

The Scottish Government's Policy on Control of Woodland Removal



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SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT



Purpose

To provide policy direction for decisions on woodland removalⁱ in Scotland.

The Scottish Government will apply the policy to decisions within its areas of competence.

Definition of woodland removal

In this paper 'woodland removal' is defined as the permanent removal of woodlandⁱⁱ for the purposes of conversion to another type of land use.

Woodland removal can be at a local, regional or national level, deliberate or accidental, and can take place quickly or over time scales measured in decades. It does not include the removal of trees associated with the internal re-design of woodlands to meet the UK Forestry Standard.

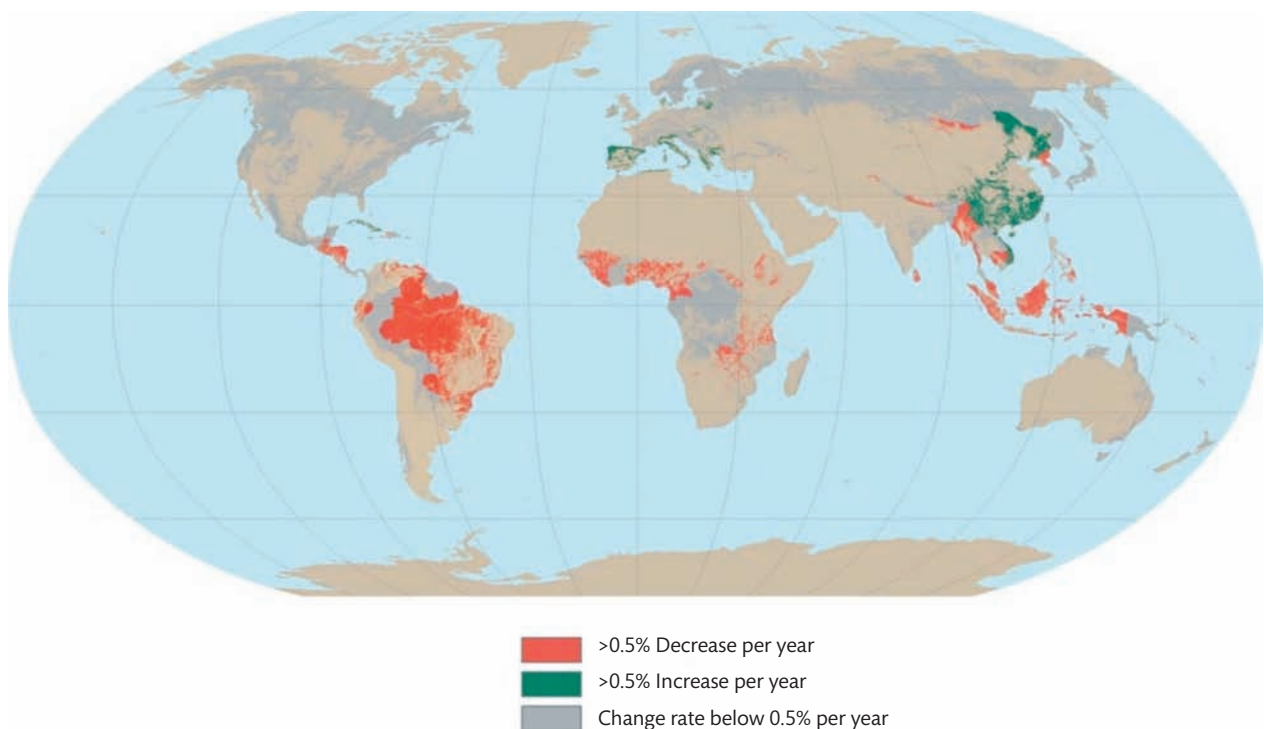


Control of Woodland Removal

Background

Globally, forest cover has reduced from 50% to 30% of the world's land area over the last century and now stands at about 4 billion hectares. Net annual forest loss between 2000-2005 has been 7.3Mha compared to 8.8Mha annually between 1990-2000. Deforestation now comprises 18% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 25% from electricity and heat generation, 14% from transport and 13% from agriculture).

Countries and forests with high rates of net forest area change 2000-2005



In Scotland, extensive deforestation has occurred since prehistoric times, mainly for agriculture. By 1900 only 5% of our land cover was woodland, of which less than a third comprised ancient, semi-natural woodland. Reforestation during the 20th century increased the resource to 17% of land area (1.3Mha) by 2005. About one third of this comprises native species. Since 1990 there has been significant woodland removal associated with landscape design, restoration of priority habitats, wind farms, and other types of development. The National Forest Inventory of Great Britainⁱⁱⁱ will enable the national scale of change to be assessed. More specifically the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland^{iv} will give a firm baseline for native and ancient woodland, and will also estimate recent losses.

Current policy and regulatory context

At world, EU, UK and Scottish levels there is a strong presumption against deforestation (see endnote i), with climate change considerations being a significant driver for that stance.

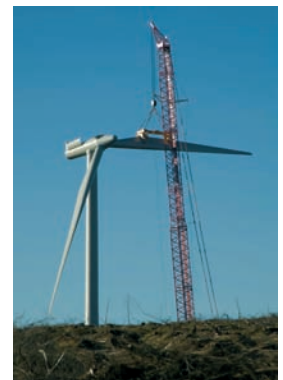
The Forestry Act 1967 (as amended) is the basis for the regulation of felling through the felling licence system. Other statutory powers apply to sites designated for their special interest^v and to development^{vi}. Woodland removal (under the title of 'Deforestation') comes within the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (Scotland) Regulations 1999. Woodland removal resulting from lack of active management or overgrazing is managed primarily through advice and incentives rather than regulatory powers. Annex A gives further details of the policy and regulatory context.

No changes to existing legislation are anticipated as a consequence of this Scottish Government policy on woodland removal.

Woodland removal in Scotland

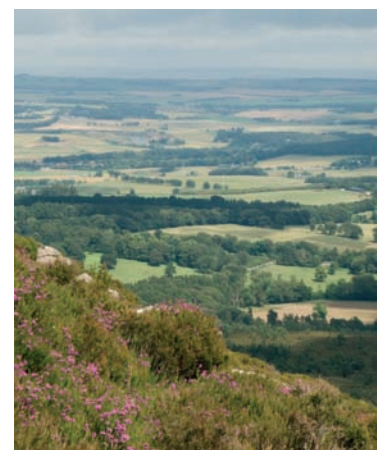
Woodland removal has arisen in many forms, arranged in the chart at Annex B by scale and intent. This paper focuses on major and intentional woodland removal where there is a deliberate and relatively immediate change in land use. More gradual forms of woodland removal such as those arising from overgrazing are also of relevance but will be addressed through other mechanisms such as the Scotland Rural Development Programme.

The temporary removal of tree cover associated with clearfelling and restocking, and the removal of trees associated with the internal re-design of woodlands to meet the UK Forestry Standard, are not considered as woodland removal in this statement of policy.



Principal aims of this policy statement

- To provide a strategic framework for appropriate woodland removal.
- To support the maintenance and expansion of forest cover in Scotland^{vii}.
- To contribute towards achieving an appropriate balance between forested and non-forested land in Scotland.
- To support climate change mitigation and adaptation in Scotland.
- To provide a sound basis for Scotland's participation in the global debate and actions on deforestation.
- To develop a clear understanding of the nature and extent of future woodland removal in Scotland.



Guiding Principles

- There is a strong presumption in favour of protecting Scotland's woodland resources.
- Woodland removal should be allowed only where it would achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits^{viii}. In appropriate cases a proposal for compensatory planting^{ix} may form part of this balance.
- Approval for woodland removal should be conditional on the undertaking of actions to ensure full delivery of the defined additional public benefits.
- Planning conditions and agreements are used to mitigate the environmental impacts arising from development and Forestry Commission Scotland will also encourage their application to development-related woodland removal.
- Where felling is permitted but woodland removal is not supported, conditions conducive to woodland regeneration^x should be maintained through adherence to good forestry practice as defined in the UK Forestry Standard.



Criteria for determining the acceptability of woodland removal

Woodland removal, without a requirement for compensatory planting, is most likely to be appropriate where it would contribute significantly to:

- enhancing priority habitats and their connectivity;
- enhancing populations of priority^{xi} species;
- enhancing nationally important landscapes, designated historic environments^{xii} and geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- improving conservation of water or soil resources; or
- public safety.



Woodland removal, with compensatory planting, is most likely to be appropriate where it would contribute significantly to:

- helping Scotland mitigate and adapt to climate change;
- enhancing sustainable economic growth or rural/community development;
- supporting Scotland as a tourist destination;
- encouraging recreational activities and public enjoyment of the outdoor environment;
- reducing natural threats to forests or other land; or
- increasing the social, economic or environmental quality of Scotland's woodland cover.

There will be a strong presumption against removing the following types of woodland: ancient semi-natural woodland; woodland integral to the value of designated or special sites (Special Areas of Conservation {SACs}; Special Protection Areas {SPAs}; Sites of Special Scientific Interest {SSSIs}; Ramsar sites; National Nature Reserves {NNRs}; areas supporting priority habitats and species listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan; Scheduled Monuments; National Scenic Areas; and woodlands listed within the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes); woodlands critical to water catchment management or erosion control; or woodlands listed as 'Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites' (PAWS). There will also be a strong presumption against woodland removal where it would lead to fragmentation or disconnection of important forest habitat networks.

General guidance on meeting these criteria is outlined in Annex C, and further detailed guidance will be developed, with stakeholder involvement, during 2009.

Approval for woodland removal should be conditional on achieving significant net public benefit, this taking account of the current and future benefits/disbenefits of the existing woodland. Where possible this should include a broad assessment of the impact on carbon and relevant greenhouse gases. Specific site operations will generally be required to achieve the subsequent public benefits and should be clearly defined as part of the approval process.

A woodland owner's financial considerations alone will not be regarded as sufficient reason to permit woodland removal without compensatory planting. They may, however, justify a change in the type of woodland and the intensity of management. Further guidance on these, and other forms of 'uneconomic woodlands' is outlined in Annex D.



Control of Woodland Removal

Managing the process

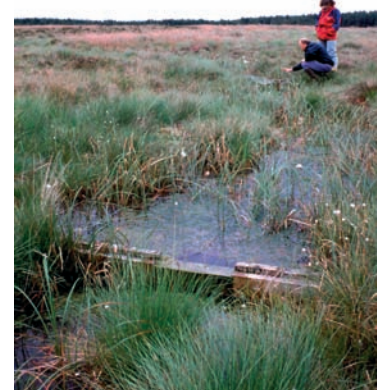
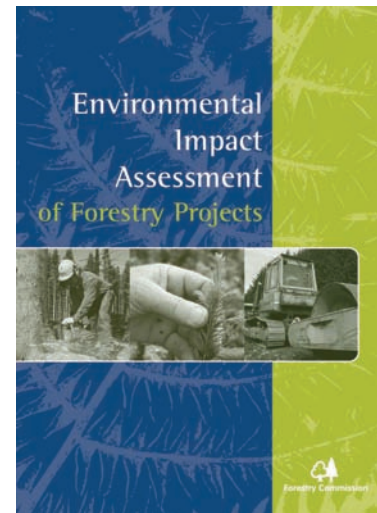
The implementation of this policy will be based on the use of the minimum regulation required to achieve clearly defined public benefits. Other than for woodland removal associated with development, the 'The Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (Scotland) Regulations 1999' (as amended) will be used to assess woodland removal proposals likely to have a significant environmental impact. Any significant environmental impacts of woodland removal associated with development would be incorporated within assessments made under 'The Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 1999' or, in the case of Section 36 & 37 consents, under the Electricity Act 1989, the 'Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment)(Scotland) Regulations 2000'.

For woodland removal permitted under the Forestry Act 1967, legal enforcement of the actions required to implement a change in land use will normally be based on felling licence conditions^{xiii}. For woodland removal associated with development, the relevant planning authorities (or Scottish Ministers in the case of deemed planning permission for applications made under the Electricity Act 1989) have the power to enforce any requirements relating to the planning permission. Other legal mechanisms can also apply on Natura sites and land covered by Management Agreements or their equivalent.

For woodland removal authorised by Forestry Commission Scotland, and where achievement of the desired future condition will take a number of years and/or involve reliance on natural processes, an annual^{xiv} expert^{xv} review process should be used to monitor progress. In significant cases this will be aided by a transition plan and formal monitoring procedure. Appropriate grant incentives can be used to promote delivery of the clearly defined public benefits.

The specific location, nature and timing of any compensatory planting must be agreed prior to felling licence approval. For compensatory planting stipulated as a requirement of planning permission, specification of that planting will be determined by the relevant planning authority or, in the case of deemed planning permission for applications made under the Electricity Act 1989, Scottish Ministers.

If compensatory planting is required as a condition of development it is unlikely to be eligible for support through the Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP). In other circumstances it will be at the discretion of Forestry Commission Scotland, as the policy lead on the forestry content of the SRDP, whether such planting should be considered eligible to bid for grant aid.



Appeals procedures

Forestry Commission Scotland has an established procedure for dealing with complaints and appeals relating to its decisions or activities. This is available at: www.forestry.gov.uk/scotlandcomplaintsappeals

Appeals relating to planning consents are dealt with under the procedures set out in the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

Certification

Conversion of forest land to non-forest land is one of the verification factors assessed when certifying against the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS). Owners of certified woodland, or those seeking to gain certification, will need to consider the impact of woodland removal on their ability to satisfy UKWAS criteria.

Carbon offsetting

The main suppliers of forestry based voluntary carbon offsets are unlikely to accept compensatory planting areas as part of their schemes for the sale of carbon credits.

The national forest estate

On the national forest estate, Forest Enterprise Scotland will adopt an exemplar role in considering and addressing woodland removal and appropriate aftercare. Potential sites for significant woodland removal will be identified in Forest District Strategic Plans.

Equality Impact Assessment

This draft policy has been screened and the conclusion was that it does not require a full Equality Impact Assessment.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

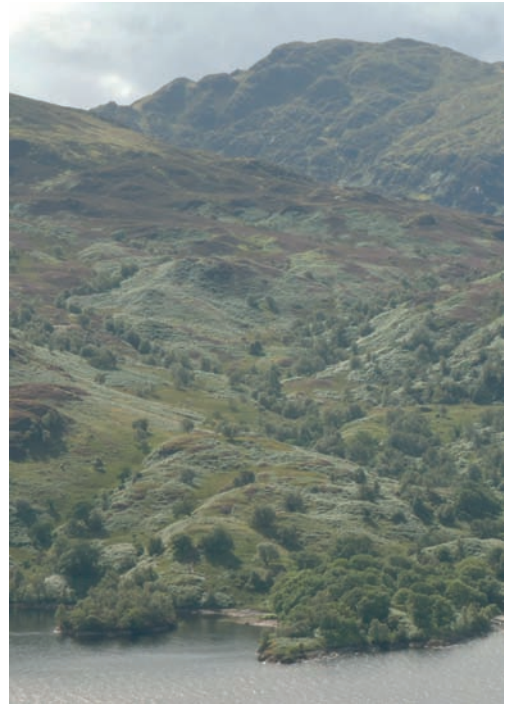
Any significant environmental impacts resulting from implementation of this policy are likely to be local rather than national in extent and will come within the scope of the relevant Environmental Impact Assessment procedures (see Annex A - 'Regulation'). At a broader level, woodland removal was included in the scope of SEAs prepared for the Scottish Forestry Strategy and Forest Enterprise's Framework Strategic Plan 2008-2013. SEAs prepared for the Scotland Rural Development Programme and the National Planning Framework also covered strategic issues arising from land use change.

Control of Woodland Removal

Policy consequences

The principal aims of this policy statement are set out on page 5. The primary consequences will be:

- minimising the inappropriate loss of woodland cover in Scotland;
- enabling appropriate woodland removal to proceed but with no net loss of woodland-related public benefits other than in the special circumstances outlined on pages 6 and 7 ('Criteria for determining the acceptability of woodland removal'); and
- facilitating achievement of the Scottish Government's woodland expansion ambition in a way that integrates with other policy drivers (such as increasing sustainable economic growth, tackling climate change, rural/community development, renewable energy, and biodiversity objectives).



Monitoring

A methodology to monitor year-on-year rates of intentional woodland removal will be developed during 2009. The periodic National Forest Inventory of Great Britain will be used to monitor overall woodland cover and the longer-term trends of woodland loss that may arise through a lack of active management.

Review

This policy will be reviewed after not more than 5 years.

Policy and Regulatory Context

Policy

- Building on the 1992 Earth Summit at Rio, the Helsinki Guidelines (1993) (www.mcpfe.org/conferences/helsinki) leading to the 1998 Pan European Criteria (PEC) for sustainable forest management, contain a general presumption that “...forest land, particularly land considered natural or semi-natural, will remain dedicated to that use.”
- The commitments agreed at Helsinki were elaborated and endorsed at the 3rd and 4th Ministerial Conferences in Lisbon (1998) and Vienna (2003) and are also referred to in the introduction to the Rural Development Regulation.
- At the seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the international community agreed a non-legally binding instrument that included four global objectives on forests. Global objective No.1 states: “Reverse the loss of forest cover world wide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation.”
- At the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali (2007) a ‘Decision on Deforestation’ acknowledged that deforestation contributes to greenhouse gas emissions and that there was an urgent need to reduce emissions from this source. Although aimed at developing countries the decision also signalled a clear need for developed countries to lead by example.
- The UK Government’s broad forestry policy is to promote sustainability through the sustainable management of existing woods and forests, and a steady expansion of tree cover to increase the many diverse benefits that forests provide.
- An expansion of woodland area is one of the 40 UK Indicators of Sustainable Forestry (www.forestry.gov.uk/sfindicators).
- The UK Forestry Standard (www.forestry.gov.uk/publications) sets out the UK’s approach to sustainable forest management and is compatible with both the Helsinki Guidelines and the PEC.
- The UK Woodland Assurance Standard (2nd Edition) (www.ukwas.org.uk) requires the maintenance of the long-term productive potential of woodland, although it recognises that there are circumstances where this need not apply. It also requires that woodland of national importance (e.g. SAC, SPA, SSSI, Ramsar, ancient semi-natural woodland {ASNW}, PAWS, UK Biodiversity Action Plan {UK BAP}) shall not be converted to non-forested land unless it meets certain criteria that would make it of greater environmental value.
- The Scottish Forestry Strategy (www.forestry.gov.uk/sfs) has an aspiration to increase forest cover from 17.1% to around 25% of Scotland’s land area by the second half of this century.

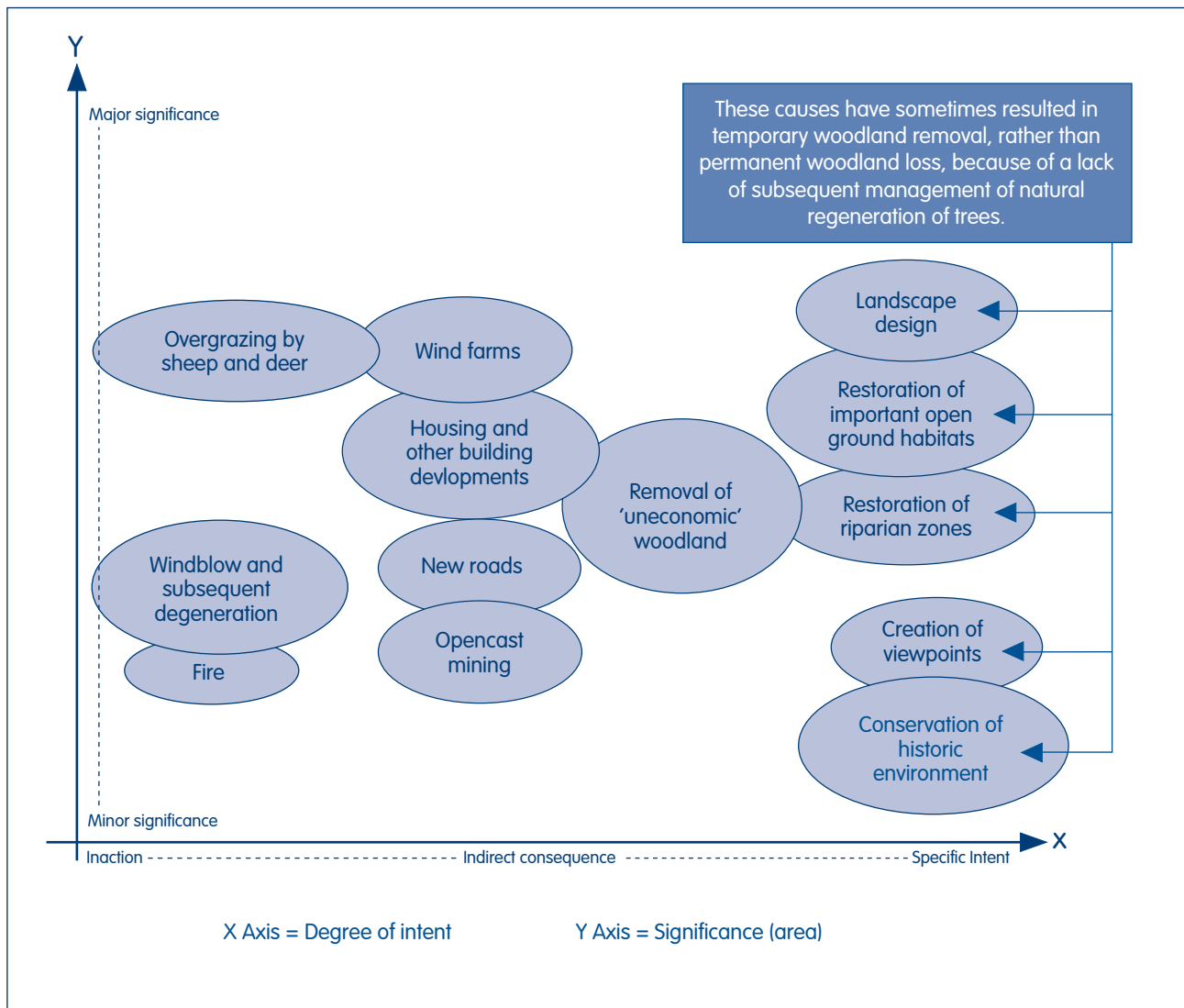
- The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) and associated Local BAPs, contain targets and aspirations for the restoration of open ground habitats, many of which would require selective woodland removal.
- National Planning Policy Guideline NPPG14 “Natural Heritage”, which is currently under review, makes reference to environmental degradation as a result of progressive deforestation and asks planning authorities to “protect trees, groups of trees and areas of woodland where they have natural heritage value or contribute to the character or amenity of a particular area.” It also recommends: “Where development involves the loss of trees, permission should normally be conditional on a replanting scheme”. NPPG 14 also recommends that local authorities should ensure that Indicative Forestry Strategies should seek to “...protect woodland and other areas of natural heritage value....”.
- In Scotland’s Climate Change Programme, forests and woodlands are recognised as carbon sinks, and the role of wood and timber products has also been recognised as a way of substituting for energy intensive building materials and fossil fuels. The Programme sets targets for annual carbon savings from the forestry sector.
- Scottish Ministers have set a target of generating 50% of Scotland’s electricity from renewable sources by 2020 (with an interim target of 31% by 2011). Scottish Planning Policy SPP 6, ‘Renewable Energy’, sets out how the planning system should manage the process of encouraging, approving and implementing renewable energy proposals when preparing development plans and determining planning applications.
- The Scottish Government is committed to securing an 80% reduction in emissions by 2050 and to reducing emissions in the period to 2011. Both commitments are made in the Government Economic Strategy and the former target is likely to become a statutory requirement through the provisions of the Scottish Climate Change Bill.
- The UK Climate Change Act sets a target of a at least an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, with an interim target of at least a 26% reduction in CO² emissions by 2020 against a 1990 baseline.
- The UK Climate Change Act and the Scottish Climate Change Bill both propose carbon budgets that will set the direction to achieve the above emissions reductions.

Regulation

- The Forestry Act 1967 (as amended) makes no reference to woodland removal although it charges the Commissioners with the “...general duty of promoting the interests of forestry, the development of a afforestation and the production and supply of timber and other forest products...”. In doing so they must endeavour to achieve a reasonable balance between the above and “...the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and the conservation of flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest”.
- The Commissioners’ general duty “...includes that of promoting the establishment and maintenance of adequate reserves of growing trees”. Carbon management is now a relevant consideration in discharging that duty.
- In general terms, permission to fell trees in Scotland is usually conditional on those trees being replaced. The Forestry Act 1967 (as amended and incorporating changes made by the Nature Conservation {Scotland} Act 2004) requires the Forestry Commission to grant unconditional felling licences except where this would be against the “...interests of good forestry or agriculture or of the amenities of the district; for the purpose of complying with their duty of promoting the establishment and maintenance of adequate reserves of growing trees; or for the purpose of conserving or enhancing the flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features, or the natural beauty or amenity, of any land.” In such cases the Forestry Commission can require that land (or other land) to be appropriately restocked and maintained for a period not exceeding 10 years.
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act (Amendment) 1995 requires the Forestry Commissioners to: “...endeavour to achieve a reasonable balance between: the development of afforestation; the management of forests and the production of timber, and the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and conservation of flora, fauna and geographical or physiographical features of special interest”.
- The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 states that: “It is the duty of every public body and office-holder, in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.” It also enables the Forestry Commission to impose conditions for the “purpose of conserving or enhancing the flora, fauna or geological or geographical features, or the natural beauty or amenity of any land.”
- The EC Habitats Directive (1992) requires certain habitats and species to be protected by means of a network of sites (SACs and SPAs) known as Natura 2000. There is a statutory need to prevent deterioration of these sites and to take measures to maintain or restore relevant natural habitats and wild species at a favourable conservation status. In some cases this might require woodland removal. (NB the 2007 amendments to protect breeding sites/resting places and prevent significant disturbance to European Protected Species).

- Other than woodland removal associated with development, deforestation (woodland removal) comes within the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (Scotland) Regulations 1999 (as amended). This contains thresholds above which a formal opinion must be sought from Forestry Commission Scotland to see if a consent (which would require an EIA) is required before work can begin. Further advice can be found at: www.forestry.gov.uk/eia-scotland
- Any significant environmental impacts of woodland removal associated with development will be assessed in accordance with the requirements of 'The Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 1999' or, in the case of Section 36 & 37 consents under the Electricity Act 1989, the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2000.
- The Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 places a duty on planning authorities "to ensure, whenever it is appropriate, that in granting planning permission for any development adequate provision is made, by the imposition of conditions, for the preservation or planting of trees".
- Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 places on the developer a duty to "have regard to the desirability of preserving the natural beauty of the countryside, of conserving flora, fauna and geological and physiological features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest". In addition, decision-makers are required to give consideration to Scottish Planning Policy 6 on Renewable Energy, other relevant Scottish Planning Policies, the relevant planning authority's Development Plans and any relevant supplementary guidance.

Characterisation of the principal, recent (1990-2008) causes of woodland removal



Broad guidance on meeting the acceptability criteria for woodland removal

Criteria	Potential indicators of acceptability
The change in land use, without compensatory planting, would contribute significantly to:	
Enhancing priority habitats and their connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the boundaries of priority^{xvi} habitats. • Contributes to the functional connectivity of priority and associated habitats without adverse impact on priority woodland habitats or connectivity. • Availability of 'seed banks' from previous land use and adjacent land use.
Enhancing populations of priority species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland is detrimental to nationally significant concentrations of Biodiversity Action Plan species.
Enhancing nationally important landscapes and historic environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current landscape character^{xvii} in National Parks and National Scenic Areas compromised significantly by the woodland. • Condition or context of Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Gardens & Designed Landscapes compromised significantly by woodland.
Improving conservation of soil and water resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed as a measure to address Significant Water Management Issues identified in River Basin Management Plans more effectively than woodland. • Significantly reduces water loss from woodland in area of high water demand and low water supply but without impacting on flooding. • Restoration of peat bogs where the removal of woodland would prevent the significant net release of greenhouse gases.
Public safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant risk to road users e.g. critically poor road visibility caused by trees/ shrubs. • Established need to reduce fire hazard to people and property e.g. by provision of low-sward fire traces.



Criteria	Potential indicators of acceptability
The change in land use along with compensatory planting would contribute significantly to:	
Helping Scotland mitigate or adapt to climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates appropriate development of renewable energy projects. • Enables sustainable flood management projects to proceed. • Enables priority habitat connectivity. • Significantly reduces net greenhouse gas emissions. • Maintains long term wood supply for industry.
Sustainable economic growth and rural/community development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables appropriate economic development to proceed in areas of low income/high unemployment. • Enables appropriate development to proceed as part of agreed, 'temporary greening' strategies in urban areas. • Where a democratically formed community aim is judged to be in the wider public interest. • Significant reduction in damage to weak but essential public roads.
Scotland as a tourist destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant existing tourism facilities enhanced by woodland removal. • Facilitates creation of new, significant and appropriate tourism facilities. • Significant landscape enhancement.
Increasing the quality of Scotland's woodland cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing woodland does not meet, and has low potential to meet, the requirements of the UK Forestry Standard, with correspondingly low potential for providing social, economic and environmental benefits. • Proposed compensatory planting offers real potential for increased delivery of public benefits in Scotland. • The land can be readily restored to the desired future condition.



Dealing with 'uneconomic' woodlands

- Owners' rights and objectives must be respected.
- Apart from statutory requirements, private owners will not be expected to provide public benefits at their sole expense.
- Where an owner feels that the net costs of managing existing woodlands are no longer affordable, alternative courses of action should be explored, for example:
 - assessing the realistic potential for adding value to products/services from that woodland or reducing costs;
 - determining the minimum conditions required to maintain future woodland status. This could include a change in woodland type, reduced intensity of management, or a longer time-scale for achieving the desired outcomes;
 - the availability of public funding to secure desirable public benefits (e.g. carbon conservation^{xviii}, timber production, environmental services etc);
 - the feasibility and desirability of compensatory planting; or
 - the sale or lease of the woodland.
- A woodland owner's financial considerations alone will not be regarded as sufficient reason to permit deforestation, but they may indicate the need to change the type of woodland and/or the intensity of management.
- A reduction in the area of woodland (as distinct from the type of woodland) will not be authorised unless there are clear, significant public benefits from doing so.



- i A distinction has been made between woodland removal and 'deforestation'. The latter has a global connotation and implies a net loss of woodland cover at a national level rather than the locality-specific removal of woodland. With Scotland's reforestation ambition of 9,000 ha – 10,000 ha each year, and an aim to increase woodland cover from 17% to 25% of its land area, deforestation, at a national level, is not anticipated.
- ii There is no legal definition of 'woodland'. In this paper the definition of woodland will follow that of the UK Forestry Standard and the National Inventory of Woodlands and Trees combined:

"The part of woods and forests where the ecological condition is, or will be, strongly influenced by the tree canopy. This embraces land under stands of trees with a canopy cover of at least 20%, or having the potential to achieve this, including integral open space, and including felled areas that are awaiting restocking. The minimum area is 0.1 ha." There is no minimum height so the definition includes woodland scrub, short rotation coppice and short rotation forestry but not areas of gorse, Rhododendron etc outside woodland.
- iii The National Forest Inventory of Great Britain is expected to be completed within ten years, with interim maps for Scotland available within two years.
- iv The Native Woodland Survey of Scotland commenced in November 2006 as a five-year project to determine the location, extent and condition of native woodlands in Scotland.
- v Natura 2000 (Special Protection Areas {SPAs} and Special Areas of Conservation {SACs}), Ramsar sites, National Nature Reserves {NNRs}, Sites of Special Scientific Interest {SSSIs}, and Scheduled Monuments.
- vi In this paper 'development' is as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and includes consents carrying deemed planning permission under Sections 36 & 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.
- vii See Scottish Forestry Strategy 2006: www.forestry.gov.uk/sfs
- viii Public benefits include social, economic and environmental benefits, the latter including carbon considerations. Further guidance on defining and assessing the significance of these public benefits will be developed with stakeholders during 2009.
- ix As a default, 'compensatory planting' (or compensatory natural regeneration) implies an equivalent woodland area, on appropriate site types and with at least the equivalent woodland-related net public benefits, and must take place in Scotland. Further detailed guidance on compensatory planting will be developed with key stakeholders during 2009 and will include aspects of scale, location and timing.
- x As a minimum default this will require the initial exclusion of browsing and the control of invasive exotic weeds (e.g. Rhododendron ponticum, Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam).
- xi Includes species listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives, SNH's Species Action Framework and the Scottish Biodiversity Action Plan list.
- xii See 'Scottish Historic Environment Policy 1: Scotland's Historic Environment' and Forestry Commission Scotland's policy statement 'Scotland's Woodlands and the Historic Environment'.
- xiii Amendments to the Forestry Act (following the Nature Conservation {Scotland} Act 2004) gave Forestry Commission Scotland the power to set conditions for felling licences 'for the purpose of conserving or enhancing the flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features, or the natural beauty or amenity of any land'.
- xiv Or longer period if appropriate and agreed by Forestry Commission Scotland and the relevant experts.
- xv The required expertise will depend on individual circumstances and might usefully be drawn, either directly or indirectly, from Regional Forestry Forums.
- xvi Habitats listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, Natura sites, Ramsar sites, SSSIs, NNRs
- xvii SNH Landscape Character Assessments
- xviii Carbon conservation and sequestration, above those associated with the definition of woodland (see note i above) will be regarded as a public benefit.

Forestry Commission Scotland serves as the forestry directorate of the Scottish Government and is responsible to Scottish Ministers.

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