Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029

Consultation responses: final report

January 2019

Conducted for:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This report presents an analysis of responses to the Scottish Government's consultation on the draft Forestry Strategy 2019-2019. The consultation ran between 20 September to 29 November 2018. A finalised strategy, informed by analysis of consultation responses, will be published in early 2019. The consultation received 442 responses from 340 individuals and 102 organisations; a large number of the individual responses comprised an identical campaign response, submitted by 216 people.

Conclusions

Many informed stakeholders and individuals took part in the consultation. Views were often strongly expressed and typically reflected participants' interests in economic, social or environmental aspects of forestry. Often the perspectives of different stakeholders were at odds with each other; and many called for a greater focus on the issue(s) of most relevance to them.

The majority of participants that provided a response to the yes no questions on agreement or disagreement with aspects of the Strategy had a favourable opinion of the vision (64%), objectives (60%) and the assessment of the major issues (54%). However many (52%) respondents did not feel that the priorities captured the areas where action is most needed. These participants often identified aspects of presentation, structure or rationale that they were unhappy with as opposed to dissatisfaction with the priorities themselves. Participants wish to see more detail about how the strategy will be delivered. This includes specification of detailed targets, resources, timescales and measurable progress indicators. There were also repeated calls for more engagement by the Scottish Government with stakeholders when shaping, implementing and monitoring the future of forestry in Scotland.

Quantitative summary

Participants were asked if they agreed with proposals put forward in the draft strategy. In most cases more than half of those who provided an answer gave a 'yes' response to indicate that they agreed with the relevant section of the strategy presented in the draft document.

The Long-Term Vision for Forestry in Scotland

Most consultation participants responded to the question on vision. Almost two thirds of those who gave a yes/no answer to the question supported the vision. Those who agreed with the vision frequently commented on its resonance in terms of alignment with relevant strategies and plans, its long term and holistic nature, the commitment to expand Scotland's forests with consideration of quality, recognition of the positive contribution of woods and forestry in terms of social and health impacts, consideration of employment and other economic contributions of forestry, from large to small scale businesses, the principle of "the right tree, in the right place for the right purpose" and the focus on sustainable management. Respondents who agreed with the vision also suggested changes or adjustments they would like the Scottish Government to consider. Those who disagreed with the vision typically suggested it does not go far enough to address the challenges Scotland faces.

Objectives for Forestry

A large number of consultation participants responded to the question on objectives. Two thirds of those who gave an answer to the yes/no question supported the objectives. A common theme in the comments on the objectives was an assessment of their relative priority; the objective participants felt to be most important. These views differed significantly depending on the respondent. Many of the respondents who agreed with the objectives also suggested adjustments or additions they would like the Scottish Government to consider. Reasons for disagreement with the objectives varied and were often grounded in a respondent's assessment as to whether or not they considered the objectives achievable.

Major Issues facing Forestry
A large number of consultation participants responded to the question on major issues. The majority view about the assessment of issues set out in the draft strategy is positive. As with the discussion on objectives, there was frequent mention of priorities within the issues identified. In their comments respondents identified a range of additional issues they wished to see included.

Priorities for Action
A large number of consultation participants responded to the question on priorities. Views were split; slightly more of those who responded to the yes/no question disagreed, rather than agreed, with the priorities. Responses were interrogated to ascertain any obvious reasons for the different trend with regard to this question. The group who responded 'no' proffered qualified responses which frequently described aspects of presentation, structure or discussion about the priorities that participants were unhappy with, as opposed to dissatisfaction with the priorities themselves. There was no priority that was universally unpopular with respondents.

Delivery Mechanisms
Many respondents shared examples of effective delivery mechanisms and reflected on features of practice they believe work well or could be improved. The examples typically related to financial mechanisms, learning from other sectors, conservation practice, working in partnership with stakeholders, standards, planning and regulatory processes, working with communities, including engaging volunteers, and education.

Progress Indicators
The majority view towards the progress indicators is positive. However, there was significant discussion of potential gaps. Many respondents suggested the proposed indicators are too high-level to show how their use will ensure the progress of the strategy can be fully monitored. A small number of respondents suggested the indicators are too focused on the economic aspects and commercial value of forestry. A few participants suggested it would be useful to use local indicators. Over half of the respondents provided suggestions on additional indicators.

Other Comments on The Strategy
A large number of 'other comments' were received. Over half of these comments came from an identical response submitted by 216 respondents, who called for the strategy to provide clear plans of action with ambitions, measurable targets related to creating new native woodland, improving the condition of existing woods and protecting ancient woodland. The additional comments frequently reiterated points made elsewhere in consultation response. Participants also described issues they did not feel had been raised within the consultation.

Thematic assessment of responses linked to environmental, social and economic impacts
Thematic analysis of responses in relation to environmental, economic and social considerations revealed broad themes across responses. Respondents typically called for the strategy to provide a greater focus on matters related to environmental, economic or social considerations, with greater detail and explicit targets, and resources aligned to their interests and priorities. Within these comments there were frequent calls for more consultation with stakeholders in the development of a monitoring framework and actions to underpin the strategy.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report presents an analysis of responses to the Scottish Government's public consultation on the draft Forestry Strategy 2019-2019[1].

1.2 The online consultation ran between 20 September to 29 November 2018. Questions focused on the following considerations:

- o The long-term vision for forestry in Scotland.
- o Objectives for forestry over the next 10 years.
- o Major issues likely to affect the achievement of objectives.
- o Priorities for action.
- o Effective delivery mechanisms.
- o Progress indicators.
- o Impact assessments.
- o Other comments on the strategy.

1.3 The Lines Between was commissioned to independently, accurately and comprehensively undertake and report on the analysis of consultation responses.

Background

1.4 Earlier this year the Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act 2018 was passed. The first forestry Act passed by the Scottish Parliament, it sets out the framework for completing the devolution of forestry to Scotland. Part 3 of the 2018 Act sets out a duty for Scottish Ministers to prepare, revise and publish a forestry strategy.

1.5 The draft strategy builds on and modernises the approach set out in previous strategies; most recently the 2006 Strategy[2]. Consultation provides an opportunity for key stakeholders, including the general public, to respond to the draft and communicate their views on important considerations such as the proposed vision, objectives, priorities and policies.

1.6 Principles of sustainable forest management are embedded within the strategy, which sets out a 50-year vision for forestry in Scotland and three primary objectives for the next 10 years:

- o Increase forestry's contribution to sustainable and inclusive economic growth.
- o Protect and enhance our valuable natural assets to contribute to a healthy and high-quality environment.
- o Use our forest and woodland resources to empower more people to improve their health, well-being and life chances.

1.7 A finalised strategy, informed by analysis of consultation responses, will be published in early 2019.

1.8 When the 2018 Act is enacted, forestry functions in Scotland will become the responsibility of the Scottish Ministers and two new agencies of the Scottish Government will be created to discharge those functions.

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[1] https://consult.gov.scot/forestry/scotlands-forestry-strategy-2019-29/
[2] https://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/images/corporate/pdf/scottish-forestry-strategy-2006.pdf

- Scottish Forestry will cover forestry policy, regulatory, support and grant giving functions.
- Forestry and Land Scotland will have responsibility for the management of the current National Forest Estate, with flexibility to take on management of other peoples' land, by agreement.

Profile of participants and consultation response rate

1.9 The consultation received 442 responses from 340 individuals and 102 organisations.

1.10 Participants provided responses to the consultation through the online platform Citizen Space (188 responses),by emailing or posting their responses to the Scottish Government (251 responses), or, for statutory Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) consultees, by submitting them to the SEA Gateway (3 responses). They were asked to submit a Respondent Information Form (RIF) to establish their identity, contact details and publication preferences. The organisations that took part included industry and membership representative bodies, businesses, campaign groups and charities, local authorities, public sector bodies, academic institutions.

1.11 Both the organisations and most of the individuals who participated in the consultation demonstrated a practical knowledge of or interest in forestry and woodlands in their responses. While their responses offer informed and detailed comments on the proposals, the views expressed may not necessarily be seen as representative of wider public opinion.

Analysis and reporting

1.12 The Lines Between developed a coding framework based on a review of the consultation questions and themes that became evident during the analysis process. Qualitative data (responses to open questions) was coded manually, according to specific themes; quantitative data was analysed with Excel. This analysis process enabled the research team to highlight and group key messages that emerged from the responses

1.13 An overview of responses to each question is provided in this report; individual responses to the consultation are available for review on the Scottish Government's consultation hub.

1.14 The quantitative overview of responses provides a breakdown of any yes/no responses to a direct 'do you agree' question. It also summarise the number of comments received. Any blank responses or responses in which a participant has replied 'no comment' or words to that effect, have been discounted from the total number of comments.

1.15 While qualitative analysis of open-ended questions does not permit the quantification of results, the weight of particular views are indicated through the following framework:

- Many/several - a reoccurring theme.
- Some/a few - a minor theme.
- One - issue raised by one respondent.

1.16 This report presents the range of views expressed and trends amongst responses. During analysis it became evident that a few participants repeated aspects of their responses across questions. In some cases, parts of a response aligned more closely with another question in the consultation document. To avoid repetition, the analysis is presented under the most

appropriate thematic heading.

Report structure

1.17   The Lines Between was commissioned *'to produce a clear and concise report for publication, that reflects a robust analysis of the responses'*. This report presents the findings of the consultation analysis.

- **Chapter 2** presents a quantitative overview of responses to the consultation.
- **Chapter 3** provides an overview of responses by sector.
- **Chapter 4** sets out analysis of responses to the vision.
- **Chapter 5** presents analysis of responses to the objectives.
- **Chapter 6** contains analysis of responses to the major issues.
- **Chapter 7** sets out analysis of responses to the priorities.
- **Chapter 8** presents analysis of responses to the delivery mechanisms.
- **Chapter 9** contains analysis of responses to the progress indicators.
- **Chapter 10** sets out analysis of responses to the impact assessments.
- **Chapter 11** presents analysis of general responses to the consultation document.
- Finally, **Chapter 12** includes conclusions and reflections for the Scottish Government to consider when developing the final strategy.

2. Quantitative Summary

2.1 The table below provides a quantitative overview of consultation responses. It indicates where participants have given a clear yes or no response to a specific question put forward by the Scottish Government, if a question has not been answered, and the number of comments made by participants in response to the question.

2.2 In most cases there was a majority view of agreement with proposals put forward in the strategy. This means that more than half of those who provided an answer gave a 'yes' response to the agree or disagree question. The profile of those who expressed agreement was broad ranging. During the analysis process respondents were categorised into stakeholder groups. A review of responses identified that those who expressed agreement typically included at least one representative from every participant group; individuals, academics and researchers, businesses, environmental charities or campaign organisations, forestry or land use industry body, local authorities, other public sector organisations, or respondents representing specific geographies or communities of interest.

2.3 While the table is a useful reference point in terms of the overall number of responses to each question, it is not an exact representation of the views expressed. This is because in some cases participants made qualifying comments with their 'yes' or 'no' response. For example, some participants answered 'yes' to indicate agreement with an aspect of the consultation document, but in their comments called for adjustments to what was being proposed or highlighted other issues they wished the Forestry Strategy to reflect or give greater prominence to. Chapters 4 to 10 present both the quantitative and qualitative interpretation of responses which provides a fuller picture of the views expressed.

Question	Yes[3]	No	Comments
1. Do you agree with the long-term vision for forestry in Scotland?	110 (64%)	62 (36%)	174
2. Does the strategy identify the right objectives for forestry in Scotland over the next 10 years?	101 (60%)	66 (40%)	162
3. Do you agree with our assessment of the major issues?	85 (54%)	72 (46%)	168
4. Do the ten priorities identified capture the areas where action is most needed to deliver our objectives and vision?	74 (48%)	79 (52%)	165
5. Can you provide any examples of delivery mechanisms that have previously been effective in delivering similar objectives and priorities?*[4]	~	~	127
6. For any delivery mechanism examples given in answer to question 5, please explain why they worked well?	~	~	99
7. Do you think the proposed progress indicators are the right ones?	~	~	148

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[3] Percentages are provided in relation to the total number of participants that provided a yes or no answer to the question.

[4] ~ This symbol represents an open-ended question which did not direct participants to provide a clear yes/no answer; the comments are described and analysed in the relevant chapter.

Question	Yes[3]	No	Comments
8. Do you have any suggestions for other indicators we could use to measure progress (especially ones which draw on existing data)?	~	~	146
9. For any indicators suggested in answer to question Q8, please explain why you think they would be appropriate.	~	~	121
10. Would you add or change anything in the Equality Impact Assessment (which includes our assessment of the potential impact of the strategy on inequalities caused by socioeconomic disadvantage – Fairer Scotland Duty)?	~	~	66
11. Would you add or change anything in the Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment?	~	~	57
12. What are your views on the evidence set out in the Environmental Report that has been used to inform the assessment process?	~	~	76
13. Should any additional evidence sources be used in the Environmental Report?	33 (55%)	27 (45%)	53
14. What are your views on the predicted environmental effects as set out in the Environmental Report?	~	~	81
15. Do you agree with the conclusions and recommendations set out in the Environmental Report?	34 (54%)	29 (46%)	67
16. Please provide any other further comments you have on the Environmental Report.	~	~	55
17. Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the draft strategy for forestry in Scotland?[5]	~	~	403

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[5] A large number of identical responses to question 17 (general comments on the strategy) were submitted by 216 individuals. These have been counted as responses to that question alone. Aspects of this response are referenced in the discussion of qualitative responses to those questions in Chapter 9.

3.   The Long-Term Vision for Forestry in Scotland

Introduction

3.1   This chapter presents a quantitative summary and qualitative analysis of responses to the draft vision put forward by the Scottish Government. It describes the consultation question, number of responses, overall level of support for the vision and key themes in feedback provided by respondents.

3.2   The consultation document notes that, reflecting the lifespan of trees, forestry is a long-term consideration. It articulates an ambition to meet the needs of Scottish people in 2070 and beyond. This vision, its underpinning principles and the relevant consultation question are set out below:

> **Scotland will have more forests and woodlands, which will be sustainably managed as a much greater part of the nation's cultural capital, providing a resilient, high quality and growing resource that supports a strong economy, a thriving environment, and healthy empowered communities.**
>
> This vision is based on:
>
> - *A long-term commitment to sustainable modern forestry as a key to land-use in Scotland*
> - *A sustained programme of woodland expansion*
> - *Increasing the already substantial economic, environmental and social benefits of forestry to Scotland by addressing key challenges and harnessing opportunities.*
> - *Promoting multi-purpose forestry and the sustainable management of Scotland's forests and woodlands*
> - *A commitment to the principle of the right tree, in the right place for the right purpose.*
> - *Integrating forestry with other land-uses and businesses.*
> - *Supporting the delivery of the Scottish Government's purpose and National Performance Framework*
>
> Therefore, this draft strategy focuses on both the sustainable management of the forests we have inherited and the establishment of new woodlands, which will help realise our long-term vision for forestry in Scotland.
>
> **Q2. Do you agree with our long-term vision for forestry in Scotland? Please explain your answer.**

Quantitative overview of responses to the vision

3.3   Most consultation participants responded to the question on vision. The table below provides a quantitative summary of their responses:

Question One	Yes	No	Comments
Do you agree with the long-term vision for forestry in Scotland?	110 (64%)	62 (36%)	174

3.4   The quantitative summary suggests the majority view towards the vision is **positive**. Approximately two thirds of those who gave a yes/no answer to the question supported the vision.

Qualitative analysis

3.5   Qualitative analysis of the responses provides a more nuanced picture. There were calls for changes to the proposed vision from:

- The 62 respondents who answered 'no', to indicate they did not agree with the vision.
- 40 respondents who answered 'yes', to indicate they agreed with the proposals, but went on to qualify their answer, for example by describing changes to the vision or other things they wish to see reflected in the vision. Many of their comments concerned matters covered elsewhere in the strategy - such as risks or threats - which participants wished to see explicitly mentioned in the vision.

3.6   The group who did not advocate for changes comprised:

- The 70 respondents who answered 'yes', to indicate they agreed with the vision, and made no calls for change in their comment.
- The participants who did not respond to question 1, given they did not communicate a preference for the Scottish Government to do anything other than is suggested by the vision.

3.7   Many of the responses to this question were very detailed. Participants frequently took the opportunity to describe their overall views on the strategy in their comments on this first consultation question. Therefore, much of what is described in this chapter provides an insight into the wide-ranging perspectives among the diverse group of consultation participants.

Themes in comments about the draft vision from those who agree with it.

3.8   Those who agreed with the vision frequently commented on its **resonance** in terms of:

- Alignment with relevant strategies and plans.
- The commitment to expand Scotland's forests with consideration of quality.
- Recognition of the positive contribution of woods and forestry in terms of social and health impacts.
- Consideration of employment and other economic contributions of forestry, from large to small scale businesses.
- The welcome principle of "the right tree, in the right place for the right purpose".
- The long-term nature of the vision.
- The focus on sustainable management.

- Its holistic nature.

3.9 Many of the respondents who agreed with the vision also **suggested changes or adjustments** they would like the Scottish Government to consider. Several of these comments relate to issues that were covered elsewhere in the strategy, outwith the vision. These comments were wide-ranging and included calls for:

- **Definitions** of terms that are open to interpretation, such as:
  - Sustainable management
  - Healthy and empowered communities
  - Thriving
  - Harnessing opportunities
  - Resilient
  - Forests and woodlands
  - Natural capital
- **Affirmations of Scotland's commitment to fulfilling relevant international environmental obligations**, such as current European and international Aichi biodiversity targets, the expected international post-2020 framework, and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Establish priorities within the vision.** For example, some suggested that commercial considerations were most pressing and should have foremost consideration; others felt that environmental issues should be most prominent. Conversely, others suggested that there should be no hierarchy between ambitions covered by the vision.
- **Greater specificity,** based on suggestions that the vision is too vague, or calls for more detail about how the vision will be achieved.
- **Visual representations** of the vision and steps toward achieving it, for example, through use of a 'pen portrait'.
- **Qualification of the principle 'the right tree in the right place for the right purpose'** to reflect the importance of specific trees such as native species or ancient woodlands, or goals such as diversity.
- **Specific targets** about forest and woodland coverage.
- **Greater reference to social and economic benefits** of forests and woodlands.
- **More discussion of forestry 'disbenefits',** describing increased consumption of water by trees and acidification of watercourses and forest drainage arrangements leading to increased erosion and deposition of silt in watercourses.
- **Recognition of the value of landscape-scale** conservation.
- **Consideration of deer management** within the vision.
- **Analysis of the barriers** to woodland expansion.
- **Recognition of the re-wilding agenda**.
- A statement about the **resources** that will be devoted to achieving the vision.
- Calls for **consideration of wider benefits**, such as developing habitat networks to ensure habitat for protected species including fish (and species which are dependent on them, such as freshwater pearl mussels).
- **For climate change** to be incorporated in the vision more strongly.
- To include a commitment to the achievement of **biodiversity net gain.**
- Scope for **adjustments to the vision at the 5-year mark** or provision of short, medium and long term objectives.
- Greater references to links with the National Ecological Network and Scotland's biodiversity strategy.
- Details about intentions for **integrating forestry with other land uses.**

- Commitments to supporting the **rural economy.**
- **Concerns that the expansion of woodlands** must be carefully planned and spread geographically around Scotland.
- Recognise the **value of individual trees** in the more densely developed urban areas.
- **Potential conflicts,** such the loss of woodland to large scale developments such as wind farms and hydro-electric power schemes, which conflicts with 'integrating forestry with other land uses' and conflicts with the 'sustained programme of woodland expansion'.
- **A greater emphasis on inclusion** to demonstrate that the benefits are for all and related negative impacts will be considered equitably.
- **Acknowledgments that this vision is likely to have a greater impact on Scotland's rural areas,** than urban areas.
- Concerns that **private ownership of forests may be an impediment** to achieving the vision and calls for a strategy to address that dynamic.
- Calls for more detail about **transport or access to forests for** people who do not own cars.
- A demand to **shift from non-native conifers to native woodland and the use of natural regeneration.**
- Greater reference to supporting **biodiversity and social outcomes.**
- A suggestion that a **third principle of viability** should be added.
- Calls to **support productive forestry** to provide timber suitable for Scotland's processing industry.
- A commitment to **engagement in UK-wide forest research** with support for areas such as genetics, experimental crops and disease management.
- Some urged the vision to make **greater reference to challenges and historic issues to address**. These include:
  - Restoration of areas which have been inappropriately planted in the past, particularly PAWS and peatlands.
  - Unsatisfactory current forestry practice, for example that which doesn't deliver community aspirations, relies heavily on fossil fuels.
  - The lack of mixed woods.
  - Perceived failings of the grant system.
- There were suggestions that the vison could make **greater mention of the integrated partnership working** that will underpin it.
- A few urged the Scottish Government to include a **vision for a culture of inclusive forestry**. Linked to this were calls for mention of forests as a potential home with reference to recent initiatives to create forest crofts and acknowledging the increasing interest in hutting.
- **For greater consideration of community involvement** – that this might not necessarily relate to an interest in ownership, but other forms of engagement or use of forests and woodlands.

Themes in comments from those who <u>disagree</u> with the draft vision.

3.10 Respondents who **disagreed with the vision** typically suggested it does not go far enough to address the challenges Scotland faces. Some of these responses echoed the adjustments called for by those who gave a qualified 'yes' to express agreement with the vision, as described above. These comments were wide-ranging and included calls for:

- **Less emphasis on economic considerations;** however, conversely, a small number of respondents disagreed with the vision on the basis there should be greater focus on the economic value of forestry for rural areas.
- **A greater emphasis on the environmental, particularly linked to the challenge of climate change.**
- **A focus on improving the *quality* of Scotland's trees woods and forests**, not just creating 'more forests and woodlands'.
- **More ambition about the scale of planting**, reflecting a demand for a greater percentage of woodland cover and specific targets to measure progress against.
- A **greater emphasis within the vision on conserving and enhancing biodiversity.**
- **Affirmations of Scotland's relevant international environmental obligations**, such as current European and international Aichi biodiversity targets the expected international post-2020 framework and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.
- Commitment to the **development of a National Ecological Network.**
- **More detail about the principle** of "right tree, in the right place for the right purpose", and linked to this, a commitment to removing the wrong trees from the wrong places, such as peatland habitats.
- Greater **recognition of rare and important habitats** and species.
- Consideration of **diversity and locality of ownership** within the vision.
- Inclusion of direct references to **culture and the historic environment**
- More detail about **the intention behind the word 'sustainability'** to include greater recognition of the role for forestry and woodlands in mitigating climate change both in terms of C02 emissions and preventing flooding.
- A greater commitment to **protecting Scotland's ancient and native woodlands**.
- Specific mention of **how to address risks** such as pests and diseases.
- An affirmation that decisions around reforestation and tree planting will be underpinned by **ecological assessments.**
- Explicit reference to the **need for deer management** to promote tree growth.
- A more **inclusive approach** that recognises the role of stakeholders, including private businesses, in bringing about changes for forestry in Scotland.
- For the vision to **convey urgency** about the need to expand Scotland's forests and woodlands.
- To redress a perceived **imbalance between forestry and woodlands;** reflecting a view that the strategy currently prioritises forestry.
- For **social impacts to be given greater prominence** in the vision, particularly the health and wellbeing benefits associated with forests and woodlands and tackling barriers to access.
- One respondent suggested that a ten-year plan was not sufficient, advocating for a **longer-term commitment**.
- A suggestion to give greater **sensitivity and consideration to local issues.**

3.11 A few participants suggested changed wording or highlighted assertions within the strategy that they believe to be incorrect. Examples are included at Appendix 1.

3.12 A small number of respondents **shared general reflections on forestry in Scotland** but did not link these comments directly to a call for change in the vision statement. For example, three respondents suggested that the strategy could revisit the grant and subsidy schemes in place for forestry to achieve better value for the state and protect tenant farmers.

3.13 Some participants commented on **perceived differences between forestry strategies** across the years. For example, one suggested the new strategy gives a lower a priority to biodiversity.

There was also mention of a perception that the new strategy is less detailed and more 'high level' that its predecessor.

4. Objectives for Forestry

Introduction

4.1 This chapter presents analysis of responses to the draft objectives put forward by the Scottish Government. It describes the consultation question, number of responses, overall level of support for the objectives and key themes in feedback provided by respondents.

4.2 The question asked of respondents is shown below:

> **Q2. Does the strategy identify the right objectives for forestry in Scotland over the next 10 years? Please explain your answer**

Quantitative overview of responses to the forestry objectives

4.3 A large number of consultation participants responded to the question on objectives. The table below provides a quantitative summary of their responses:

Question Two	Yes	No	Comments
Does the strategy identify the right objectives for forestry in Scotland over the next 10 years?	101 (60%)	66 (40%)	162

4.4 The majority view towards the objectives is **positive**. Approximately two thirds of those who gave a yes/no answer to the question supported the objectives.

Qualitative analysis

4.5 Qualitative analysis of the responses provides a more nuanced picture. There were calls for changes to or greater detail about the proposed objectives from:

- The 66 respondents who answered 'no', to indicate they did not agree with the proposals.
- 43 respondents who answered 'yes', to indicate they agreed with the proposals, but went on to call for clarifications or changes to the objectives, such as a preference about the hierarchy of priorities, in their comments.
- 8 respondents who did not provide a clear yes/no answer but made a relevant comment. In each of these responses there was a call to adjust or add to the objectives.

4.6 The group who did not advocate for changes comprised:

- The 57 respondents who answered 'yes', to indicate they agreed with the proposals, and made no calls for change in their comment.
- The respondents who did not provide a yes/no answer this question, and made no comment calling for change, given they did not communicate a preference for the Scottish Government to do anything other than is suggested in relation to the objectives.

Comments on the objectives

4.7 A common theme in comments on the objectives was an **assessment of their relative priority**; the objective participants felt to be most important. These views differed significantly depending on the respondent. For example, many suggested environmental issues were paramount, several felt that economic considerations should be given the utmost attention; and a few suggested that the social objectives were most pressing. Within these comments, a small number of participants highlighted the interconnected nature of the objectives.

4.8 Linked to the above, another theme within the comments was a suggestion that the numbering of objectives was interpreted, by some participants, to signify ranking. A few respondents asked if this was intentional, others conveyed their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the ranking as they interpreted it.

4.9 Those who expressed agreement with the objectives frequently commented on **their value** in terms of:

- Ambition and recognition of the diverse benefits F&W can bring Scotland.
- Holistic approach.
- Achieving a balance between economic, social and environmental benefits.
- Alignment with other Scottish Government initiatives and international commitments.
- Focus on the 'right' objectives.
- Resonance with the concept of natural capital.
- Embedding Sustainable Forest Management approaches.

4.10 Many of the respondents who agreed with the objectives also **suggested adjustments** or additions they would like the Scottish Government to consider. Themes in these responses are set out below:

- Recognition of the cross-over and dependencies between the three objectives, with calls to avoid any perception of a "silo" effect, and also identification of objectives which should be given priority; these varied depending on the respondent. Some called for detail about how the three objectives will be balanced against one another; others for the links and interdependence between the three to be made more explicit. One asked for details about how any conflict between the objectives could be resolved.
- Linked to the above, several believed the numbered list indicated ranking or prioritisation of objectives; which they either agreed with, if they felt that economic considerations were most important, or reacted against if they felt environmental or social objectives should be given more weight.
- A few participants felt the objectives were too vague or general. Linked to this were observations that the objectives are not measurable or specific.
- One suggested the level of ambition was unachievable.
- One suggested that the explanatory text should include references to the Aichi targets for biodiversity.
- There was a call to use the Scottish Government's Land Use Strategy (LUS) to influence the language and objectives in the Forestry Strategy, so that both Strategies can relate well, and work well with each other.

4.11 Reasons for **disagreement with the objectives** varied and were often grounded in the respondent's assessment as to whether or not they considered the objectives achievable. Some

of these responses echoed the adjustments called for by those who gave a qualified 'yes' to express agreement with the objectives, as described above. Once again, the comments were wide-ranging and are summarised below:

- More realism, reflecting a view that the objectives are unlikely to be achieved within the 10-year time frame.
- Greater detail about how these objectives will be achieved.
- Less emphasis on commercial forestry.
- Specific mention of biodiversity.
- Expansion of the objectives, to include a desire to reverse historic depletions of F&W.
- Consideration to be given to the cultural dimensions of sustainable development.
- Greater focus, reflecting a view that the objectives are too high-level or broad to be achievable.
- More specificity; calling for objectives linked to measurable targets.
- Fears that pursuit of the objectives will cause harm to other habitats or species.
- Demand for specific resource allocation from the Scottish Government to support the achievement of these objectives.
- There was a call for more ambition, reflecting concerns about the impact of climate change.
- Some identified potential conflicts of interest between objectives, while others reflected on the synergies between them.

The table in Appendix 2 summarises comments from participants about specific objectives. For example, comments regarding the economic objective included the development of niche markets, tourism and economic benefits of forestry and woodland. Comments regarding the environmental objective included climate change, integration with farming, the rewilding agenda. Those who responded to the social objective referenced tackling inequalities and increasing access to outdoor activities.

4.12 Two respondents reflected on the differences between strategies across the years. One observed that the structure of the 2006 Forestry Strategy was more logical, highlighting specific outcomes which the Strategy's objectives were aiming to deliver under a series of themes. Linked to this, there was an observation that the objectives in the new strategy have been reprioritised and reflect a greater emphasis on economic growth in the sector.

5. Major Issues

Introduction

5.1   This chapter presents analysis of responses to the major issues identified by the Scottish Government. It describes the consultation question, number of responses and key themes in feedback provided by respondents.

5.2   The question asked of respondents is shown below:

> **Q3. Do you agree with our assessment of the major issues likely to have the greatest impact on the achievement of our objectives? Please explain your answer.**

5.3   A large number of consultation participants responded to the question on major issues. The table below provides a quantitative summary of their responses:

Question Three	Yes	No	Comments
Do you agree with our assessment of the major issues?	85 (54%)	72 (46%)	168

5.4   The majority view about the assessment of issues set out in the draft strategy is **positive**. The group who agreed with the issues identified in the consultation document included at least one representative from every participant group bar one; individuals, academics and researchers, businesses, forestry or land use industry body, local authorities, other public sector organisations, or respondents representing specific geographies or communities of interest.)

5.5   The group from which no explicit 'yes' to agreement with assessment of the major issues was: environmental charities or campaign organisations.

5.6   Qualitative analysis of the responses provides a more nuanced picture. There were calls for changes to the issues identified, from:

- The 72 respondents who answered 'no', to indicate they did not agree with the issues identified.
- 38 respondents who answered 'yes', to indicate they agreed with the issues identified, but went on to call for changes. These included calls for more action, fuller discussion of the issues, other matters to be considered, research for the Scottish Government to review, suggested rewording, clarification of terms or specific allocation of priorities within the issues identified.
- 25 respondents who did not provide a clear yes/no answer but made a relevant comment. In each of these responses there was a call to include other issues, or additional discussion of issues within their comments.

5.7   The group who did not advocate for changes comprised:

- The 47 respondents who answered 'yes', to indicate they agreed with the issues identified, and made no calls for change of any kind in their comment.
- The respondents who did not respond to question 3, given they did not communicate a preference for the Scottish Government to do anything other than is suggested in relation to the issues set out in the draft strategy.

Comments on the issues

5.8   As with the discussion on objectives, there was frequent mention of priorities within the issues presented in the consultation document. A small number of respondents described the presentation of issues as confusing, suggesting that they encompassed a mixture of opportunities, objectives and threats.

5.9   Respondents identified a **range of additional issues** they wished to see included in their own right, as follows:

- Undermanaged or neglected woods.
- Diverse ownership of woodland, to include greater ownership by local residents.
- Landscape quality.
- The historic environment.
- Protection of native and ancient woodland.
- Non-timber forest products, wild harvest.
- Grouse keeping and deer stalking.
- Use of plastic within the forestry sector.
- Poor mobile phone and internet coverage in rural areas.
- Health and safety.
- Woodland crofts.
- Research and development.
- Tackling poor management of forestry and enforcement of forestry standards
- Effective models of collaboration and decision-making across wide ranging stakeholder groups.

5.10   The table in Appendix 3 summarises comments on the specific issues set out in the strategy.

6. Priorities for Action

Introduction

6.1 This chapter presents analysis of responses to the ten priorities identified by the Scottish Government. It describes the consultation question, number of responses and key themes in feedback provided by respondents. The question asked of respondents is shown below:

> **Q4. Do the ten priorities capture the areas where action is most needed to deliver our objectives and vision? Please explain your answer.**

6.2 A large number of consultation participants responded to the question on priorities. The table below provides a quantitative summary of their responses:

Question Four	Yes	No	Comments
Do the ten priorities identified capture the areas where action is most needed to deliver our objectives and vision?	74 (48%)	79 (52%)	165

6.3 Views concerning the priorities set out in the Strategy were **split**. A slightly greater number of those who responded to the yes/no question disagreed, rather than agreed, with the priorities.

6.4 The group who responded 'no' proffered qualified responses which frequently described aspects of presentation, structure or discussion about the priorities that participants were unhappy with, as opposed to dissatisfaction with the priorities themselves. There was no priority that was universally unpopular with respondents. Comments in which some **disagreement was expressed** typically alluded to one or more of the following concerns:

- Would like to see priorities ranked, with calls for specific issues to be at the top of the list.
- Require more detail in the discussion about priorities.
- Would like priorities to be 'unpacked', with issues distilled into separate categories, where they have been grouped with other priorities (particularly climate change).
- Calls for other priorities to be established.
- A small number of respondents suggested that some priorities lie outwith the control of the forestry strategy.
- Concerns that the priorities did not seem sufficiently linked to the vision and objectives.
- Suggestions that the priorities, as set out, were not measurable.

6.5 Those who agreed with the priorities commented on **their value** in terms of being:

- Clear.
- Robust or comprehensive.
- Reasonable.
- One praised the lack of ranking, suggesting it was helpful that all were afforded priority status, without hierarchy.

6.6 The table in Appendix 4 summarises comments from participants about specific priorities.

7.   Delivery Mechanisms

Introduction

7.1   This chapter summaries the delivery mechanisms shared by consultation participants with the Scottish Government. It describes the consultation question, number of responses and key themes in feedback provided by respondents.

7.2   The question asked of respondents is shown below:

> **Q5. Can you provide any examples of delivery mechanisms that have previously been effective in delivering similar objectives and priorities?**
>
> **Q6. For any delivery mechanism examples given in answer to question 5, please explain why they worked well?**

Question	Number of comments
5. Can you provide any examples of delivery mechanisms that have previously been effective in delivering similar objectives and priorities?	127
6. For any delivery mechanism examples given in answer to question 5, please explain why they worked well?	99

7.3   Many respondents shared examples of effective delivery mechanisms. They also reflected on features of practice they believe work well or could be improved. Acknowledging the succinct nature of this report, detailed responses have been extracted into a separate document for review and consideration by the Scottish Government. The examples typically fell into one of the following categories, specific examples are provided in Appendix 5:

- Financial mechanisms including grants.
- General examples and learning from other sectors.
- Conservation practice.
- Working in partnership with stakeholders.
- Standards, planning and regulatory processes.
- Working with communities, including engaging volunteers in forestry and woodland activity.
- Education.

Financial mechanisms

7.4   Some described **previous/existing** schemes that they believe are or were successful in achieving their intended aims, such as the Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme (SFGS), Regional Challenge Funds and the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP).

7.5   Others reflected more broadly on **features of delivery mechanisms** that they thought worked well:

- Schemes with non-centralised administration, local based inspections and payments.
- Use of a 'trusted intermediary' non-governmental organisations to help deliver on the ground, through detailed and non-threatening dialogue with land managers.

- Use of targeted incentive payments.
- 'Reverse auctions' to encourage individual landowners to propose areas for planting themselves that do not damage their own farm business model.

7.6   There was mention of **schemes elsewhere** that can be learned from, such as:

- Upstream Thinking SW England.
- Pumlumon Project, Wales.

7.7   Some **voiced criticisms** of current schemes that they would like to see addressed and suggested that the following issues be tackled:

- SFGS too onerous for small woodland owners.
- Woodland Creation Scheme is unwieldy and complex.
- Overall resourcing for outdoor access remains inadequate.
- Only having one agency for consultation and input on applications would assist those responsible for delivery on the ground.

Specific examples

7.8   Participants shared details about delivery mechanisms that they believe work well, some from other related sectors such as agriculture, for example: Eden River Catchment, Cumbria, LENS Cumbria, and Borders Forest Trust.
- Large scale afforestation (framework) schemes have worked well, where they have been undertaken by the private sector.
- The Development Planning System provides a ready-made template as to how forestry schemes should be delivered.

Partnership activities

7.9   There was frequent mention of the multitude of stakeholders connected to matters of forests and woodlands. Respondents welcomed the recognition of supportive partnerships stating the important role they play as delivery mechanisms for the priorities. Comments on effective delivery mechanisms referred to:

- Features of good practice include effective engagement and strong relationships with stakeholders and interested parties.
- Scope to build on successful history of consultation by forestry sector.
- The Rural Land Use Pilots provide a relevant, recent set of experiences, involving many of the types of stakeholder groups who can be expected to be party to collaborative work required for delivery of the Forestry Strategy.
- Joint working with NGOs and others on projects such as Glen Affric and Cairngorms Connect has been effective because it can help to achieve a critical mass of connected land area that can achieve more than isolated fragments. It also harnesses the efforts of private individuals and organisations to common goals. The delivery of the Forest Strategy potentially offers opportunities to work with key stakeholder bodies, such as NFUS, QMS and SCF to explore new ideas and technologies.
- The Conifer Breeding Cooperative – provides a good example of collaboration between private sector enterprises and Forestry Commission and Forest Research.
- Community Planning is a well-established mechanism for bringing stakeholders together in a shared vision of the future for their local area.

Standards, planning and regulation

7.10　Across responses participants highlighted the value of standards such as the UKFS, frameworks including the Regional Land Use Framework and implementation of forestry regulations.

7.11　Participants also noted how Brexit and the termination of the Common Agricultural Policy may provide an opportunity for improvements in forest management.

Community initiatives

7.12　Much of the commentary about delivery mechanisms in relation to communities focused on:

- The benefits of community engagement in forests and woodlands and the potential success of initiatives when communities have been engaged and involved in delivery appropriately.
- Community ownership of land has been shown to be effective in delivering inclusive benefits at a local level.
- Challenges of working with communities.
- Difficulties that communities face when seeking to establish management or ownership of forests and woodlands.
- One participant outlined how the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016 contains powers for community bodies to acquire land for sustainable development purposes. This has profound implications for the development of community woodlands, providing the opportunity for communities throughout Scotland to purchase nearby land for the purposes of establishing woodland and developing public use facilities. It is a mechanism that has the potential to play a major role in the delivery of new woodland near communities.

Education

7.13　Another theme in responses to the question about effective delivery mechanism included calls for greater education of the general public about forestry and woodlands and other ways to raise awareness. These were mentioned as ways to increase visits to forests and woodland for learning and recreation. Within this strand of comments there were also calls for more training and skills development among those that work within the sector. Participants state that education in its widest sense can operate at all levels and is important in developing skills, management, public understanding and public support.

8. Progress Indicators

Introduction

8.1 This chapter presents analysis of responses to the proposed progress indicators put forward by the Scottish Government. It describes the consultation question, number of responses, overall level of support for the indicators and key themes in the feedback provided by respondents. Suggestions of other indicators to consider are provided in Appendix 6.

8.2 The consultation document notes that, following the publication of the strategy, the Scottish Government will publish a more detailed monitoring and reporting framework. It states its commitment to reporting using a focused suite of progress indicators to track progress against the strategy's 10-year objectives and monitor forestry's contribution towards the Scottish Government's National Outcomes. The draft progress indicators put forward in the strategy is outlined below:

Forestry Strategy 10-year objectives	Possible progress indicators
Increase the contribution of forests and woodlands to Scotland's sustainable and inclusive economic growth	• Contribution of woodlands, forests and the forest sector to the Scottish economy (GVA and jobs). • Volume of available wood fibre. • Area of woodland and forests. • Area of new woodland and forest creation.
Protect and enhance Scotland's valuable natural assets, ensuring that our forests and woodlands are resilient and contribute to a healthy and high-quality environment.	• Woodland contribution to Natural Capital Index. • Proportion of protected woodland and forests with natural features in favourable condition. • Area of new native woodland and forest creation.
Use Scotland's forest and woodland resource to empower more people to improve their health, well-being and life chances.	• Numbers of visits to forests and woodlands. • Area of forests and woodlands that are owned by communities.

Q7. Do you think the proposed progress indicators are the right ones? Please explain your answer.

Q8. Do you have any suggestions for other indicators we could use to measure progress (especially ones which draw on existing data)?

Q9. For any indicators suggested in answer to question Q8, please explain why you think they would be appropriate.

Quantitative overview of responses to the progress indicators

8.3   There were over 100 responses to the each of the three questions on progress indicators. The table below provides a quantitative summary of their responses:

Question	Number of responses
Do you think the proposed progress indicators are the right ones?	148
Do you have any suggestions for other indicators we could use to measure progress (especially ones which draw on existing data)?	146
For any indicators suggested in answer to question Q8, please explain why you think they would be appropriate.	121

8.4   A review of responses to Q7 (do you think the proposed indicators are the right one) revealed:
  - Explicit or inferred agreement from 48 respondents.
  - Explicit or inferred disagreement from 37 respondents.

8.5   This suggests the majority view towards the progress indicators is **positive**. However, while participants were generally content with the proposed indicators there was significant discussion of potential gaps.

Themes in comments about the indicators

8.6   Specific comments on the proposed indicators are covered in Table 1 at the end of this chapter.

8.7   Many respondents suggested the proposed indicators are 'too vague' or 'high-level' and do not go far enough to show how their use will ensure the progress of the strategy can be fully monitored. Some noted insufficient links between the proposed indicators and the wider strategy content. There were concerns that important aspects of the strategy may be lost if they are not clearly linked to specific indicators to help measure progress and hold the Scottish Government to account.

8.8   A small number of respondents suggested the indicators are too focused on the economic aspects and commercial value of forestry. These participants advocated for expansion of the indicators to achieve greater balance in term of the focus on the protection and maintenance of biodiversity to ensure forests are sustainable into the future.

8.9   A few participants suggested it would be useful to use local indicators. They described data available regionally, or for each local authority, with particular reference to data sets that include areas of National Park e.g. Stirling. There were suggestions this would encourage more buy-in at a local level. For example, it was noted that the last assessment of the forestry industry at a national level showed it was worth £1bn, however this could not be broken down regionally or

by local authority area which restricted the appetite of local authorities to become involved in the sector as they could not see the impact of their own area on the industry.

Other indicators suggested by respondents

8.10   A large number of respondents (146 participants) commented on additional indicators. Key themes in the suggested additions included: woodland management, biodiversity and species-based metric. Indicators on pest and diseases, deer problems, the historic environment and climate change were also suggested.

8.11   Some respondents commented that the current indicators focus on economic factors relating to forestry production / processing, and that more meaningful indicators should be included to measure ecological / natural capital aspects, and societal and individual well-being. Respondents also noted a need for social indicators to provide information on how people use forests and woodlands, their perceptions of forests in the landscape, and the uptake of tree and woodland promotion schemes in agriculture for the wellbeing of the farming sector.

8.12   The additional indicators suggested by respondents are extensive. They have been grouped under the three high-level objectives and are outlined in Appendix 6.

Table 1: Summary of comments on the proposed indicators		
Forestry Strategy 10-year objectives	**Proposed indicators in the Strategy**	**Specific comments on the indicators**
Objective 1: Increase the contribution of forests and woodlands to Scotland's sustainable and inclusive economic growth	• Contribution of woodlands, forests and the forest sector to the Scottish economy (GVA and jobs).	• GVA and jobs alone are insufficient indicators, neither can give an indication of sustainability or inclusiveness. • Separate GVA from forestry and farming. • Diversify the econometrics used for this indicator.
	• Volume of available wood fibre.	• Replace fibre with timber.
	• Area of woodland and forests.	• Useful indicator. • Requires distinction between conifer and new broadleaf planting. • Needs to include areas felled.
	• Area of new woodland and forest creation.	• Useful indicator. • Requires distinction between conifer and new broadleaf planting.
Objective 2: Protect and enhance Scotland's valuable natural assets, ensuring that our forests and woodlands are resilient and contribute to a healthy and high-quality environment.	• Woodland contribution to Natural Capital Index.	• Too vague, lacks definitions. • Some support the use of the NCI. • Some feel it is not well-known and is a blunt instrument for assessing sustainability. • Question whether it will identify changes or provide enough guidance on sustainability. • Monitoring this is resource intensive.
	• Proportion of protected woodland and forests with natural features in favourable condition.	• A suggestion that habitat connectivity is a better measure than favourable condition. • Connectivity and patch size are good measures of climate breakdown resilience. • Monitoring this is resource intensive.
	• Area of new native woodland and forest creation.	• This indicator should allow a better idea of how Scotland is rebuilding lost woodland and encouraging increased biodiversity. • Good metric, but not necessarily a focus area in the wider strategy.
Objective 3: Use Scotland's forest and woodland resource to empower more people to improve their health, well-being and life chances	• Numbers of visits to forests and woodlands.	• Useful indicator, but needs clearer definition to ensure consistency. • As well as number of visits important to know purpose of use, how long people are in the forests and how many are repeat visitors.
	• Area of forests and woodlands that are owned by communities.	• Indicator inadequate to measure progress against objective.

9. Other Comments on The Strategy

9.1 This chapter presents analysis of additional comments made by participants at the end of their consultation response. It describes the consultation question, number of responses and key themes in feedback provided by respondents.

9.2 The question asked of respondents is shown below:

> **Q17. Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the draft strategy for forestry in Scotland?**

9.3 A large number of 'other comments' were received (403). These came from 187 participants who made a final comment on the strategy at the end of the consultation response and another 216 individuals who submitted a response to this question only.

9.4 The identical response submitted by 223 respondents is set out in full below. It is an important reference point given the numbers who expressed this view.

> With regards to the Scottish Forestry Strategy currently under consultation I wish to respond to Question 17 (further comments) as follows:
>
> The strategy should seek to provide clear plans of action, with ambitious targets that are monitored and regularly reported on, around:
>
> **Creating new native woodland** - the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy currently commits the Government to creating between 3,000 and 5,000 hectares of new native woodland every year, but the 2018 Climate Change Plan also increases the overall annual target for new woodland creation (including non-native commercial timber planting) from 10,000 hectares per year to 15,000 by 2025. This new strategy should commit Scotland to an increase in native woodland planting, tied to the overall new planting targets as they rise over time.
>
> **Improving the condition of our existing woods** - the 2014 Native Woodland Survey of Scotland identified the shocking fact that more than half of Scotland's native woods (54%) are in an unsatisfactory condition. This was largely down to management issues such as invasive Rhododendron ponticum and the damage done by inappropriate grazing, especially by wild deer. The 2019-2029 strategy should help ensure all native and ancient woodland can benefit from appropriate deer management and plans to curb invasive non-native species.
>
> **Protecting our ancient woodland** - only 1% of Scotland's land mass is covered with ancient woodland, yet this vital, biodiverse and irreplaceable habitat is still being gradually reduced year-on-year. Over the last 30 years at least 14% of what little remains of Scotland's ancient woodland has been lost forever. A truly ambitious Forestry Strategy should categorically state that there should be no further loss of ancient woodland in Scotland. This should be explicitly stated as part of the vision for our future.

9.5 Within the comments from participants who provided full responses to the consultation, there were numerous themes.

9.6   Most common was **reiteration of points made elsewhere** in their consultation response, with extensive repetition of views shared previously:

- That **biodiversity** should be the central focus of the forestry strategy.

- For greater priority be given to the **protection and enhancement** of native woodlands.

- For more clarity about the strategic direction for **managing wild deer.**

- There was frequent mention of a perception of **vagueness** in aspects of the document, in which participants called for more detail within the final strategy and/or greater focus. Within these comments several participants asked for a commitment to the publication of a **detailed action plan** with targets, measurable progress indicators and information about the resources that will support implementation. Many of these respondents called for a consultation on the draft action plan.

- There were also calls for clarification about how **conflicts** between different interests will be addressed; specifically, different environmental impacts or tensions between economic and environmental considerations.

- For a **shift in balance** from those who expressed a view that the strategy is too heavily focused on economic considerations.

9.7   Some highlighted **inconsistencies** within the document. For example:

- One said they welcomed mention of the 'integration with other land uses and businesses' within the vision but felt these should have been included in the list of priorities for action.
- Two respondents noted that biodiversity was referenced as one of ten priorities, when they felt it should underpin the whole strategy.
- One participant suggested there are mismatches between the targets set out in box 2, with differences between types of metrics (for example, some are not timebound).

9.8   A small number of respondents highlighted **differences** between the consultation document and **the 2006 strategy**, noting that the new strategy lacks an action plan. Others reflected that the 2006 strategy had a greater focus on biodiversity and preventing species decline, higher target for woodland cover and a commitment to developing a forest culture. One person suggested the new strategy is better than its predecessors but did not explain the basis of this view.

9.9   Some reflected on aspects of the drafting that they would **like to see reconsidered**; for example:

- One respondent, while commending the consideration of community forestry in the strategy, suggested there was a sense of this being an 'add on'. They noted that the positive impacts of community forestry were often couched with references to terms of social or community benefits as opposed to them being effective delivery mechanisms.
- One respondent noted the consideration of forestry and woodlands appears 'siloed'. They would like to see greater consideration of other land usages including farming.

9.10   Ten participants reflected on **layout and language,** identifying opportunities to make the document more accessible. These are included in Appendix 7.

9.11 Another theme across comments concerned **issues that participants did not feel had been raised** within the consultation. These included:

- **Resourcing;** the future of grants and other ways to bring finance to the sector.
- **Land ownership, tenure and management;** how to achieve diversity and how to meet the challenge of implementing a forestry strategy of this scale and scope, considering that a large proportion of Scotland's forests are privately owned.
- **Matters to do with felling,** including:
    - Discussion of practical considerations such as road construction.
    - Consideration of ways to increase engagement with consultation processes for felling applications.
    - Calls for enhancements to compliance checks, with greater scope for feedback from the public.
- **Other opportunities** afforded by the introduction of a new strategy. Examples from these comments include:
    - Potential to reduce bureaucracy.
    - A new approach to using public funding, particularly grants, to achieve desired impacts.
    - Scope to consider alignment with and make greater reference to other relevant legislation, strategies and policies. These include the Land Use Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy, European Landscape Convention, Scottish Planning Policy, the Land Reform Act, the Planning Act, the National Peatland Plan, Code of Practice on Non-Native Species and the Curriculum for Excellence.
- **The future role for Forestry Scotland** with regards to its function for research and technical advice.
- **Consultation,** specifically greater consultation with sector representatives, including a suggestion for the Scottish Government to create an advisory committee that reports to the Minister.
- **Enforcement arrangements,** when activities do not conform to standards.
- Discussion of **infrastructure and forestry**, particularly timber transport.
- More reflection on the **changes to forestry in Scotland**, particularly progress since the 2006 strategy, with detail about how that assessment has informed the present position.
- A lack of specific mention of **woodland crofts** in discussions about community ownership and management.
- Consideration of **landscape designations.**
- Mention of the **National Ecological Network.**
- **Cross sectoral links between forestry and other areas of policy.** Examples include working with those who bring expertise on matters such as integrated land management and the rural economy.
- **Consideration of the challenges of implementing this strategy,** for example the need to work with diverse stakeholders and how the strategy will inform the development of individual grant schemes.
- **The process of implementing the strategy;** for example, Borders Forest Trust called for the strategy and action plan to be piloted before national implementation.

9.12 A few respondents took the opportunity to **communicate directly with the Scottish Government or Forestry Commission Scotland:**

- Messages of **good luck** to the Scottish Government or Forestry Commission Scotland when implementing the strategy.

- A few invited **further direct discussio**n or support from their organisation in the development of the strategy or implementation plan.
- A small number of respondents shared examples of cases in which they felt the principles underpinning the strategy had been contradicted in recent planning decisions.
- One person suggested the term Scottish Forestry is the name of a forestry journal and is therefore copyrighted and not appropriate for the new Forestry body.
- Another asks Forestry Commission Scotland to make improvements to its website, with a focus on user friendliness and increasing its capacity to function as a conduit for consultation.
- One respondent suggested that the reference to Scotland being in the Boreal Zone is inaccurate (another respondent also expressed this view elsewhere in their consultation response, see discussion in Chapter 4).

10. Thematic assessment of responses linked to environmental, social and economic impacts

10.1   As evidenced by the findings presented in chapters 2-9, there was significant diversity in responses to the consultation question. These reflect the broad range of interests, concerns and priorities evident among the large number of individuals and organisations that participated in the consultation. However, a thematic analysis of responses in relation to environmental, economic and social considerations revealed broad themes across responses. These reveal different perspectives on important issues presented in the strategy, such as climate change.

10.2   This chapter provides a succinct thematic analysis of responses. Detail on the responses to specific questions is provided elsewhere in this report; individual responses to the consultation are available for review on the Scottish Government's consultation hub.

Common themes across comments about environmental issues:

10.3   When discussing the environment, participants commonly called for the strategy to encompass more of the following:

- A greater **focus on biodiversity**.
- More detail about resources, implementation and targets, particularly **specific targets for planting native woodland and improving condition**.
- Greater **consultation with stakeholders** in the development of a monitoring framework and actions to underpin the strategy.
- A focus on **integrated approaches** to land management.
- For the strategy to include an explicit commitment to protecting **Scotland's ancient woodlands.**
- Greater consideration of the value of forests in **mitigating the impacts of climate change.** Often these included comments of the need for diversity in species planted. Some called for more research about approaches that achieve optimal gains in reducing or mitigating climate impact.
- **A reprioritisation of objectives** within the strategy, with more focus on environmental sustainability.

Common themes across comments about economic considerations:

10.4   When discussing forestry's potential economic impact, participants commonly called for the strategy to encompass more of the following:

- Calls for more detail about resources, implementation and targets, particularly **specific targets for planting productive woodland**.
- For the Scottish Government to establish a **forestry advisory group** with representatives from the private sector.
- Greater consideration of the value of commercially managed forests in **mitigating the impacts of climate change** and for calls therefore to increase support for commercial planting of trees.
- A strategy which **allows for consideration of local or regional conditions**, granting flexibility at the local level.
- For significant improvements to Scotland's **rural transport infrastructure.**
- A focus on how to address the **skills gap** in the forestry sector.

Common themes across comments about social impacts:

10.5   When discussing forestry's potential impact for communities, equalities and other social implications, participants commonly called for the strategy to encompass more of the following:

- More detail about resources, implementation and targets, particularly **how to improve access to forests and woodland**.
- A focus on **integrated approaches** to land management.
- Greater consideration of ways to support **community engagement** with woodlands and forests above and beyond ownership and management arrangements.
- A more comprehensive consideration of small-scale forestry and other aspect of activity linked to **woodland culture**.
- Greater **consultation with stakeholders** in the development of a monitoring framework and actions to underpin the strategy.
- A higher profile within the strategy of the value of forests in **mitigating the impacts of climate change** for the benefit of current and future generations.
- More focus on **landscape quality.**

Responses to the Scottish Government's Impact Assessments

10.6   Consultation participants were asked for their views on the impact assessments linked to the draft strategy. These identify potential impacts of the strategy in relation to equality, businesses, regulations and the environment. Responses were sought as to whether the partial assessments identified all areas where there may be an impact. Respondents were also invited to comment on the need for any amendments or additions to the draft/partial assessments.

10.7   Themes in these responses closely echoed the findings set out above and are summarised in Appendix 8.

11. Conclusions

11.1 Many informed stakeholders and individuals took part in the consultation. They were typically highly-engaged and knowledgeable, sharing expertise, examples and reflections on how to nurture the environmental, economic and social value of Scotland's forests and woodlands. These responses provide a useful evidence base for the Scottish Government to draw upon in the development of the final strategy.

11.2 At a broad level, responses to the draft strategy were generally positive; in most cases more respondents replied 'yes' than 'no' to yes/no questions about agreement with elements of the draft strategy document. Participants welcome the new forestry strategy for Scotland, however their comments revealed mixed views about priorities and the scale of ambition; they frequently called for adjustments. Views were often strongly expressed and typically reflected participants' interests in economic, social or environmental aspects of forestry. Often the perspectives of different stakeholders were at odds with each other; and many called for a greater focus on the issue(s) of most relevance to them.

11.3 Reflecting across responses, it is evident that above and beyond specific interests, most participants wish to see more detail about how the strategy will be delivered. This includes specification of detailed targets, resources, timescales and measurable progress indicators. There were also repeated calls for more engagement by the Scottish Government with stakeholders when shaping, implementing and monitoring the future of forestry in Scotland.

Appendix 1: Suggested revisions to the vision statement

Suggested changes to the wording of the vision statement included:
'Refer to trees as well as woodlands and forests.'
'The first commitment could be expanded to 'modern and contemporary' forestry, with an explanation of the understanding of the meaning provided in Section 2. This would recognise the prospect of changes in public priorities and expectations into the future'.
'Not sure though about the word "modern" as a basis for sustainable forest management. Nothing dates a concept or a thing more than calling it modern. The principles of sustainable forest management were agreed, as noted in the introduction, twenty-five years ago'.
'The words "a thriving environment" without further qualification misses the opportunity to distinguish the internal (within woodlands) from the external (affected by woodlands), perhaps e.g. "contains and contributes to thriving environment"'.
'Bullet 1, why is the "long-term commitment" only here? Surely this applies to all, and so the list should be preface by "This vision is based on a long-term commitment to: "Also on bullet 1, "sustainable modern forestry" falls into the "motherhood and apple pie" category - better to delete this and focus on the constituent parts. Bullet 2 needs a qualification along the lines "where appropriate", as although I agree strongly with the principle of woodland expansion both on biodiversity grounds and on the ability of woodlands to absorb carbon dioxide, it is far from true that all unwooded areas are suitable for planting / enclosure within woodland. Bullet 5 could usefully be paired with bullet 2 after qualification as above, so that the "commitment to the principle of the right tree, in the right place for the right purpose" no longer fails as at present to recognise that, for many reasons, "the right tree" might be "no tree". I do not think the sideways reference to integration with other land uses covers this point well enough. Bullet 6 needs expansion of the meaning of "integrating" to emphasise the long-term nature of the strategy, the statement could begin with the words "by 2070"'.
'None of the vision can be achieved without integrated partnership working…we feel that this is so fundamental that the vision needs to embed recognition of it, perhaps with the following wording: "Scotland will have more diverse and balanced forests and woodlands integrated sensitively into a landscape of other land uses, which will be sustainably managed as a much greater part of the nation's natural capital providing an ecologically and economically resilient, high quality and growing resource that supports the delivery of public goods, contributes to a strong economy, furthers the conservation of biodiversity and a thriving environment, and supports healthy and empowered communities"'.
'It perhaps gives the impression that economic growth is the key component. This is re-enforced by reference to the vision being based on "sustainable modern forestry". Reference to the vision being based on "sustainable modern forestry" risks creating a perception that the focus is on 'exclusively' commercial forestry. While commercial forestry is a vital component of the overall strategy, a better approach may simply be to describe the aim as "sustainable forestry" with the different elements within the strategy

then described'.

'We question the use of the term "natural capital" in the statement as this is a relatively new technical term that does not mean an awful lot to many people and even to professionals causes some confusion to its meaning'.

'We feel, for maximum impact, the vision statement should focus on simply 'supporting sustainable forestry and encouraging integrated land use' because this is broadly understood and accepted whilst inherently delivering the other elements. Given the almost total absence of mountain woodland in Scotland we feel there is a need to refer to it specifically in order for it not to remain missing. For example the vision could be changed as suggested below: Scotland will have expanded, diverse, forest and woodland cover extending across the full natural altitudinal range, which will be sustainably managed as a much greater part of the nation's natural capital, providing an ecologically & economically resilient, high quality and growing resource that provides a wide range of public goods, supports a strong economy, enhances forest and associated biodiversity and a thriving environment, and supports healthy and empowered communities'.

'We feel that there should be more focused wording, for example: "A long-term commitment to sustainable modern forestry as a key land-use in Scotland." should be changed to "A long-term commitment to sustainable modern forestry as a key part of the national objective in Scotland"'.

Appendix 2: Summary of comments on specific objectives

Objective and number of participants who commented on this objective	Themes derived from the comments on this objective
1: Economic (15)	• Calls for interconnections between environment and social objectives to be mentioned here; for example, the role of Forests and Woodlands (F&W) as mitigating climate change and thereby contributing to economic objective, employment associated with F&W also playing a role in health and wellbeing and community development. • Calls to mention the development of niche markets. • Calls to mention tourism and economic benefit of diverse F&W. • Suggestion that it should be made clear that this is a top priority of the three. • Calls to mention the need to achieve balance in commercial forestry through mixed planting.
2: Environment (25)	• Calls for references to maintain and enhance biodiversity. • Suggestion to give greater prominence to integration with farming. • Calls for ongoing commitment to diversification of F&W. • Suggestions that this should be the first priority and that other objectives will be dependent on this being achieved. • Calls to recognise the value of non-woodland species and habitats in and around F&W. • Suggestion of the inclusion of a presumption against restocking peatland areas. • Suggestion to mention value for climate change, biodiversity and water management objectives. • A focus on local tree supply and presumption against imports. • Calls to include an assertion not to damage non-F&W areas (open ground habitats and species). • Suggestion to use term 'ecologically' resilient. • Suggestion to include reference to individual trees. • Suggestion of an additional objective about rewilding Scotland's hills to provide native forest cover.
3: Social (23)	• Suggestion to expand to include reference to tackling inequalities in access to F&W. • Suggestion to expand to include reference to creating employment opportunities in F&W sector. • Call to mention forests and potential homes and hutting. • Suggestion it should be made clear that this is the bottom priority of the three. • Potential to include references to improved public perception and understanding of trees and forests; a stronger forest culture. • Suggestions that this should be the first priority. • Calls for references to provide increased opportunities for outdoor recreation in forests and woodlands and encouraging people to take

	advantage of these opportunities.
	• Suggestion this is not an appropriate objective for privately owned F&W.
	• Suggestion of the inclusion of a commitment to resources.
	• Call to highlight the value of diverse ownership.
	• Disagreement with this objective; 'fashionable nonsense'.
	• Importance of this consideration for supporting rural communities
	• Emphasis on community involvement.

Appendix 3: Summary of comments on issues set out in Strategy

Issue and number of participants who commented on this issue	Themes derived from the comments on this issue
WOOD FIBRE SUPPLY AND DEMAND (37)	- Recognition of issue welcomed. - Call to include wider considerations of efficiency, such as job creation, added value, social benefits and timber miles. - A view this section is aimed at industry rather than small scale foresters or businesses and could do more to reflect potential of small businesses to innovate and diversify. - Suggestion this should explicitly state the intention to plant more native species. - Concerns about the intention to restock felled sites, on basis of these sites being inappropriate for forestry and should instead be returned to original condition. Conversely another respondent suggested the commitments to restock could be stronger, to reflect need for more timber. - A view this section does not convey an appropriate sense of urgency. - Replace term 'fibre' with 'product' to make strategy more accessible to layperson. - A call to present graphs with various planting scenarios, such as softwood availability in 50 years with and without planting targets. - A suggestion that it may be realistic to consider need to import more from neighbouring countries. - Creation of new forests in conflict with maintaining Scotland's internationally valued landscapes. - A call to extend rotations on site, where feasible, to increase wood supply. - A call for more emphasis on growing quality hardwood. - A call for greater consideration of diversification of wood processing in Scotland. - A call for more discussion about market fluctuation and challenges of extraction from remote areas. - Suggestion of more details on mitigating actions outlined. - Call for equal emphasis on use of forests for sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products. - Observations that there will be conflict between agriculture and forestry. - Calls for investment in developing the future forestry workforces. - Greater consideration of threats to semi-natural woodland from development required. - A discussion of the potential to engage farmers in short-rotation willow to address fuel gaps and provide a financial opportunity for those who will struggle in agriculture post Brexit. - A view that restocking should be given greater consideration as an issue in its own right. - Calls for more details about methods to increase productivity - A view that the Strategy requires consideration of interlinked factors such as transport infrastructure. - Calls for specific mention of the value of Sitka Spruce to the sector.

Issue and number of participants who commented on this issue	Themes derived from the comments on this issue
	• A view that deforestation is strongly linked to planning policy and out with the scope of this strategy. • Calls for publication of tolerance thresholds to aid assessment of appropriate or effective restocking levels • A suggestion that other solutions can be found for bioenergy; such as waste and residues • Calls for binding standards to differentiate between timber for manufacturing and fibre for biomass. • Suggestion to look at ways to improve efficiencies in manufacturing

RURAL LAND USE, PRODUCTIVITY AND INTERGRATION (38)	• Recognition of issue welcomed.
	• A sense of affront conveyed by industry representatives at description of forests as 'badly designed'. Linked to this, a call to do more to champion and celebrate innovation and consultation over the past 50 years.
	• Suggestions that mechanisms, plans and strategies exist to address these issues. While many of these are referenced, there were calls to give given greater prominence to:
	    ○ Local Authority Woodland and Forestry Strategies
	    ○ Land Use Strategy
	    ○ Woodland Expansion Advisory Group
	    ○ Regional Land Use Frameworks
	    ○ National Ecological Network
	    ○ The CCF approach (managing continuous cover forests)
	• Concerns about some rural practices such as sheep farming and moor burning which limit possibilities of regenerating woodland habitats.
	• A view that there is scope for more integration of farming and forestry.
	• Concerns that land use change from farming to forestry will lead to job losses.
	• Calls for greater recognition of the importance of forestry for rural economy.
	• Suggestion of the need for resources and incentives to encourage management of forests.
	• A call for an assessment of barriers to expansion and how to tackle these.
	• A view that changes will require wider engagement with communities beyond professional forestry sector.
	• Concerns that economic interests will dominate decisions about converting agricultural land to forestry land; without sufficient consideration of biodiversity value.
	• Concerns that new forests may have a detrimental impact on forests as recreational areas.
	• Identification of barriers to acquiring land for afforestation, such as windfarms and wild land strategy
	• The view that Brexit is an opportunity to bring about new integrated approaches to land management.
	• Call for greater reference to different land management strategies such as agro-forestry systems.
	• Suggestion to encourage woodland crofts as a holistic approach to

Issue and number of participants who commented on this issue	Themes derived from the comments on this issue
	foodproduction, business and housing.
	• A call for greater reflection on historic challenges such as poorly designed forests.
	• An observation that the strategy represents an opportunity to signal that farmers continue to be eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme for land on which they plant trees.
	• A view that the National Forest Estate and other publicly owned forests should lead by example and managed to deliver a range of environments and social benefits.
	• A call for more detail about intentions with regards to woodland management and mechanisms for consultation and engagement with local stakeholders, communities of interest and related experts.
	• Calls for government agencies not to work in silos and make greater recognition of the interconnections between this strategy and various policies, including rural affairs, transport, housing and health.
	• A suggestion to quantify the commitment to investment in the timber-processing sector.
	• A call for the Scottish Government to commission a spatial-mapping exercise to consider woodland expansion targets in relation to conservation and other land use priorities.
	• A call for the need to protect the historic environment to be recognised within this.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: NATIONAL, REGIONAL & LOCAL (26)	• Calls for wider consideration of economic value beyond planting and harvesting timber, for example employment, recreation, tourism.
	• A call for a greater focus on small scale production which can achieve a range of local benefits.
	• A call for more consideration of opportunities to develop the workforce.
	• Concerns that there may be conflict between economic and environmental priorities.
	• Greater recognition of the role that culture and the historic environment can play in facilitating the delivery of sustainable and inclusive growth.
	• A discussion of the need to assess and address transport restrictions that impede the movement of timber.
	• Calls to reference housing shortages in rural areas as a barrier to growth of timber industry.
	• A suggestion to make greater reference to economic impact on communities; development of areas around industry.
	• A suggestion to address the need for better gender balance in the sector.
INNOVATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGY (20)	• Recognition of issue welcomed.
	• Concerns there may be a lack of realism about what can be achieved, for example ambitions in relation to bio refinery.
	• Support for reference to the development of cellulosic plastics.
	• Consideration of negative impacts of some production methods such as eutrophication.

Issue and number of participants who commented on this issue	Themes derived from the comments on this issue

	• Concerns that innovation may lead to job losses in rural areas.
	• A call to promote and support smaller scale production, including mechanisms for local ownership or sharing of equipment.
	• Calls for greater investment in research on commercial potential for native tree species.
	• Identification of challenges, including:
	    ○ an ageing workforce,
	    ○ inaccessible data
	    ○ the need for very expensive purpose-built equipment
	    ○ lack of training to utilise equipment to its full potential
	• Calls for more ambition, such as green infrastructure schemes, greater mention of other silvicultural systems and diversity within the forestry sector.
	• A suggestion to include within innovation the return of traditional woodland management practices.
	• A call for greater mention of the potential benefits of improvements in technology to contribute to better data and thereby improve management.
	• A view that this section focuses on the economic impact of innovation and could do more to highlight social and environmental benefits too.

DEVELOPING FUTURE FORESTERS AND UPSKILLING THE EXISTING WORKFORCE (36)	• Recognition of issue welcomed, particularly the references to developing future forestry and upskilling workforce.
	• Concerns that focus on profits creates pressures for foresters to make short term decisions.
	• Calls for mention of recruitment issues and ways to address these
	• Other workforce training issues identified, namely:
	    ○ Techniques for improving and monitoring plant diversity
	    ○ A need to accredit small and farm woodland skills
	    ○ Ecological skills
	• Calls for investment in education to raise awareness and interest in forestry, including encouragement of forest school sites and engagement with both private and public sector education providers
	• Recognition that advances are reducing diversity within industrial roles, which could be addressed through promotion and development of smaller scale enterprises.
	• Calls to particular focus om the development of high skilled and high waged jobs.

CLIMATE CHANGE (46)	• Recognition of issue welcomed, particularly references to promotion of timber in the construction sector, benefits of trees in natural flood management and tree planting as way of reducing carbon in the atmosphere. • Concerns that timber transport can have negative impact on environment; suggest shift to rail or sea. • Request to move this issue to the top of the list of challenges faced.

Issue and number of participants who commented on this issue	Themes derived from the comments on this issue
	- A call to invest in local processing facilities to reduce transport impacts. - A request that the strategy considers waste (e.g. from construction and forestry processes themselves). - A call for the strategy to acknowledge its role in addressing the impacts of climate change on the historic environment. - A view that the benefits of new forestry in mitigating climate change is questionable. - Calls to consider species choice and achieve diversity within forests to achieve maximum impact on climate change. - Requests to reference the following documents: - Read Report 2009 - SPICe report 2016 - Report by Nicholas Stern (2005) - And numerous academic studies - IPPC report - Concern that the statement re: climate neutrality by 2050 is unfounded. - Calls to use procurement processes to drive change within industry, for example requiring businesses to state their carbon reduction policies. - Calls for greater consideration of interlinks with other land use. - A request for the strategy to specify the time period in which the average 7 tonnes of carbon will be sequestered. - Concerns that climate change issues focus on economic impacts. - A concern that discussion on carbon focuses on positive aspects of carbon capture with disregard to carbon loss through peatland ploughing. - Concerns that large-scale planting will be more detrimental to climate change than other lower impact forestry processes such as continuous cover forestry. - Calls for greater ties between academics and the forestry sector to develop and apply learning about impact of different techniques. - A suggestion to upskill forestry managers to mitigate against pollution, linked to this, the strategy should give greater consideration of the risks of poor management practices of contributing to climate change. - More consideration of the carbon storage capacity of different types of wood required. - A suggestion to explore the potential for a low carbon economy based on softwood timber. - A call to make distinctions clear between carbon sequestered long term by Sitka Spruce grown on 40-year rotation and compared to native broadleaf woodland. - Suggestion to note that not all tree species will benefit from longer and warmer growing seasons. - Asserting the need to recognise the role of engaging with private owners on these issues. - Suggestion to recognise the role of woodlands in adaption for wildlife, habitats in which species can adapt to climate change. - Suggestion to emphasise the need for long term sequestration, with

Issue and number of participants who commented on this issue	Themes derived from the comments on this issue
	particular discouragement of carbon release by use of wood as fuel or large-scale biomass production. • Asserting the need for peatland protection and restoration.
TREE PESTS & DISEASES (36)	• Recognition of issue welcomed. • A call for greater emphasis on achieving diversity within forests and woodlands to build resilience. • Calls to reduce reliance on Sitka Spruce. • Suggestion to consider that in event of catastrophic loss of species, consider use of appropriate trees as alternative hosts. • A call for more research into disease eradication and management, including improved Sitka Spruce breeding to increase disease resistance. • A view that problems exacerbated by inconsistent approaches to forestry is leading to closures of nurseries. • Greater examination of imported stock and other improvements to bio-security required. • More details called for on strategies to contain threats and consideration of impact on trees and businesses. • A call for greater emphasis on the need for risk assessments of tree pests/pathogens and identification of measures to reduce their impact. • Concerns that pests and diseases may increase as a result of increased import sources after Brexit and as a result of climate change. • Calls for preventive action, such as removal of exotic pine tree species • A call for presumption towards planting of native tree or other trees that are ecologically appropriate.
WILD DEER (42)	• Recognition of issue welcomed. • While not directly submitted in response to the question on issues, a very strong theme came from the 223 individuals who submitted an identical response to the question asking for general comments on the strategy. This is set out in detail in Chapter 10, but key points included calls for: to improve the condition of existing woods by addressing the issue of inappropriate grazing by wild deer. • Concerns that the discussion of this issue lacks detail compared to other issues covered in the strategy, signifying that it is not viewed as important. One respondent particularly highlighted that they would expect to see greater consideration to wild deer given the requirement in the 2018 Act (Section 4(b) (iv) to establish a code of practice on deer management. • A small number of calls to reintroduce predators such as wolves to Scotland to support the management of the deer population. • A small number of requests to remove the term 'wild' and simply refer to 'deers' or 'herbivores'. • Frequent mention of the various forms of harm caused by deer, such as preventing regeneration, removing ground-layer vegetation and destroying woodland plants.

Issue and number of participants who commented on this issue	Themes derived from the comments on this issue
	• Calls to move beyond the voluntary code to greater regulation and a legal requirement to control deer. • Calls for collaboration with landowners and other stakeholders. • Better marketing of venison. • Calls for more urgency and greater emphasis of the need to address this issue. • Views that fencing is a costly and unsustainable form of management. • A few participants highlighted the valuable contribution of deer to particular landscapes; another disagreed with the premise that deer are a problem.
ENHANCING OUR NATURAL ASSETS AND IMPROVING BIODIVERSITY (45)	• Recognition of issue welcomed, particularly of the need to protect native species. • While not directly submitted in response to the question on issues, a very strong theme came from the 223 individuals who submitted an identical response to the question asking for general comments on the strategy. This is set out in detail in Chapter 10, but key points included calls for: a commitment to creating new woodland, to improve the condition of existing woods and protect ancient woodland. • Calls to engage woodland owners in management of assets. • Concerns that grant schemes or funds could be improved to have greater impact and incentive controls over invasive species. • Frequent discussion of conflict between natural evolution and conservation efforts. • A call to include reference to the historic environment in this section and to reference risks to Scheduled Monuments from forestry. • A suggestion that this should be higher on the list of issues. • Mention of issues affecting natural assets with frequent reference to comments on deer, pests and diseases. • Calls for more input from conservation agencies in significant decisions about land use. • Concerns that woodland development and expansion may have a negative impact on biodiversity in existing habitats; that these aspects of the strategy are in conflict. • Calls to reference the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy targets. • Calls for a stronger presumption against built development of woodland sites. • Suggestion that enhancement of natural assets should be a consideration within commercial forestry practice as well as native woodlands. • Recognition that fragmentation is a problem for native woodlands. • A view that there is a gap in consideration of loss of trees outside woodlands due to pests and disease. • Calls to increase diversity within Scotland's F&W. • A suggestion that small-scale woodland management approaches are particularly beneficial for protecting natural assets. Linked to this, a comment that small-scale efforts should not be prevented from future

Issue and number of participants who commented on this issue	Themes derived from the comments on this issue
	rural support mechanisms or grants. • More detail about how targets will be achieved required. • A call for greater emphasis on the management and restoration of priority woodlands. • A suggestion to align with England and draft legislation to afford legal protection to ancient woodlands and trees. • More regular and extensive monitoring of native woodlands called for. • Suggestion of the need for greater emphasis on managing over-grazing and invasive species. • Would like strategy to refer to projection of existing open habitats. • Calls to include a timescale for review of targets and progress. • Some reiterated specific assets they wish to see afforded special protection and attention including Montane Scrub, Atlantic Woodland, Ancient Woodland and Caledonian Pine Forests.
ENVIRONMENTAL & LANDSCAPE QUALITY (36)	• A suggestion that F&W are not features of the landscape at present, because of their rarity. • A suggestion these issues can be addressed through the Land Use Strategy • A concern that the assertion that forest design can 'moderate water temperature though shading' is too simplistic. • Numerous comments on factors that affect water, soil and landscape. • Calls for stricter enforcement and penalties for those who affect quality. • Comment that the CCF approach (managing continuous cover forests) can help to address issues. • Calls to consider the impact of forestry roads on landscape quality and wild land and other comments about negative visual impact of felling. • Concern that the assertion that forestry has a positive impact in mitigating flooding is unfounded. • Calls for more detail about how F&W will contribute positively to landscapes. • A request for detail about how conflicts between issues will be avoided, for example the impact of new developments on landscapes. • Requests for recognition about potential for design to improve landscapes, for example creating softer borders around forest plantations. • Comments on the detrimental visual impact of fencing and access routes.

WELL-BEING (19)	• Recognition of issue welcomed, particularly links with healthy active lives, affordable housing and contribution to rural economies.
	 • Suggestions this should be afforded a higher priority within the list of issues.
	 • Calls for expansion of the discussion and ambition about addressing access barriers, such as:
	     o Deer fences
	     o Poor links with public transport
	     o Ladder stiles
	     o Locked gates

Issue and number of participants who commented on this issue	Themes derived from the comments on this issue
	o Lack of toilets and other facilities • Suggestion there could be more mention of promoting woodland-based education. • Calls for inclusion of the term 'recreation' in this title to emphasise the need to encourage and increase time spent by members of the public in F&W. • Recognition that this will require significant resource and effort, including active and targeted engagement with disadvantaged communities. • Calls to encourage the expansion of urban forests. • Will necessitate increase in number of rangers and more partnership working with health and social care providers. • Promote education and awareness about responsible behaviour in nature. • Include recognition that the cultural aspects of the environment contribute to people's well-being. • Include reference to the adoption of the National Path Grading System. • Strategy should encourage or support woodland crofts and living. • Public access and recitation impacts should be factored in decision making about new planting. • Forest Estate will need to engage and show leadership to influence private landowners.
EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT (15)	• Recognition of issue welcomed, particularly the comments on community ownership and management. • Calls to include ambitions for gender equality within the sector. • A request for greater reflection on diversification of ownership within the private sector including among farmers. • Comments on the broader ways that communities might be involved beyond ownership, including calls to include references to capacity for community involvement in monitoring and research. • Suggestion from one participant that equality and empowerment not relevant to achieving objectives. • Concerns that community ownership models may not be viable in the longer term without the requirement for an ongoing commitment. • Calls to reflect within this the need to invest in the future forestry workforce.
URBAN FORESTRY (22)	• Recognition of issue welcomed, particularly the emphasis on health and wellbeing and references to social inclusion and recreation. • A call to recognise hutting in this section. • A suggestion to link the wellbeing objective to this issue. • Comment that the description downplays the importance of this issue, given that a majority of Scotland's population live in urban areas. • Suggestion this will conflict with demand for housing development and the strategy should consider safeguarding urban trees in planning and development processes. • A suggestion to reference the need to improve access.

Issue and number of participants who commented on this issue	Themes derived from the comments on this issue
	• A call to commit funding to addressing this issue. • A suggestion of the scope to connect this issue to improved air quality. • Concern that the reference to vacant and derelict land may be at odds to protect priority habitat. • A call to mention the positive impact of urban forestry on visual landscape. • A targeted approach to engage urban communities is required. • One respondent suggested that urban locations are not suitable for woodlands - that the emphasis should be on providing access to forests and woodlands in rural areas. • Mention of the access issues for those in rural areas who do not have a car.

Appendix 4 Examples of Delivery Mechanisms:

Examples of effective delivery mechanisms highlighted by the consultation participants:

Financial mechanisms

Some described **previous/existing** schemes that they believe are or were successful in achieving their intended aims:

- Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme (SFGS).
- Regional Challenge Funds.
- Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP).
- Woodland grant schemes – have created new sites that benefit biodiversity.
- Strategic Timber Transport Fund.
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas – established in Britain in 1980s and provided a framework for incentivising (financially) farmers to deliver environmental value.
- Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN).
- Woods in and around Towns (WIAT).
- New Native Pinewoods grant scheme.
- The Dedication Scheme – committing owners to long-term management of their woodlands.

Delivery mechanisms

Participants shared details about delivery mechanisms that they believe work well, some from other related sectors such as agriculture:

- Eden River Catchment, Cumbria.
- LENS Cumbria.
- Borders Forest Trust.
- Regional Land Use Strategy Pilot Schemes.
- Next Generation Dairy Leader Programme.
- WGS Mark III.
- The Mackinnon Review.
- The Scottish Borders Local Premium.
- Industry Leadership Group.
- The Tweed Forum – acts as a trusted and neutral land management broker.
- Upstream Thinking, SW England - a spatially targeted Payment for Ecosystem Services scheme with South West Water (buyer) to incentivise farmers to improve 'raw water quality' and other ecosystem services.
- Nestle has demonstration farms in Cumbria and Ayrshire to explore innovative approaches to dairy farming (Next Generation Dairy Leaders Programme), which could serve as a model for the forest sector supply chain.
- Aberdeenshire and the Scottish Borders, have demonstrated some success in delivering an integrated land management approach. Strategic Timber Transport Fund has been effective for 20 years in managing and reducing the impact on existing rural infrastructure for a growing timber industry.
- FSC Forest Management Certification provides a credible mechanism to promote and demonstrate high standards of forest management, where regulatory capacity to achieve the same end may be limited.

- Large scale afforestation (framework) schemes have worked well, where they have been undertaken by the private sector.
- The Development Planning System provides a ready-made template as to how forestry schemes should be delivered.

Appendix 5: Summary of comments about specific priorities

Priority and number of participants who commented on this priority	Themes derived from the comments on this priority
Promote and develop the concept of sustainable forest management as it applies to Scotland (7)	• Priority welcomed, particularly definition of sustainable development used. • Agreement this is the basis on which to implement forestry in uplands. • Expand 'maintaining biodiversity' to 'restoring and enhancing biodiversity'. • According to one participant, promoting and developing the concept of sustainable management will require enforcement . • One participant suggested a shift of focus from management to engagement. • One respondent suggested that sustainable forest management should include preserving and enhancing the social and cultural dimensions of such practice.
Sustainably expand the area of all type of woodlands and forests across Scotland and ensure harvested sites are replanted appropriately (15)	• Priority welcomed, particularly principle of assessing biodiversity impact. • Effects of expansion will be mixed; give consideration of ways to minimise adverse impacts. • Value of expansion dependent on types of plantations. • Suggestion that expansion should focus on productive conifer. • One participant suggested that there should be a restriction on the expansion of commercial forestry to areas of low population. • Concern about potential encroachment of commercial forestry to uplands. • Unclear whether or not this priority covers new woodland planting. • Queries about details such as minimum patch size and spatial targeting. • One participant asserted that actions should be taken to minimise the adverse impact on public access during replanting. • Emphasise role of partnerships, particularly with recreational organisations. • Provide forest grants only in instances where public access is considered. • Include explicit commitment to 'right tree in the right place for the right purpose' here. • Disagreement – any inappropriate planting should be followed by efforts to restore natural habitat. • While not directly submitted in response to the question on issues, a very strong theme came from the 223 individuals who submitted an identical response to the question asking for general comments on the Strategy. This is set out in detail in Chapter 10, but key points included calls for: a commitment to

Priority and number of participants who commented on this priority	Themes derived from the comments on this priority
	creating new woodland, to improve the condition of existing woods and protect ancient woodland.
Ensure wood fibre availability from Scotland's forests is predictable and increases over time (9)	• Priority welcomed. • Increase of this nature may place strain on transport and infrastructure. • One participant commented that this priority is too broad and open to interpretation. • A few participants commented that there should be no assumption of increase in commercial forestry. They noted disagreement with need to increase domestic tree fibre production. • Confusing terminology for general public - replace term 'fibre' with 'products' or 'timber'. • Belief this is not appropriate for the strategy as responsibility lies with the forestry industry. • Some participants focussed on the need to consider precautions against adverse impacts, such as reduced diversity of land use.
Protect forests and woodlands from damage caused by new or existing pests and diseases, promote the sustainable management of wild deer and build resilience to support adaption to climate change (7)	• Priority welcomed. • View that climate change should be a priority in its own right. • View that deer management should be a priority in its own right, linked to this, calls for a more radical approach to tackling the issue of wild deer. • While not directly submitted in response to the question on issues, a very strong theme came from the 223 individuals who submitted an identical response to the question asking for general comments on the Strategy. This is set out in detail in Chapter 10, but key points included calls for: a commitment to creating new woodland, to improve the condition of existing woods and protect ancient woodland.
Increase Community Ownership and management of forests and woodlands (7)	• Priority welcomed • A view this can be achieved through new woodland creation • Include references to Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and HES Strategy for Scotland. • A view that this should be achieved by increasing local participation in management of public owned forestry, not through changes to private ownership. • May conflict with other priorities. • Include mention of governance models for decision making. • Provide more detail about forms of community engagement with forestry, not just ownership.
Increase efficiency, productivity and value	• Priority welcomed. • One participant commented that this priority is too broad and

Priority and number of participants who commented on this priority	Themes derived from the comments on this priority
generated from forests and services and help develop forestry's role in creating a low-carbon economy by supporting technological innovation improving the capacity and skills of those working in the sector and developing new and existing markets Dev New Markets (10)	open to interpretation. • One participant suggested that the Strategy should refer to job quality. • There was a view that workforce issues should be a priority in its own right. • Some examples of innovation shared with Scottish Government for consideration.
Increase the natural capital value of Scotland's woodlands and forests by improving the condition of native woodlands and forests, and increasing the positive impacts of forest and woodland management of biodiversity, air, water, soils, flood management, landscapes and the historic environment, mitigating the risks of negative impacts (8)	• Priority welcomed. • Some participants indicated that this priority is too descriptive. • A view that this repeats or is inextricably linked to priority 1. • Some participants noted that this priority will need enforcement or incentives to be achieved. • Some participants noted that this priority will have a significant effect on uplands and wildlife. • A view that each consideration listed, such as biodiversity, air and water, should be made priorities in their own right or covered in more detail. • One participant suggested that the Strategy should make specific mention of native woods and restoration of degraded agricultural land. • While not directly submitted in response to the question on issues, a very strong theme came from the 223 individuals who submitted an identical response to the question asking for general comments on the Strategy. This is set out in detail in Chapter 10, but key points included calls for: a commitment to creating new woodland, to improve the condition of existing woods and protect ancient woodland. • One respondent suggested that, in terms of the reference to natural capital, the definition of environmental resources which yield a flow of benefits to people should be expanded to include the historic environment.
Increase the use of Scotland's forests and woodlands to improve health and well-being, help people better understand forestry, and support wider Scottish Government activity to help children become	• Priority welcomed. • A view that this could be separated into distinct priorities; with the link to outdoor access made more explicit.

Priority and number of participants who commented on this priority	Themes derived from the comments on this priority
confident and resilient members of Scottish society. (6)	
Enhance forestry's contribution to sustaining viable rural communities and increase the positive impact of forest and woodland management on other businesses, especially in agriculture and tourism. (11)	• Priority welcomed. • One participant suggested that this priority requires recognition of the need for significant increase of engagement with and by rural communities and land owners. • Some noted that this priority will need to be supported by greater transparency, changes to procurement practices and more local democracy. • Questions about how this will be achieved in practice • Some noted that this priority will need resourcing to be achievable. • One participant asserted that this priority will require engagement with private landowners.
Increase the positive contribution that urban forestry makes in Scotland's towns and cities. (8)	• Priority welcomed. • A view this is outwith the scope of the Strategy. • Some examples of innovation shared with Scottish Government for consideration. • One participant noted that this priority will require pro-active forestry management and greater consideration of forestry in planning processes.

Appendix 6: Other progress indicators for the Scottish Government to consider

Objective 1: Increase the contribution of forests and woodlands to Scotland's sustainable and inclusive economic growth:

Some respondents felt that the indicators for Objective 1 are too vague and do not sufficiently address the long-term trends necessary for effective strategic management. A small number of respondents made suggestions on additional indicators that fall under Objective 1. The gaps highlighted largely encompass the following themes: employment and skills, the financial health of the sector, and the recognition and inclusion of the diversity of businesses involved in the forestry sector.

The following table outlines some of the specific indicators suggested by respondents, and their reasoning behind their suggestion/s when given:

Theme	Specific indicator suggested in comments from respondents
Employment and skills:	- The contribution of forestry to employability, training and skills, both in wood-fibre and related green jobs and sustainable tourism. - Forestry sector employment/recruitment (including type of employment and with a regional focus). - The number of apprenticeships available in the forestry industry. - Number of trainees in the system that will be ready to replace those that retire. - Training of personnel specifically in sustainable forest management. - The number of women who work in forestry. - Number of contractors working in the industry and what they do.
More specific indicators on the forestry sector:	- The financial health and degree of integration in the forest industry sector. - The economic resilience of the forestry sector. - Number of small-scale forestry businesses (e.g. < 5 employees). - The economic contribution of small and micro forestry businesses. - Number of contractors that are diversifying within the forestry sector (new opportunities). - Number of contractors that have gone bankrupt, retired or left the industry. - How many (any sector) businesses work within or benefit from their proximity to woods and forests. E.g. tour companies, outdoor nurseries, mountain bike guides, cafés as well as more traditional forestry. - One participant suggested that local and equity of economic benefits would be a valid progress indicator and that the data relates directly to the contribution of forestry to remote and fragile, rural communities and can be easily gathered -A study by the 'Forest Policy Group' was referenced for the Scottish Government to consider. - The contribution of non-wood fibre economic activity within forests, such as community cafes, outdoor nurseries, social enterprises focussing on green jobs and sustainable tourism. - Measurement of progress on improving the quality and diversity of

	forest products to market. Not just the volume of wood fibre.
	• Measurement of forest yield based on pounds per hectare of economic output compared to pounds per hectare of public funding input.
	• The impact of an efficient wood chain on the profitability and efficiency of the industry.
	• Number of environmental prosecutions/warning letters issued in relation to forest operations.
	• Increase in new forest-based products or services.
	• Increase in the number of companies actively involved in innovation.
	• Investment made (inward or existing).
	• Increase in new entrants to the sector.
	• Increase in academic research to complement future business growth.
Additional indicators:	• Area of woodland removal e.g. for renewable energy, urban and infrastructure developments.
	• Record of funding for approved Strategic Timber Transport Fund projects.

Objective 2: Protect and enhance Scotland's valuable natural assets, ensuring that our forests and woodlands are resilient and contribute to a healthy and high-quality environment:

Objective 2 received the highest number of additional indicator suggestions. The gaps highlighted largely encompass the following themes: biodiversity, habitat and species diversity, sustainable woodland management, gene conservation, land use and deer management. The following tables outline some of the specific indicators suggested by respondents, and their reasoning behind their suggestion/s when given:

Biodiversity

Most respondents who made suggestions in relation to Objective 2 mentioned the lack of indicators on biodiversity as an issue. Biodiversity indicators are needed, they argue, in order to know what type of land to conserve, which areas to plant and what areas to retain in order to protect Scotland's most important habitats. A small number acknowledged that there is already a significant amount of biodiversity monitoring throughout Scotland e.g. through activity carried out by Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Historic Environment Scotland, and so for the purposes of this strategy the task is to draw this information together to make it meaningful for measuring progress.

Respondents also encouraged the Scottish Government to draw on the expertise of third sector organisations when developing more detailed indicators on biodiversity, such as the British Trust for Ornithology, the RSPB and the Woodland Trust, all of which have data sets which would be valuable indicators and their regular surveys would give trends over time. Others called for more research to inform the indicators.

Theme	Specific indicator suggested in comments from respondents

Biodiversity:	• One participant referenced biodiversity net gain measurements -They suggested that 'The Scottish Biodiversity List' should be used to set biodiversity monitoring indicators as this would tie in to the Biodiversity Duty of public bodies. A full range of species should be used, and not just a limited subset of high-profile species. They stated that this would cover a broad range of flora and fauna, appropriate for such a large and diverse land area. It would also tie in to other legislative and policy requirements. "*We* (participant 193) *have championed the 'net gain' approach for some time and have produced the first UK Biodiversity Net Gain Principles, jointly with the Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) and the Institute for Environmental Management & Assessment (IEMA). These indicators provide a direct measure of biodiversity and structural diversity at an appropriate level, while incorporating other policy commitments.*"[6] • The presence of biodiversity in woodland and forest sites. • One participant suggested a biodiversity indicator such as the Vascular Plant Diversity Indicator laid out in Scotland's Biodiversity Indicators (2007) or an ecosystem health indicator for native woodland. • Biodiversity and habitat quality of existing and new forest and woodland plantations as reflected in the level of species diversity and populations. • One suggested that progress could be measured against Scottish Biodiversity Strategy Route map 2020 targets. • One participant referenced the 'Ecosystem Health Indicator' They suggested that the 'Scottish Government's Ecosystem Health Indicator' for native woodlands has already been developed and is appropriate for use for measuring progress towards the aims of the Strategy.[7] And it could be used to measure ecosystem function, such as carbon storage, which could contribute to climate change mitigation objectives.
Historic environment	• Monitoring of the condition of heritage assets (designated and non-designated) within and adjacent to Scotland's forests and woodlands. • The impact of Scotland's forests and woodlands on the quality and diversity of the landscape which includes cultural aspects.
Habitat and species diversity:	• There were calls for a species breakdown, including a measure of the status of Priority Species and Habitats. It was suggested that the diversity of tree species can be used to monitor hotspots requiring action such as reduction in spread/eradication of invasive species or addressing herbivore grazing pressure. • The condition of Priority Native Woodland Habitats associated with forestry and woodland management, including those that are negatively impacted as well as those that benefit. • The area of Scotland's forests classed by the number of tree species in a management unit. • Loss of other habitats (by habitat type) resulting from woodland expansion.

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[6] https://www.environment.gov.scot/our-environment/state-of-the-environment/ecosystem-health-indicators/condition-indicators/indicator-3-forests/
[7] www.environment.gov.scot/data/data-analysis/ecosystem-health-indicators/?indicator=Native_woodland

	- Woodland Herbivore Impact assessments – would give an idea of the success of managing herbivore impact in areas outside of designated areas.
	- Invertebrate diversity and health (like fresh water shellfish, bugs in general, wild fish stocks).
	- One participant suggested considering the breadth of avian and mammal diversity.
	- One participant suggested that the Strategy should consider maps of the distribution of legally present woodland animals whose range was previously limited by persecution and other factors: e.g. pine martens, red squirrels, beavers, wildcats. They suggested that this would provide a visual, relatable and significant measure of the recovery of nature (or otherwise) from past impacts and that it would provide a measure of how connected woodland habitats are from the point of view of different species.
	- One participant suggested that the Strategy should note the conservation status of red-listed species, to enable progress to be measured by any changes in status.
	- A habitat diversity indicator such as the Woodland Diversity Indicator.
	- A woodland bird populations indicator.
	- A woodland Lepidoptera indicator.
	- A woodland bird index.

Forest and Woodland management

Some respondents called for more specific measures towards Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in Scotland. Respondents argued if there are no measures relating specifically to SFM then it is not possible to see where Scotland is failing and where it is succeeding in this regard. A small number of respondents argued for an indicator related to the compliance and application of the SFM approach and meeting the requirements of UK Forestry Standard for all public and private forest and woodland creation to enable Scottish Ministers to assess progress on delivery of their duty to promote SFM. In addition to indicators relating to SFM, there were also some additional specific indicators relating to forest and woodland management, as outlined below:

Theme	Specific indicator suggested in comments from respondents
Woodland Management:	- Breakdown of silvicultural systems and the area of Scotland's forests managed under different silvicultural systems, e.g. clear-felling, CCF, coppice, etc. - One participant suggested that in the one hectare felled to one hectare planted as written in objective two could in many cases result in a net loss as the associated habitats will have been destroyed. - Percentage of felling permission applications for habitat restoration which are refused, and reasons for refusal. - Statutory or regulatory requirement for the Scottish Forestry Agency to provide regular statistics on felling area/volume, restocking and removals for both state and private forestry. - Hectares of Sitka planted and felled each year. - Hectares of native woodlands planted and felled. - Percentage of native woodland SSSI/SAC/SPA features in favourable condition (available already).

	• One participant suggested that the percentage of woodland with an approved management plan in place complying with the UKFS should be measured as this would show how actively managed, and therefore how open to following best practice woodland management Scotland's forests are. • The proportion of forest area covered by FSC forest management certification. • Percentage of open ground in commercial schemes or the area of commercial woodland management for biodiversity outcomes should be measured. • A few participants suggested that area, location and type of wood/forest created (Native broadleaves, productive conifer, diverse conifer, small farm woodland) and the primary purpose for which they are created e.g. biodiversity, landscape, timber, shelter, carbon sequestration, biomass etc should be considered. • Area of open habitat restored per annum, split into habitat type. Alternatively, area of tree removal from deep peat sites. • Area of non-native woodland converted to priority open ground habitat. • The area (and volume) of Scottish forests affected either by pests and diseases or by climatic events (e.g. wind blow). • One respondent suggested an indicator to measure the percentage of Scotland's native woodland in acceptable condition according the NWSS' 'native woodland condition indicator' values, or a comparable metric. • Percentage of Scotland's PAWS under restoration and completed. • According to one participant, the percentage of understory dead wood within native woodland should be measured as deadwood plays a key role in ecosystem functioning and productivity in terrestrial and riparian habitats. • Area of Ancient Woodland lost to development - If an ambition of no further loss of Ancient Woodland is adopted for Scotland then this indicator is vital. • Tree canopy cover in major towns and cities - If a priority is enhancing the contribution of urban forestry, we believe that the best indicator of this is canopy cover, using the Tree methodology already used by Forest Research. • Regional distribution of forest and woodlands including by local authority. • Percentage of new planting which is predominately native woodland (could be further split into priority woodland types, e.g. Western Atlantic Woodland, Caledonian Pinewood etc). • Area of ASNW lost to development. • Percentage of designated sites where colonisation by trees is causing unfavourable conservation status. • Percentage of woodland creation that takes place on "shallow" peat. • Area/ number of INNS removed/ controlled per annum. • Area and types of open habitat lost to afforestation. • Area of protected forest showing active reproduction and regeneration. • One participant called for an indicator to identify the extent and

	increases in areas of natural regeneration, as this could be a very low-cost way of expanding Scotland's forest cover. • Percentage of schemes which undergo Equality Impact Assessment.

Gene conservation:	• Protecting Scotland's forest genetic resources:
	      o Number of tree species for which genetic resources in Scotland have been characterised: using field tests, using DNA-based approaches.
	      o Number of tree species with registered in situ genetic conservation units and entered on EUFORGEN database.
	
	 • One participant suggested that protected sites (SSSIs and SACs) should be the starting point for identifying gene conservation units. They reference to the Scottish government that guidance on coordinating action to collect data and conduct more research is given in 'Trivedi et al (2018) Strategy for UK Forest Genetic Resources'.

Deer Management:	• One participant suggested that deer numbers are a broad-brush indicator of the success in managing a major impact on Scottish woodlands, they further state that excessive deer numbers have ecological, welfare and economic impacts. • One participant suggested measuring the percentage of Scotland's forests under an active deer management plan as this would ensure that Scotland's most vulnerable native woods are being considered by the land managers making deer management decisions. • The length of deer fencing used. A reduced amount of fencing relating to increased area of woodland could indicate the success of more integrated land-use management.
Land use:	• There was a call for contemporary land use mapping, the participant explained that maintaining a contemporary map of land use for Scotland would provide a context for the commitment in the Strategy to expand woodlands. Scope for woodland expansion across Scotland has limitations due to the availability of land, and capability for the growth of different species. During the period of implementation of a vision with a 50-year time horizon change can be expected in climatic factors and social attitudes (e.g. to land use). A regularly updated national land use map, linked to the increase in woodland cover indicated in the Strategy, would be useful for monitoring progress on woodland expansion, and one aspect of integration with other land uses. Recent work on this has been produced by ClimateXChange, James Hutton Institute and partners for the Scottish Government to consider. • There was a call for changes in regional land use patterns. One respondent argued there is potential for both positive and negative effects to arise through land use change and conflict over potential alternative land use options. They argue that a balance is needed between expansion and management of forests/wood, agriculture and other land uses, the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of natural heritage and opportunities for local employment. • Linked to land-use is landscape impact, one respondent suggested

	monitoring the effects of woodland creation to ensure an appropriate balance between both afforested and un-afforested areas in the locality and ensure the cumulative impact of new forests and woodland does not have an adverse impact on the region's landscape quality.
Water quality:	• One participant noted that restoring water quality where inappropriate past planting, especially Sitka spruce on deep peats, has caused problems. They suggested the use of the 'SEPA River Basin Management Planning Process' which highlights where water courses have been downgraded due to forestry associated impacts. • Measures to recognise improvements in water quality (especially acidification) and riparian habitats.
Scales and indexes that could be used to develop indicators:	• It was suggested by one participant that the 'Gini index of tree sizes' is a good proxy for ecological properties related to biodiversity and habitat quality and can show differences between native woodlands and plantations (Valbuena et al 2016). They said it has also been linked to forest productivity (Sullivan et al 2017) and can be reliably estimated from LIDAR data (Valbuena et al 2016). • The 'native woodland condition indicator' has been developed using measures that are relevant to every unit area of native woodland and can indicate ecological health or condition in relation to biodiversity, no matter what the age or type of native woodland. • The Scottish Government's 'Ecosystem Health Indicator' for native woodlands.
Negative indicators:	• One participant felt that additional indicators should also be developed to measure the less desirable consequences in terms of the negative impacts of the strategy on Scotland's broader natural assets. These could include: o Loss of land capable of producing food crops. o Numbers of jobs lost in the agriculture sector. o Area of peatland of less than 50cm lost to trees. o Loss of habitat to ground nesting bird species. o Loss of hardy native breeds of livestock. o Loss of skills in the hill farming sector. o Negative impact on tourism.

Objective 3: Use Scotland's forest and woodland resource to empower more people to improve their health, well-being and life chances

Similar to Objectives 1 and 2, respondents felt that the proposed indicators for Objective 3 in their current state will be insufficient in monitoring the key aspects of the strategy. For example, they noted they will fail to acknowledge or address the social inequalities related to access to nature and recreation. Respondents therefore would welcome a far more comprehensive, interlinked set of indicators to acknowledge the complex social and economic pressures on people's empowerment in this context. The additional indicators for this objective fell largely under the themes of Health and Well-being, Accessibility, and Ownership.

The following table outlines some of the specific indicators suggested by respondents, and their reasoning behind their suggestion/s when given:

Theme	Specific indicator suggested in comments from respondents
Health and well-being	• The contribution of forests to physical and mental health and wellbeing, e.g. number of visits to health initiatives such as MTB trails, Countryside Ranger Events and Volunteering. • Number of community organisations that visit to woodlands and transport links that facilitate access. • Number of Branching Out (mental health and wellbeing) programmes delivered across the country. • Number of other mental health and wellbeing projects using National forest estate, private and community woodlands. • Number of projects using forests or related sectors (sawmills etc) to develop skills and further training for young people, or those out of work. • Number of schools and nurseries using woodlands • The number of individuals helped with their mental health and wellbeing. The 'National Rural Mental Health Forum' would be willing to help the Scottish Government to develop and monitor indicators to consider what the Forestry Estate is doing to help with Mental Health and Wellbeing[8]. • The inclusion of an 'Inclusive Development Index'. • Provision of recreation facilities and new initiatives undertaken. • One participant suggested a woodland connectivity indicator should be included in the Strategy. • A measure of the length of paths through woodland as this would show improvement to the access of Scotland's forests.
Ownership	• One participant suggested the diversity of ownership should be included such as woodland ownership, community ownership and private ownership (small and large) and renting. • Changes in forestry ownership (private to community/public). • Average size of woodland holding in Scotland. • Percentage of community ownership, reduction in ownership by major land owners who limit access. • Area of land under community control.
Accessibly and usage	• One participant suggested that measures of accessibility of woodlands to people should be considered. They explained that this could use similar methods as those used for the SIMD, and access to green spaces. They suggested that a numerical indicator could be used to monitor changes in access with respect to the population as a whole, and to guide targeting of woodland expansion. • A small number of participants made a specific reference to the current SFS indicator relating to the *'proportion of the population with accessible woodland greater than 2 hectares within 500 metres of their home'* and feel its use should be continued.

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[8] (www.ruralwellbeing.org/partners).

	- A small number of participants suggested the use of existing user group data, in identifying what the forest is used for spread over the course of a year. They explained that Ideally this would be done on a multi-year survey, to see if user groups change. This would allow for decisions based on what recreation people are carrying out, and the future needs of the public - Distance to accessible and well-maintained woodlands for the most deprived communities compared with less deprived sectors. - One participant suggested the monitoring of changing demand as an indicator. - One participant suggested the measuring of the length of trails available for public use, for example the proportion of Core paths available for multi -use, the percentage of the rights of way on FCS forest land that are signed and free of obstruction. The length of the Scotland's Great Trails on FCS land that are included in the management planning for the FCS land and the number of kilometres of trails adopted by community groups. - One participant suggested the measurement of vacant and/or derelict land taken up by forestry planting. In urban areas, in particular they suggested that vacant/derelict land can be a blight on people's immediate environments and uptake for forestry can help contribute to a healthy and high-quality environment and help improve people's health, well-being and life chances. - Levels of visits to forests and woodlands according to socio-economic status. - Number of sites with promoted walking routes. - Number of public sector organisations adopting the path grading system. - How far rural communities feel that local forestry meets their local needs. - Reduction of forest accidents.

In addition to the indicators that fit under Objectives 1, 2 and 3, a small number of respondents requested the addition of specific indicators relating to climate change, highlighting their omission as a key gap in the current set of proposed indicators. The main themes in relation to climate change are: carbon storage and sequestration, carbon sinks and renewables. Suggestions are provided below.

Theme	Specific indicator suggested in comments from respondents
Carbon storage and sequestration:	- A measurement of the tons of carbon stored to mitigate climate change. - A measurement of the density of biomass or carbon, in tons per hectare. One participant explained that this measure has become a gold standard in forest carbon credits within climate change mitigation strategies. - One participant suggested the indicators should include the Co2 budget of forests in Scotland. - A measurement of woodland carbon sequestration per year which could include carbon stored in growing timber or biomass, and carbon balance in woodland soils. - The rate of carbon sequestration. - The volume of standing timber to gain a measure of carbon sequestration. - The number of schemes specifically for carbon storage and sequestration benefits.
Carbon Sinks:	One participant discussed the capacity of Scotland's forests, especially areas of

	new planting, in being effective carbon sinks. Important in the context of Scotland meeting climate change targets. They suggest that this can link up meaningfully with the goals set out in the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan (2018), if the policy of 'the right tree in the right place' is enacted on a meaningful scale, then there is great opportunity for Scotland's forests to become even more efficient carbon sinks.
Renewables:	• One participant suggested measuring the capacity per year of renewable energy installations on Scotland's Forestry Estate as this would help track the contribution of the forestry estate to the Scottish Government's objective, as outlined in the Scottish Energy Strategy, to secure the equivalent of 50% of its energy demand from renewables by 2030.
Other	• One participant suggested monitoring cradle-to-grave usage of plastics within forestry. • The measurement of fossil fuel consumption per ton of timber produced.

A small number of respondents urged the Scottish Government to ensure the development of indicators and the monitoring of the Strategy is supported by research and highlight the research needed to prioritise and implement it. One participant urged the Scottish Government to fund research projects led by scientists to collect data on biodiversity and the impacts of native woodland creation and protection. They noted that the Woodland Trust have extensive data on protected ancient woodlands and may be able to provide more information on native woodland development. They believe that indicators should be based on already established measurements, developed by people who have extensive experience in data collection and analyses. Taking a science-based approach to ensure the right indicators are developed and the results are interpreted correctly.

One participant encouraged the Scottish Government to ensure its process for developing indicators considers the full range of current data and technologies that can be used, to ensure the monitoring systems are fit for purpose over the coming years. For example, they state that the process of selecting the indicators should take account of the potential of the recent and substantial advances in remote sensing and environmental monitoring technologies (including real-time monitoring). These, they argue, coupled with Big Data analysis, is providing unprecedented potential to collect data on a wide range of parameters to inform current and future management and policy. Thus, there is immense potential to collect, analyse, and make accessible data on a wide range of indicators relating to forests and woodlands. Such regular assessments can contribute to the revision of management plans and regional approaches to the implementation of the Forestry Strategy and can inform the revision of the Forestry Strategy itself as and when necessary.

Appendix 7: Other comments on the strategy

From those who suggested changes to the language and layout of the strategy, there were calls for:

- A stronger emphasis on the need for urgent change.
- More diagrams, infographics and images.
- Clear terminology, including definitions woodlands and forests, and Natural Capital.
- Specific changes to wording.
- A shorter introduction.
- A non-technical summary.
- More examples.
- Assertive language.
- Inclusion of electronic links to key reference points, such as mentions of the UKFS.
- Removal of references to time-specific issues such as 'ongoing changes' (page 37) which may date the strategy.

Appendix 8: Responses to the equality, business and environmental impact assessments

Q10. Would you add or change anything in the Equality Impact Assessment (which includes our assessment of the potential impact of the strategy on inequalities caused by socioeconomic disadvantage – Fairer Scotland Duty)?
Q11. Would you add or change anything in the Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment?

Equality impact assessment (EqIA): summary

A quantitative summary of responses to this question is provided below.

Nature of response	Total number	% of all respondents
Blank	351	80%
"No comment"	22	5%
Satisfied	26	6%
Discussion	40	9%
Relevant (satisfied plus discussion)	**66**	**15%**

A small proportion of respondents (66 out of 442, or 15% of all consultation participants) provided a relevant response to the question on the EqIA. The remainder either skipped the question (80%) or made a statement including, or to the effect of 'no comment' (5%).

Just over one third (26 out of 66) of those that responded to the EqIA expressed satisfaction with the document as it stands. The code 'satisfaction' was applied to any response which conveyed an unequivocal expression of agreement with the assessment. These responses typically comprised short direct comments such as 'happy', 'it's good. No changes necessary' or simply 'no', which was interpreted with reference to this question as 'no - I would not add or change anything'.

Within the other 40 responses categorised as 'discussion', mixed views about the EqIA were evident:

- Fourteen respondents asked for expansion of the discussion about the potential of the Strategy to positively address diversity issues. Improved access to forests and woodlands were a common theme in these comments. The suggestions frequently included, for example, requests for monitoring, mainly in relation to the characteristics and use of those accessing forests and woodlands; one suggested that data on non-users was also needed. In many of these comments there were calls to identify ways to improve diversity, for example two respondents highlighted the lack of gender diversity within the forestry workforce, another noted efforts to encourage greater access by people from minority ethnic communities. One reflected on opportunities for a greater focus on

intergenerational inequality, another called for consideration of regional activity and its contribution to addressing socio-economic disadvantage.

- Seven made positive comments or described general support for the EqIA for example 'reasonable as far as it goes'. Those who gave qualified responses asked for other aspects to be taken into consideration, such as the potential for the Strategy to make a positive contribution to addressing inequalities as described above.
- Three voiced uncertainty, through responses such as 'unsure' and 'don't know'.
- Three participants signposted the Scottish Government to other responses; either their own reply to a previous question within the consultation or a response submitted by another organisation, to which they added their support. However only one of these signposted responses included any reference to the EqIA.
- A small number reflected on opportunities to achieve greater equality in Scotland. For example, one identified a need for education, resources and opportunities and two called for more diversity in land ownership. Another suggested that the real living wage for forestry jobs would support those at a disadvantage in rural areas.
- Three commented on the consultation process, suggesting it could be more extensive or more accessible.

Some participants focused on issues of fairness. Three referenced the experiences of tenant farmers, a group which does not belong to those categorised as having a protected characteristic. However, these respondents felt that any potential impact of the Strategy on this group should be considered. One suggested that there should be more empowerment of forestry workers. Another suggested that more private land could be used for forestry for wider public gain. There were a small number of calls to extend the scope of the EqIA beyond the forestry sector; for example one respondent suggested that impact on wildlife should be considered in the assessment.

Additional comments by individual respondents:

- One person made a solely negative response 'would drop all of Equality Impact Assessment'.
- Another suggested that if the strategy fails in its objective to achieve sustainable inclusive economic growth then it may exacerbate socioeconomic disadvantage.
- One suggested it was difficult to assess the EqIA given the high-level nature of the Strategy.
- One called for consideration of human capital in the forest industry but did not expand on this suggestion.

Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA): Summary

A quantitative summary of responses to this question is provided below.

Nature of response	Total number	% of all respondents
Blank	352	80%
"No comment"	30	7%
Satisfied	25	6%
Discussion	32	7%
Relevant (satisfied plus discussion)	**57**	**13%**

A small proportion of respondents (57 out of 442, or 13% of all consultation participants) provided a relevant response to the question on the BRIA. The remainder either skipped the question (80%) or made a statement including, or to the effect of 'no comment' (7%). The responses categorised as '"no comment"' included any explanations provided for non-participation, such as 'I have not read this'.

Just under half (25 out of 57) of those that responded to the BRIA expressed satisfaction with the document as it stands. The code 'satisfaction' was applied to any response which conveyed an unequivocal expression of agreement with the assessment. These responses typically comprised short direct comments such as 'no changes', 'nothing to add' or simply 'no', which was interpreted with reference to this question as 'no - I would not add or change anything'.

Within the other 32 responses categorised as 'discussion', mixed views about the BRIA were evident:

- Eleven asked for broader engagement with the forestry sector and/or those affected by the strategy during the consultation process, and more expansion of the discussion within the BRIA to impacts on broader range of stakeholders. These suggestions varied according to the respondent. Examples include local businesses, the tourism sector, conservation NGOs, Local Authorities and Community Councils. Linked to this point, one asked for specific consideration of forestry workers.
- Five voiced uncertainty, through responses such as 'I cannot judge', 'unsure' and 'don't know'.
- Four participants signposted the Scottish Government to other responses; either their own reply to a previous question within the consultation or a response submitted by another organisation, to which they added their support. However, none of these signposted responses included any reference to the BRIA.
- Three suggested the BRIA could include more discussion of the various stakeholders within the forestry sector and their role in and contribution towards achieving forestry objectives. In these responses a range of positive impacts were highlighted, in relation to the environment, as well as economic and social benefits for rural communities. On this theme, four made specific reference to the business value of the circular economy.
- Three suggested that the BRIA could put forward multiple options for consideration rather than the alternatives presented i.e. no action vs. a new strategy.

- Two suggested the BRIA could also highlight any potential positive impacts for businesses or organisations, such as opportunities that might arise through implementation of the strategy.
- Within their comments a few participants reiterated views expressed elsewhere in their consultation response.

Additional comments by individual respondents:

- One highlighted a challenge in enforcement but did not explain what this meant in relation to the BRIA.
- One asked for greater consideration of Climate Change within the BRIA.
- One expressed qualified agreement with the assessment but noted that this was based on the premise that any Tree Protection Order has an associated, well-defined Management Plan to ensure the continuance of trees at that place.
- One disagreed with the statement 'no concerns have been raised regarding adverse impacts on businesses as a result of the strategy'. They expressed a view the Government's ambitions and priorities for forestry are a threat to businesses that supply and serve the agricultural sector and it should not be assumed that rural communities necessarily support the vision in its current form.
- One suggested they would like to see the revised BRIA once it is amended to take consultation responses into account.

Strategic Environmental Assessment: Summary

Question	Yes	No	Comments
Q12. What are your views on the evidence set out in the Environmental Report that has been used to inform the assessment process?	~	~	76
Q13. Should any additional evidence sources be used in the Environmental Report?	33 (55%)	27 (45%)	53
Q14. What are your views on the predicted environmental effects as set out in the Environmental Report?	~	~	81
Q15. Do you agree with the conclusions and recommendations set out in the Environmental Report?	34 (54%)	29 (45%)	67
Q16. Please provide any other further comments you have on the Environmental Report.	~	~	55

In due course the Scottish Government will publish a Post Adoption Statement. The statement will comprise information on how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Strategy; how the environmental report has been taken into account; how the opinions expressed in response to the consultation have been taken into account; the reasons for choosing the Strategy as adopted and measures to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Strategy.

Roughly a quarter of consultation participants (114 individuals/organisations of 442 participants) responded to one or more of the five questions on the Strategic Environmental Assessment. This cohort comprised 70 individuals and 44 organisations. In addition to the yes/no responses presented above, there were many comments; these responses are summarised below against each SEA consultation question.

What are your views on the evidence set out in the Environmental Report that has been used to inform the assessment process?

Substantive responses to the question came from a mixture of organisations (28 responses) and individuals (27 responses). A large number of participants (21 out of 76) made non-descriptive comments such as 'none' or 'no comment', which was interpreted with reference to this question as 'none - I have no views on this question'.

There were positive responses from roughly three quarters of the 28 organisations that commented on the evidence. A quarter expressed support for the SEA without qualification, through statements such as 'the evidence seems to be sound' and 'wide ranging and comprehensive'; 4 others highlighted specific aspects of the SEA that they welcomed, for example, access to green space. A further six organisations expressed overall satisfaction with the SEA but suggested additions to consider, for example opportunities, issues or more context and/or provision of baseline data. Five organisations expressed a desire for the SEA to reference biodiversity in Table 4. Two organisations suggested that there could be more mention of forestry activity that damages the environment, another felt the SEA should include targets. Two organisations commented more broadly on the challenges of protecting the environment, including issues such as enforcement and resource constraints experienced by public bodies that work to protecting and enhancing Scotland's natural assets. One suggested that the importance of forests and woodlands in relation to Scotland's culture should be recognised more highly in the strategy and the SEA. Another called for more detail about how the evidence presented had been used to inform the assessment process.

Of the 27 individuals that commented on the evidence, a third expressed support for the SEA without qualification, through statements such as 'appears to be comprehensive' and 'suitable as stands'. Under half felt more evidence was required, however there was no general consensus and a range of different sources of evidence were cited. A fifth of the individuals (6 people) suggested the SEA could make more mention of forestry activity that damages the environment. Six people suggested changes to the presentation of material in the document and/or asked for aspects of the material to be included within the main strategy document. Other minor themes included calls for more discussion of biodiversity (3 people) and rewilding (3 people) within the SEA.

Should any additional evidence sources be used in the Environmental Report?

There were 47 substantive comments on the need for additional evidence sources in the SEA. These came from 27 individuals and 20 organisations.   A small number of participants (6 out of 53) made non-descriptive comments such as 'don't know'. Other comments were varied; there was no repetition and each person referenced a different source or type of evidence.   Some reiterated points made in their previous response on the evidence presented.

Comments from almost half of the individuals (13 people) about additional evidence were non-specific; two calling for the inclusion of evidence from other countries but without explanation of the evidence or its source. One person did not identify an additional evidence but asked for more discussion of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy that was mentioned in the SEA. Other suggestions included consultation with specific groups of stakeholders, for example the Woodland Trust, or tenant farmers. A few cited

specific sources for review, for example a land use pilot and the 2012 report from the Woodland Expansion Advisory Group. One asked for more evidence about afforestation, another for the SEA to go beyond measurements of trees to include counts of animals and birds, another for measurement of habitats. One person called for greater consideration of social effects, for example the potential for new forest creation to reduce land for public access. Two individuals indicated that no additional evidence was needed.

In terms of more general comments on the evidence base, one person asked for references to the evidence presented in the SEA to be included within the main strategy document. Another suggested that gathering more evidence should be made an explicit objective within the strategy.

Repeat views within the responses were minor and are summarised as follows: two organisations indicated that no additional evidence was needed. Two organisations called for the Scottish Government to undertake new research; one of these asked for research into the areas of woodland creation, the use of plastics in forestry, and the environmental impact of forestry transport and haulage; the other asked for research into forest management. Two organisations asked for a reference to the Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Plan within the evidence, two suggested that data from SEPA about the status of water courses would be a useful inclusion, and two called for more evidence about the environmental impact of specific species.

Other suggestions of additional evidence were varied and made by individual organisations. These included consideration of an alternative measurement for natural capital, but without suggesting a replacement index; more consultation with a particular organisation; inclusion of data on atmospheric nitrogen deposition; greater consideration of social effects, such as access to forests and woodlands; inclusion of reference to the policy for wild fisheries; expansion of the scenarios presented in the SEA and consideration of additional sources of evidence in relation to flora and fauna but with no further detail. Linked to their previous comment on the importance of forests and woodlands in relation to Scotland's culture, one suggested the evidence should be expanded to include the Vienna Resolution on presenting and enhancing the social and cultural dimension of sustainable forest management (2003). Another organisation commented on the thoroughness of the research and suggested a few additional sources in relation to biodiversity, water, air and soils for consideration; they also reiterated a previous call for more detail about how the evidence presented had been used to inform the assessment process.

What are your views on the predicted environmental effects as set out in the Environmental Report?
This question received the largest number of substantive responses in the section on the Strategic Environment Assessment with 81 comments. Some participants (15 out of 81) made non-descriptive comments such as 'unsure'. Respondents often reiterated points they had raised elsewhere in their consultation response when reflecting on the complexities of potential scenarios, noting the interdependence of factors that underpin change. The responses have been grouped and are summarised under four headings: agreement with the predicted effects; discussion of alternative effects; discussion of factors that may affect predicted effects; and, other comments.

Agreement with predicted effects: Six respondents described their agreement with the predicted effects, through short comments such as 'well-researched, credible and reasonable'.

Discussion of alternative effects: Participants described potential impacts from the implementation of the draft strategy that they felt could be given a higher profile in the SEA. These varied according to the respondent and included: wider positive impacts of community ownership and management of forests (five respondents); improved landscapes (two respondents), provision of employment in rural areas (two respondents); value of forestry for natural flood catchment (two respondents); and, the contribution of non-native species to natural capital (one respondent). Some respondents felt there should be greater consideration of the negative impacts of the expansion of forests, with specific mention of potential damage in relation to habitats and biodiversity (fifteen respondents), water quality (four respondents) and open landscapes (three respondents). One felt that the SEA should include consideration of the cumulative impact of afforestation; four organisations suggested the SEA should reference that forestry complies with the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the subsequent Scottish Outdoor Access Code in the discussion of afforestation; one disagreed with the premise that afforestation might have a negative impact on the historic environment, believing that more forests would represent a return to the natural environment.

Discussion of factors that may affect predicted effects: Six respondents suggested that the positive scoring for biodiversity based on expansion of woodlands and forests should be qualified, on the basis that not all types of forests and woodlands will have a positive impact. In these comments they highlighted differences between environmental effects associated with the Sitka spruce planted for commercial forestry, and native species. Four individuals expressed general uncertainty about the predicted effects. One person suggested that a high speed of planting might impede effective planning. Some described factors that might impede or enhance predicted effects, for example, four commented on the important role of planning and regulatory or compliance processes; four commented on threats to new planting from deer. One respondent suggested that encouraging a shift from road to rail and sea would enhance positive environmental impacts of forestry. Linked to their previous comments on the importance of forests and woodlands in relation to Scotland's historic environment, one participant provided detailed comments against the assessment of priorities 1, 2, 4 7 and 8 which have been signposted to the Scottish Government for review.

Other comments: Seven participants suggested that the high-level nature of the strategy impeded their ability to assess whether or not the predicted effects were likely. One of these seven said they would like to see more consultation in the development of the SEA. In other comments, five respondents shared their suggestions on which effects should be prioritised. One suggested that integration with the Land Use Strategy approach would be important. Two suggested that they would like to see a range of alternative scenarios presented in the SEA; within their comments one asked more detail about the SEA development and assessment process and suggested there may also be a need to consider mitigation of residual effects. Another reiterated a previous call for more detail about how the evidence presented had been used to inform the assessment process and provided comments against the assessment of priorities 1, 2, 3, 4, 5,6 7 and 10 which have been signposted to the Scottish Government for review.

Do you agree with the conclusions and recommendations set out in the Environmental Report?

As presented in the table on page 68, just over half of the participants that responded to the yes/no question said they agreed with the conclusions and recommendations in the SEA. Another 15 respondents did not answer the yes/no question but shared their view. Participants commonly linked their view to their previous comments on the assessment of predicted effects; many also echoed points raised elsewhere in their consultation response.

Themes in these responses included: calls for more detail in the overall strategy and the SEA, often these included a request for greater consideration of an issue of particular interest to the respondent (16 respondents); further expressions of agreement with the conclusions and recommendations (9 respondents); greater consideration of the potential negative impacts of the strategy, particularly in relation to habitat and biodiversity (7 respondents); 5 respondents suggested alternative conclusions/priorities; 6 expressed disagreement with assumptions made in the SEA, such as the UK Forestry Standard being met.

Please provide any other further comments you have on the Environmental Report.

There were substantive responses from 27 participants who provided additional comments on the SEA. These typically reiterated points they had made in their responses to questions 12-15. A further 28 respondents made non-descriptive comments such as 'none'. Seven respondents made comments about the SEA document, for example in relation to its length and format; these varied from descriptions of finding it useful, to suggesting it is too long, to asking for inclusion of a direct link to the SEA within the strategy and other presentational considerations. Three individuals took the opportunity to pose questions about specific matters of forestry practice or aspects of the evidence put forward in the SEA. Building on their previous comments, one called for greater recognition of forests and woodlands in relation to Scotland's historic environment in the Strategy and SEA and recommended that indicators are developed and monitored in relation to heritage assets and cultural aspects of the landscape. Another noted that their organisation would value the opportunity to be involved in developing the final Strategy and SEA. One organisation emphasised that they would expect the implementation of the strategy to be monitored widely against its impact on the environment, not just in relation to woodland cover.