
Sitka Spruce	27.11	17.68
Norway Spruce	13.54	8.83
Douglas Fir	6.78	4.42
Scots Pine	4.50	2.94
Managed Open	56.43	36.8
<b>Total Area</b>	<b>153.35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Planting specifications

- Native broadleaved plants will have provenance of a suitable region. In this instance this will be 107, 108, 109 or 301.
- Where a native broadleaf compartment runs contiguous to a conifer area, there will have a buffer of 6-8m to ensure that they are not overshadowed by the surrounding conifer
- Broadleaf stock will generally be transplanted or undercut stock of 45-60cm tall
- Conifer stock will generally be 2-3 year old transplanted or undercut stock 20-40cm tall
- Planting of conifer will be at 1.9 m x 1.9 m spacing to achieve 2500 stems per hectare

**Mixed broadleaf plantation (37.98 ha)** will compliment the existing native woodland and woodland type in intimate mixes as identified by the National Vegetation Classification (NVC). NVC types include W9, W7, W11 and native willow and downy birch to create a wet woodland priority habitat, see Appendix 11: Future Habitats and Species map.

This area will be mounded (or flat planted where ground conditions are unsuitable for machinery access), at 2.5 m x 2.5 m spacing to give a density of 1600 stems per hectare.

**Sitka Spruce plantation (27.11 ha)**, as indicated on Appendix 11: Future Habitats and Species map; will be mounded at 1.9 m x 1.9 m to achieve 2500 stems per hectare. Species: 100% Improved Sitka Spruce (SS)

**Norway Spruce plantation (13.54 ha)**, as indicated on Appendix 11: Future Habitats and Species map. Mounded at 1.9 m x 1.9 m, Species: 100% Norway Spruce (NS).

**Douglas Fir plantation (6.78 ha)**, as indicated on Appendix 11: Future Habitats and Species map. Mounded at 1.9 m x 1.9 m, Species: 100% Douglas Fir (DF).

**Scots pine plantation (2.75 ha)**, as indicated on Appendix 11: Future Habitats and Species map; to be mounded at 1.9 m x 1.9 m, Species: 100% Scots pine (SP).

**Mixed broadleaf / Scots pine plantation (8.76 ha)**, as indicated on Appendix 11: Future Habitats and Species map. This area will be mounded (or flat planted where ground conditions are unsuitable for machinery access), at 2.5 m x 2.5 m spacing to give a density of 1600 stems per hectare. Species: 80% (7.01 ha) Mixed broadleaf (MB) and 20% (1.75 ha) Scots Pine (SP).

## **Open Ground (56.43 ha)**

There will also be further areas left:

- To enhance riparian margins by watercourses
- To create accessible rides for future woodland management
- To soften woodland edges
- To create wayleaves for utilities (see **Appendix 12: Constraints**)

**Maintenance:** Describe the maintenance regime for the site (e.g. monitoring, weeding, beat-up, etc.).

There are no deer fences in the area, however, new stock fences will be maintained to a stock proof standard.

All plants will be maintained in a wind firm position.

Plants will be monitored for signs of disease, nutrient deficiency and damage. Appropriate action will be taken as required to ensure stocking density and plant health.

The site will have ongoing monitoring, with standard stocking density measurements taken at year one and five as per operational guidance for woodland creation and beat up conducted as required to meet stocking densities.

**Fertilisation:** Where applicable, describe the proposed fertiliser regime e.g. application rate, timing, etc.

No fertilisation is required for this site.

**Other:** Please include any other silvicultural detail here.

## Annex 1

### **Assessment of Potential Impact**

Please use the following guidance to assist with describing any potential significant impacts and any mitigation which is proposed:

- **Population & Human Health:** Detail any discussions which you have had with neighbours, local communities or other stakeholders and explain how this has influenced your proposal. Explain what public access is currently undertaken on the site and what provisions you plan to make to continue or improve this in adherence with the [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#).
- **Cultural Heritage:** Indicate what survey work has been undertaken and describe how archaeology will be protected.
- **Soil:** Provide an accurate assessment of the soil on site and describe how you will manage the quality of the soil including any effects from erosion and compaction.
- **Water:** Detail the nature of the likely impacts on water bodies or water supplies from your activities and how you will mitigate these impacts.
- **Air:** Detail the nature of the likely impacts on air quality or the impacts on light provision.
- **Biodiversity:** Detail the nature and extent of high value habitats such as those listed on the [Scottish Biodiversity List](#) and describe how you will protect these habitats. Detail the nature of the likely impacts on wildlife from your activities and how you will mitigate these impacts. Refer to [European Protected Species](#) for guidance.
- **Landscape:** Provide details of how the impact on the landscape has been assessed and how the application has been designed to minimise any impact.
- **Climate:** Provide details on the vulnerability of the project to climate change and how this impact was mitigated.
- **Land:** Does your application have an impact or an effect on prime agricultural land (defined as land use classes 1, 2 and 3.1), or the local land use balance with agriculture?  
Detail the nature of the likely impacts on agriculture from your activities and how you will mitigate these impacts and integrate with forestry.  
You should refer to the [Guidance About Woodland Creation on Agricultural Land](#), located in the further information and technical guidance section of the [FGS woodland creation](#) web page.
- **Material Assets:** Identify and describe all built and natural assets that are relevant to the site and which could be adversely impacted by the proposal e.g. utilities, minerals. Describe any mitigation proposed for these features.

### Annex 2 Issues Log

Issue (include date and raised by)	Applicant's Comments	FCS Comments	Agreed Mitigation	Status (Open, Closed)	Significance of Impact (High, Medium, Low)
<i>e.g. Archaeology – Scheduled Monument at NS123456. HES, 23/10/16.</i>	<i>e.g. Scheme design includes OG to buffer Scheduled Monument as per UKFS. John Smith, 25/10/16</i>	<i>e.g. Applicant has taken on board HES feedback and designed the scheme in accordance with best practise. Susan Jones, 27/10/17.</i>	<i>e.g. 20 metre OG buffer around SAM.</i>	<i>e.g. Closed</i>	<i>e.g. Low</i>
<b>Population &amp; Human Health</b>	<p>No private water supplies known within the proposed planting area. Consultation with Scottish Water has shown there is one water supply pipeline to the north and east of the New Woodland Area following the C90 Glen Afton Road. Referred to generic 'Guidance on Forestry Activities Near Scottish Water Assets' by SW, see <b>Appendix 12. Constraints.</b></p> <p>There is no current or active recreational access across the site outside of the provisions within the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.</p> <p>Notification and consultation with all neighbouring landowners or land managers has taken place. No objections have been raised by any neighbouring landowners/managers from our external consultation process, see <b>Appendix 5. Pencloe External Consultation</b></p> <p>Lena Boukelia 29/06/2021</p>				
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	<p>An independent Historic Environment Assessment and Survey was carried out by Rathmell Archaeology LTD in July 2019. All identified archaeological features have been mapped and incorporated into our conservation layers and will be buffered according to UKFS to protect the historic environment, see <b>Appendix 3. Key Features, Issues and Constraints</b> and <b>Appendix 4. Historical Environmental Assessment and Survey.</b></p> <p>Lena Boukelia 29/06/2021</p>				
<b>Soil</b>					

	<p>A soil survey was undertaken by an independent surveyor following standard forestry soils surveying methodology in September 2019. Predominantly upland brown earths with typical surface water gleys, with alluvial soils on the valley floor and discrete areas of deep peat.</p> <p>Identified deep peat soils have been incorporated into FLS conservation layers. Areas of deep peat will be protected from forestry operations, plantation and remain undrained to protect the integrity of this priority habitat and prevent further degradation in line with the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS).</p> <p>Please see map, <b>Appendix 6. Pencloe soils.</b></p> <p>Lena Boukelia 29/06/2021</p>				
<b>Biodiversity</b>					
	<p>Open habitats survey completed by an independent open habitats ecologist September 2019 which identified priority habitats.</p> <p>Upland Hay Meadows (MG3) have been identified east of the Glen Afton Road totalling 1.17 ha (Green polygons Appendix 7a). These areas would benefit from traditional hay mowing or late season grazing and will therefore remain unplanted and grazed as part of a lease contract with the adjacent grazing land.</p> <p>Blanket bog habitats have been identified by their dominant vegetation types; however, soil surveys indicate peat coverage is discontinuous within a matrix of peaty surface water gleys. These areas and will remain protected from forestry activities as managed open areas. Furthermore, the hydrological unit as a whole has been considered in the adjacent areas to prevent forestry activities from having a negative impact to this priority habitat. The planting design, in consultation with FLS ecologist and peatland expert have been designed to protect these sensitive areas.</p> <p>An isolated area of Lowland Acid Grassland</p>				

	<p>(1.09 ha) is an important habitat that requires grazing to maintain (Red polygon Appendix 7a). However, the size and position of this area precludes it from a sustainable grazing proposition. As part of the proposed plan this area would be a mix of managed open and upland oakwood mix W11.</p> <p>UK BAP priority habitats of upland mixed ashwood (W7, W9), upland birchwood (W11) and wet woodland (W7) circa 6.5 ha have been identified along existing riparian wooded areas (in habitat survey polygons 3, 4, 13, 20, 31 and 38), these areas will be retain and enhanced with complimentary planting within the site.</p> <p>13.42 ha of important upland flush, fen and swamp (M23a/M6b/M6d/M10), has been identified (yellow polygons Appendix 7a). These flush, fen and swamp areas are associated with pockets of wet woodland and upland mixed ashwoods; UK BAP habitats in their own right. Ordinarily these flush, fen and swamp areas would be left unplanted, however, their size and position offer two opportunities. Firstly, direct planting native willows and shrubs to create suitable wet woodland priority habitat (polygons 1, 21, and 36) for 10.29 ha. Secondly, adjacent to ASNW establishing an upland mixed ashwood W9 and slope alderwood W7 communities (3.13 ha) would compliment the existing native woodland. For these areas direct planting with zero ground preparation or drainage due to the GWDTE status would occur with the wetter flushes left unplanted as a selection.</p> <p>As part of the independent ecological appraisal and UK BAP Habitats recorded as part of the Open Habitats survey the following has been noted by the consultant ecologist (Appendix 10):</p> <p><i>"In the main, areas of Priority Habitat have been left free of planting, most notably areas of blanket bog and upland hay meadow habitats. Planting of broadleaved trees has been proposed over areas of upland flush, fen and swamp habitat with a view to creating habitat mosaics with wet woodland. Current proposals will however result in the loss of priority habitat Lowland Dry Acid</i></p>				
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	<p><i>Grassland from the site, and open habitats will be at greater risk of invasion from tree seedlings from adjacent plantations. A small negative residual impact is anticipated from the loss of priority habitat Lowland Dry Acid Grassland, which may be balanced against the expansion of other priority habitats such as wet woodland within the site."</i></p> <p>Identified priority habitats have been imported to the FLS GIS Conservation Layer, and will be protected and managed (remain unplanted and protect from drainage).</p> <p>A breeding bird survey (BBS) was carried out following standard methodology for two site visits one in the early part of the season (5<sup>th</sup> May 2021) and one later in the season (8<sup>th</sup> June 2021). All bird species were recorded with particular emphasis on wader and raptor species.</p> <p>The BBS reported One Schedule 1 species – goshawk (<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>) adjacent to the new woodland creation area. No evidence of breeding observed of this single male.</p> <p>Six red listed bird species (BoCC), Mistle thrush (<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>), Spotted flycatcher (<i>Muscicapa striata</i>), Common cuckoo (<i>Cuculuc canorus</i>), Lesser redpoll (<i>Acanthis cabaret</i>), Skylark (<i>Alauda arvensis</i>) and Song Thrush (<i>Turdus philomelos</i>) of which the latter four are UK BAP species, all showing evidence of breeding except the Mistle thrush. Incidental observations of grey wagtail (<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>) were observed with evidence of breeding during mammal surveys.</p> <p>Six BoCC amber listed species recorded Dunnock (<i>Prunella modularis</i>), House martin (<i>Delichon urbicum</i>), Meadow pipit (<i>Anthus pratensis</i>), Redstart (<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>), Swift (<i>Apus apus</i>), Willow warbler (<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>) with all but the Swift showing signs of breeding. Incidental observations of a single oyster catcher (<i>Haematops ostralegus</i>) was observed during mammal surveys with no evidence of breeding. A further 22 BoCC green listed species were recorded within or adjacent to the site with many showing evidence of breeding.</p>				
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	<p>Finally, a mammal walkover survey was carried out on 8th June 2021, principally focussed on badger and otter although a watching brief for evidence of other mammal species was conducted throughout the survey. No evidence of badgers or otters within the planned new woodland creation site. Other mammals recorded include grey squirrel (<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>), roe deer (<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>), brown hare (<i>Lepus europaeus</i>).</p> <p>In addition to this, an independent ecological appraisal was conducted using the Open Habitats Survey as a base map across the site. This was to assess the site for the presence of UK BAP habitats and the presence of habitats that could support legally protected and/or priority species. Moreover, ecological receptors and the likely impacts and effect of the proposed works and residual impacts have been considered in light of the proposed future habitats in the new woodland design (<b>See Appendix 10 Pencloe Ecological Appraisal, Section 5.0</b>).</p> <p>In relation to The increased cover of native broadleaved woodland habitat proposed in the current planting scheme is considered likely to promote the ecological integrity of the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve and the proposed Glen Afton LWS in the long-term by providing habitat linkages with surrounding woodlands. A positive residual impact is anticipated for the Schedule 1 species – Goshawk; the BoCC red list species: grey wagtail, lesser redpoll, mistle thrush, song thrush and spotted flycatcher. BoCC amber listed species - dunnoek, redstart and willow warbler as well as other nesting birds. Positive residual impact are also anticipated for commuting and foraging bats, badgers, and otters as a result of the proposed plans.</p> <p>Negative residual impacts are anticipated for a small number of BoCC red list species - skylark and cuckoo and the BoCC amber listed species - meadow pipit due to the loss of open habitat on the site, however, areas of existing blanket bog and other open areas will remain open totalling an area of 56.3 ha</p>				
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	<p>(36.5% of the plan area), that may offset this negative impact somewhat. Likewise, for the loss of open habitat negative residual impacts for BoCC green listed birds – wheatear and brown hare would also be anticipated.</p> <p>FLS acknowledge the biodiversity enhancement recommendations as detailed in section 6 of the Pencloe Ecological Appraisal (<b>Appendix 10</b>) and have initiated plans to erect bat and bird boxes in appropriate locations across the site. Other recommendations will be taken on board and implemented where feasible in consultation with the FLS Environment team.</p> <p>Lena Boukelia 23/07/2021</p>				
<b>Landscape</b>					
	<p>Neighbouring properties: The new woodland creation site is adjacent to the existing Pencloe forest block and the privately owned Lochingerroch Forest Block.</p> <p>The main views into the site are from passing traffic on the C90 Glen Afton Road. The new woodland has been designed to fit into the existing matrix of woodland - a mature ancient woodland forms the majority of the NW boundary, mature riparian NBL planting exists along the watercourses with mature conifer plantation in the neighbouring forest blocks to the South and East of the NWC.</p> <p>The proposed planting will compliment and extend areas of ancient woodland with NBL plantation. With the NBL and conifer species choice and location has been designed to blend and evolve into the existing neighbouring blocks.</p> <p>Designed open space along the C90 will maximise views within the intimate landscape setting. Overall the woodland block has been designed to fit into the local landscape of permanent grazing and shelterbelts, extending to conifer plantation at higher elevations.</p> <p>See <b>Appendix 9</b> for future forest visualisations using Prospect at several vantage points across the area.</p>				

	Lena Boukelia 02/07/2021				
<b>Material Assets</b>					
	<p>Please see <b>Appendix 12: Constraints Map</b> that outlines the position of utilities and infrastructure across the site. Unplanted wayleaves will be incorporated in the design plan during operations to ensure adequate buffers compliant with UKFS are included.</p> <p>Wayleaves include: 33 kV Electricity wayleave and 11 kV spur. Scottish water main runs along the public road with a meter for the farm at the road end</p> <p>Lena Boukelia 02/07/2021</p>				
<b>Water</b>					
	<p>Watercourses to be protected to UKFS recommended buffer distances.</p> <p>Removal of grazing and planting/enhancement of native woodland, including wet woodland types around riparian zones should enhance habitat.</p> <p>Lena Boukelia 02/07/2021</p>				
<b>Air</b>					
	No comment				
<b>Climate</b>					
	<p>New planting will provide carbon sequestration toward reduction in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>. Moreover, retention and protection of blanket bog will preserve the stored carbon in the deep peat soils.</p> <p>Lena Boukelia 02/07/2021</p>				
<b>Land</b>					
	<p>A review by Senior Agricultural Officer, Rural Payment and Inspections Division SGRPID was carried out as part of the original "Land Transaction Appraisal" (LTA) at time of land acquisition by FLS (a standard procedure when we purchase land.) His comments were as follows;</p> <p>Local farming context:</p>				

	<p>“The impact of woodland planting on approximately 113 Ha of agricultural land at Pencloe Farm, will not have a significant effect on local farming. The loss of this area of poor pasture with limited grazing value may have some limited importance at an individual farm business level. However the potential of the grazing land being let to a new entrant to farming prior to afforestation will negate this to some extent.</p> <p>On this visible landscape scale site, woodland creation on this scale as a change in land use may raise interest among local residents, neighbours or other interested parties.</p> <p>District farming context: The change in land use of 113 Hectares of agricultural grazing land in the New Cumnock area from agriculture to forestry would not be significant to agriculture in the district</p> <p>Regional farming context: The change in land use of 113 Hectares of class 4 and 5 land in the Cumnock area from grazing to forestry will not have a significant effect on farming in the region.”</p> <p>Lena Boukelia 22/07/2021</p>				
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