

Laughton Forest Plan

10 year review

2016 - 2026

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Laughton Forest Plan 10 year review

This document is a brief review of the current Forest Design Plan, known as "Laughton - Design Plan 21"

This plan expired in 2012 and was rolled over until 2017. The new plan is due to be consulted upon in 2016 and will be known as "Laughton Forest Plan" and will again run for 10 years with a mid term review at the 5 year point.

The purpose of this 10 year review is to answer the four questions set out below, in accordance with OGB 36 – Forest Design Planning.

Was the plan implemented properly?

- Approval for the forest plan was extended for 5 years when plan period expired. This was to take account of amalgamation of Forest Districts and restructuring of the Forestry Commission.
- Exchanges of letters were made after the widespread windblow in 2007. FS approved clearance and restocking.
- Amendment process was also followed in order to remove trees from around power line in order to reduce disruption to local power supply in the future.

Did the implementation of the plan meet the stated objectives?

Objective	Met?	Comment
Landscape	Ongoing	Coupe shapes as per the current plan have been followed and thought given to the internal landscapes during forest operations.
Silviculture	Yes	Timber production is shown to be sustainable as thinning is carried out to MTI and restocking after clearfelling is carried out within 2 years.
Biodiversity	Ongoing	SSSI plan continues, rare and notable species taken into account during ops 1 process, areas of retention identified.
Archaeology	Yes	Known areas mapped on GIS and appropriate buffer zones will be in place during operations

Are the aims and objectives of the plan still appropriate?

- Some coupes have been slightly redesigned in order to take into account the above and also the proposed objectives.
- Laughton will continue to be managed productively in order to supply a sustainable timber resource.
- Biodiversity continues to be high on the list of priorities. Areas of the proposed plan are dedicated specifically to the management of this objective.
- No changes to the management of the archaeological features.

Do proposals for the next 10 years meet the current objectives, standards and vision of the Forestry Commission?

- The proposed plan will continue to adhere to UKFS and UKWAS as well as working toward delivering results in areas identified by SSSI plans and local consultees.

New Forest Plan Proposals.

- The proposed review of Laughton – Design Plan 21 follows this document.

The Laughton Forest Plan Brief

The Laughton Forest Plan (FP) comprises the block of woodland known as Laughton Forest near the village of Laughton which lies between the towns of Scunthorpe and Gainsborough on the A159 in West Lincolnshire. Of the 909 hectares covered by the plan, only a little over 100 ha are freehold where there is some provision for public access. The remaining 800 ha is leasehold, managed by the Forestry Commission on a long term lease which does not allow for public access.

The woodland is predominantly conifer species, mainly pine. The majority of the area is secondary plantation, on land which was previously used for agriculture. The woodland contains a 10 hectare Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This area has a specific management plan which will be addressed in the full FP.

The approved Forest Plan will provide an operational plan that will deliver sustainable forest management. It has been developed to find the right balance of forest management based on the environmental, social and economic considerations associated with the forest and its surrounding landscape. It will also aim to contribute to our district strategic plan objectives, which are based around the three drivers of sustainable land management; Economy, Nature and People.

Economic Issues

Dothistroma Needle Blight (DNB) is present to some extent in the Corsican pine (*Pinus nigra* var. *maritima*) crop; but has not manifested at Laughton as badly as could have been expected. This disease is also known as Red Band Needle Blight (RBNB), but this term is not used in the plan. The pathogen *Dothistroma septosporum* is responsible for defoliating the pine which leads to a significant reduction of needle material and eventual cessation of the trees growth.

Forestry in the UK constantly faces challenges from various pests and diseases. Many of these are established, existing problems but we are always identifying new threats from outside the UK as well as dealing with recently discovered plant health issues. Couple with this the fact that our climate is changing, it is necessary to increase the resilience of our forests over the coming decades. Continuing to diversify the species we use in the forest, the age classes of stands and the types of silvicultural systems we use, will all contribute to this approach and will all be reflected in the new FP.

The new plan will balance the need for productive forestry against appropriate and future proof species as well as accounting for improvements to infrastructure such as roads and drains.

Environmental Issues

The plan area lies on the eastern edge of the North Lincolnshire Coversands and Clay Vales Natural Area at the southern extremity of the acidic, nutrient poor sandy soils of the coversands. The main ecological interest arises from these heathland origins which comprises a mosaic of heather, acid grassland, mire and sand dune, a habitat which is of national importance. This system supports a number of notable species of plants, invertebrates, birds and reptiles. Key species, individual trees, habitats and areas will be identified and the plan will make provision for their requirements.

Social Issues

Although Laughton Forest is mainly leasehold and those areas where official provision for recreation are small, there is still a significant level of informal access by the local community. Only two rights of way exist in the woodland. The only formal provision for access is a small Forestry Commission car park in the Tuetoos area of the site. The plan review will consider public access when planning forestry operations in this area.

Consultation

Due to the size, position and relatively low public access of the site, consultation will be via on site notices, informing the public of where the consultation document will be accessible – for example, the nearest public library and Parish Council. Letters will also be sent to statutory bodies, interested parties and other stakeholders.

Terms of Reference for Laughton Forest Plan

	Important Themes	Particular Issues to be addressed
Economy	Timber Production	Demonstrate the continuation of a structured and sustained programme of clearfell and thinning to include infrastructure requirements (roads and main drains). Select suitable species and appropriate silvicultural techniques to regenerate (either naturally or through planting) commercially productive but more structurally and species diverse and resilient crops.
Environment	<p>Statutorily designated sites and non-designated priority habitats</p> <p>Trees of Special Interest and Deadwood</p> <p>Species</p>	<p>Demonstrate appropriate management to maintain the current extent and ecological value of the non-designated priority habitats.</p> <p>Make appropriate provision to achieve the aims of the SSSI Management Plan.</p> <p>Identify existing locations of TSIs and demonstrate appropriate management to both maintain the current resource and to recruit future veteran replacements.</p> <p>Identify appropriate areas to increase deadwood habitat and propose management to maintain a sustainable resource.</p> <p>Identify key species and sites and make appropriate provision for their requirements.</p>
People	<p>Landscape</p> <p>Informal Public Access</p>	<p>Diversify species composition and structure, and plan sympathetically designed and appropriately scaled interventions to improve and maintain the visual integration of the forest into the wider landscape.</p> <p>Consider public access in the design of the Tuetoos area.</p>

Application for Forest Plan Approval

1. Plan area identification

Forest District: Central England Forest District
 Beat: Sherwood North Beat
 Name: Laughton Forest Plan
 Nearest Town: Gainsborough
 Total Plan Area: 909 hectares
 OS Grid Ref: Centre of Laughton Forest: SK84609961
 Local Planning Authority: Lincolnshire – West Lindsey

2. Designations

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Notable plant, insect and reptile species.

3. Date of commencement of plan

As soon as possible after the approval date.

4. Planned operations within 10 year period of the plan

Area	Conifers (ha)	Broadleaves (ha)
Felling	109	0
Restocking*	124 (gross)	0

*Restocking refers to that area that may be under planted if conditions are suitable, as well as that area which has recently been clearfelled.

Signed.....

Forest Management Director (FE)

Date

.....

Field Manager (FS)

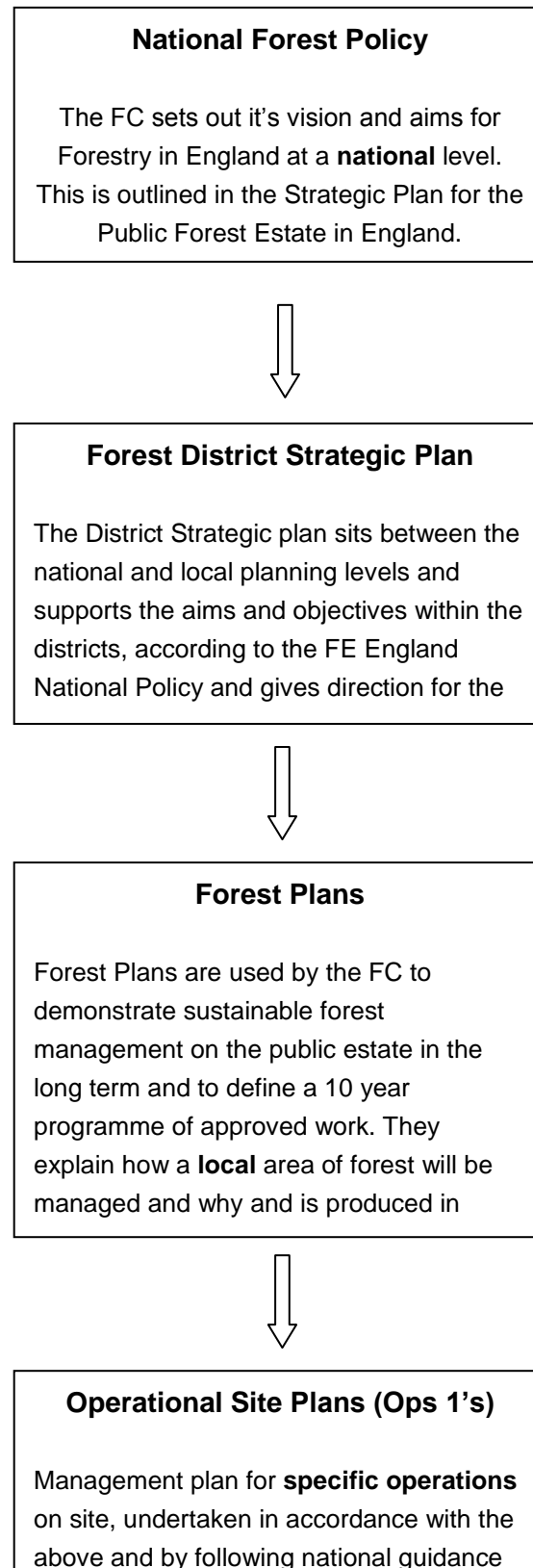
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Introduction

This plan updates the current plan approved in 2002. It sets out our management proposals for the next 50 years and provides approval for felling and thinning, both conventional and unconventional, for the next 10 years.

This Forest Plan is guided and directed by a number of policies and strategies, the main points of which are summarised below (Fig.1). Delivering this plan will require the Forestry Commission to be responsive to shifts in our operating environment, and to be increasingly flexible in our approach in order to sustain this responsiveness over decades to come.

Fig 1. Forestry Commission England's Planning Strategy



1.0 Key Characteristics and Survey Data

1.1 Location

- See Location map.
- The Laughton FP area lies just outside Gainsborough in Lincolnshire. The woodland is situated to the north and west of the village of Laughton, and between the villages of Scotter and Blyton on the A159.
- OS Grid References: Laughton (Village): SK84839736
 Centre of Forest: SK84609961
 Tuetoes Carpark: SK84580103

The area covered by the Forest Plan amounts to 909 ha of which 82% ha is woodland. Of the planted area, 61% is commercial conifer plantation and 21% is broadleaved woodland. 18% of the plan area is open space, 11% of which is permanent which will remain throughout the period of this plan. The remaining 7% is made up from unplanted or felled areas. (See Fig.2) This element will increase and decrease rotationally due to usual clearfelling and restocking operations and natural regeneration.

1.2 Geology and Soils

- This area is designated as the Lincolnshire Coversands and is characterised by Fen-edge sands and gravels.
- Research suggests Laughton sits on freely draining very acid sandy and loamy soils.

1.3 Aspect and Natural Character Area

- The plan area is an aggregation of woodland and lies on the eastern flats of the River Trent. The woodlands lie within a flat landscape which is predominantly mixed agricultural use. The woodland is primarily coniferous in a flat landscape, 4 – 20m above sea level and rising to 40m OD at Hardwick Hill.
- Principal views are from the immediate roadside edges of the A159 and of Hardwick Hill from the Western edge between Susworth and East Ferry, villages on the east bank of the River Trent. Secondary views are from minor roads surrounding the villages of Laughton and Scotter.
- The FP area falls on the boundary of two Natural Character areas, the Humberhead Levels and the North Lincolnshire Coversands and Clay Vales. The forest is mainly within the Humberhead levels area and is described by Natural England as being a flat, low-lying and large scale agricultural landscape. The Isle of Axholme (where the forest sits) is of international significance for its extensive field strip system, generally bounded by ditches which usually have to be pumped in order to keep the water table down.

1.4 Hydrology

- Perhaps the most notable hydrological feature is that of Roses Ponds to the east of Rainfords Corner. These are remnants of what are thought to be retting pits from the 19th century (see Archaeology and Heritage).
- The FP area contains notable drains which not only serve as drainage for the forest but also contribute to the management of the local water table.

1.4 Habitats & Species

- 12.4 ha of SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest).
- Scotton Common is an important open grassland habitat. This is currently mown annually to prevent succession.
- There is one known Adder Hibernacula in the Tuetoos area. This area is maintained as an open heather ride which has been managed as open and expanded in recent years.
- A wide variety of bird species are present in Laughton and have been subject to regular surveys and analysis. Laughton holds regionally significant populations of “scarce” species, particularly those associated with heathland. Comprehensive surveys have been conducted since the early 1990s and the results of these are used to inform management. This has suggested that although some populations have declined; others have fared well and are moving throughout the woodland following habitat succession created by forestry operations. The latest survey shows the movement of Woodlark, Tree pipit and Nightjar populations to new areas of Conifer Clearfell.
- There are species of botanical interest in Laughton such as: Round Leaf Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), Butterwort (*Pinguicula spp*) and Common Polypode (*Polypodium vulgare*).

2.0 FC Management Objectives

Economic - produce sustainable timber yields, encourage and support new and existing business activity associated to the public forest estate and to make the economic potential of our forests and woodlands more resilient in the face of a changing climate. Growing and diversifying our income from a wide range of sustainable activity on the estate, including non-forestry activities.



Environmental - To increase where possible the environmental contribution made by the Estate to the range of ecosystem services delivered and to protect and enhance its overall biodiversity and heritage value at both the landscape and local level.

Social - Enable everyone, everywhere to connect with the nations' trees and forests so that they understand their importance and act positively to safeguard forests for the future.



3.0 Forest Plan Objectives

3.1 Woodland

The woodlands will be managed using a variety of silvicultural systems to allow for the production of commercial conifer and broadleaved species. All forest operations will be carried out in accordance with current best practice and will be assessed at the Operational Planning stage. Operations comply with UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS), UK Forest Standard (UKFS) and Forest District Strategic Plan to ensure that the woodlands are managed sustainably.

3.11 Current Species, Age Structure and Yield Class

The woodlands within the plan area are predominantly secondary coniferous woodlands. Approximately 82% of the area is planted with 18% being open space. In addition, the cycle of clearfelling and restocking provides rotational open space and a little over 1% of the planted area is currently designated as being felled – this will be restocked in due course. Of the planted area, 74% is coniferous and 26% is broadleaved. See Fig. 3 Current Forest Structure. Of the coniferous element, approximately 97% is pine. Of this, 62% is Corsican pine (*Pinus nigra var. Maritima*) and 35% Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). Table 1 shows a breakdown of species composition.

Laughton forest was acquired by the Forestry Commission on a long term lease in 1926 and planting commenced soon after. Felling and planting has continued throughout this period. Table 1 shows the breakdown of current species by area and Figure 3 shows the current age classes.

Fig. 2 Current Land Use (%) 2016

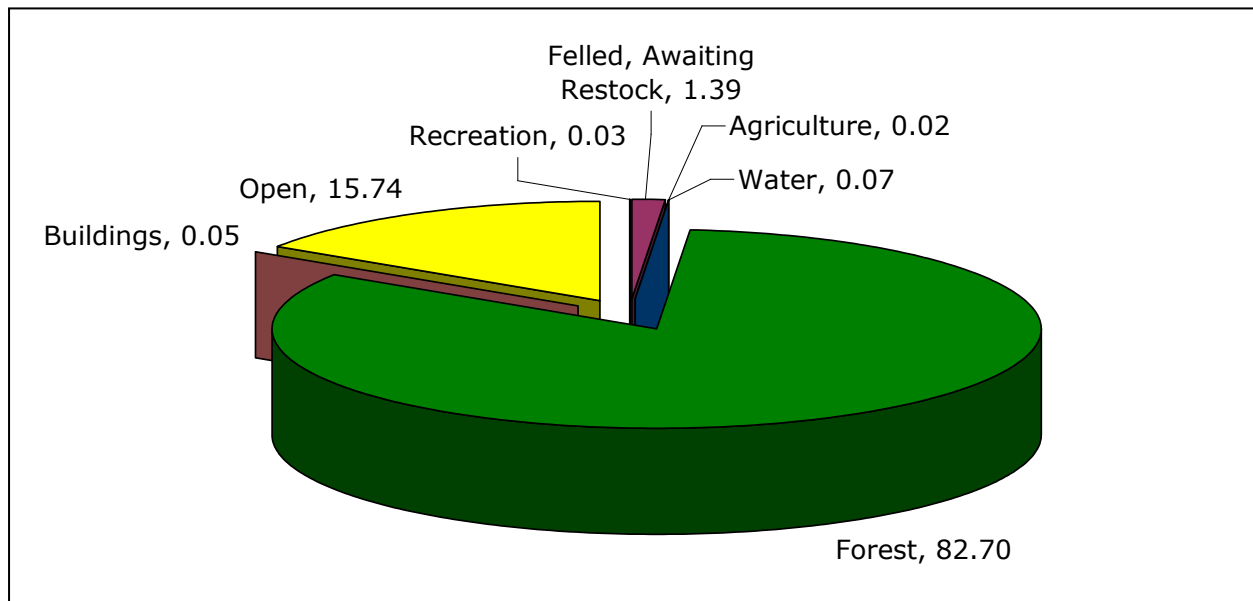


Fig. 3 Current Forest Structure (2016)

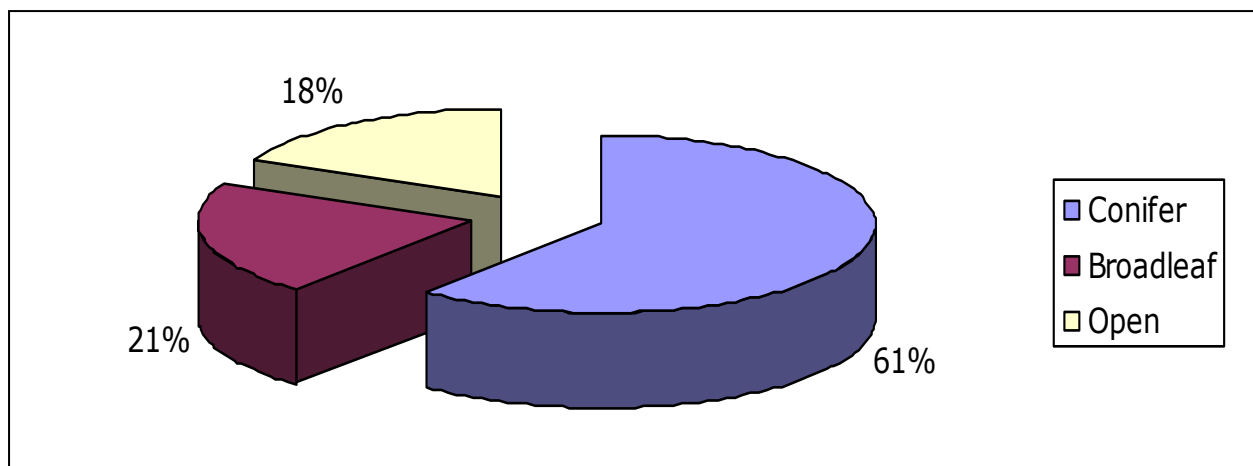


Table 1 – Current Species (as of 2016)

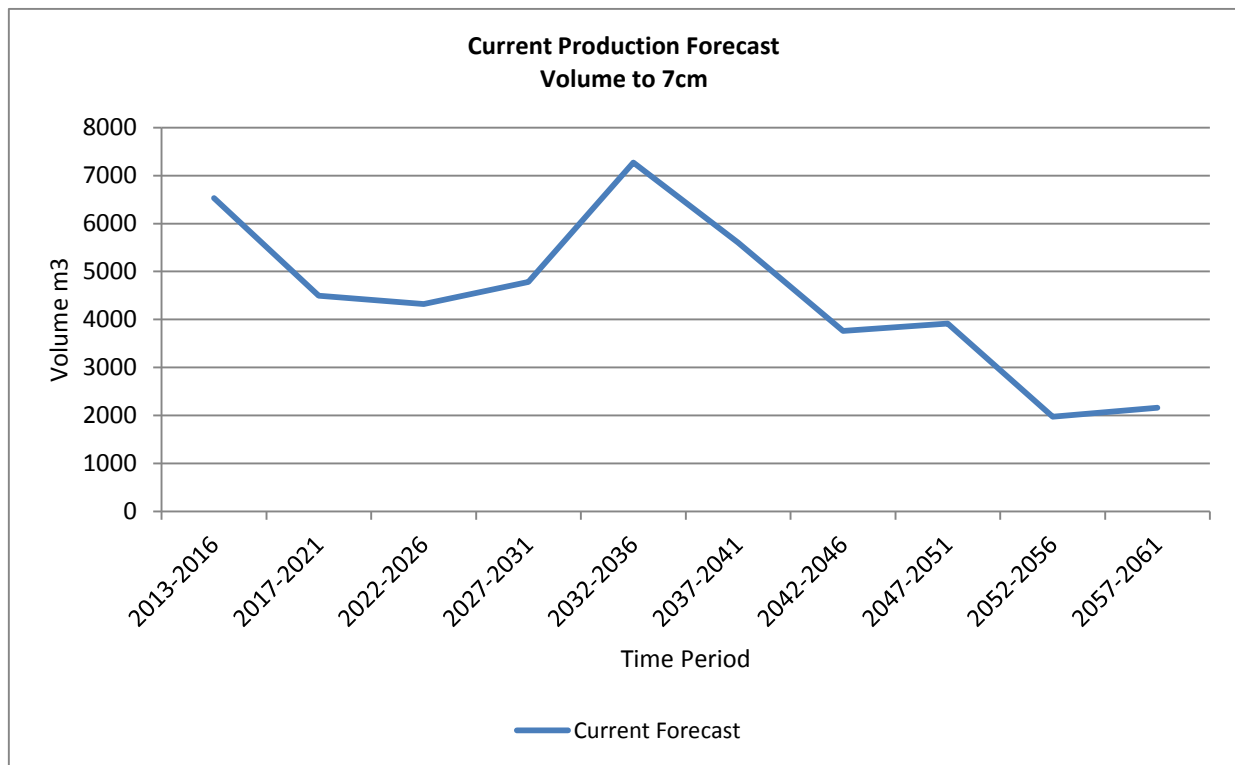
Species	Area (ha)	Percentage of Total Area
Conifer		
Corsican Pine	348.6	38.2
Scots Pine	194.8	21.4
Larch	5.9	0.6
Spruce	2.5	0.3
Other Conifer	4.4	0.5
Total Conifer	556.2 ha	61%
Broadleaf		
Birch	129.3	13.8
Beech	12.8	1.4
Oak	16.6	1.8
Other Broadleaf	37.2	4
Total Broadleaf	195.9 ha	21%
Open	157.5 ha	18%
Of which Rides @ 3m	16.5	1.8
Of which Roads @ 6m	10.3	1.1
Total Area	909.6 ha	100 %

The woodland has been managed sustainably in the past and this will continue. Table 2 shows the current production forecast from the previous plan.

Table 2 – Current Production Forecast

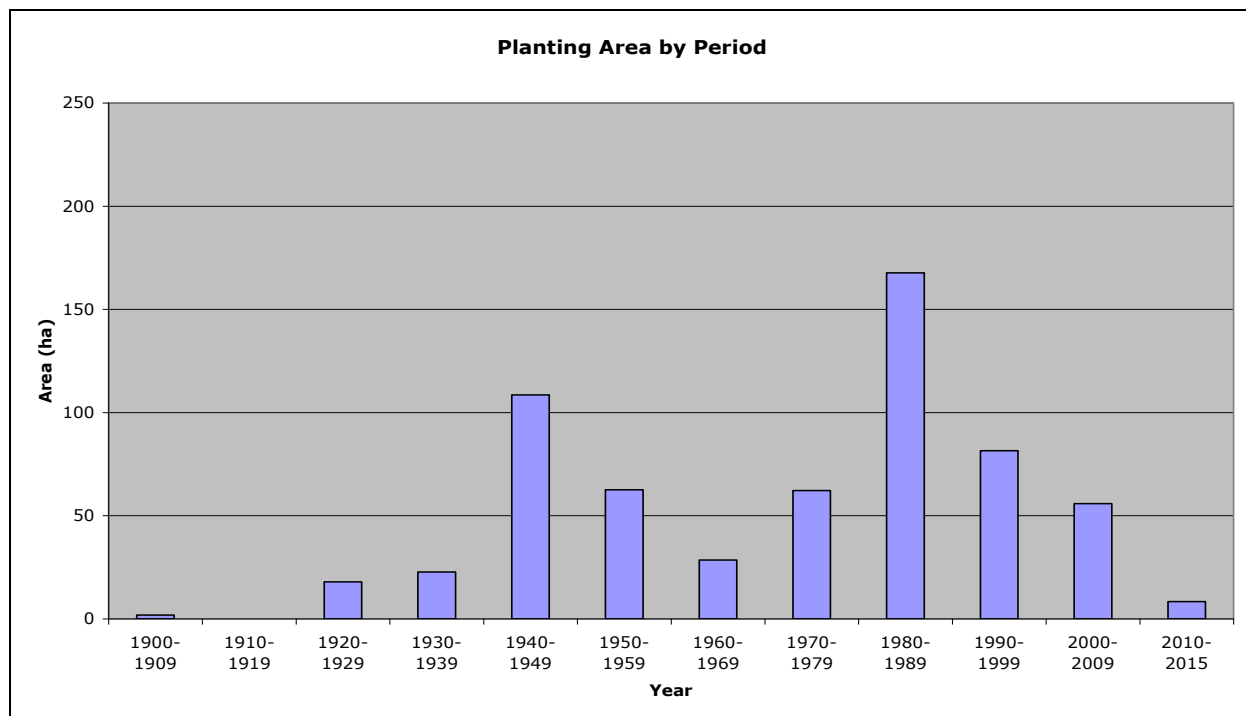
	Period	All Species	All Conifer	All Broadleaf
Volume	2013-2016	6530	6096	434
	2017-2021	4499	4297	203
To	2022-2026	4321	3928	394
	2027-2031	4781	4533	248
7cm	2032-2036	7271	6681	590
	2037-2041	5602	5171	431
	2042-2046	3760	3337	423
	2047-2051	3912	3577	335
	2052-2056	1971	1757	214
	2057-2061	2157	2124	34

Note: values given are for m³ per year for each year of that period.



Current Production Forecast based on existing Forest Design Plan

Fig. 4 – Planting Area by Period



- Figure 4 above shows how much area was planted in which time period.
- 55% of the woodland is second rotation.
- 45% of the woodland is first rotation.

3.2 Environmental

3.21 Retentions

- 75 ha of woodland will be managed as Long Term Retention for structural, ecological and aesthetic reasons. Some of these areas will be retained to the end of their natural lifespan.
- Deadwood will be retained where appropriate, working towards the Forestry Commission's policy on retention and creation, which is set out in the Forestry Commission's Practice Guide – Managing deadwood in forests and woodlands. An additional 5 ha failing/wet area has been identified as part of the plan review; to retain as standing deadwood for its conservation benefits. This area will be under thinned for the next five years and then thinned to remove good healthy trees, leaving standing deadwood and poor stems.
- As part of the forest plan review, Trees of Special Interest (TSIs) and areas of Long Term Retention have been identified. These are either individual trees that we have decided to preserve for their historic, intrinsic or environmental value or whole areas of trees which meet one of these criteria. These will be highlighted at the operational planning stage and future management of surrounding coupes will either preserve or enhance these areas. The list of these trees/areas is by no means finished and we intend to continue to add trees and areas over the course of the new plan.

3.22 Biodiversity

- Laughton FP contains many interesting areas and species including a SSSI (which has its own management plan), a Heronry, an existing Adder population and several notable plant species. Laughton Forest will be managed to maintain, and where possible enhance, the ecological interest across the plan area. We will continue our biological monitoring in order to ensure that our management remains sympathetic to the needs of wildlife.
- In the Tuetoes area there is an Adder hibernacula within a heather ride and the growth of surrounding trees is expected to shade out this area of open space in the next ten years. To prevent this and improve the habitat further; clear felling will take place at the same time as thinning the surrounding trees. This will move the edge of the open space out by 10-20 metres reducing shading. At this time, the ride on the southern edge of the Adder area will be opened up, increasing this open area and providing connectivity to open areas in the wider forest.
- Scotton Common is currently managed as open grassland. It would be preferable to manage this open area by grazing, however this is currently not an economically viable option. It is therefore planned to continue to manage the area by mowing with a tractor on an annual basis. If circumstances change and the possibility for grazing arises, this will be reconsidered.
- Areas around SSSIs will be managed in a way that is sympathetic to the aims of the SSSI management plan where possible and practical to do so.

3.3 Social

- Just over 100ha of the 909 ha plan area are freehold. There is public access to freehold parts of the plan area. Of the two freehold areas, access is not promoted in the Roses Ponds area because of the ecological sensitivity of the site, as well as the lack of parking. The Tuetoes area contains a Forestry Commission car park. There are two rights of way, one which follows an external boundary and one (a Byway Open to All Traffic) which bisects the woodland from Rainsford's Corner to Hardwick Grange Farm. The leasehold areas, which make up the majority of the woodland, surround the freehold and as such prevent expansion of recreation provision.
- The Tuetoes area will be managed as continuous cover by thinning and strip fells (where appropriate). This will minimise disruption in the accessible area. The only exception to this will be the clear felling for Adders (see 3.22).

3.4 Archaeology and Heritage

- The plan area contains a site which was a roman metal-working site and possible garrison.
- The area has had a long history of settlement. Various prehistoric implements from Neolithic and Bronze Age periods were found in the local area in 1934, and many tools from the Mesolithic period have been found in the Hardwick Hill area.
- The Roses Ponds area is thought to have been used as "retting pits". These would have been used to steep the flax plant in order to separate the fibres in the stems and then used for various applications including producing rope and twine.
- Any future finds or identifications will be managed in line with UKFS and, where appropriate, the County Archaeologist will be informed.

3.5 Infrastructure

- Roads will be upgraded throughout Laughton as the need for felling access arises.
- Ongoing maintenance of drains will continue. Laughton is typical of this area in that it is not very far above sea level and there is a high water table. As a result, it is expected that more major works will take place over the coming plan period to improve drainage and keep the land drained. The intention of this will be to prevent the loss of trees in some areas, due to ground conditions becoming too wet.

4.0 Restocking and Future Management

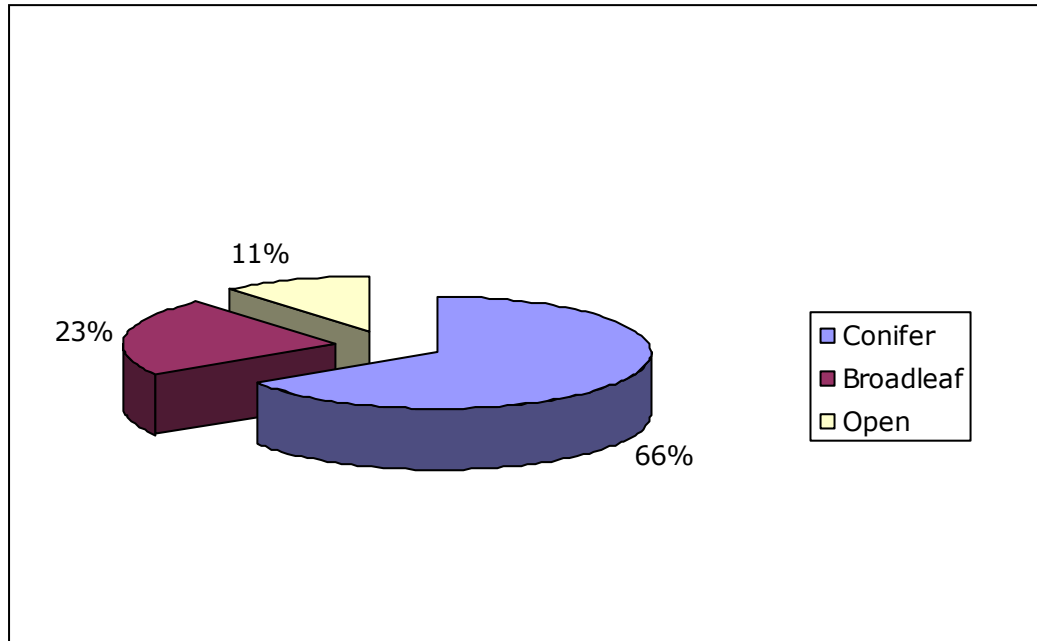
- Of the 909 ha plan area;
- The clearfell and restock element of the Forest Plan will amount to 48.2%. This is a reduction of 13.6% on the current plan. Restocking will be with a range of site appropriate conifer and broadleaved species.
- Those areas designated as being managed for Long Term Retention will amount to 8.6%. This is an increase of 4% on the current plan.
- The amount of open ground within the Forest Plan decreases slightly to 11.5%
- Those stands managed under continuous cover silvicultural systems will amount to 31 % of the area. This is an increase of 13.5% on the current plan.
- Table 3 and Figure 4 show a breakdown of future forest structure.
- As Corsican pine has been suffering from *Dothistroma* Needle Blight (DNB) and to mitigate for the potential effects of climate change, it is planned to diversify species when restocking. The following species have been trialled on recent restock sites within Laughton and it is planned to use them on future sites over the next 10 years:
- Restock/Underplanting species could include: Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*), Japanese Red Cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*), Swamp Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), Omorika/Serbian Spruce (*Picea omorika*), Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*), Oak (*Quercus spp*), Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*), Western Hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*) and Leyland Cypress (*Cupressocyparis leylandii*).
- It is hoped these conifers will provide a diverse mix of species when restocking Corsican Pine areas that are adaptable (such as being able to use Norway Spruce in wetter areas) and future proof.

- In broadleaf areas, restocking will be like for like but may include diversifications such as Oak or near natives (such as Beech (*Fagus* spp) and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)).

Table 3 – Future Species (as of 2066)

Species	Area (ha)	Percentage of Total Area
Conifer		
Corsican Pine	1	0.1
Scots Pine	10	1.1
Other Conifer	590	64.9
Total Conifer	600	66.0
Broadleaf		
Birch	22	2.4
Oak	2	0.2
Other Broadleaf	181	19.9
Total Broadleaf	204	22.5
Open	105	11.5
Of which Rides @ 3m	16.5	1.8
Of which Roads @ 6m	10.3	1.1
Total Area	909	100

Figure 5 - Future Forest Structure (2066)



5.0 Meeting and Monitoring Objectives

Objective	Description	Proposals	Methods of Monitoring
Woodland	The woodland will be managed to produce high quality commercial conifer and broadleaved timber using a variety of silvicultural systems which will be chosen to meet the other management objectives.	The timing, scale and shape of future felling operations will be designed to create a diverse woodland structure.	Monitored through SCDB.
Woodland	<i>Dothistroma</i> Needle Blight is now present throughout the whole district affecting the Corsican and Lodgepole pine stands.	In the most severe cases, premature felling will be used.	Monitored by Beat team and at FP review.
Woodland	Identify and appropriately manage Trees of Special Interest and Long Term Retention.	Areas and individual trees have been identified and more will be identified during the plan period. Identified areas/trees will be either preserved or enhanced during operations.	TSIs/LTR Highlighted at operational planning stage. Monitored by Beat, Planning and Environment/Heritage teams. Opportunities to enhance these areas or the surroundings of individual TSIs to be capitalized on if they arise during operations.

Biodiversity	Local area contains species of interest, including red wood ants, adder, and many notable bird and butterfly species.	There is an active monitoring programme which will continue to be used to improve management.	Up to date assessment and reports for both flora and fauna are readily available, see appendix (File FP document, held at Forest Office).
Biodiversity	Open space.	The current areas of open space will be managed to maintain their value to wildlife.	Beat team to monitor regeneration on open ground and act accordingly.
Recreation	Formal provision of the FC maintained car park.	Currently no proposals to expand or enhance any provisions.	Review at FP mid term review.
Heritage	Protect and conserve designated and non-designated features.	Currently no proposals but will review on a case by case basis.	Beat team review all known heritage features at the operational planning stage and to liaise with FC Historic Environment advisor and historical bodies when appropriate.
Forest Standards	The woodland will continue to be managed in a sustainable and productive way.	Guidelines set out be UKWAS, UKFS, and Forest District Strategic Plan will be adhered to.	Mid-term monitoring of the FP, UKWAS and SGS audits and Beat staff.

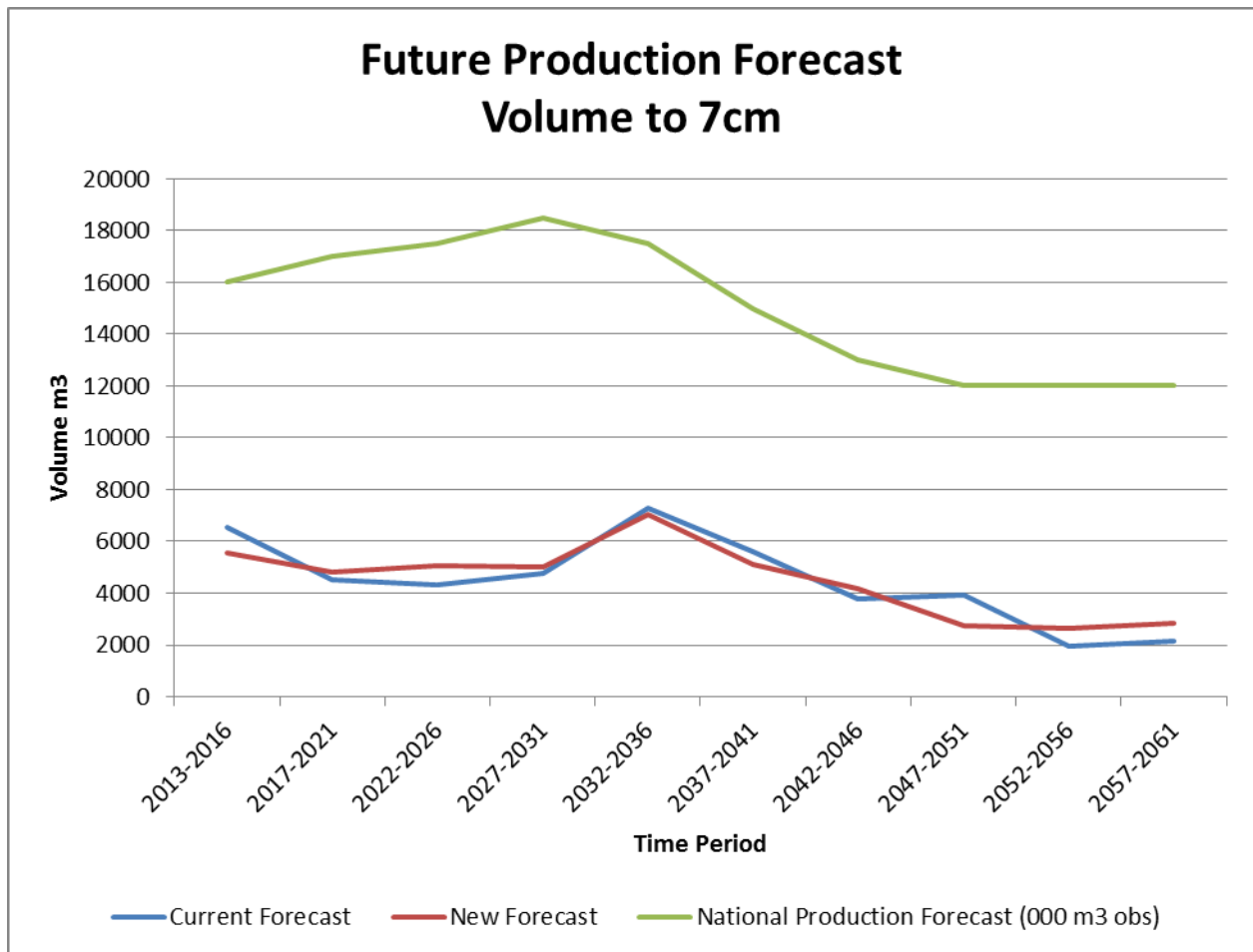
6.0 Economic forecast

The woodland will continue to be managed sustainably as set out in previous and current objectives relating to Forest Standards. Table 4 shows the future production forecast which takes into account changes in silvicultural systems and felling years.

Table 4 – Future Production Forecast

	Period	All Species	All Conifer	All Broadleaf
Volume To 7cm	2013-2016	5558	5125	433
	2017-2021	4834	4666	168
	2022-2026	5075	4651	423
	2027-2031	5007	4758	249
	2032-2036	7051	6477	575
	2037-2041	5097	4725	371
	2042-2046	4151	3685	465
	2047-2051	2762	2509	253
	2052-2056	2656	2420	236
	2057-2061	2816	2744	72

Note: values given are for m³ per year for each year of that period.



New production forecast comparing current and new forecasts with national average.

7.0 Consultation

7.1 Consultees

D Pickard & Sons Ltd.

Historic England

J Walker & Co. Ltd.

Laughton Parish Council

Lincolnshire County Council

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

Martin Robinson & Sons Timber Ltd.

Meynell Estates (att. Mr. J. S. Atkinson FRICS FAAV)

Mr. Graham Catley (Ornithological Consultant)

Mr Paul Kirby (Botanical Consultant)

Natural England

Other interested parties will be directed via on site signage to Gainsborough and Scotter Libraries where copies of the plan will be held.

All of the Forestry Commission's woodlands are assessed against the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) and as a result, Forestry Commission woodlands now carry the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) stamp of approval.



Forestry Commission
woodlands have
been certified in
accordance with the
rules of the Forest
Stewardship Council.



End of Document