

Forestry EIA application guidance: Road or quarry

This guidance is for anyone applying to the Forestry Commission (FC) for a 'stage 1' forestry Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) using the EIA road or quarry application form (England). Stage 1' is the plain English term used to describe Applications for Opinions (and Basic and Full Notification in relation to afforestation).

This guidance is designed to be read with the application form. You may wish to read this guidance in full prior to completing your form. Alternatively, if you only require guidance in relation to specific parts of the forms, simply skip to the corresponding parts of this guidance that elaborate on that part of the form.

The EIA road or quarry application form (England) can be found on the [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk).

Part 1 – Applicant details

Use Part 1 to fill in the details of the person who has or who will have primary control of the land on which the project is being proposed. In most instances, this will be the land owner, leaseholder or a tenant.

If the person with primary control of the land has a Customer Reference Number (CRN) from the Rural Payments Agency or a Single Business Identifier (SBI) for their business, please fill this in here. If not, leave these sections blank.

If you are completing this form as an agent of the person with primary control of the land, you should not insert any details relating to yourself or your business in this section.

Part 2 – Agent or woodland manager's details

Use Part 2 to fill in agent details. If you do not have an agent, please leave this section blank. The agent or woodland manager is the person you have authorised to act on your behalf in relation to the proposed project.

If the agent has a Customer Reference Number (CRN) from the Rural Payments Agency, please fill this in here.

You do **not** need to supply the Forestry Commission with an agent authority form to submit a standalone 'stage 1' EIA application for deforestation (i.e. the [EIA road or quarry application form](#)) on behalf of your client. However, you may require one if you are applying for other permissions or licences.

Part 3 – Property details

Please provide property details so the FC can identify the land where the project is being proposed. Please take care to ensure the name of the property used here is the same as other documentation where it is recorded. Consistency of naming across all records will aid cross-referencing and communication between parties.

Please provide an OS grid reference for the centre of your proposal area. You can obtain an OS grid reference using the [Forestry Commission Map Browser](#).

If you have a County Parish Holding (CPH) number issued by the Rural Payments Agency, please add it in this section. If not, please leave blank.

If you don't know the local planning authority, you can find them through your local council.

Part 4 – Proposals on or affecting sensitive areas

Whether your proposal lies completely or partly within one of these 'sensitive areas' will impact upon what threshold your proposal falls within.

Some thresholds allow for you, and the FC, to **presume** that the proposal will not be likely to have a significant effect on the environment (and therefore an EIA 'stage 2' Application for Consent, incorporating an Environmental Statement, is unlikely to be required). However, this presumption is **not a guarantee**, and only provides a 'starting point' for the FC's decision.

All other proposals will be examined by the FC without any presumption of the proposal's effect on the environment.

The thresholds determine which statutory timescales apply for the FC to respond to your EIA 'stage 1' application. For more information, see the threshold tables for roads and quarries in Annex 1 of your form.

Forestry proposals within some sensitive areas and other statutory designations require a separate consent from the authorities responsible for those sites (for example Historic England in relation to Scheduled Monuments). Applicants must ensure that all necessary permissions are in place prior to starting any forestry works.

You can find out more about your key obligations on [Forestry project checks: Constraints](#). This tells you what actions you need to consider after running a [Land Information Search](#) in relation to individual constraints.

4.1 Is your proposal on any of the following sensitive areas?

You must answer 'yes' or 'no' to each of these nationally important designations to declare whether your proposal sits within their area.

You can use the [Forestry Commission's Land Information Search tool](#) and [Defra's MAGIC Map](#) to identify these sensitive areas, with the following caveats:

- ❑ **Proposed SSSIs:** although Sites of Special Scientific Interest are mapped, proposed SSSIs are not; if your land has been proposed as a SSSI then you, as the land owner, will have received communications from Natural England about the proposal. Declare the proposed SSSI here. If you have not received a notification from Natural England then you may assume that the land is not a proposed SSSI. Agents must check with their clients prior to making this assumption.
- ❑ **The Norfolk Broads:** are mapped as a National Park.
- ❑ **'Local' Nature Reserves:** The forestry EIA regulations list 'local' nature reserves that are not designated by local authorities as a 'sensitive area'. These are nature reserves that are designated by bodies other than the local authority, such as a National Park Authority or town or parish council. There are fewer nature reserves that are in this category. They will be mapped on [Forestry Commission's Land Information Search](#) and [Defra's MAGIC Map](#) as 'Local Nature Reserves'. If a search indicates a local nature reserve on your land, check [Natural England's Designated Sites page](#) to see whether its declaring authority is a local authority (such as a borough or county council) or otherwise (for example, a National Park Authority). If the declaring authority is **not** a local authority, the local nature reserve will be considered a sensitive area.

Many of the identified sensitive areas require separate permissions from bodies other than the FC before works on those sites may commence. Refer to the [Forestry project checks: Constraints](#) to help guide you on what you need to do in relation to particular constraints. Applicants must ensure that all necessary permissions are in place prior to starting their approved forestry project.

4.2 If you have indicated 'yes' to any of the sensitivities listed in Part 4.1 please provide details of its features and of the reason for designation(s).

You can find details of designations on the relevant statutory body's web page. For example, SSSIs are listed on Natural England's [Designated Sites view](#).

If you are not sure who to contact, [Forestry project checks: Constraints](#) will give you further information.

4.3 If your proposal sits outside a sensitive area, does it still have the potential to affect the features of interest within a sensitive area?

The [Forestry Commission's Land Information Search](#) tells you when your proposal is within 500m of a constraint, including those that make up 'sensitive areas' (as listed in 4.1). If your proposal is within 500m of a sensitive area, you may still affect that sensitive area. Declare this in 4.3.

You should also consider sensitive areas that are further away if they are linked to your proposal in some way. This could be via a watercourse or because of the flight path of a particular bird species. If you are unsure, you can ask for advice from the statutory body that governs that sensitive area. A list of these is found on [Forestry project checks: Constraints](#).

4.4 If the site is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), what is its listed condition?

Refer to Natural England's [Designated Sites view](#), where you will be able to find the listed condition for all SSSIs, or ask your Natural England advisor.

For SSSIs that have multiple condition assessments across the site, tick all that apply.

Part 5 – Proposal size

5.1 What is the size of your road or quarry proposal?

Tick the threshold in the table that applies to the area of road that you intend to create/maintain/alter, and/or the area of your quarry.

If your proposal contains both a road and a quarry, please note the total area of the roads, **and** the total area of the quarry in both rows. Mixed applications for forest roads and quarries must be split into two separate applications for the purposes of assigning an EIA threshold.

The table on the form match the thresholds in the Regulations and will help determine how the FC processes your EIA 'stage 1' application.

You will be asked about adjacent projects in Part 7, so do not include adjacent projects here.

The area of the road is its length in metres multiplied by its width in metres. Metres squared (m²) can be converted into hectares (ha) by dividing by 10,000.

Part 6 – Proposal overview

6.1 Please provide an overview of your forest roads and/or quarries proposal.

Give your answers to the nearest tenth of a hectare. You can use the [Forestry Commission Map Browser](#) to measure the area of your proposal.

The area of the road is its length in metres times its width in metres.

Metres squared (m²) can be converted into hectares (ha) by dividing by 10,000. You could also measure this area using online mapping. Use the [Forestry Commission Map Browser](#) layers to measure how much of your proposal sits on sensitive areas (listed in Part 4).

You will be asked about adjacent projects in Part 7, so do not include adjacent projects here.

6.2 Please outline the aims and objectives of your forest roads and/or quarries proposal.

You must provide a brief but detailed overview of your forest road and/or quarry proposal, **proportionate to the scale of your proposal**.

Your aims and objectives are: the purpose of your forestry proposal, and measurable outcomes you want the completed project to deliver (for example, to facilitate timber extraction).

Comment on the design of your proposal: the type of route you are making (light track/forwarder track), plans for drainage, and site access, including turning and stacking areas. Explain how your design will help deliver your aims and objectives.

You should also show this in your site maps and plans (see Part 10).

More information

The minimum appropriate standards for forest roads are set out in Operations Note 25: [Roads and tracks](#).

Note: If you are planning to install culverts, change culverts or bridges or any plan that alters the flow of a watercourse, you may need to apply for consent from the appropriate authority before the work can go ahead. This may be the local planning authority (for ordinary watercourses), Environment Agency (for main rivers) or (if your proposal is in an internal drainage district) the internal drainage board – refer to the [Association of Drainage Authorities' map](#) to find these.

6.3 Please indicate how you intend to carry out the work for your forest road and/or quarry proposal.

You can either:

- attach an operational plan for carrying out the work
- or
- give details on the form (or in an attached map)

More information about operational plans can be found in the [UK Forestry Standard](#). The UK Forestry Standard states that every project should include an operational plan to show how you intend to carry out the work. The FC can approve the EIA without an operational plan, but one must be produced in order for your approved project to be UKFS-compliant.

You may wish to include:

- bio-security considerations when moving soil
- roadside excavation for construction materials
- appropriate felling widths
- choice of machinery; for example, bulldozer, wheeled excavator
- your plan for managing run-off and reducing the risk of sediment pollution

This may best be portrayed on a map or plan of your site.

More information

The minimum appropriate standards for forest roads are set out in Operations Note 25: [Roads and tracks](#).

[Managing forest operations to protect the water environment](#) sets out good operational practice for forest roads and quarries.

Part 7 – Adjacent projects

Any EIA forest roads and/or quarries projects completed within the last five years, adjacent to your proposal must be considered as part of your proposal. This may change your proposal area and therefore how the FC processes your application.

Adjacency is relevant to establishing the land sensitivity and threshold of your proposal. **You do not need to seek engagement with stakeholders in relation to adjacent projects.**

You should consider projects to be 'adjacent' if they are (in part or in whole) within 500m of the boundary of your proposal.

7.1 Is there a forest road or quarry project adjacent to your proposal that has been completed within the last five years?

An adjacent project may be on your land, or it may be on a neighbouring property.

A site survey should identify nearby forest road or quarry projects. Desk based checks are also possible. Projects that have come to the FC for grant funding can be found on online using the Forestry Commission's Land Information Search. Historical aerial photography, widely available online, can also be of use.

Please indicate 'yes' or 'no'.

7.2 How many hectares of forest roads and/or quarries have been completed on adjacent sites within the past five years?

Please give the area of recent completed projects. If there are none, please put 0 hectares here.

7.3 Adding this to your current forest roads and/or quarries proposal listed in 6.1, what is the new total area of your proposal?

If 0 ha are being added (from adjacent projects), please just re-supply your original proposal area here.

7.4 Do adjacent projects sit within or affect additional sensitive areas (as defined in Part 4) not also covered by your proposal?

Adjacent projects could be on or affecting sensitive areas that your existing proposal did not affect. You, and the FC, will need to take these into account when considering your proposal's threshold. As in Part 4.1, you should use the [Forestry Commission's Land Information Search](#) and [Defra's MAGIC Map](#) to identify sensitive areas, and if there are any, give details of whether they are a National Park or National landscape (formerly known as an AONB), or another sensitive area. Detail how they are affected by adjacent projects. If not, mark 'No'.

Part 8 – Environment checks A – Land Use

A.i. How is the current land use of your proposal area best described? Identify the proportion of current land use to the nearest 10%

Provide the percentage splits that best apply to your land's current use; for example, 50% scrub, 50% arable.

Make sure you show these land use types on your project plan, indicating recent land use change (from within the last three years) and the land use on adjacent land. You could use your Rural Payments Agency land code annual returns (if you have one) to see any differences in land use in the past years.

Background information

When roads and/or quarries cross into non-woodland, they can have a greater visual impact on the landscape; they may also run into semi-natural habitats, and habitat features of interest. It's important that the FC can see how your project will impact both woodland and non-woodland areas by seeing the current land use across your proposal area.

Part 8 – Environment checks B – Biodiversity

B.i. Have any priority habitats (under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006) or habitat features been identified within, or which may be affected by, the proposal area?

As for B.ii. below.

B.ii. Have any protected species or species of principal importance, or other species important to the area, been identified within, or which may be affected by, the proposal area?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for B.i. and B.ii

Habitat checks

- [Defra's MAGIC Map](#) will show whether your site has been mapped as a priority habitat. Go to *Habitats and Species > Habitats > various Priority Habitat Inventory* layers to check.
- You should check for both habitats and habitat features using a walkover survey.

Species and habitat checks

- ❑ **For every proposal**, you must show you have been in touch with your Local Environment Records Centre (LERC). This centre can provide information they hold on habitats and species that have been recorded on your land. They should be the first place you contact. There may be a charge for the information they hold, but it could potentially avoid the need to undertake a site survey.
- ❑ Use Defra's MAGIC Map and the Forestry Commission Map Browser to check for nearby RSPB reserves and RSPB important bird areas, and priority creation areas for red squirrels. The latter are mostly found in the north of England.
- ❑ Contact the Biological Records Centre. This national centre has vast datasets on species from the volunteer recording community.
- ❑ Use the National Biodiversity Network's (NBN) Atlas to look for recorded priority habitats, important and recorded species, and other mapped environment features. Note: NBN Atlas have controls on how the information they publish can be used. Read the terms and conditions for the use of published data and credit any data providers in any reports or plans you produce.
- ❑ Your local wildlife trust can provide advice based on any records they hold.
- ❑ The Woodland Wildlife Toolkit can provide information about important woodland species, and how to check for them. It is not designed to identify species that are present on any site, but gives practical guidance on how to plan forestry operations in a way that is sympathetic to the needs of identified species.

Species and habitats surveys

- ❑ If initial investigations have identified priority habitats or species, you may need to undertake further surveys, such as a Phase 1 or Phase 2 Habitat Survey, or a species survey.
- ❑ Trained ecologists who can undertake survey work can be found using the directory provided by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Alternatively, a forestry agent will likely be able to organise these surveys on your behalf.
- ❑ If it is likely you will need a species survey, seek advice from the Forestry Commission. Some surveys, such as breeding bird surveys (relevant for afforestation projects that may affect open habitat birds), need to take into account surrounding land up to 1km from your site. Other constraints have smaller buffer zones. Take into account the seasonality of surveys and plan ahead to avoid delaying your project.

Existing surveys can be used, but should ideally be from the most recent survey season. Surveys will be subject to verification by the Forestry Commission, which may require further information from you if the information is inadequate.

If your answer to either B.i. or B.ii. is 'yes'

- Mark your map/plan with habitat features and priority habitats.
- Explain how your project plan will avoid, mitigate or compensate for any effect on these habitats or species. For more information refer to the background information below.
- Use Part 9 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement, if any, you have undertaken for B.i. and B.ii. and attach any evidence – including copies of data searches and a report from the local environment records centre. You may also have information from other experts.

Background information

Priority habitats are set out under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. They are habitats of principal importance for conservation in England. More information, including definitions of these habitats, can be found on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's [list of UK BAP Priority Habitats](#) which, while now out of date, formed the basis for the section 41 list.

Habitat features are indicators of remnant priority habitat and might include: features such as ponds, ancient hedgerows, wet flushes and spring lines.

Both priority habitats and habitat features have the potential to harbour important species, so it is important to identify them in your proposal area. Your proposal should not result in the loss of an important habitat.

Certain species are protected in England under numerous lists or legislation. Other species are considered at risk, or important.

- European Protected Species, such as dormice, bats and otters, are protected in UK law under The Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017.
- The schedules of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 protect wild birds, certain animals and certain plants.
- The Red Data Book, maintained by the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) maintains an international list, published as the Red Data Book, of species categorised by perceived risk. This includes a Red Data Bird List.

- The UK Red list for birds includes the IUCN red list, as well as an amber list of birds with unfavourable conservation status.
- Other species are identified as species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England, under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

However, a species of plant or animal does not have to feature on a list to be considered important to a local area.

Your proposal should not result in a loss of biodiversity in its area, and you should undergo the appropriate level of field checks, including surveys where needed, to check your proposal area for protected and important species. This may include looking beyond your proposal area at adjacent and nearby land.

If you have identified a protected species you may need to commission additional surveys. Most protected species will require a licence in order to disturb them and their habitats. Rules differ for how they are protected. You will be asked to confirm you understand your particular obligations towards European Protected Species, wild birds, and badgers in parts B.iii. – B.v., below.

B.iii. Have you considered the effect your proposal will have on wild birds in the area and diversity of habitat(s) for wild birds?

As for B.v. below.

B.iv. Are you aware of the Good Practice guidance to safeguard European Protected Species when undertaking forestry operations and the need to obtain a licence if you cannot comply with the Good Practice?

As for B.v. below.

B.v. Are you aware of the Good Practice guidance to safeguard badgers when undertaking forestry operations and the need to obtain a licence if you cannot comply with the Good Practice?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for B.iii. – B.v.

Landowners are legally obliged to take account of protected species.

Please indicate 'yes' to parts B.iii. – B.v. to show that you are familiar with your obligations with regard to wild birds, European Protected Species, and badgers.

More information on managing and protecting woodland wildlife, a checklist for protecting European Protected Species during woodland operations, and information on wildlife licences can be found in the GOV.UK guidance [Manage and protect woodland wildlife](#).

B.vi. Have any Local Sites been identified that may be affected by your proposal?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for B.vi.

Check for Local Sites:

- Check local authority information online or contact the [Local Environment Records Centre \(LERC\)](#).
- If your local authority has a Local Nature Recovery Strategy they may have already prepared a map of local sites.
- For geological sites, [The Geology Trusts](#) can provide local records and maps.
- For geological sites, you can find county-based geo-conservation volunteer groups in England using [GeoConservationUK](#). They will keep a record of geological sites that are important to the region.

If your answer to B.vi. is 'yes'

- Describe the features identified on the form.

- Keep a record of all the evidence you have gathered, and declare it in Part 9.2 – Evidence Log.
- Provide a map from the Local Environment Records Centre, your local authority, GeoConservationUK or The Geology Trusts.
- Engage with the authority who manage the site – often the local authority in partnership with other organisations – to find out how you can mitigate any impact from your proposal.
- Use Part 9 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement you have undertaken for B.vi., attach any evidence and log your proposed mitigation.

Background information

Local Sites are non-statutorily protected sites, designated locally for their substantive nature conservation importance, either for wildlife or geology. They are designated by locally developed criteria and are generally mapped at a county level.

Their names may vary across the country (for example, Local Wildlife Site, Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI), etc.), but they can all be referred to as Local Sites. There are over 40,000 such sites in England, some with as high quality biodiversity as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Local Sites are designated, monitored and protected by Local Sites Partnerships, usually involving a combination of the local authorities, The Wildlife Trust, and local records centres.

Part 8 – Environment checks C – Water and soils

The FC produces the UK Forestry Standard Practice Guide: [Managing forest operations to protect the water environment](#). Section 5 sets out how to design a road or quarry project in a way that minimises its impact on water and soils. The FC will take these design principles into account when screening your project.

C.i. Have any public or private drinking water supplies been identified within or which may be affected by your proposal?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for C.i.

You can identify drinking water supplies using the following:

- Conduct a walkover survey to look for obvious water sources and supply infrastructure.
- Check with relevant neighbours and landowners. Ask whether they have records or evidence of existing licence agreements, access routes or buried pipes.
- Check with the Environment Agency, local water company and local authority for drinking water supplies and associated infrastructure. The local authority or local water company may also have records of drinking water quality testing.

If your answer to C.i. is 'yes'

- Mark water-related features on your project map.
- You will need to incorporate appropriate buffer zones around certain water-related features. The UK Forestry Standard lists buffers in its Guidelines on Forests and Water. Make sure these buffers are visible on your maps.
- When designing a forest road, consider how it will cross water supply routes without pollution risk. Make sure that your forest road and/or quarry, and their drainage, do not affect water sources that need protecting. Forest drains should be disconnected and given appropriate buffer zones from all watercourses and water bodies. Refer to their advice in your application.
- It is good practice to engage with the Environment Agency, local water company or local authority when your road or quarry proposal is likely to impact on the yield of drinking water abstraction locations (where water is taken out of the ground). Use their advice to address your proposal's potential impact on drinking water supplies.
- Use Part 9 of the form to record what, if any, stakeholder engagement you have undertaken for C.i., attach any evidence and log your proposed mitigation.

Background information

Public and private drinking water supplies include water bodies that provide drinking water, and water supply infrastructure, such as abstraction points (where water is taken out of the ground), wells and bore holes, pumps and open / covered reservoirs.

C.ii. Is your proposal in an area identified by the Environment Agency as a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone or a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for C.ii.

Find Nitrate Vulnerable Zones and Drinking Water Safeguard Zones. Find out whether your proposal sits in these zones by using the [Environment Agency's map of environment data for farmers and landowners](#).

Nitrate Vulnerable Zones are also found as a layer on [Defra's MAGIC Map](#):

- *Designations > Land-Based Designations > Non-statutory > Drinking Water Safeguard Zones (Surface water) (England)*
- *Designations > Land-Based Designations > Non-statutory > Drinking Water Safeguard Zones (Groundwater) (England)*

If your answer to C.ii. is 'yes'

- If your proposal is in a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone you must follow the [legal requirements outlined on GOV.UK](#) on the use of nitrogen fertiliser and storing of organic manure used in your proposal. Make sure that your proposal outline (Part 6) includes these details.
- If your proposal is in a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone (SgZ) you must take care when using any 'at risk' substances listed on the [Environment Agency map](#), as these could cause pollution of water. There is also [water protection advice available on the Voluntary Initiative website](#).
- Make sure that your forest road and/or quarry, and their drainage, do not affect water sources that need protecting. Forest drains should be disconnected and buffered appropriately from all watercourses and water bodies.
- You may wish to engage with the Environment Agency.

- Use Part 9 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement, if any, you have undertaken for C.ii., attach any evidence and log your proposed mitigation.

Background information

Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) are areas designated as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution.

Drinking water safeguard zones (SgZs) are designated areas in which the use of certain substances must be carefully managed to prevent the pollution of drinking water.

C.iii. Is your proposal in an area identified by the Environment Agency where the quality of riparian and/or surface water is an issue?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for C.iii.

Check your area's water quality:

- Conduct a walkover survey and mark any water bodies and riparian zones, flowing water, springs and flushes (where groundwater seeps up to surface level) on your map.
- Use the [Forestry Commission Map Browser](#) layer: *Data > Targeting and scoring > CS WCM Water – Water Quality* to find whether your proposal sits near a water body that is failing or at risk of failure due to water quality issues – these are areas that are 'high spatial priority' or 'lower spatial' priority on the map. If you have identified an area with a water quality issue, you will then need to identify which bodies of water your proposal could affect.

If you answer 'yes' to C.iii.

- Contact the Environment Agency and get their advice on how your proposal might affect water quality in the area. Use this to inform your proposal design so you do not make water quality issues worse.
- You should consider the soil type in the area. Depending on the soil type, roads and quarries proposals can lead to higher erosion, which might lead to increased sedimentation in nearby water, again affecting its quality.
- When designing a forest road, use Operations Note 25: [Roads and tracks](#) to design a route that avoids sensitive riparian areas. Make sure that the forest drains (including roadside drains) are disconnected from watercourses and water bodies.

- Design your road with a gradient of at least 3% - but no more than 10% (forest tracks can be steeper, if required). This gradient will allow water to move in a controlled fashion through your route's drainage system, and helps your proposal avoid causing localised flooding.
- Plan where captured water can be safely released from your infrastructure proposal via culverts and/or into silt traps, and avoid direct release into riparian zones / flowing water.
- You could also check that your proposal is suitable to the area by reviewing the area's River Basin Management Plan. If you are unsure, you can ask the Environment Agency for further advice.
- Use Part 9 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement you have undertaken for C.iii., attach any evidence and log your proposed mitigation.

Background information

"Riparian" means related to or situated adjacent to a water course or water body, typically a river or lake.

Badly designed forest roads and quarries and their drainage systems can cause long term damage to riparian and surface water. In particular, sediment discharge from your proposal and water drains that go directly into watercourses, could have a negative impact, as can fuels and lubricants from machinery.

Your proposal may go on to affect statutorily protected river systems, such as SACs and SSSIs.

C.iv. Is your proposal in an area identified by the Environment Agency where groundwaters are at poor quantitative status?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for C.iv.

You can identify poor quantitative status by using the Forestry Commission Browser layer:

- *Data > Targeting and scoring > W4W Less-than-good Quantitative Status*

If your answer to C.iv. is 'yes'

- Forest roads and/or quarries must not cause further deterioration to groundwater quantities. You can find out more about groundwater protection in the [UK Forestry Standard](#).
- You could also check that your afforestation proposal is suitable to the area by reviewing the area's River Basin Management Plan, if there is one available.
- You can contact the Environment Agency for further advice.
- Use Part 9 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement, if any, you have undertaken for C.iv., attach any evidence and log your proposed mitigation.

Background information

"Groundwater" refers to is all water beneath the surface of the ground. "Poor quantitative status" means that there could be limited groundwater availability. Your proposal may affect how water drains from the site, and go on to affect the water quantity of statutorily protected river systems, such as SACs and SSSIs.

C.v. Is your proposal adjacent to a watercourse and/or does it affect flood defence structures or facilities?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for C.v.

- Check for watercourses, flood facilities and flood risk. Conduct a walkover survey and locate and mark the following:
 - flowing water bodies
 - flood plain boundaries
 - flood defences*
 - other flood and river control infrastructure

*Flood defences include any bank, wall, embankment, barrier, whether natural or artificial, against the inundation. This can include natural or artificial high ground and river control structures include measuring devices, sluices, weirs, pumps and pipes.

- In addition to a walkover survey, check maps for any watercourses. Watercourses include all rivers, streams, ditches, drains, canals, cuts, culverts, dykes, sluices, sewers and passages through which water flows, except a public sewer or drain.

- You can check long term local flood risk in your area on GOV.UK. You can also find background on flood risk management on GOV.UK.
- Identify the flood plain using the flood map on GOV.UK and see if your proposal lies within it.

If your answer to C.v. is 'yes'

- Record all features on your project plan/map.
- Read about environmental permits for flood risk activities on GOV.UK.
- If your proposal will affect a main river or flood defence you will need to engage with the Environment Agency. Speak to the Environment Agency to check appropriate buffer zones around main rivers, tidal main rivers and flood defences. View a map of England's main rivers.
- In areas of high potential flood risk, it's useful to engage with the Environmental Agency on how your forest road proposal can reduce the potential effects of flooding caused by its drainage and infrastructure.
- If your proposal sits within an Internal Drainage District, you may need to consult the Internal Drainage Board. You can find these districts on the Association of Drainage Authorities' interactive map.
- If your proposal may affect an ordinary watercourse (ie: not main rivers), you may need to consult the local authority.
- You will also require consent if you plan to:
 - change a culvert or bridge
 - if your culvert redirects a watercourseRefer to Operations Note 25: Roads and tracks for more information.
- You may also need to engage with any relevant neighbours to find out whether existing flood structures will be adversely affected, or byelaws breached by, your proposal.
- Use Part 9 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement, if any, you have undertaken for C.v., attach any evidence and log your proposed mitigation.

Background information

Forest roads and quarries can make flood risk worse. Their infrastructure can block flood flows, and their drains can change how water flows across the land.

C.vi. Have any other water features been identified within, or which may be affected by your proposal?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for C.vi.

Find water features:

- Conduct a walkover survey to look for water features other than drinking water supplies and watercourses. This may include adits (drainage used by mines), springs, seepage and wetland areas, ponds and lakes.
- If you have already identified watercourses and drinking water supplies in C.i. and C.v., you do not need to include these again here.

If your answer to C.vi. is 'yes'

Provide further information on the form:

- Mark water-related features on your project map.
- Seek Environment Agency guidance, or, if necessary contact the Environment Agency for advice if your proposal is likely to have a significant effect on a water feature.
- Use Part 9 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement, if any, you have undertaken for C.vi., attach any evidence and log your proposed mitigation.

Background information

Water features are any bodies of water on your land, including boreholes, wells, adits (mine entrances used for drainage), springs, seepage and wetland areas, ponds, lakes and watercourses. You should identify drinking water supplies and watercourses in parts C.i. and C.v. as proposals affecting these require engagement with multiple statutory bodies. Other water features are less likely to require engagement, but you should seek advice from the Environment Agency if you are concerned about your project's likely effect.

C.vii. Is your proposal on or near an area of peaty soil?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for C.vii.

Find peaty soils:

- Use the [Forestry Commission Map Browser](#) to identify peaty soils, using the layer:
 - *Data > Constraints > Natural England Peat Map*

These are labelled as deep peaty soils, shallow peaty soils and soils with peaty pockets.

- The peat map does not cover all peaty areas, so you should also conduct a thorough walkover of your site, or a soil survey, particularly when peaty soils are known to be nearby.
- Make sure you also consider your proposal's impact on any bog or wetland habitat adjacent to your proposal.

If your answer to C.vii. is 'yes'

- Contact Natural England for advice.
- Refer to the [England Peat Action Plan](#) government policy paper, and the [Decision support framework for peatland protection, the establishment of new woodland and re-establishment of existing woodland on peatland in England](#) produced by the Forestry Commission, Forest Research and Natural England.
- Detail how your project plan and operational plan are designed to avoid, mitigate and compensate for any effect on peaty soil.
- If there are peaty soils and areas of deep peat, show where those lie on your map or plan and explain how your proposal accounts for them.
- Use Part 9 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement, if any, you have undertaken for C.vii., attach any evidence and log your proposed mitigation.

Background information

Peaty soils and organo-mineral soils (also known as shallow peat) have delicate hydrological systems that can be affected by nearby forestry projects. They are also important carbon stores and can often be priority habitat. You should avoid works that compromise the hydrology of adjacent bog or wetland habitats, or work that disturbs peaty soils.

Part 8 – Environment checks D – Landscape character

D.i. What is the national landscape character area?

How to identify national landscape character

- Identify the national character area (NCA) on [Defra's MAGIC Map](#), using the layer:
 - *Landscape > Landscape Classifications > National Character Areas (England)*
- Write it on your form as it is written on [Defra's MAGIC Map](#); for example, 'Severn and Avon Vales'.

Background information

England is divided – by natural lines in the landscape, rather than by administrative boundaries – into 159 distinct National Character Areas (NCAs).

[Natural England's online list of all NCA profiles](#) provides data, landscape descriptions and statements of environmental opportunity which should inform the design of your forest roads and/or quarries proposal.

D.ii. What is the local landscape character type?

How to identify local landscape character

- Contact the local authority to find out whether there is a character statement for the area. They may have carried out a [landscape character assessment](#) (LCA) and be able to provide you with a map.
- Describe the local landscape in a few words, for example 'wooded estate downland'.
- Only very large proposals are likely to span more than one character area.

Background information

Local landscape character statements are usually produced by the local authorities and are used to identify and describe variation in the character of the landscape. These authorities also have the power to designate local landscapes of importance (local landscape designations, or LLD) in order to protect them from man-made interventions.

D.iii. Will a road/quarry in this location significantly negatively impact the landscape character?

If you are minded to mark 'no', first make sure you:

- Conduct a walk over survey of your site, taking plenty of photographs.
- Use the [UK Forestry Standard's](#) guidelines on landscape (UKFS – Landscape, section 6.4) to make sure your proposal design accounts for local landscape characteristics.
- Refer to any landscape character assessments and the National Character Area for your proposal location.
- Evidence stakeholder engagement, particularly with neighbours, on impacts such as loss or view or obstruction of access.
- When your proposal is in a protected landscape (for example, a National Park), consult with the relevant authority (for example, the National Parks Authority) on your proposal's potential to integrate into the landscape. The GOV.UK page [Forestry project checks: Constraints](#) lists possible protected landscape types.
- Use Part 9 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement, if any, you have undertaken for D.iii., attach any evidence, such as details from the character assessment, and log your proposed mitigation.

D.iv. Has full planning consent been granted by the planning authority?

As for D.v. below

D.v. Has permitted development been granted by the planning authority?

How to answer D.iv. and D.v.

More information about planning consent and permitted development are found at the top of your EIA road or quarry application form.

Engage with the local planning authority over whether your proposal counts as permitted development or whether it needs planning consent.

Provide information on the form to answer D.iv. and D.v. and then use Part 9.2 of the form to attach evidence from the local planning authority if you have it. You will be asked to declare if you've attached this evidence in Part 11 – Declarations.

Background information

Permitted development: Where only permitted development is granted by the planning authority, the Forestry Commission is required to make the EIA determination.

Planning consent: The FC do not expect forest road or quarry projects to require full planning consent. If your proposal requires full planning consent it is likely that it will be considered by the local planning authority under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, rather than by the FC under the EIA forestry regulations. If you have full planning consent for your road or quarries project, supply it to the FC so that the FC can check that your project requires a Forestry EIA.

Part 8 – Environment checks E – Historic environment

E.i. Have any local historic environment records identified features which may be affected by your proposal?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for E.i.

Find historic features:

- **For every proposal**, you must provide your correspondence with the local authority historic environment / archaeology service and obtain Historic Environment Record (HER) and Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) maps. If local HLC data is not available, national HLC available in the 'Landscape' section of Defra's MAGIC Map can be used.
- You may also wish to check (or ask the local authority historic environment service to check) the following sources for historic features:
 - LiDAR data (available from the Environment Agency)
 - digital aerial photographs (where available online, such as historic imagery on Google Earth)
 - selected historic mapping where known to exist (this may involve visits by the specialist to selected archives – the local historic environment service will be able

to advise, or use online resources such as those provided by the [National Library of Scotland](#))

- Conduct a visual inspection yourself of your site to identify potential historic environment features or those identified within the HER; for example, ridge and furrow or burial mounds. Pay particular attention to uncultivated land, such as heathland, upland moor and existing woodland. Historic features often survive well in existing woodland, but many have not yet been archaeologically studied.
- Where HER data, HLC data and/or visual survey identifies significant evidence, the local historic environment service or Forestry Commission may recommend specialist surveys, which you should be prepared to commission. These could include:
 - analytical archaeological survey (level 1 walkover)
 - geophysical survey
 - drone survey
 - aerial investigation and mapping
 - metal detecting
 - archaeological monitoring to take place during your project's construction/excavation

If your answer to E.i. is 'yes'

- Show known historic environment features on the project plan/maps.
- Detail how your project plan and operational plan are designed to avoid, mitigate or compensate for any effect on the historic environment. Historic assets can be adversely affected by ground preparation and infrastructure associated with your road or quarry proposal. A historic feature's setting can be an intrinsic part of its value, but this can be fundamentally changed by new roads and quarries.
- Consider how you can complement or enhance the historic environment through your proposal. A new forest road may have the additional benefit of providing additional public access.
- Commission specialist surveys (for example, archaeological walkover surveys, geophysical surveys or drone surveys) where evidence is significant. Seek advice from local historic environment services and/or the Forestry Commission where appropriate.
- Use Part 9 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement, if any, you have undertaken for E.i., attach any evidence and log your proposed mitigation.

Background information

Local historic environment features are important historic sites. They include visible earthworks, buried archaeological remains, ruins and structures. They are not generally mapped at a national level, with scheduled monuments being the notable exception. Additional considerations should be given to burial grounds (which are protected by the Burial Acts) and aircraft crash sites (which are protected by the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986).

It is important to check thoroughly for historic features. Without careful planning, your road or quarry might adversely affect heritage assets, either through ground preparation, excavations or during the disposal of overburden. Roads and quarries will create a permanent change to historic features above and below the ground.

Part 8 – Environment checks F – Open access land

F.i. Is your proposal in an area of open access land, or within Dedicated (Open Access) woodland, as defined by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000?

How to find out if your answer is 'yes' or 'no' for F.i.

Check for open access land. Use [Defra's MAGIC Map](#) and [Natural England's open data](#) to identify the type of open access land your project might affect.

You should check for the following types of land:

- Registered Common Land
- Section 15 Land (Mountain, Moor, Heath or Down)
- Section 16 Land (Dedicated Land)

These layers are defined by the CROW Act 2000. If any of these fall in your proposal area, you must answer 'yes' to F.i.

Use [Defra's MAGIC map](#) layers:

- Access > Countryside and Rights of Way Act, Section 15 Land (England)
- Access > Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 - Access Layer (England)
- Access > Registered Common Land (England)

Using [Natural England Open Data](#), search for 'CROW Act 2000 - Section 16 Dedicated Land' to see if your proposal affects any dedicated land.

If your answer to F.i. is 'yes'

- Be aware that your forest roads and/or quarries proposal should maintain the existing levels of access to the land – in most cases, this will be the preservation of a path or desire line. Usually your forest road will increase accessibility, rather than decrease it.
- Conduct a walkover survey to identify paths and desire lines, and places where users congregate.
- Map the location of any routes, points of interest and vistas on your plan.
- Engage with your [Local Access Forum](#) to reach an agreement on your plans.
- Engage with local stakeholders who have an interest in accessing the land, and use their local knowledge to inform your proposal design (for instance, neighbourhood, rambling or equestrian groups).
- If your forest roads and/or quarries proposal is on Common Land, you may need to seek consent from the Secretary of State before you commence works. See [Forestry project checks: Constraints](#) for more information on legal requirements.
- Use Part 9 of the form to record what stakeholder engagement, if any, you have undertaken for F.i., attach any evidence and log your proposed mitigation.

F.ii. What area (ha) of the proposal is on land subject to CROW Open Access?

Use [Defra's MAGIC Map](#) or the [Forestry Commission Map Browser](#) to measure how much of your proposal sits on open access land, using the layers listed in F.i., and give this area to the nearest tenth of a hectare.

Background information

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act) normally gives a public right of access to land mapped as 'open country' (mountain, moor, heath and down) or registered common land. These areas are known as 'open access land'.

Dedicated land is land that has been voluntarily (but permanently) 'dedicated' by the owner. As with open access land, dedicated land is subject to a permanent legal public right of access.

Part 9 – Stakeholders and evidence log

9.1 In the table on the form, record the individuals and organisations who have been contacted regarding your proposal.

The FC will not undertake stakeholder engagement on your behalf. You must undertake your stakeholder engagement prior to submitting your application. Feedback from stakeholder engagement is necessary to finalise your proposal. However, the FC may consult with other bodies to validate the information, and interpretation of that information, that you provide in your completed application.

Alongside the stakeholders recommended in Part 8 – Environment Checks, you can find a list of potential stakeholders on [Forestry project checks: All projects](#). This list is not exhaustive.

Please indicate whether a copy of correspondence with the stakeholder has been submitted with your application. It is always good practice to submit a copy of the actual correspondence had with stakeholders so that the FC can assess this first hand.

Please summarise what actions you took based on recommendations by stakeholders, to avoid or mitigate for any adverse effect on your proposal area. This should be reflected in the final design of your proposal, shown in your proposal overview in Part 6.

9.2 Use the evidence log on the form to list supporting information which you are including in your application.

To help the FC process your application without having to request more information, please list any attachments / printed material you are sending in support of your application and, if possible, which question on the application form they support.

This should include:

- relevant correspondence from the stakeholders listed in 9.1
- any extra maps, plans, surveys and information to support Part 8 – Environment Checks
- you **must** include a map from the local authority historic environment/archaeology service

Part 10 – Project maps

10.1 Please indicate that your map(s) fulfils FC requirements by confirming the statements on your form.

To design a UKFS-compliant proposal you should prepare a number of maps. You may be supplying the following maps as part of your project design:

- Landscape Context Plan
- Site Context Map
- Design Concept Plan
- Site Appraisal Plan
- Operational Plan
- Local Historic Environment map

More information about suitable project maps is found at the top of the application form.

The FC expect you to be able to mark 'yes' for every part of 10.1.

For more information on including a map of local historic environment features, refer to Part 8 – Environment Checks E – Historic environment.

10.2 Please mark 'yes' or 'no' for the statements on the form to show whether or not they apply to your project map(s).

For more information on adjacent land refer to Part 7 – Adjacent Projects.

For more information on habitats and species, water-related features, local historic environment, local geological features, and open access land refer to Part 8 - Environment Checks.

Part 11 – Declarations

You (the applicant or agent) should tick the applicable parts of this declaration, and sign on the line.

To insert a digital signature, you should open the form in Adobe Reader.

Your application will not be accepted if this information is not provided or is not complete.

Please email or post completed applications to your local FC admin hub.

Part 12 – Applying for EIA Consent (Optional)

You do not need to fill in this part of the form unless you want the FC to immediately consider your application as a 'stage 2' EIA Application for Consent.

You can ask the FC to immediately consider your application as a 'stage 2' EIA Application for Consent under the regulations, rather than wait for a 'stage 1' EIA Opinion on whether the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the environment and, therefore, whether an EIA stage 2 Application for Consent is in fact required.

Proceeding immediately to stage 2 is only likely to be beneficial to you if you are confident that your proposal is highly likely to have a significant effect on the environment, because of its location within a designated or sensitive area, its scale, or for some other reason.,

If you are planning to proceed immediately to 'stage 2', speak to the FC first, by contacting your local woodland officer.

The FC strongly recommends that you apply for a 'stage 1' EIA Opinion of your proposal first, (by completing and submitting this form) and allow the FC to evaluate if EIA 'stage 2' Consent would be required.

For more information on applying for EIA Consent, including the drafting of an Environmental Statement, refer to the relevant section of our Environmental Impact Assessments for woodland guidance on GOV.UK.