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Ayrshire and Arran Forestry and Woodland Strategy Habitats Regulations Appraisal

Screening Report **DRAFT**

Prepared by LUC
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Planning & EIA
Design
Landscape Planning
Landscape Management
Ecology
Mapping & Visualisation

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1 Introduction

1 Introduction

Introduction

- 1.1 The Ayrshire and Arran Forest and Woodland Strategy is being developed by Land Use Consultants on behalf of the Ayrshire Joint Planning Unit. The Habitats Regulations Appraisal Process is required for the Strategy. The Ayrshire and Arran FWS Strategy is required to be subject to the Habitats Regulations Appraisal process to enable the competent authority to be able to ascertain whether there would be no adverse effects on the integrity of Natura sites (Special Areas for Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)) or otherwise¹.
- 1.2 The content of this report has been informed by Scottish Government Planning Circular 1 2009 *Development Planning: Appendix 1 The Habitats Regulations*, and David Tyldesley and Associates (2010) *Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Plans Guidance for Plan-making bodies in Scotland*.
- 1.3 This Screening report builds on the baseline information gathered for the Pre-screening work, and is informed by the comments received from SNH on the Pre-screening report and a draft version of the Screening report.

The Strategy

- 1.4 The Strategy is intended to guide woodland management and expansion in Ayrshire and Arran, providing a policy and a spatial framework to maximise the contribution of woodland and forestry to the people, environment and economy of the region. The Strategy will:
 - provide Supplementary Planning Guidance for the three Ayrshire Local Development Plans;
 - inform local authority development management decisions on proposals that include woodland removal or creation;
 - guide local authority responses to consultation on planting proposals and application for grant support for woodland creation and management;
 - assist with the development and approval of Forest District Strategic Plans and long term Forest Design and Management Plans; and
 - guide development of Regional Priorities for the Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP).
- 1.5 The Strategy is structured by four high level aims, with supporting objectives and specific actions under each of these. The individual actions have been assessed through the Habitats Regulations Appraisal screening process.

Definition of 'Likely Significant effect'

- 1.6 If 'likely significant effects' on Natura sites are identified by the screening process, the document is required to be subject to an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan for the site concerned, in view of its conservation objectives.

¹ Candidate Special Areas for Conservation (cSAC) and potential Special Protection Areas (pSPA) in the process of being classified also receive the same level of protection, as a matter of Scottish Government policy. There are no Ramsar sites within the Strategy area, however all Ramsar sites are also European sites and /or Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

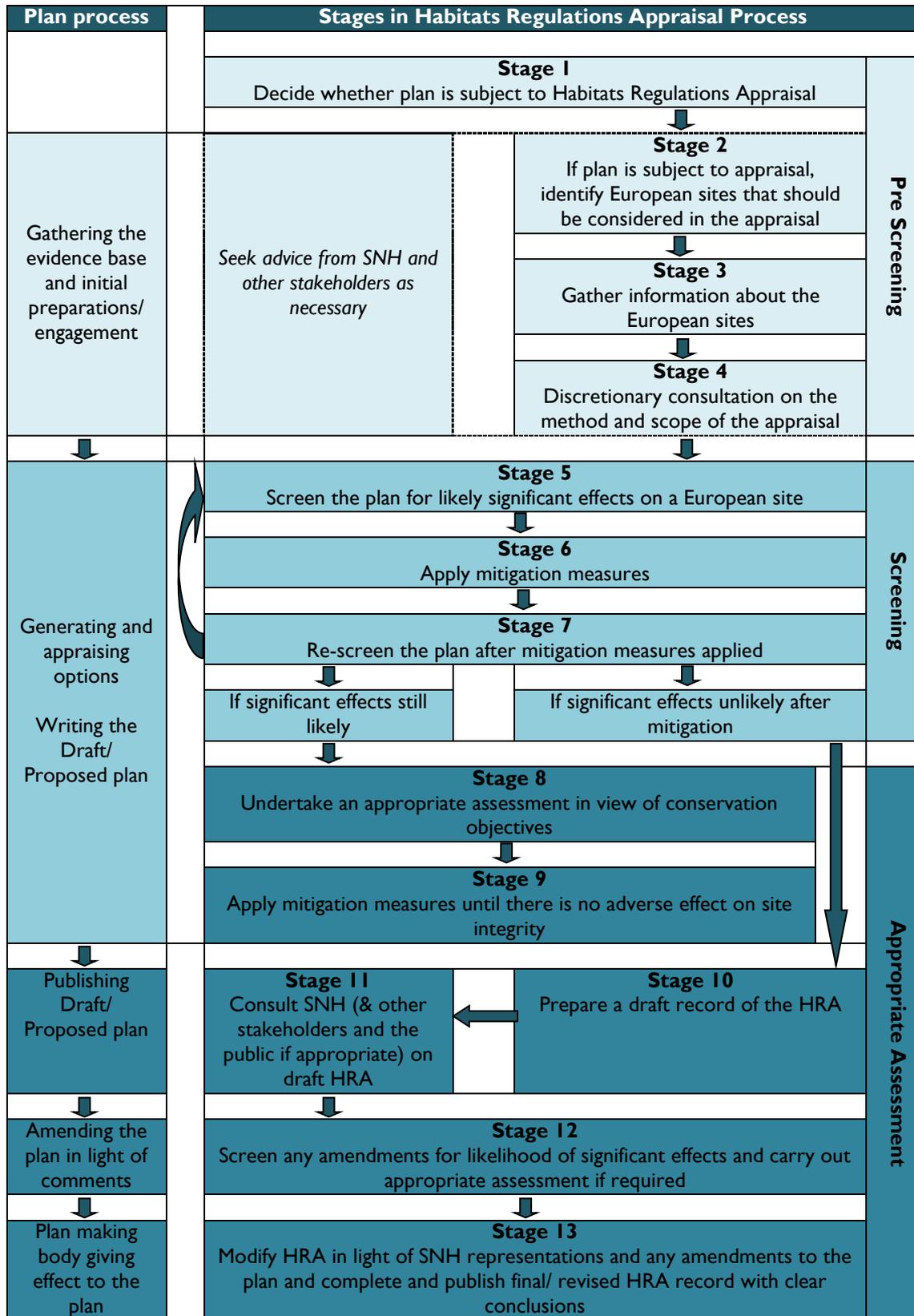
- 1.7 The David Tyldesley and Associates (2010) *Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Plans Guidance for Plan-making bodies in Scotland* notes that in the Waddenzee case the European Court of Justice ruled that a project should be subject to appropriate assessment 'if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that it will have a significant effect on the site either individually or in combination with other plans and projects.'
- 1.8 The term 'Appropriate Assessment' (AA) refers to the assessment of the potential adverse effects of a proposed plan on one or more European sites (Natura sites). AA is required for plans which, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, are likely to have a significant effect on a European site. The competent authority should be able to ascertain whether the plan would not adversely affect the integrity of any international site or otherwise. Where a likely significant effect has been identified, the appropriate assessment looks at the implications of the plan for the sites in view of their 'conservation objectives' which are crucial to the assessment process. Information on the conservation objectives for Natura sites is provided by SNH on their website.
- 1.9 Where uncertainty or doubt remains, an adverse effect should be assumed, meaning that the plan cannot be consented to by the competent authority.
- 1.10 David Tyldesley and Associates (2010) *Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Plans Guidance for Plan-making bodies in Scotland* identifies that the purpose of the screening stage is to:

- a) identify all aspects of the plan which would not be likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other aspects of the same plan or other plans or projects, so that they can be eliminated from further consideration; and
- b) identify those aspects of the plan where it is not possible to rule out the risk of significant effects on a European site, and thereby provide a clear scope for the parts of the plan that will require 'appropriate assessment'.

Overview of the HRA process

- 1.11 There are key stages to the Habitat Regulations Appraisal Process as shown in the following diagram in **Figure 1.1** overleaf.

Figure 1.1: Key stages of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal Process for Plans (adapted from David Tyldesley and Associates (2010) Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Plans Guidance for Plan-making bodies in Scotland, Figure 2)



2 Methodology

Introduction

2.1 The following bullet points summarise the stages in the methodology:

Pre Screening

- Identification of Natura sites;
- Identification of the qualifying interests and conservation objectives of the Natura sites;
- Identification of potential impacts on the qualifying interests and conservation objectives resulting from forestry and woodland activities (e.g. habitat loss, hydrological impacts, disturbance from recreation);
- Informal consultation with SNH on the sensitivities of qualifying interests to forestry and woodland activities, and information on the existing pressures that sites are experiencing.

Screening

1.1 The purpose of the screening stage is to:

- 1 identify all aspects of the plan which would not be likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other aspects of the same plan or other plans or projects, so that they can be eliminated from further consideration; and
- 2 identify those aspects of the plan where it is not possible to rule out the risk of significant effects on a European site, and thereby provide a clear scope for the parts of the plan that will require 'appropriate assessment'.

1.2 Stages include:

- Screen out general policy statements;
- Screen out projects referred to but not proposed by the plan;
- Screen out policies or proposals with no ecological pathway to Natura sites;
- Evaluate the scale of impact of policies on Natura sites;
- Undertake in-plan in-combination assessment of minor effects;
- Undertake between plan in-combination assessment of minor effects.

3 Baseline

3.1 This chapter of the report sets out the baseline information gathered to allow identification of key issues to be taken into account in the plan preparation process, and the Screening of the Draft Ayrshire and Arran Forest and Woodland Strategy.

3.2 Table 3.1 sets out the Natura sites within Ayrshire, their notified features, conservation objectives and sensitivities to woodland and forestry activities. Information in the first six columns has been sourced from SNH sitelink website <http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/index.jsp> , and the final column sets out potential impacts of forestry and woodland activity on these sites.

Natura sites in adjacent areas

3.3 In identifying sites that should be considered in the appraisal, consideration was given to Natura sites outwith Ayrshire which could be affected by woodland and forestry activities within the area.

3.4 Sites which cross the Ayrshire and Arran area boundary include:

- Renfrewshire Heights
- Muirkirk and North Lowther Uplands
- Merrick Kells
- Glen App and Galloway Moors

3.5 These comprise separate areas of the same designated areas listed in Table 3.1, and therefore potential impacts on these sites are already identified through the assessment process. However the consideration of in-combination effects with other plans will have to take account of plans in the adjacent planning authority areas, alongside the consideration of plans from within Ayrshire and Arran

3.6 Other Natura sites within surrounding local authorities are identified in Table 3.2, and the potential for likely significant effects resulting from the Strategy is discussed. This is based on assessment of connectivity between the site and activities within Ayrshire and Arran. The assessment in Table 3.2 identified that the following sites should be included in the Screening stage of the appraisal process, based on connectivity and potential impacts from within Ayrshire:

- River Bladnoch
- Kirkcowan Flow

Natura sites screened out of the appraisal process: Ailsa Craig

3.7 Ailsa Craig has been identified at this early stage as unsuitable for forestry or woodland activity due to its lack of accessibility, landcover and conservation interests. It has therefore been screened out of the assessment because there is no ecological connectivity between the qualifying interests of the site and the potential effects of the plan.

Sensitivities

3.8 In summary, Table 3.1 covers four main sensitivities of the Ayrshire Natura sites to forestry and woodland activity. These are:

- Hydrological impacts (water quantity and quality, including pH and sediment);
- Habitat loss (loss of qualifying habitat or habitat supporting qualifying species);
- Recreational access disturbance (impacts on bird and mammal species).
- Forestry operations disturbance (impacts on bird and mammal species).

Site Vulnerability

- 3.9 The impacts of forestry activity on Natura sites will vary from site to site depending on the existing pressures which sites are under. SNH has provided additional information on existing pressures on the Natura sites, which is included in Table 3.1. General issues identified by SNH regarding the impacts of woodland planting state that with regard to sites notified for bird interests or blanket bog habitat, there is a need for a buffer zone between any new woodland planting and the SPA/SAC, as woodlands typically provide shelter for species which prey on ground nesting birds and blanket bog habitat is particularly susceptible to regeneration from forestry plantations which act as a seed source.

Distance from Natura 2000 sites from which impacts may occur

- 3.10 Impacts on the sensitivities identified in Table 3.1 may occur over large distances, particularly in relation to hydrological impacts. We have used GIS information on water catchments to inform the identification of associations between areas which may be subject to woodland and forestry activity and hydrological impacts on Natura sites. However this is not a detailed data set. Other sensitivities relating to access or forestry activity disturbance to bird or mammal species also need to be considered in relation to the distance from which impacts may occur.

Table 3.1: Ayrshire Natura 2000 sites, Conservation Objectives and sensitivities of qualifying interests to forestry and woodland planting

Designation	Name and area	Qualifying interest	Condition	Location	Conservation objectives	Additional information from SNH on site vulnerability	Sensitivities of qualifying interests to forestry and woodland activities																								
SAC	Airds Moss (1359ha) (overlaps with Muirkirk and North Lowther SPA)	Blanket bog	Unfavourable declining	East Ayrshire	<p>To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitat (listed below) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying habitat that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of the habitat on site • Distribution of the habitat within site • Structure and function of the habitat • Processes supporting the habitat • Distribution of typical species of the habitat • Viability of typical species as components of the habitat • No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat 	<p>The principal factors contributing to the unfavourable condition of Airds Moss SAC are grazing pressure, drainage, peat erosion and burning. Part of the site is also afforested which is likely to have a drying effect on the blanket bog.</p> <p>These factors together are likely to increase the sensitivity of the site to further forestry activities. However, there is currently a compensation plan and further positive management in place to address these issues.</p>	<p>The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality/quantity. <p>Listed below are most likely impacts resulting from woodland and forestry activities that can affect the qualifying interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat loss • Hydrological impacts. This includes impacts within the upstream and downstream catchment/s. Impacts could extend substantial distances if planting is carried out in the same hydrological unit as Airds Moss. 																								
SAC	Merrick Kells (8698ha)	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Blanket bog</td> <td>Unfavourable recovering</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Depressions on peat substrates</td> <td>Unfavourable recovering</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dry heaths</td> <td>Unfavourable recovering</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath</td> <td>Unfavourable recovering</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Acidic scree</td> <td>Favourable maintained</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Plants in crevices on acid rocks</td> <td>Favourable maintained</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Otter (lutra lutra)</td> <td>Favourable maintained</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Montane acid grasslands</td> <td>Unfavourable declining</td> </tr> </table>	Blanket bog	Unfavourable recovering	Depressions on peat substrates	Unfavourable recovering	Dry heaths	Unfavourable recovering	Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath	Unfavourable recovering	Acidic scree	Favourable maintained	Plants in crevices on acid rocks	Favourable maintained	Otter (lutra lutra)	Favourable maintained	Montane acid grasslands	Unfavourable declining	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Unfavourable recovering</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unfavourable recovering</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unfavourable recovering</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unfavourable recovering</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Favourable maintained</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Favourable maintained</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Favourable maintained</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unfavourable declining</td> </tr> </table>	Unfavourable recovering	Unfavourable recovering	Unfavourable recovering	Unfavourable recovering	Favourable maintained	Favourable maintained	Favourable maintained	Unfavourable declining	East Ayrshire, South Ayrshire	<p>To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitats (listed below) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying habitats that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of the habitat on site • Distribution of the habitat within site • Structure and function of the habitat • Processes supporting the habitat • Distribution of typical species of the habitat • Viability of typical species as components of the habitat • No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat <p>OTTER</p> <p>To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying species that the</p>	<p>Several of the notified features of Merrick Kells SAC are in unfavourable condition. The principal reason for this is due to inappropriate grazing levels across the site. A review of management has already begun, with the aim of reducing grazing pressure on the heath and grassland communities while maintaining sufficient grazing to maintain scrub free rock crevice and bog communities.</p> <p>While these features remain in unfavourable condition they are likely to be more susceptible to forestry activities.</p> <p>The clear water lakes feature of the site, although found to be favourable condition, is thought to be being affected by acidification and therefore would also be sensitive to any woodland planting within its catchment.</p>	<p>The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of foraging areas (otter) • Extent of habitat • Water quality/quantity • Disturbance levels at feeding and breeding sites <p>Listed below are most likely impacts resulting from woodland and forestry activities that can affect the qualifying interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat loss • Hydrological impacts. This includes impacts within the upstream and downstream catchment/s. Impacts could extend substantial distances if planting is carried out in the same hydrological unit as Merrick Kells. • Water quality impacts. particularly acidification impacts in the case of coniferous habitat • Access disturbance (otter)
Blanket bog	Unfavourable recovering																														
Depressions on peat substrates	Unfavourable recovering																														
Dry heaths	Unfavourable recovering																														
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Designation	Name and area	Qualifying interest	Condition	Location	Conservation objectives	Additional information from SNH on site vulnerability	Sensitivities of qualifying interests to forestry and woodland activities
		Acid peat-stained lakes and ponds	Favourable maintained		following are maintained in the long term: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population of the species as a viable component of the site Distribution of the species within site Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species No significant disturbance of the species 		
		Clear-water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels	Favourable maintained				
SPA	Muirkirk and North Lowther Uplands (26330ha)	Golden plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>), breeding	Favourable maintained	East Ayrshire	To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population of the species as a viable component of the site Distribution of the species within site Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species No significant disturbance of the species 	The hen harrier, peregrine and merlin features of this site are currently in unfavourable condition. The principal reason for this is thought to be the current grazing regime and game management. Illegal raptor persecution is likely to be an additional stress, particularly affecting the hen harriers. Forestry plantations adjoining much of the SPA are occasionally used by nesting Merlin, and forest edges may be used by foraging Merlin, hen harrier and possibly peregrine. Increased diversity in forest edge structure is likely to result from future felling rotations, and may benefit these species through enhanced foraging value. However a buffer zone should remain between the SPA and any woodland planting to prevent an increase in predation from species such as foxes and crows.	The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent of foraging areas Disturbance levels at feeding and breeding sites Listed below are most likely impacts resulting from woodland and forestry activities that can affect the qualifying interest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat loss particularly where moorland habitats might be lost due to forestry planting. Access disturbance This includes impacts within the upstream and downstream catchment/s Forestry operation disturbance
		Hen harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>), breeding	Unfavourable declining				
		Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>), breeding	Unfavourable no change				
		Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>), breeding	Unfavourable no change				
		Short-eared owl (<i>Asio flammeus</i>), breeding	Favourable maintained				
		Hen harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>), non-breeding	Unfavourable declining				
SAC	Bankhead Moss, Beith (33ha)	Active raised bogs	Favourable maintained	North Ayrshire	To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitat (listed below) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and To ensure for the qualifying habitat that the following are maintained in the long term: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent of the habitat on site Distribution of the habitat within site Structure and function of the habitat Processes supporting the habitat Distribution of typical species of the habitat Viability of typical species as components of the habitat No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat 	Bankhead Moss SAC is currently in favourable condition. However, there is some localised evidence of birch trees regenerating on the site. The drying effect of these trees is likely to increase the sensitivity of the bog to any additional adjacent woodland planting. However this site is included within the South of Scotland Bog Scheme (SSBS) and therefore future management should remove regenerating trees and enhance the bog habitat.	The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water quality/quantity. Listed below are most likely impacts resulting from woodland and forestry activities that can affect the qualifying interest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat loss Hydrological impacts. This includes impacts within the upstream and downstream catchment/s. Impacts could extend substantial distances if planting is carried out in the same hydrological unit as Bankhead Moss.

Designation	Name and area	Qualifying interest	Condition	Location	Conservation objectives	Additional information from SNH on site vulnerability	Sensitivities of qualifying interests to forestry and woodland activities
SAC	Cockinhead Moss (48ha)	Active raised bogs	Unfavourable no change	North Ayrshire	To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitats (listed below) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and To ensure for the qualifying habitats that the following are maintained in the long term:	Cockinhead Moss SAC is currently in unfavourable condition. The principal reason for this is that tree regeneration is frequent and widespread on the bog, mainly in the south-western half of the site, and that birch scrub/woodland is becoming established on some sections of the bog margin. The present levels of tree regeneration on site will increase the sensitivity of the site to any further woodland activities adjacent to the site. However, Cockinhead Moss SAC is also included within the SSBS which should, in time, enhance the bog habitat through positive management, which will include the removal of regenerating trees.	The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality/quantity. Listed below are most likely impacts resulting from woodland and forestry activities that can affect the qualifying interest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat loss • Hydrological impacts. This includes impacts within the upstream and downstream catchment/s. Impacts could extend substantial distances if planting is carried out in the same hydrological unit as Cockinhead Moss.
		Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration	Unfavourable declining		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of the habitat on site • Distribution of the habitat within site • Structure and function of the habitat • Processes supporting the habitat • Distribution of typical species of the habitat • Viability of typical species as components of the habitat • No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat 		
SAC	Dykeneuk Moss (62ha)	Active raised bogs	Favourable maintained	North Ayrshire	To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitats (listed below) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and To ensure for the qualifying habitats that the following are maintained in the long term:	Dykeneuk Moss SAC is currently in favourable condition. However, birch seedling and saplings have encroached over the north eastern section of the bog. The drying effect of these trees is likely to increase the sensitivity of the bog to any additional adjacent woodland planting. However, this site is also included within the SSBS which should remove the encroaching trees and enhance the bog habitat.	The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality/quantity. Listed below are most likely impacts resulting from woodland and forestry activities that can affect the qualifying interest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat loss • Hydrological impacts. This includes impacts within the upstream and downstream catchment/s. Impacts could extend substantial distances if planting is carried out in the same hydrological unit as Dykeneuk Moss.
		Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration	Favourable recovered		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of the habitat on site • Distribution of the habitat within site • Structure and function of the habitat • Processes supporting the habitat • Distribution of typical species of the habitat • Viability of typical species as components of the habitat • No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat 		
SPA	Arran Moors (10,737 ha)	Hen harrier (Circus cyaneus), breeding	Favourable maintained	North Ayrshire	To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:	Forestry plantations occupy most of the upland areas adjacent to Arran Moors SPA. Future forestry management is likely to be beneficial to breeding hen harriers, with some enhancements to the structure and composition of forest edges and increased provision of open space. These measures will improve foraging and even nesting opportunities for hen harriers, noting the lack of ground predators on Arran makes harriers more inclined to nest close to forestry plantations within forest clearings.	The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of foraging areas • Disturbance levels at feeding and breeding sites Listed below are most likely impacts resulting from woodland and forestry activities that can affect the qualifying interest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat loss – particularly where moorland and grassland habitats might be lost at breeding sites • Access disturbance • Forest operation disturbance

Designation	Name and area	Qualifying interest	Condition	Location	Conservation objectives	Additional information from SNH on site vulnerability	Sensitivities of qualifying interests to forestry and woodland activities											
					<p>processes of habitats supporting the species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant disturbance of the species 	<p>However all forest operations will cause disturbance and therefore should take place outwith the bird breeding season.</p>												
SPA	Renfrewshire Heights (8943 ha)	Hen harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>), breeding	Unfavourable declining	North Ayrshire	<p>To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population of the species as a viable component of the site Distribution of the species within site Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species No significant disturbance of the species 	<p>The hen harrier population of Renfrewshire Heights SPA is currently in unfavourable condition. Overgrazing and inappropriate burning are considered to be the main factors that have resulted in the decline of the moorland habitats utilised by the hen harriers. These issues are currently being addressed through management agreements under SNH's moorland management scheme.</p> <p>Predation by foxes has also been identified as an additional factor contributing to the decline of hen harriers.</p> <p>Therefore at present the Renfrewshire Heights SPA hen harrier populations will be particularly sensitive to any changes in management, including forestry operations.</p>	<p>The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent of foraging areas Disturbance levels at feeding and breeding sites <p>Listed below are most likely impacts resulting from woodland and forestry activities that can affect the qualifying interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat loss – particularly where moorland and grassland habitats might be lost at breeding sites Access disturbance Forest operation disturbance 											
SAC	Lendalfoot Hills Complex (1310 ha)	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Base-rich fens</td> <td>Unfavourable recovering</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grasslands on soils rich in heavy metals</td> <td>Unfavourable declining</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dry heaths</td> <td>Unfavourable declining</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath</td> <td>Unfavourable no change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas</td> <td>Unfavourable no change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Very wet mires often identified by an unstable 'quaking' surface</td> <td>Unfavourable declining</td> </tr> </table>	Base-rich fens	Unfavourable recovering	Grasslands on soils rich in heavy metals	Unfavourable declining	Dry heaths	Unfavourable declining	Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath	Unfavourable no change	Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas	Unfavourable no change	Very wet mires often identified by an unstable 'quaking' surface	Unfavourable declining	South Ayrshire	<p>To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitats (listed below) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying habitats that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent of the habitat on site Distribution of the habitat within site Structure and function of the habitat Processes supporting the habitat Distribution of typical species of the habitat Viability of typical species as components of the habitat No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat 	<p>All of the notified features within Lendalfoot Hills Complex SAC were found to be in unfavourable condition during the latest SCM. Inappropriate grazing management appears to be the main issue at this site and is likely to increase the sensitivity of these features to forestry and woodland activities.</p>	<p>The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water quality/quantity. <p>Listed below are most likely impacts resulting from woodland and forestry activities that can affect the qualifying interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat loss Hydrological impacts. This includes impacts within the upstream and downstream catchment/s. Where habitats are dependent on groundwater, the drying effects of plantation woodland could extend for several hundred metres. Water quality impacts. Planting of coniferous woodland could lead to acidification impacts within the catchment, affecting base rich and neutral habitats.
Base-rich fens	Unfavourable recovering																	
Grasslands on soils rich in heavy metals	Unfavourable declining																	
Dry heaths	Unfavourable declining																	
Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath	Unfavourable no change																	
Species-rich grassland with mat-grass in upland areas	Unfavourable no change																	
Very wet mires often identified by an unstable 'quaking' surface	Unfavourable declining																	

Designation	Name and area	Qualifying interest	Condition	Location	Conservation objectives	Additional information from SNH on site vulnerability	Sensitivities of qualifying interests to forestry and woodland activities
SPA	Ailsa Craig (2760 ha)	Gannet (<i>Morus bassanus</i>), breeding Guillemot* (<i>Uria aalge</i>), breeding Herring gull* (<i>Larus argentatus</i>), breeding Kittiwake* (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>), breeding Lesser black-backed gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>), breeding Seabird assemblage, breeding * indicates assemblage qualifier only		South Ayrshire	To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population of the species as a viable component of the site Distribution of the species within site Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species No significant disturbance of the species 		Ailsa Craig has been screened out as no woodland or forestry proposals will take place which will affect this site.
SPA	Glen App and Galloway Moors (8942ha)	Hen harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>), breeding	Favourable maintained	South Ayrshire	To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population of the species as a viable component of the site Distribution of the species within site Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species No significant disturbance of the species 	Although currently in a favourable condition the hen harrier population of Glen App Moors SPA is in decline. The Glen App and Galloway Moors Management scheme should be maintaining the moorland habitats that support nesting and foraging hen harriers therefore the reasons for the decline could be related to a number of factors including; predation by foxes, periodic crashes in vole population, poor female winter survival rates and an increase in cold wet summers. Until the cause of decline has been identified and addressed the hen harrier population will remain sensitive to any changes in management, including forest activities.	The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent of foraging areas Disturbance levels at feeding and breeding sites Listed below are most likely impacts resulting from woodland and forestry activities that can affect the qualifying interest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat loss – particularly where moorland and grassland habitats might be lost at breeding sites Access disturbance Forestry operation disturbance

Table 3.3.1 Natura Sites outwith Ayrshire and Arran which may be affected by forestry and woodland activities within Ayrshire and Arran

Designation	Name and area	Qualifying interest	Condition	Location	Conservation objectives	Additional information from SNH on site vulnerability	Sensitivities of qualifying interests to forestry and woodland activities	Potential interaction with forestry and woodland activities within Ayrshire and Arran
SAC	River Bladnoch (300 ha)	Atlantic salmon (Salmo salar)	Unfavourable Recovering	Dumfries and Galloway	<p>To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Population of the species, including range of genetic types, as a viable component of the site <input type="checkbox"/> Distribution of the species within site <input type="checkbox"/> Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species 	<p>Forestry practices, poor water quality management in some areas and damaging agricultural practices are considered to have negative effects on Atlantic salmon in the River Bladnoch SAC.</p> <p>However forestry re-structuring taking place within the Bladnoch catchment is regarded as a positive activity and should alleviate pressure of forestry activities.</p>	<p>The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality/quantity. <p>Listed below are most likely impacts resulting from woodland and forestry activities that can affect the qualifying interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydrological impacts. This includes impacts within the upstream catchment/s. Impacts could extend substantial distances if planting is carried out in the same hydrological unit as the River Bladnoch. 	<p>Part of the water catchment area (approx. 800ha) for the River Bladnoch extends into South Ayrshire. None of the River Bladnoch SAC lies within Ayrshire. Forestry activities within the upper reaches of the catchment could potentially impact on water quality within the River Bladnoch SAC.</p> <p>This site should be included in further stages of the AAFWS HRA process.</p>
SAC	Kirkcowan Flow (777ha)	Blanket Bog Depressions on peat substrates	Unfavourable, no change Favourable declining	Dumfries and Galloway	<p>To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitats (listed below) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying</p>	<p>The blanket bog feature of Kirkcowan Flow SAC was found to be in unfavorable condition during the last SCM. The main reason for this is due to a number of past influences including chronic grazing, burning and drying from artificial drainage.</p> <p>Together these influences are likely to</p>	<p>The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality/quantity. <p>Listed below are most likely impacts resulting from woodland and forestry activities that can affect the qualifying interest:</p>	<p>Kirkcowan Flow lies within the River Bladnoch water catchment area. Part of the water catchment area (approx. 800ha) for the River Bladnoch extends into South Ayrshire. Forestry activities within the upper reaches of the catchment could potentially impact on water quality and quantity at Kirkcowan Flow.</p> <p>This site should be included in further stages of the AAFWS</p>

Designation	Name and area	Qualifying interest	Condition	Location	Conservation objectives	Additional information from SNH on site vulnerability	Sensitivities of qualifying interests to forestry and woodland activities	Potential interaction with forestry and woodland activities within Ayrshire and Arran
					<p>features; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying habitats that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Extent of the habitat on site <input type="checkbox"/> Distribution of the habitat within site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure and function of the habitat <input type="checkbox"/> Processes supporting the habitat <input type="checkbox"/> Distribution of typical species of the habitat <input type="checkbox"/> Viability of typical species as components of the habitat <input type="checkbox"/> No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat 	increase the sensitivity of this site to forestry and woodland activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat loss • Hydrological impacts. This includes impacts within the upstream and downstream catchment/s. Impacts could extend substantial distances if planting is carried out in the same hydrological unit as Kirkcowan Flow. 	HRA process.
SAC	Kilhern Moss (124 ha)	<p>Blanket bog</p> <p>Depressions on peat substrates</p>	<p>Favourable maintained</p> <p>Favourable maintained</p>	Dumfries and Galloway	<p>To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitats (listed below) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying habitats that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Extent of the habitat 		<p>The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality/quantity. <p>Listed below are most likely impacts resulting from woodland and forestry activities that can affect the qualifying interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat loss • Hydrological impacts. This includes impacts within the upstream and downstream catchment/s. Impacts could extend substantial distances if planting is carried out in the same hydrological unit as Kilhern Moss. 	<p>Kilhern Moss lies within the Luce water catchment area. Approximately 470 ha of the catchment lie within Ayrshire.</p> <p>Kilhern Moss lies on the flanking slopes, above the Main Water of Luce and therefore forestry activities within the Ayrshire reaches of the catchment would not impact on water quality and quantity at Kilhern Moss.</p> <p><i>This site can be excluded from further stages of the AAFWS HRA process.</i></p>

Designation	Name and area	Qualifying interest	Condition	Location	Conservation objectives	Additional information from SNH on site vulnerability	Sensitivities of qualifying interests to forestry and woodland activities	Potential interaction with forestry and woodland activities within Ayrshire and Arran
					<p>on site</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Distribution of the habitat within site</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Structure and function of the habitat</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Processes supporting the habitat</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Distribution of typical species of the habitat</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Viability of typical species as components of the habitat</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat</p>			
SAC	Flow of Dergoals (170 ha)	Blanket bog	Favourable maintained		<p>To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitats (listed below) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and</p>		<p>The conservation status of the qualifying features is considered to be closely linked to and dependent on the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality/quantity. <p>Listed below are most likely impacts resulting from woodland and forestry activities that can affect the qualifying interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat loss • Hydrological impacts. This includes impacts within the upstream and downstream catchment/s. Impacts could extend substantial distances if planting is carried out in the same hydrological unit as Flow of Dergoals. 	<p>A small part of the Flow of Dergoals site boundary extends into the Luce water catchment, which extends into Ayrshire. Due to the surrounding topography of Flow of Dergoals, water quality and quantity would not be influenced by forestry and woodland activity within the Ayrshire part of the catchment.</p> <p><i>This site can be excluded from further stages of the AAFWS HRA process.</i></p>
		Depressions on peat substrates	<i>No information</i>		<p>To ensure for the qualifying habitats that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Extent of the habitat on site</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Distribution of the habitat within site</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Structure and function of the habitat</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Processes supporting the habitat</p>			

Designation	Name and area	Qualifying interest	Condition	Location	Conservation objectives	Additional information from SNH on site vulnerability	Sensitivities of qualifying interests to forestry and woodland activities	Potential interaction with forestry and woodland activities within Ayrshire and Arran
					<input type="checkbox"/> Distribution of typical species of the habitat <input type="checkbox"/> Viability of typical species as components of the habitat <input type="checkbox"/> No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat			
SAC	Galloway Oakwoods (355 ha)	Western acidic oak woodland	<i>No information</i>		<p>To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitat (listed below) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying habitat that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Extent of the habitat on site <input type="checkbox"/> Distribution of the habitat within site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure and function of the habitat <input type="checkbox"/> Processes supporting the habitat <input type="checkbox"/> Distribution of typical species of the habitat <input type="checkbox"/> Viability of typical species as components of the habitat <input type="checkbox"/> No significant disturbance of typical			<p>The Galloway Oakwoods lie within the River Cree water catchment area. Approximately 5600ha of the catchment extends into Ayrshire. Other areas of the Galloway Oakwoods lie within the Minnoch water catchment area. Approximately 3700 ha of the Minnoch catchment extends into Ayrshire</p> <p>The impacts of forestry and woodland activity within Ayrshire is not identified as having an interaction with Galloway Oakwoods SAC as the qualifying features would not be affected by forestry and woodland activities at the periphery of the catchment.</p> <p><i>This site can be excluded from further stages of the AAFWS HRA process.</i></p>

Designation	Name and area	Qualifying interest	Condition	Location	Conservation objectives	Additional information from SNH on site vulnerability	Sensitivities of qualifying interests to forestry and woodland activities	Potential interaction with forestry and woodland activities within Ayrshire and Arran
					species of the habitat			
SAC	Upper Nithsdale Woods (98 ha)	Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes	Unfavourable Declining	Dumfries and Galloway	<p>To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitat (listed below) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying habitat that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Extent of the habitat on site <input type="checkbox"/> Distribution of the habitat within site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure and function of the habitat <input type="checkbox"/> Processes supporting the habitat <input type="checkbox"/> Distribution of typical species of the habitat <input type="checkbox"/> Viability of typical species as components of the habitat <input type="checkbox"/> No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat 			<p>Some of the sites which comprise the Upper Nithsdale Woods lie within the water catchment area of the Nith, of which approximately 16000 ha extends into Ayrshire.</p> <p>The impacts of forestry and woodland activity within Ayrshire is not identified as having an interaction with Upper Nithsdale Woods SAC as the qualifying features would not be affected by forestry and woodland activities at the periphery of the catchment.</p> <p><i>This site can be excluded from further stages of the AAFWS HRA process.</i></p>
SAC	Clyde Valley Woods (435 ha)	Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes	Favourable maintained	South Lanarkshire	To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitat (listed below) thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an			Some of the component sites of the Clyde Valley Woods lie within the Avon water catchment which extends into Ayrshire. Less than 600ha of the catchment lies within Ayrshire.

Designation	Name and area	Qualifying interest	Condition	Location	Conservation objectives	Additional information from SNH on site vulnerability	Sensitivities of qualifying interests to forestry and woodland activities	Potential interaction with forestry and woodland activities within Ayrshire and Arran
					<p>appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and</p> <p>To ensure for the qualifying habitat that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Extent of the habitat on site <input type="checkbox"/> Distribution of the habitat within site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure and function of the habitat <input type="checkbox"/> Processes supporting the habitat <input type="checkbox"/> Distribution of typical species of the habitat <input type="checkbox"/> Viability of typical species as components of the habitat <input type="checkbox"/> No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat 			<p>The impacts of forestry and woodland activity within Ayrshire is not identified as having an interaction with Clyde Valley Woods SAC as the qualifying features would not be affected by forestry and woodland activities at the periphery of the catchment.</p> <p><i>This site can be excluded from further stages of the AAFWS HRA process.</i></p>

4 Screening policies and proposals of the AAFWS

- 4.1 This section of the report lists the aims, objectives and priority actions of the Ayrshire and Arran Forest and Woodland Strategy, and identifies if there are likely significant effects, low level residual effects or no effect from each action on the Natura sites listed in the Baseline chapter. The column headed 'spatial reference' identifies if the action includes a spatial reference, and if this is specific enough to allow effects on the Natura sites to be identified, or to highlight if the action is too general.
- 4.2 The key issue with the AAFWS is the high level nature of the actions, and the lack of spatial specificity.

Table 4.1 Stage 1: List policies and proposals of AAFWS, set out results of screening

Aim	Objectives	Actions	Note of any spatial reference set out in action	Potential Impact on Natura sites: Likely significant effects, no likely significant effect, 'de minimis' effect
To optimise the role of woodland and forests in addressing climate change	Reducing greenhouse gases emissions	CC1: Implement the woodland removal policy, with compensatory planting required within Ayrshire and Arran	-	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general and does not specify the location of change.
		CC2: Achieve a net expansion of woodland cover to increase carbon sequestration	-	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general and does not specify the location of change.
		CC3: Continue to support development of the biomass market	-	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general and does not specify the location of change.

Aim	Objectives	Actions	Note of any spatial reference set out in action	Potential Impact on Natura sites: Likely significant effects, no likely significant effect, 'de minimis' effect
		CC4: Promote the wider use of local timber in construction	-	No likely significant effect, will not lead to development or other change affecting Natura sites.
		CC5: Facilitate renewable energy development	-	No likely significant effect, project proposals not specified and therefore effects on any particular European site cannot be identified as the proposal is too general.
		CC6: Encourage energy efficiency in the timber sector	-	No likely significant effect, will not lead to development or other change affecting Natura sites.
	Adapting to climate change	CC7: Promote the role of woodland in terms of sustainable flood management	Upland or riparian woodland planting	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general.
		CC8: Promote the development of integrated habitat networks to help species adapt to climate change	New woodland planting to support integrated habitat network mapping	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general and does not specify the location of change.
		CC9: Promote the role of trees and woodland in	New woodland planting on	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified

Aim	Objectives	Actions	Note of any spatial reference set out in action	Potential Impact on Natura sites: Likely significant effects, no likely significant effect, 'de minimis' effect
		conserving soils and stabilising slopes	vulnerable soils and slopes	because the proposal is too general and does not specify the location of change.
		CC10: Raise awareness of the role of trees and woodland in improving urban micro-climates	-	No likely significant effect, will not lead to development or other change affecting Natura sites.
		CC11: Adapt forest management practices to climate change and move to continuous cover forestry where appropriate	Existing woodland	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general and does not specify the location of change.
To maximise woodland and forests' contribution to the economy of Ayrshire and Arran	Timber production and processing	ED1: Manage woodland harvesting, restructuring and expansion to provide a more even pattern of timber production	Existing woodland and new woodland	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general and does not specify the location of change.
		ED2: Facilitate the retention and upgrading of timber processing facilities	Irvine, Troon and Auchinleck	No likely significant effect, timber processing sites identified as at Irvine, Troon and Auchinleck do not have an ecological pathway to Natura sites.

Aim	Objectives	Actions	Note of any spatial reference set out in action	Potential Impact on Natura sites: Likely significant effects, no likely significant effect, 'de minimis' effect
		ED3: Plan for future timber processing development	-	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general. (project referred to but not proposed)
	Timber transport	ED4: Support the work of the Ayrshire Timber Transport Liaison Group	-	No likely significant effect, will not lead to development or any other change.
		ED5: Develop a strategic approach to timber transport based on agreed timber routes	Timber transport routes	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general, areas for upgrading not identified.
		ED6: Develop local solutions based on use of forest haul roads to avoid sensitive locations	Forest haul roads	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general, and the locations of increased traffic on forest haul roads not yet identified.
		ED7: Explore potential for alternative transport by rail and water	Port and rail hubs	No likely significant effect, effects on any particular European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general, (no project proposal).
		ED8: Support the retention and use of local timber processing plant	Existing timber processing plant	No likely significant effect, will not lead to development or other change.

Aim	Objectives	Actions	Note of any spatial reference set out in action	Potential Impact on Natura sites: Likely significant effects, no likely significant effect, 'de minimis' effect
		ED9: Ensure that proposals for new softwood forests reflect the capacity of the local road network	New forestry and road capacity	No likely significant effect, effects on any particular European site cannot be identified, because the proposal is too general and the analysis to inform the location of development has not been carried out.
	Biomass	ED10: Increase the area of existing woodland that is managed to provide wood fuel	Existing woodland	No likely significant effect, effects on any particular European site cannot be identified, because the proposal is too general.
		ED11: Encourage the creation of new energy woodlands on derelict and vacant land and in locations close to sources of current or potential demand	Derelict and vacant land and areas of current or potential demand for biomass	No likely significant effect, effects on any particular European site cannot be identified, because the proposal is too general and the location of the areas mentioned is not identified.
		ED12: Facilitate the development of wood fuel processing and distribution infrastructure	-	No likely significant effect, effects on any particular European site cannot be identified, because the proposal is too general and the potential location of infrastructure is not identified.
		ED13: Support the creation of a market for wood fuel by investing in	-	No likely significant effect, effects on any particular European site cannot be identified, because the proposal is too general and the

Aim	Objectives	Actions	Note of any spatial reference set out in action	Potential Impact on Natura sites: Likely significant effects, no likely significant effect, 'de minimis' effect
		biomass boilers, specifying combined heat and power units and raising awareness among developers and householders		potential location of infrastructure is not identified.
	Economic investment and regeneration	ED14: Use new planting to enhance the enhance derelict and degraded land, including former industrial and mineral sites, urban fringe landscapes and stalled development sites	Derelict and degraded land suitable for forestry planting	No likely significant effect, effects on any particular European site cannot be identified, because the proposal is too general and the location of the sites mentioned is not identified.
		ED15: Use woodland planting and management to improve the environmental quality of key investment locations	Key investment locations	No likely significant effect, effects on any particular European site cannot be identified, because the proposal is too general and the location of the sites mentioned is not identified.
		ED16: Prioritise woodland planting in advance of development to create a high quality landscape framework, integrate development into the wider landscape, link into	Future development sites	No likely significant effect, effects on any particular European site cannot be identified, because the proposal is too general and the location of the sites mentioned is not identified.

Aim	Objectives	Actions	Note of any spatial reference set out in action	Potential Impact on Natura sites: Likely significant effects, no likely significant effect, 'de minimis' effect
		habitat networks and contribute to sustainable flood management		
		ED17: Further develop the role of woodlands and forests in supporting the tourism sector across Ayrshire and Arran	Existing woodland	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general and does not specify the nature of change.
	Rural diversification	ED18: Encourage the positive management of existing farm woodlands to provide a range of local economic and environmental benefits	Existing farm woodland	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general and does not specify the nature of change.
		ED18: Work with land managers to encourage the integration of woodland planting on farm enterprises with the aim of diversifying incomes and delivering a range of economic and environmental benefits	Existing farm woodland	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general and does not specify the nature of change.
To maximise woodland	Improving local	QL1: Prioritise woodland creation and management	Ayrshire WIAT	No likely significant effect, as it does not in

Aim	Objectives	Actions	Note of any spatial reference set out in action	Potential Impact on Natura sites: Likely significant effects, no likely significant effect, 'de minimis' effect
and forests' contribution to communities and quality of life	landscapes	in WIAT areas	areas	itself bring about development or other change.
		QL2: Develop a strategy for woodland expansion in former mineral working areas, using native, mixed, softwood and energy forests to improve degraded landscapes and create new opportunities for employment	-	No likely significant effect, the proposal to develop a strategy will not result in development or other change. The effects of the strategy should be assessed once the strategy is written.
	Education and training	QL3: Support the Forest Education Initiative in increasing the role of woodland in education	Woodlands close to schools	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general.
		QL4: Raise awareness of the role of woodlands in supporting Eco-schools and other formal education	Woodlands close to schools	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general.

Aim	Objectives	Actions	Note of any spatial reference set out in action	Potential Impact on Natura sites: Likely significant effects, no likely significant effect, 'de minimis' effect
		QL5: Develop opportunities for volunteering and training associated with woodlands.	-	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general.
	Access, health and wellbeing	QL6: Use woodland management and creation to create high quality opportunities for outdoor recreation close to where people live	Woodlands close to settlements	No likely significant effect, the proposal makes provision for change but which could have no significant effect on a European site as focus of activity will be in locations remote from the Natura sites.
		QL7: Target new access provision in areas with high levels of multiple deprivation and poor levels of access to outdoor recreation	Woodlands close to settlements	No likely significant effect, the proposal makes provision for change but which could have no significant effect on a European site as focus of activity will be in locations remote from the Natura sites.
		QL8: Involve woodland managers, access authorities and NHS Ayrshire and Arran to focus activity and promotion where it is most needed	-	No likely significant effect. Proposal makes provision for change but which could have no significant effect on a European site as the proposal is too general and the location of the sites mentioned is not identified

Aim	Objectives	Actions	Note of any spatial reference set out in action	Potential Impact on Natura sites: Likely significant effects, no likely significant effect, 'de minimis' effect
	Community involvement in woodland planning, management and ownership	QL9: Provide forest managers with the training required for effective community engagement	-	No likely significant effect, as the proposal will not lead to development or any other change.
		QL10: Ensure communities are engaged in the process of planning woodlands and forests	-	No likely significant effect, as the proposal will not lead to development or any other change.
		QL11: Support the development of community woodlands, including community ownership of local woodlands	-	No likely significant effect, effects on any particular European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general and locations of community woodlands cannot be identified.
		QL12: Provide training, advice and support for communities owning and managing local woodlands	-	No likely significant effect, effects on any particular European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general and locations of community owned woodlands cannot be identified.
		QL13: Support community initiatives to establish social enterprises associated with woodland	-	No likely significant effect, effects on any particular European site cannot be identified

Aim	Objectives	Actions	Note of any spatial reference set out in action	Potential Impact on Natura sites: Likely significant effects, no likely significant effect, 'de minimis' effect
		and forests		because the location or impacts of potential social enterprises is not identified.
To maximise woodland and forests' role in creating a high quality, resilient and diverse natural environment	Landscape character	ENV1: Support the ongoing restructuring of existing conifer plantations to achieve a better fit with the landscape	Existing conifer plantations	No likely significant effect, which does not in itself lead to development or other change as it relates to the timing and location of forestry work which would otherwise take place.
		ENV2: Encourage the positive management of lowland trees, farm woodlands and shelterbelts in recognition of the contribution they make to the agricultural landscape, highlighting the role of SRDP in providing funding	Lowland trees, farm woodlands etc	No likely significant effect, relates to management of existing woodland in lowland locations, with no ecological pathway to Natura sites.
		ENV3: Encourage the positive management of urban trees including street trees, urban	urban trees	No likely significant effect, relates to management of urban trees with no ecological pathway to Natura sites.

Aim	Objectives	Actions	Note of any spatial reference set out in action	Potential Impact on Natura sites: Likely significant effects, no likely significant effect, 'de minimis' effect
		woodlands and trees in parks and private gardens		
		ENV4: Explore the potential for additional tree planting within urban areas, particularly along road corridors and on underused areas of open space	urban areas	No likely significant effect, relates to planting of urban trees with no ecological pathway to Natura sites.
		ENV5: Encourage the positive management of veteran trees, specimen trees and policy woodlands associated with historic gardens and designed landscapes, including the planned replacement of over mature trees	existing trees and woodland associated with historic gardens and designed landscapes	No likely significant effect, makes provision for change but which could have no conceivable effect on a European site because there is no link or pathway to Natura sites.
		ENV6: Promote the role of trees and woodland in enhancing the character and quality of degraded or damaged landscapes	degraded or damaged historic landscapes	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general, and the location of change is not identified.

Aim	Objectives	Actions	Note of any spatial reference set out in action	Potential Impact on Natura sites: Likely significant effects, no likely significant effect, 'de minimis' effect
		ENV7: Ensure that new woodlands are designed and located to achieve a good fit with the underlying character of the landscape	-	No likely significant effect, will not lead to development or other change as it relates to design aspect of woodland only.
	Improving woodland biodiversity	ENV8: Manage and enhance existing native and semi-natural woodlands	existing native and semi-natural woodland	No likely significant effect, management to enhance the biodiversity of existing woodland.
		ENV9: Establish new native woodlands as part of integrated habitat networks	-	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general and does not specify the location of change.
		ENV10: Establish new native woodlands in areas affected by mineral extraction and around urban fringes	Urban fringe and areas affected by mineral extraction	No likely significant effect, intended to enhance the environment.
		ENV11: Restore ancient and semi-natural woodland	Areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland	No likely significant effect, management to enhance the biodiversity of existing woodland.

Aim	Objectives	Actions	Note of any spatial reference set out in action	Potential Impact on Natura sites: Likely significant effects, no likely significant effect, 'de minimis' effect
		ENV12: Ensure that woodland expansion does not affect other important non-woodland habitats and species	-	No likely significant effect, management to protect the natural environment.
	Protecting important non-woodland habitats and species	ENV13: Ensure woodland expansion does not have an adverse impact on nationally or internationally important non-woodland habitats	Protecting designated sites	No likely significant effect, intended to protect the natural environment.
	Conserving historic designed landscapes and veteran trees	ENV14: Encourage positive management of trees and woodlands within historic gardens and designed landscapes	existing woodland within historic gardens and designed landscapes	No likely significant effect, intended to protect the historic landscape.
		ENV15: Carry out selective replanting of trees and woods	existing woodland within historic gardens and designed landscapes	No likely significant effect, intended to protect the historic landscape.

Aim	Objectives	Actions	Note of any spatial reference set out in action	Potential Impact on Natura sites: Likely significant effects, no likely significant effect, 'de minimis' effect
		ENV16: Ensure that new woodland planting within or near historic gardens and designed landscapes reflects their historic design	historic gardens and designed landscapes	No likely significant effect, will not lead to development or other change as it relates to design of woodland.
	Protecting the historic environment	ENV17: Ensure that new woodlands are located and designed to avoid impacts on the historic environment	historic gardens and designed landscapes	No likely significant effect, will not lead to development or other change as it relates to design of woodland.
		ENV18: Use forest restructuring as an opportunity to improve the setting and interpretation of historic features	-	No likely significant effect, as it relates to a design aspect of forest restructuring, but the action will not lead to development or other change.
		ENV19: Promote understanding and awareness of trees and woodlands as part of the historic environment	-	No likely significant effect, the action will not lead to development or other change.
	Water environment	ENV20: Promote the role of woodland in terms of	upper and middle river	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified

Aim	Objectives	Actions	Note of any spatial reference set out in action	Potential Impact on Natura sites: Likely significant effects, no likely significant effect, 'de minimis' effect
		sustainable flood management	catchments	because the proposal is too general and does not specify the location of change.
		ENV21: Promote the role of woodland in contributing to water quality	-	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general and does not specify the location of change.
	Air quality	ENV22: Promote the role of woodland in improving air quality	-	No likely significant effect, the action does not lead to development or other change.
		ENV23: Provide good information to potential biomass energy users to ensure there are no adverse effects on air quality	-	No likely significant effect, the action does not lead to development or other change.
	Soils	ENV24: Promote the use of woodland planting to help remediate polluted sites	Polluted sites	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general and does not specify the location of change.
		ENV25: Promote the use of woodland in reducing soil erosion and the risk of land slips.	Vulnerable soils	No likely significant effect, any particular effects on any European site cannot be identified because the proposal is too general and does not specify the location of change.

Conclusion

No likely significant effects alone are identified. No 'de minimis' effects identified, therefore no in-combination effects need to be assessed.

Document Information

Setting	Value
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