

A design brief for South Kyle LMP

The South Kyle Land Management Unit comprises a single forest block and covers an area of 2,619 ha. The management unit is located to the east of the settlement of Dalmellington and approximately 8 km south-west of New Cumnock. South Kyle is part of Scotland's national forests and land, owned by Scottish Ministers on behalf of the people of Scotland, and managed by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS).

The South Kyle Land Management Plan (LMP) defines the management prescription for the next ten years (2023-2033) and presents the vision for the long-term management of the area. The main management objectives in this plan focus on continuing sustainable commercial softwood timber production, but with improved forest resilience (through increased structural and species diversity), improved visual appearance from transport routes and settlement, and habitat enhancement.

An Analysis and Concept map has been produced to complement this design brief. It presents the draft management objectives, and highlights the opportunities and constraints for key issues.

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 Governments Climate Change Plan 2018-2032
- Climate Change and Adaptation Programme 2019-2024
- Scotland's National Peatland Plan: Working for our future 2015
- Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2045

The plan will contribute to the first three outcomes of the Forestry and Land Scotland Corporate Plan (Outcomes 4 and 5 relate to the organisational structure and business performance of FLS) as shown in the following table (operational actions not relevant to this plan have been greyed out):

Outcomes from the FLS corporate plan	Operational Actions for delivery under Outcomes include:	LMP Actions / Prescriptions
<p>Outcome 1: Supporting a sustainable economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in the long term sustainable productivity and resilience of the national forests and land, in the face of a changing climate. • Developing our forest planning processes to ensure long-term sustainable productivity of the national forests and land. • Bringing a sustainable supply of timber to market through the Timber Marketing Framework. • Delivering an increased contribution towards the Scottish Government’s renewable energy targets. • Bringing opportunities for further renewable energy projects to the market and helping to facilitate the development of projects which achieved planning consent. • Marketing venison to offset some of the high costs of deer management. • Engaging commercially with network operators to facilitate the delivery of priority power grid infrastructure and digital and mobile connectivity projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a Land Management Plan which facilitates continued sustainable commercial timber productions. • Restock selecting site suitable species and meeting FLS regional goals for increased resilience through structural and species diversity. • Prepare a Land Management Plan which meets the UK Forestry Standard/UKWAS requirements and, other relevant regulations and guidance. • Meet production forecast commitments through revised felling and thinning plans. • Discharge appropriate flood risk management responsibilities. • Develop restock and management proposals which reflect the operational needs of South Kyle Wind Farm and monitor any new energy projects entering the planning system when preparing the Land Management Plan. • Improve the visual appearance of the forest from key transport routes, including the A713 (part of the Galloway Tourist Route). • Consult/work with colleagues and partners through the planning process to deliver a plan of value. • Implement a road construction and maintenance programme which, within the provision of existing commercial

		<p>agreements, makes use of access routes created power grid infrastructure and energy generation developers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage resident deer population as per the FLS regional strategy to facilitate successful woodland establishment.
<p>Outcome 2: Looking after Scotland's national forests and land</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing our contribution to the Peatland Action programme. • Managing the national forests and land to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. • Taking targeted action to maintain and bring designated sites into favourable condition – and working beyond designated sites at the landscape scale with partners where we can – for example in Scotland's rainforests. • Taking targeted action for vulnerable priority species (e.g. red squirrel, capercaillie, and black grouse). • Implementing the asset management approach to the historic environment within Scotland's forests and land. • Implementing a programme to improve the resilience of the national forests and land to the impacts of climate change and tree health threats. • 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. • Working with neighbouring land managers to undertake landscape-scale control of <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> to conserve ground flora and improve habitats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with <i>P. ramorum</i> management as per the revised FLS Larch Strategy, by incorporating into clearfell coupes and considering options for the removal of isolated larch e.g. fell to recycle. • Where necessary, implement road construction or upgrade programme to service proposed harvesting operations. • Implement a restock programme which focusses on increased resilience through structural and species diversity. • Manage resident deer population as per the FLS South Region Deer Strategy (2021-2026) to facilitate successful woodland establishment. • Consult/work with partners through the planning process to identify feasible opportunities for landscape-scale habitat management and restoration. • Where appropriate, develop proposals to improve the condition and habitat network linkages of designated sites within the LMP area (and those adjacent to it), e.g. Cummock Burn / Pennyvenie Burn Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS), Bryan's Height LNCS and Connel Burn / Benty Cowan LNCS. • Increase area of native broadleaf and alternative conifer species throughout the plan area for added biodiversity value. • Assess and restore appropriate peatland habitat areas. • Continue to manage as priority habitat open ground and expand moorland habitat for black grouse where practical. • Manage and protect open waterbodies, watercourses and private water supplies in keeping with UKFS and Forest and Water guidelines to assist with maintaining and improving water quality.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to implement the Larch Strategy in order to reduce the rate of expansion of <i>Phytophthora ramorum</i>. • Continuing to respond to and pre-empt Statutory Plant Health Notices by taking action to monitor, contain and slowdown outbreaks of pests/diseases. • Maintaining healthy forests by applying biosecurity procedures and monitoring tree and plant health. • 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). • Collaborating with partners on integrated landscape-scale approaches to habitat management and restoration, using our capabilities to complement and support the work of others. • Supporting policy development and research, and acting as a testbed for new and innovative approaches to forestry and land management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage designated and undesignated heritage features as per UKFS, HES guidelines, and agreed asset management plans. • Continue to apply biosecurity measures and control invasive species as per FLS regional guidance. • Retain ongoing Forest Research experiment site(s) and, should opportunities allow, be open to the creation of new sites.
<p>Outcome 3: Scotland's national forests and land for visitors and communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and implementing a new Communities Strategy. • Implementing the Visitor Services Strategy. • Developing a strategic approach to wider participation in the management of the national forests and land. • Work with partners such as VisitScotland to understand visitor profile and changing trends to ensure a responsible approach to visitor management. • Removing barriers to and actively encouraging broader participation with visits to the national forests and land by people who are care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to consult with local communities, businesses, and stakeholders through the planning process and liaison with the Visitor Services team and our local Communities and Communication Manager. • Encourage responsible public access in the spirit of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code to correspond with visitor demand by maintaining general accessibility of the block. • Maintain and enhance views of the forest from towns, roads and along existing path and Forest Road networks by presenting a variety of species, age, colour and textural experiences. • Reducing the incidence and impact of wildfires in forests and woodlands from anti-social behaviour through good

	<p>experienced, of low socioeconomic status and/or from protected characteristic groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling outdoor learning and encouraging educational and community groups to make use of the national forests and land. • Facilitating renewable energy opportunities in order to encourage community benefits/wealth building. • Engaging with communities to identify benefits in decision making relating to the management of the national forests and land. • 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. 	<p>management planning and education to protect the delivery of forest ecosystem goods and services.</p>
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