

## Summary of Proposals

### Executive Summary

Lael Forest Design Plan has been prepared in line with the UK Forestry Standard (2011), UKWAS guidelines and the Scottish Forestry Strategy (2006). The local Forest District Strategic Plan has been utilised to give local context to the Scottish Forestry Strategy and inform the plan brief which will guide the vision of the forest management for the next twenty five years.

Forestry Commission Scotland's long term planning is aligned to Scottish Government Scotland Performs objectives and the Scottish Government Land Use Strategy.

### Summary

The plan has been prepared to take into consideration those of the seven key themes of the Scottish Forestry Strategy that are detailed as relevant to the individual plan area in the NHFD Strategic Plan. The key priority areas that will drive the proposals contained in this plan are:

- Climate Change
- Timber Production
- Community Development
- Environmental Quality
- Access and Health
- Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement

Appendix 4 – The Forest Design Plan brief gives full details of the priority objectives for each area of development noted above. In addition it provides details of how the Forest District will monitor the delivery of these objectives and which member of the Forest District team will be responsible for that monitoring.

Proposals for the future management of the forests within this plan area are made in accordance with all current industry best practice guidelines and have been prepared following full scoping and consultation with the relevant agencies, community representatives and external stakeholders.

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Setting and context

The management of Forestry Commission Scotland's national forest estate is guided by the Scottish Forestry Strategy 2006 (SFS), which identifies seven key themes that will influence forest management:

- Climate Change
- Timber
- Business Development
- Access & health
- Environmental Quality
- Biodiversity
- Community Development

Drawing on these key themes North Highland Forest District (NHFD) prepared a ten year Strategic Plan in 2007. This plan establishes links with the nationally important key themes and sets out the policies and objectives under which NHFD plans will be prepared. The NHFD Strategic Plan ensures that forestry activities compliment and enhance the local economic, social and ecological individuality of each design plan area.

The key themes were used as the basis for the development of this Forest Design Plan (FDP) and key objectives were grouped under these themes. This plan aims to provide local context for the overarching key themes and objectives.

## 1.2 History of plan

The production of this Lael Forest Design Plan is the full ten year revision of the following document:

- Lael Forest 030/517/080 Expires 30/03/13 (amended 24/02/11)

Previously the plan had been produced by Inverness, Ross and Skye Forest District and the plan number has been changed to 030/516/080 to reflect the transfer of management of the forest to North Highland FD.

The plan area is situated at the southern end of Loch Broom in Wester Ross approximately 6 miles south of the village of Ullapool (see Map 1 Location & Context) and includes the forests of Lael Glen and Braemore. The forests run alongside the A835 Ullapool to Inverness road – a significant tourist route to the far north west and the Outer Hebrides.

These forests are owned by Forestry Commission Scotland and cover 874 Ha of which approximately 560 Ha (64%) is productive forest and 19 Ha (2%) is mixed woodland arboretum, seed stands and research plots of planted origin. The majority of the remaining area, totalling around 295 Ha is land currently felled in fallow (81 Ha – 9%), internal open space (193 Ha – 22%) and land under other management or unplantable (21 Ha – 2%).

There is a long history of tree cover at Lael, with some areas being restocked for a third productive rotation and areas that have had native woodland on them for many centuries.

Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris* – SP), european larch (*Larix decidua* - EL), japanese larch (*Larix kaempferi* - JL) and douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* - DF) predominate on drier soils. By far the most predominant conifer is sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis* – SS) forming significant elements of the forest on wetter and poorer soils, generally in pure stands. Significant Planted Ancient Woodland (PAWS) sites are recorded across the FDP area.