

Operations Note 035

Date: 27 February 2014

# Stakeholder Engagement for Woodland Management Plans

## Purpose

This Operations Note provides guidance to land managers preparing woodland management plans (WMP) on the extent of stakeholder engagement they should undertake before submitting their plan for approval by the FC.

## Background

The [UK Forestry Standard](#) sets out the requirements and guidelines for sustainable forest management in the UK. The UKFS advocates WMP's as a means of demonstrating compliance with the UKFS requirements across the entire woodland over an extended timescale. This holistic view of management proposals provides a greater level of UKFS assurance and as a result can facilitate regulatory approvals. A WMP can also be used to communicate proposals and engage with interested parties.

The process of developing a management plan is set out in the UKFS (table 6.1) and anticipates contact with stakeholders and interested parties, including the local community when the management objectives are first developed at the scoping stage.

The need to engage with stakeholders during the development of a WMP is also picked-up throughout UKFS requirements and guidelines, in particular Good Forest Practice Requirements 10 and 13

The task of consultation can be split into two categories:

- **Statutory consultation** – The Forestry Commission is responsible for this. The FC has a duty to undertake consultation before awarding permission for felling proposals (and restocking) included in the management plan. These duties are set out in legislation and Ministerial Directions which include a requirement to publish felling proposals on a public register for 28 days for comment before approving them, and on few occasions can involve us seeking a solution on contested scheme issues with our regional Forestry and Woodlands Advisory Committee<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> In England, Forestry and Woodlands Advisory Committee is the working title of the Regional Advisory Committees as constituted under Section 37 of the Forestry Act 1967.

- **Stakeholder Engagement** - The land manager is responsible for this.

This term represents the discussions and notifications we expect land managers to undertake in the development of their WMP. Demonstrating stakeholder engagement and how stakeholder comments have been addressed in the Management Plan is likely to make approval of the plan and help subsequent regulatory permissions easier.

## Stakeholder Engagement

Table 1 provides guidelines on those stakeholders you may need to engage when developing the WMP. This is not exhaustive and the extent of stakeholder engagement should be proportionate to the WMP. Understanding the constraints that apply to the woodland and its visibility in the landscape can be just as important in determining an appropriate level of stakeholder engagement as the scale of the proposals within the WMP. The FC's [Land Information Search](#) can provide land managers with information on the constraints that apply to the woodland which will also help determine the level of engagement.

**Table 1: Stakeholders to engage with when developing your WMP.**

Stakeholder / Interested Party	When to contact them.
<a href="#">Natural England</a>	When the proposal is within the boundary or could affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protected Area (SPA), or RAMSAR Site. You are uncertain of the impacts on habitats or species.
<a href="#">Environment Agency</a>	When the proposals could affect water quality: either ground water or surface water flows.
County Archaeology Service	You can obtain information about known sites archaeology by consulting the Historic Environment Record (HER) available from the County Council. There is usually a charge for this information.
<a href="#">National Park Authority (NPA)</a> Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Conservation Board (AONB)	If the woodland is within a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the proposals include significant areas of clear-felling and/or species change.
Parish Council	You should consider consulting the parish council, as the representative body of the local community. This may be especially useful where the woodland is very visible from

Stakeholder / Interested Party	When to contact them.
	population centres or there are Public Rights of Way.
Neighbours with land adjoining the proposal site	We strongly recommend that land managers discuss their proposals with those neighbours whose properties might be affected. This might include neighbouring woodland owners and we encourage consideration of any proposals they may have for the management of their own woodland in the development of your proposals. In some cases we will make this a requirement before regulator approval can be provided.
Local Authority	Any proposal within a Conservation Area or which affect a Tree Preservation Order (either an individual tree or woodland). Any proposals within or that may affect a Local Nature Reserve. If the proposals include significant areas of clear-felling you should consider the need to discuss plans for timber loading and exit routes onto the public highway network with the relevant section of the Local Authority services.
<a href="#">English Heritage</a>	Where the woodland lies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On or adjacent to a Scheduled Ancient Monument.</li> <li>• In a World Heritage Site.</li> <li>• In a World Heritage Site buffer zone.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Local Access Forum</a>	Where Public Rights of Way cross the woodland, or the woodland has been dedicated for public access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act.
Parks and Gardens Trust	Where the proposal is within or adjacent to a registered park or parkland.
Fire and Rescue Service (FRS)	Where wildfire is identified as a risk to the management of the woodland. <b>Please note:</b> some FRS are now separate organisations from County Councils (e.g. Hampshire and Kent).
The relevant Commoners Association	Where works will take place on common land.
<a href="#">The appropriate Wildlife Trust</a>	Where works will take place on Special Wildlife Sites.

## Record Keeping

An over view of the stakeholder engagement should be recorded in the Stakeholder Engagement section of the management plan. You should also retain a record of the discussions you have with stakeholders and the notifications that you provided them with.

## Versions

Version 1 issued 20 December 2013

Version 2 issued 27 February 2014

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**English Woodland Grant Scheme**



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