

## North York Moors National Park Authority

20 March 2017

### Forest Design Plan Consultation – Wykeham Forest (FDP 23)

#### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update the Authority on revisions to the Forest Design Plan (FDP) for Wykeham Forest and get approval for support of the revised Plan.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 A report was taken to Planning Authority on 17 November 2016 on the revised Forest Design Plan for Wykeham Forest. At that meeting the Authority's decision was as follows:

Members agreed to object to the Plan unless assurances to the three recommendations are specifically written into the Plan.

#### Recommendation:

The 2016 Wykeham Forest Design Plan is accepted for the contribution it makes to National Park purposes, subject to the Forestry Commission (FC) revising the plan as follows:

- a commitment that the 'Minimum Intervention – Candidate Natural Reserve' areas in the Plan will be monitored to ensure that biodiversity is maximised and conifer cover will not increase, and action will be taken to achieve good quality broadleaf woodland if this is needed;
- the predominately conifer areas in Troutsdale will have specified target conditions which will be monitored to ensure that these are achieved and biodiversity is maximised;
- the 11 hectares of PAWS restoration felling will be formally timetabled to minimise the loss of any ancient woodland remnant features.

- 2.2 This response, along with a more detailed explanation, was given to Forest Services (FS) and Forest Enterprise (FE) on 18 November 2016.

#### 3. Revisions to the Forest Design Plan

- 3.1 Following discussions with FS it has been agreed that FE would add the following additional text (in bold) to the 2016 Wykeham Forest Design Plan.

##### **3.4 Implementation. 3.4.1 Conservation. Ecological Sites**

All work sites are surveyed prior to any operations being carried out, both to audit the accuracy of information already held on record and to identify opportunities to further improve the ecological value of the woodlands. For Wykeham this will include:

- Increase the diversity of tree species and age structure that will maintain and improve favourable habitats for target species and identified habitats. This is particularly beneficial for the range of habitats and species recorded at Wykeham from which a selection has already been mentioned at 2.6 - Natural Heritage. **Through this plan we will progressively move the areas of conifer in Troutdale from SN Class 4 to SN Class 3 over multiple thinning and felling interventions.**

#### 4.4 Forest Plan

All forest plans are formally reviewed as part of a “5-year mid term review” and the plan’s aims and objectives and its success at achieving those aims and objectives. This plan will be formally reviewed in 2021, **the results from which will be shared with the NYMNP**. This time period can be shortened if circumstances change significantly or if parts of the plan prove detrimental to the overall aims and objectives.

#### 4.5 Habitat Condition

**Over the lifetime of the plan, areas of High Conservation Value forest such as Natural Reserves, and sites where increasing semi-naturalness is important (Troutdale), we will monitor and record levels of change through the Sub-Compartment Database and the resulting Semi Natural Class scores.**

<b>Class 1</b>	<b>Semi-Natural Woodland</b>	<b>Includes native coppice woodland and high forest or site-native plantation with a relatively high percentage of native self-sown or coppice understorey.</b>
<b>Class 2</b>	<b>Reasserting Semi-Natural Woodland</b>	<b>Plantation or ex-plantation with 50-80% site-native species. Includes coppice regeneration and/or strong natural regeneration amongst planted trees.</b>
<b>Class 3</b>	<b>Plantation</b>	<b>Plantation with 20-50% site-native trees under established plantation stands</b>
<b>Class 4</b>	<b>Plantation</b>	<b>Plantation with less than 20% site-native species. Includes all non-native broadleaves and beech planted outside its natural range in England.</b>

3.2 The additions above relate to the Authority’s first two recommendations.

3.3 The third recommendation has not resulted in a revision to the Forest Design Plan. However, the PAWS restoration timetable was given to the Authority in an e-mail from FE on 8 November 2016 (included at **Appendix 1** to this report) and further assurance has been given that PAWS restoration will specifically be considered at the 5 year mid-term review. This review will give the Authority the opportunity to assess works already carried out and to discuss how to maximise the biodiversity value of future planned works.

Forest Services considers that:

*“FE’s intended felling timetable has now been shared, as acknowledged it is subject to review for operational reasons, I suggest the level of information provided is appropriate and as much as is reasonable from a woodland owner/manager at this point.”*

#### 4. Conclusion

4.1 Forest Service’s conclusion on 8 February 2017 was:

*“Given the above revision in line with NYMNPA request, which adds value and clarity to the Forest Design Plan, FC (Forest Services) are now minded to approve as meeting the requirements of UKFS.”* (UKFS = UK Forestry Standards)

4.2 The revisions to the Forest Design Plan, which include the addition of a new section ‘4.5 Habitat Condition’, give commitment to improving the biodiversity of Natural Reserves and Troutsdale specifically. They also give commitment to sharing monitoring information with the Authority at the 5-year review which FE have committed to and have already readily done for their Forest Design Plan for Cropton Forest.

4.3 Whilst there has not been a wording change in the Plan itself in respect of the timescales for the 11 hectares of PAWS restoration covered by the Plan there has been a commitment to specific timescales and information has been provided to officers (see **Appendix 1**) on this with a further assurance that this work will be specifically discussed at the 5-year review. This provides assurance that the risk of any loss of ancient woodland remnant features is being properly managed.

4.4 Officers therefore feel that the changes in the Plan and the further information provided will now satisfy all three points of the recommendations from the previous report to this Committee.

4.5 Whilst not part of the three points covered by the previous report’s recommendations officers remain disappointed at the significant shift in management for the Troutsdale area which it feels is a step away from the broadleaf expansion planned for the area in the 2002 Plan. Officers are also disappointed by the lack of acknowledgement and reasoning in the new Plan of the significant change in management proposals from the 2002 Plan.

4.6 Forest Services consider that:

*“The requests from the Park to acknowledge change from the 2002 FDP to the 2016 Plan do not seem to reflect a requirement of UKFS, the summary information included in the Plan provide a format for comparison which would appear to meet requirement relating to monitoring. Resulting in an FDP reflecting current forest resource, policy, objectives and economics and setting a future direction with detail of proposed operations for the next 10 years. I realise there may be some disappointment in terms of anticipated unrealised potential, however the plan continues to offer environmental improvement against current condition.”*

4.7 Officers feel content recommending to Members that we confirm our previous conditional support as the three points raised have been addressed, however officers wish to reiterate for the record their concern at the change from the 2002 Plan to the new Wykeham Forest Design Plan.

## 5. **Financial and Staffing Implications**

- 5.1 A limited amount of staff time will be required in five years to monitor the biodiversity gain in Troutsdale and to ensure that PAWS restoration has progressed without detriment to remnant ancient woodland features.

## 6. **Contribution to National Park Management Plan**

- 6.1 In terms of the National Park Management Plan, the recommendations contained in this report will have the following significant beneficial sustainability implications;

- Better connected and more resilient woodland habitat networks E36;
- PAWS restoration E38;
- Plantation forests managed in accordance with sustainable forest management principles E39.
- Promotion of best practice in forest management B14

## 7. **Legal Implications**

- 7.1 None.

## 8. **Recommendation**

- 8.1 That:

- The Authority supports the revised Forest Design Plan for Wykeham;
- It is noted that there is significant shift in management for the Troutsdale area away from the broadleaf expansion planned for the area in the 2002 Plan; and
- Officers monitor the biodiversity gains in Troutsdale in five years as well as the restoration of PAWS woodland.

Contact Officer:  
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**From:** Rylance, Nigel

**Sent:** 08 November 2016 08:54

**To:** Mark Antcliff

**Subject:** FW: Wykeham FDP - Report to North York Moors National Park Authority 17 November 2016

Dear Mark

Thank you for sight of the attached report from which I feel there are a number of points and issues that need to be addressed.

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[Redacted]



- I can confirm the following scheduling for proposed felling operations across PAWS;
  - 2019 – 3.82 ha
  - 2020 – 1.10 ha
  - 2024 – 6.81 ha

Proposed felling can however be subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control such as; the proximity of breeding schedule 1 birds, timber parcels that do not sell at tender or auction or an outbreak of *phytophthora* where substitution of infected stands may require rescheduling across the sales plan to name but a few. Such occurrences could impact anywhere across the estate and would not be peculiar to Wykeham and the ability to be adaptable and flexible remains a key management tool.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Regards  
Nigel

Nigel Rylance MICFor  
Forest Planner