

Pentland Hills and Surrounding Area Woodland Action Plan

Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee

24th September 2010

Purpose of report

- 1 To inform the Joint Committee of a successful bid to the Central Scotland Green Network Development Fund to develop a woodland action plan for the Pentland Hills and surrounding area.

Main report

- 2 The Scottish Government's second National Planning Framework (NPF2) designated the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) as one of the key 14 National Developments. The CSGN aims to improve the quality and extent of woodland cover throughout Central Scotland.
- 3 The Forestry Commission Scotland, in its capacity as joint lead partner for the CSGN, is administering a new fund (the CSGN Development Fund), to support projects that help meet CSGN objectives. Eligible project will include:
 - woodland creation and management;
 - creation of a high quality landscape in support of development plan settlement strategies (including accessible green space for communities);
 - strategic routes for active travel and recreation;
 - strategic habitat networks and habitat development projects;
 - restoration of vacant and derelict land for green network purposes;
 - integration of woodland, habitat, greenspace and access development with water catchment and coastal zone management.
- 4 A proposal has been developed for a Woodland Action Plan for the Pentland Hills and surrounding areas. The proposal follows dialogue between a number of partners including: the Lothians and Fife Green Network Partnership

(LFGNP – formerly the Edinburgh & Lothians Forest Habitat Network Partnership); City of Edinburgh Council; Midlothian Council, West Lothian Council, Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust, Central Scotland Forest Trust and the Pentland Hills Regional Park.

- 5 The proposed Action Plan aims to take a targeted approach to improving woodland in and around the Pentland Hills. The plan will identify opportunities to consolidate existing woodland with new planting and to improve woodland links between the Pentland Hills and surrounding areas. The emphasis will be on identifying new woodland schemes and on supporting their delivery on the ground. The plan will therefore consider how land managers can be helped to access existing funding streams such as the Scottish Rural Development Plan (SRDP) and the Forestry Commission's Woodlands in and Around Town scheme (WIAT).
- 6 The project will take a 'bottom up' approach by placing significant emphasis on consultation with land managers and identifying viable projects on the ground. It is intended that this approach will lead directly to the delivery of new planting.
- 7 The proposed Action Plan area (see Appendix 1) falls within the administrative boundaries of City of Edinburgh, Midlothian and West Lothian Councils. Much of the area containing potential projects lies outwith the boundaries of the Pentland Hills Regional Park. It is appropriate therefore that the Lothians and Fife Green Network Partnership take the lead role in managing the project and co-ordinating communications between partner organisations.
- 8 Earlier this year, the Forest Habitat Network Officer prepared a project proposal (Appendix 1) and submitted a grant application to the Central Scotland Green Network Development Fund. This application was successful and an award of £32,288 has been made to develop the Action Plan.
- 9 The project will be delivered in two stages. Stage One will involve further scoping, site investigation, landowner consultations and identification of opportunities. Stage Two will involve the development of up to ten actual projects on the ground.
- 10 The Pentland Hills Regional Park will have a role to play in identifying potential projects and facilitating consultation with land managers within the Regional Park. It is proposed to invite the Forest Habitat Network Officer to the Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum on the 22nd October to initiate consultation with key stakeholders in the Regional Park.

Financial Implications

- 11 The Lothians and Fife Green Network Partnership has been awarded £32,288 from the CSGN Development Fund to develop and implement the Woodland Action Plan.
- 12 There are no further direct funding contributions required from the Regional Park or its partner local authorities.
- 13 The Regional Park is likely to provide a contribution 'in kind' in the form of staff support for the scoping and consultation stage.

Environmental Impact

- 14 Implementation of a Woodland Action Plan for the Pentland Hills and surrounding area would realise significant environmental benefits including:
- creation and enhancement of woodland corridors between the Pentland Hills and surrounding area;
 - new woodland habitat creation for wildlife;
 - enhancement of wider landscape quality; and
 - new opportunities for recreation and access.

Recommendations

- 15 It is recommended that the Joint Committee:
- a) notes that the Lothians and Fife Green Network Partnership has secured funding from the Central Scotland Green Network Development Fund for the development of a Woodland Action Plan for the Pentland Hills and surrounding area; and
 - b) agrees to invite the Forest Habitat Network Officer to the Regional Park Consultative Forum on the 22nd October to initiate consultation with stakeholders in the Regional Park.



David Jamieson
Parks & Greenspace Manager

Appendices	Appendix 1: Pentland Hills and Surrounding Area Woodland Action Plan Proposal (Edinburgh and Lothians Forest Habitat Network)
Contact/tel/Email	David Jamieson (Parks and Greenspace Manager, 0131 529 7055) Keith Logie (Parks Development Manager, 0131 529 7916) Alan McGregor (Regional Park Manager, 0131 445 3383)
Wards affected	All

Single Outcome Agreement	Relevant to the following National Outcomes: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe.2 We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.6 We live longer, healthier lives.10 We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.11 We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.12 We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations13 We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity.14 We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and Production.15 Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.
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Background Papers

Further Information on the Central Scotland Green Network at:
<http://www.centralscotlandgreennetwork.org/>

Further Information about the Edinburgh and Lothians Forest Habitat Network at:
www.elfhnp.org.uk

Appendix 1: Pentland Hills and Surrounding Area Woodland Action Plan Proposal
(Prepared by the Lothians and Fife Green Network Partnership to support submission to CSGN Development Fund)

**Pentland Hills and Surrounding Area
Woodland Action Plan Proposal**

1. Background

- 1.1 Purpose of the Action Plan
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- 1.3 Strategic Context
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- 2.3 Project Stages and Outputs
- 2.4 Timescales and Resourcing
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Pentland Hills and Surrounding Area Draft Woodland Action Plan Proposal

1. Background

This paper develops the concept of undertaking a woodland action plan for the Pentland Hills area. This includes both land within the Pentland Hills Regional Park in addition to its surrounding hinterland.

Rather than focusing purely on the Regional Park area, the aim is to take a "bigger picture" view which considers the relationship of the Pentland Hills to their setting. This is particularly the case with regards linkage to surrounding forest habitat networks and with woodlands associated with nearby settlements.

The Plan process is being taken forward through dialogue between stakeholders who include the Lothians and Fife Green Network (previously ELFHNP), Pentland Hills Regional Park Authority, Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust, Central Scotland Forest Trust, West Lothian Council, Midlothian Council and the City of Edinburgh Council.

The aim is that the Plan will act as a catalyst to deliver practical action on the ground. Previously there has been market failure to initiate extensive woodland management activity within the Pentland Hills through the system of forestry grants and incentives. This can be put down to a variety of factors including competing land management interests, lack of awareness and potential development value on the urban fringe.

As such the resultant outputs of this Plan and follow up work should aim to initiate action on the ground. Further development of the Plan will be a 2 stage process (with this document serving as an introductory overview). More detailed scoping work, consultation and specifications will follow on through proposed development phases.

In terms of taking forward the Action Planning process, the importance of consultation with landowners and wider stakeholders cannot be underestimated. The consultation process, by its very nature, should also help to increase landowner awareness of the potential for involvement in woodland management activities.

1.1 Purpose of the Action Plan

The specific purpose of the Plan is to take forward the development of a more strategic and targeted approach to woodland management in and around the Pentland Hills.

In particular this must recognise the potential to link between the Pentland Hills Regional Park and surrounding forest habitat networks as identified through the Edinburgh and Lothians Forest Habitat Network mapping process. Through this process, priority areas have been identified and suggestions made as to where networks might be consolidated through practical intervention and new woodland creation. The proposed areas for consolidation, effectively fringe the Pentland Hills. The strategic context with regard to habitat networks, needs to be taken into account.

The Plan also aims to create links between woods fringing adjoining settlements and the core area of the Pentland Hills Regional Park. This will enhance the landscape quality of the wider area whilst providing social and recreational benefits for local people. In this respect the plan should highlight links to key policy areas including the Central Scotland Green Network and local and regional development planning processes.

An obvious starting point for the Plan is to consider where work has taken place previously and where key gaps and opportunities exist. It should ideally add value where this is required through specifically targeting areas of greatest need. In proposing and taking forward resultant project work, existing funding streams such as the Scottish Rural Development Plan (SRDP) and Woodlands In and Around Town (WIAT) must be considered as potential sources of ongoing funding. The Action Plan should aim to highlight where funding might be sought in particular instances.

In terms of delivery, outcomes should be wide ranging and projects should bring multiple benefits including biodiversity, silviculture, access, community involvement. These outcomes should be assessed in terms of their contribution to strategic objectives including the Edinburgh and Lothians Forestry Framework and the Central Scotland Green Network.

1.2 Description of the Action Plan area and boundary

The proposed Action Plan area has been developed through discussions by project partners. The aim is to include both the central core of the Pentland Hills Regional Park and a wide buffer zone characterised by settlement and wooded mosaic landscapes. It is in these latter areas that greatest additional benefits might be accrued.

The suggested area extends from the Camilty and West Cairns plantations in the West, through Balerno and then eastwards along the A70 corridor to the meeting point with the Edinburgh City bypass. The boundary then follows the City Bypass as it sweeps around to the North East of the Pentland Hills, before heading Southwards towards Penicuik and the North Esk River Corridor. The South Eastern boundary of the area follows the local authority boundaries, North and West across the Pentland Hills and back towards the West Cairns Plantation.

The boundary (see fig. 1) has been selected to pick up the main areas of human activity surrounding the Hills, particularly to the North and East of the Regional Park, where human activity and settlement is concentrated.

It is believed that greatest social and environmental benefit can be achieved by prioritising these areas, in addition to delivering the aspirations of the Edinburgh and Lothians Forest Habitat Network Partnership.

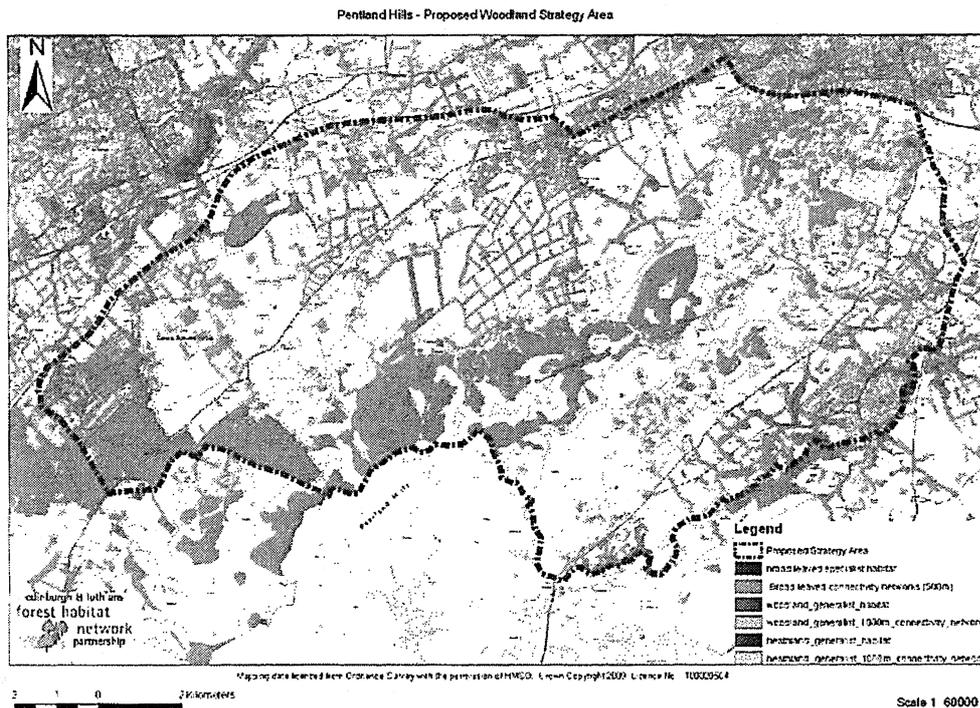


Fig. 1. The proposed Woodland Action Plan Boundary

1.3 Strategic Context:

A number of strategic documents and initiatives provide a context for taking forward a Woodland Action Plan for the Pentland Hills area. Amongst the key ones are the following;

i) Pentland Hills Regional Park Plan 2007 - 2017

The Pentland Hills Regional Park Plan 2007-2017 was produced in 2007. Under Theme C of the document (Conservation and enhancement of the landscape, natural and cultural heritage of the hills), the Plan aims "To realise the full ecological potential of the Pentland Hills Regional Park by protecting, maintaining and enhancing the present ranges of species and habitats"

With specific reference to woodlands, the Regional Park Plan aims "To bring existing native woodland cover under positive management and expanded, where appropriate".

To this end the Plan specifies the need to "Work with Forestry Commission and the PHRP land managers to develop a strategy to ensure that forestry grants are being used to improve management of existing woodland and targeting new planting into the most appropriate areas where it contributes to habitat networks or to expansion of existing woodland".

A report produced in 2003 by Tom Hobbs of the Pentland Hills Regional Park Authority evaluated potential to develop a more strategic approach to Forestry within the Pentland Hills Regional Park. The paper identified certain barriers to woodland expansion. These included the fragmented nature of landownership and a lack of awareness by owners of the potential for woodland management and the incentives available for this.

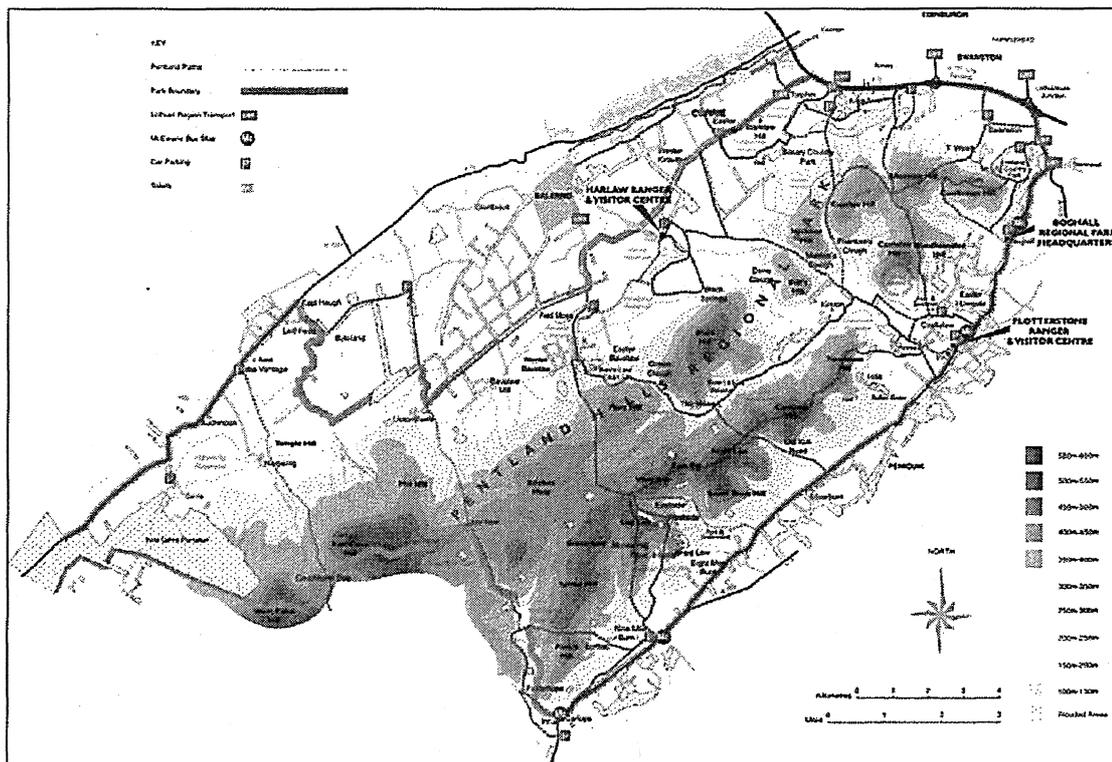


Figure 2: The Pentland Hills Regional Park (with boundary)

ii) Edinburgh and Lothians Forestry Framework (Draft) - 2008

The Regional Forestry Framework has been developed by ELFHNP (the Edinburgh and the Lothians Forest Habitat Network Partnership). ELFHNP is a joint initiative between Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, City of Edinburgh Council, Midlothian Council, East Lothian Council, West Lothian Council, Edinburgh and the Lothians Greenspace Trust, Central Scotland Forest Trust and Woodland Trust Scotland,

The Forestry Framework specifies the direction of Forest policy within Edinburgh and the Lothians Region for the next 40 year period. The Framework aims to ensure that "Edinburgh and the Lothians will have attractive, biodiverse networks of forest, woodlands, greenspaces and semi natural habitats. These networks will contribute to the development of a strong local economy and provide diverse benefits for local residents including recreation, health and well-being. Local people will be actively involved in the planning, creation and development of these networks, which will be key assets for the community."

The Strategic Outcomes of the Forestry Framework are to:

- Create an attractive environment for inward investment and economic competitiveness
- Provide biodiversity and green infrastructure benefits
- Improve health and well-being benefits
- Promote empowered communities
- Assist education and lifelong learning through use of the outdoor classroom

The imperative of the Framework is that it leads to targeted action on the ground. In this respect accompanying Forest Habitat Network maps have been produced in collaboration with Forest Research. These show where action should be targeted to consolidate habitat networks based on their significance for biodiversity and the delivery of green infrastructure

benefits. In particular the fringes of the Pentlands have been identified as priority areas for consolidation of the network (as shown in Fig 2).

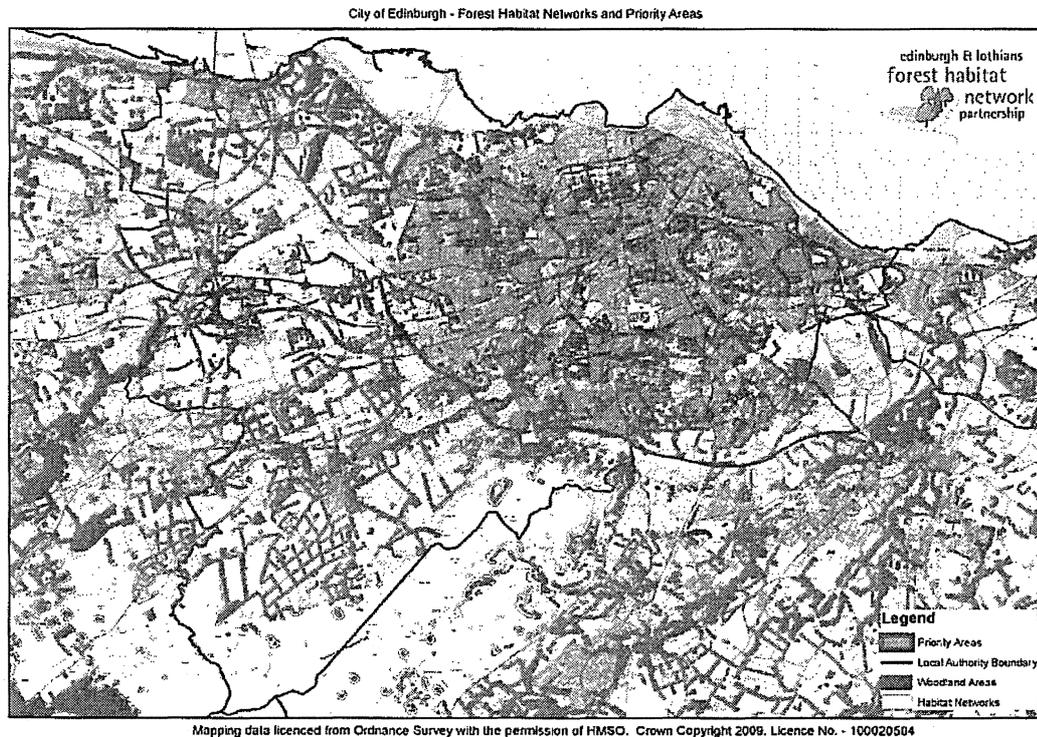


Fig. 2. Forest Habitat Networks including the priority areas around Edinburgh

iii) The Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN)

The Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) announced in NPF2 is envisaged to transform the face of Central Scotland, by restoring and transforming the landscape of an area stretching from Ayrshire and Inverclyde in the West to Fife and the Lothians in the East.

The CSGN was one of only 14 National developments in NPF2, published 25 June 2009 and aims "to effect a step change in environmental quality, woodland cover and recreational opportunities". As a consequence the CSGN will need to be written into emerging Strategic and Local Development Plans and will become a material consideration in planning applications. The NPF2 statement of need for the CSGN encompasses wide ranging parameters as follows:

- Woodland expansion
- Landscape improvements around settlements
- Improvements to habitat networks
- Improvements to active travel networks
- Restoration of vacant and derelict land
- Integration with river catchment and coastal management

Green Networks are seen as contributing to a the creation of a healthy vibrant Central Scotland. The draft vision of the CSGN reflects this and is as follows, "By 2050, the environment of Central Scotland will have been transformed through the creation of a high quality green network enhancing people's lives, supporting the economy, allowing nature to flourish and addressing climate change"

The Pentland Hills Woodland Action Plan is a good opportunity to take forward the aspirations of the CSGN at a local level and there is potential for a diverse partnership across three local authority areas to work together collaboratively.

iv) *Green network aims within SESplan*

In addition to CSGN, SESplan is of particular relevance to the development of the Green Network agenda in the Lothians. Work has been underway to include reference material to green networks within the SESplan main issues report and supplementary guidance material. To this end, a paper entitled "Embedding the Green Network into the SES Plan" has been produced jointly by Forestry Commission Scotland, Forest Research, Scottish Natural Heritage and ELFHNP. This paper made the following recommendation for Green Networks within the SESplan area.

"The green network will be recognised, conserved and enhanced as a crucial component of the region's distinctive sense of place and quality of life. Its contribution to a range of economic, social and environmental objectives will be optimised, and opportunities to create new elements, and to improve the connectivity, accessibility and quality of the green network through the delivery of suitably located and designed development will be harnessed."

With the paper, the following broad themes have been identified as priorities for the green network within SESplan:

- Sustainable economic development/ growth
- Quality of life/ wellbeing (incorporating both health improvement and sustainable communities)
- Biodiversity and ecosystem service provision
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation

The proposals within the paper have now been incorporated within the SESplan MIR (Main Issues Report) and as an accompanying Technical Note. The Potential Development of a Woodland Strategy for the Pentland Hills is identified as Opportunity 33 within the Technical Note.

In addition to the strategic documents listed above, Local Plans and landscape designations, Core Path Plans, LBAPS and Public Open Space Strategies are also of relevance.

1.4 Past and present management activity

As mentioned in the introduction there has been a market failure to initiate widespread woodland creation and management activity within the area through the existing grants system.

However in previous years a number of schemes have occurred and these have been funded through funding packages including the Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS), the Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme (SFGS) and through agri-environment grants including rural stewardship.

Partner organisations, including Forestry Commission Scotland and the Pentland Hills Regional Park Authority have access to records on previous initiatives and are able to supply this information to help develop work in proposed Core Areas. This is also useful in that it provides background context on landowners who may be amenable to undertaking further work with a little encouragement.

Past activities however have been piecemeal in their nature and increasing knowledge of the processes and function of habitat networks now provide an opportunity to a more holistic approach.

1.5 Project delivery mechanisms and methodology

The aim is to take the Action Plan process forward through building effective partnership mechanisms. The proposed project area cuts across local authority administrative boundaries and includes parts of West Lothian, City of Edinburgh and Midlothian Council areas. The project is potentially also a quick win for regional green network initiatives and satisfies ELFHNP, CSGN and SESplan priorities.

However to ensure effective co-ordination of Action Plan development, it is proposed that ELFHNP acts as a single point of co-ordination between partner organisations. In terms of efficient resource management it is suggested that there are 2 further stages to the Action Planning process in addition to this overview statement identifying strategic context, present activity and needs analysis.

- i) Scoping work within the identified core areas to evaluate potential for project development. This must include a significant stakeholder consultation component to seek the views of landowners and other interested parties. The aim of the consultation should also be to promote awareness of/ increase involvement in woodland management activities.
- ii) Detailed action planning of areas identified during the scoping and consultation phases. This could be undertaken through the partner organisations and external consultants. The outputs should aim to identify specific actions and specifications which can be taken forward as funding applications to the SRDP.

Resultant Implementation work should be undertaken where practicable through landowners agents and local delivery mechanisms to ensure a high level of landowner adoption and support. There is potential for partner organisations including the Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust and Central Scotland Forest Trust to provide assistance with canvassing landowner support and scoping of project work on the ground. Other partners may be able to provide staff time input e.g. Local Authority Rangers.

1.6 Proposed outputs and outcomes of the Action Plan

The outputs should be in the form of an Action Plan identifying clear opportunities and proposed interventions which resulting from these. These should include:

- Area prioritisation – including proposed locations and rationale for incorporation
- Summary of human and financial resources available
- Estimation of costings and time line

These outputs are detailed more fully in section 2, "Taking Forward Action". Actions resulting from the planning process must deliver multifunctional benefits including biodiversity, community, recreation, landscape enhancement and sustainable harvesting.

Longer term outcomes that the project are;

- The development of a more strategic and targeted approach to woodland management in and around the Pentland Hills.
- The enhancement of links between the Pentland Hills Regional Park and surrounding forest habitat networks including within adjoining settlements.
- Targeted interventions resulting in new woodland habitat creation, improved management of existing woodlands, linear habitat features and trees in the wider landscape.
- Increasing levels of involvement in woodland management activity by local landowners and stakeholder groups.
- Enhancement of the wider landscape quality of the area whilst providing social and recreational benefits for local people.

2. Taking Forward Action – Proposal Development

2.1 Area prioritisation - Rationale

Given limited resources for woodland management within the Pentlands and surrounding area, it is essential that work is prioritised to key areas where greatest value can be added. The areas suggested below have been identified on the basis of the following parameters;

- Key gaps in the network and where there is broken or highly fragmented woodland cover.
- Woodlands which could deliver greater multipurpose benefits through enhanced management.
- Linear Habitat Corridors such as the Edinburgh City Bypass route and river corridors including the North Esk and the Water of Leith

2.2 Priority areas – Proposed Locations

The following areas have been selected on the basis of these criteria (see fig. 3).

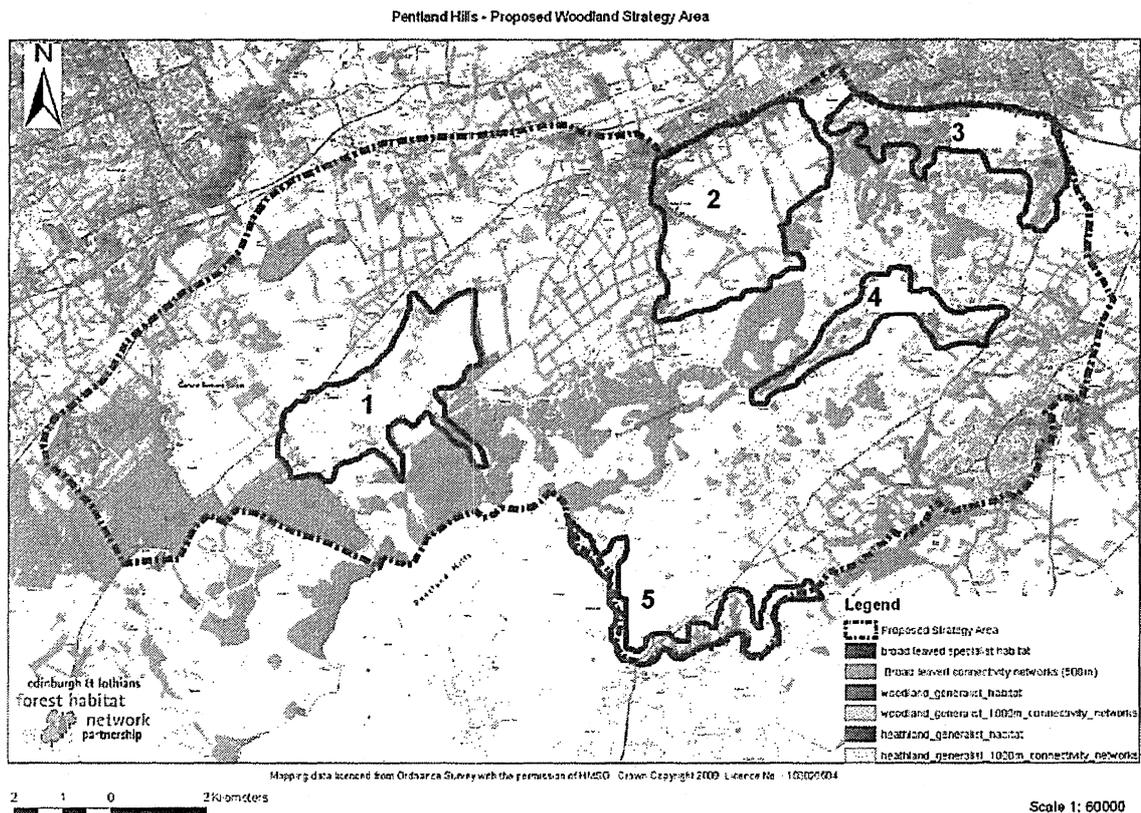


Fig. 3. Potential Priority Action Areas

i) Harperigg Reservoir / Upper water of Leith / Dean Burn Riparian Networks

Creation of new riparian woodland to link existing woodland native woodland fragments and provide key missing connection at the western edge of the network.

This might include the creation of wet woodland (alder / willow) around Harperigg reservoir and river corridor planting along the water of Leith and tributaries. The scheme should also aim to improve overall woodland habitat connectivity between West Cairns Plantation and the network of farm shelterbelts to the South West of Balerno.

The enhancement work should also provide benefits for the diversification of landscape character within the area.

Extension into the area to the North of the A70 should also be considered.

ii) Balerno Shelterbelts

The aim will be to enhance the overall quality of the wooded landscape to the SE of Balerno through the following actions:

- Improving the condition and diversity of shelterbelts to assist connectivity of habitats.
- Improving linear landscape features including hedgerows and field boundary strips.
- Increasing density of woodland corridors, particularly through creating more east/west links to the South East of Balerno.
- Assessing where improved woodland management will enhance overall network quality and connectivity.

Overall, focusing activity in this area will help to consolidate the main West / East linkage. There is potential for linking woodland creation into more general agri-environment activity within this area.

iii) North East Slopes / City Bypass Corridor

The primary aim will be to improve the total cover, diversity and management of woodland along the North East fringes of the hills from Torphin / Torduff Reservoir through Swanston to Hillend following the City Bypass corridor.

The scheme will provide the following benefits;

- Improved woodland management / diversity / silviculture.
- Increased woodland cover, particularly along the bypass
- Provision of recreation and community involvement opportunities

The City By-pass corridor is an important pinch point between the Pentland Hills and the urban edge and therefore must be considered a priority area for action. There will also be significant green infrastructure benefits through contributing to Regional and National Development Planning objectives. Improving connectivity across the bypass for wildlife and people might also be considered an important priority.

iv) Loganburn / Glencorse

The emphasis here should be upon improving the diversity of existing woodlands within Glencorse through improved silviculture and through diversification of age class, species and woodland structure. There will be benefits accrued through improving the functional connectivity of woodlands and enhancing their role as a part of the wider habitat network.

Intergration of woodland management objectives with hill farming, landscape and recreational objectives will be important and in keeping with Pentlands Regional Park Authority remit.

Development of transitional woodland edge and "montane" scrub on hill slopes through grazing management agreements would be a desirable aspiration if compatible with other land management aspirations. The value of these woodlands for delivering ecosystem services, particularly water quality and river catchment management must be considered to be imperative.

v) Upper North Esk Catchment

Activity in this area should focus upon Riparian Woodland Management between North Esk Reservoir and Penicuik Estate. A principle aim should be to undertake new riparian planting along the river corridor to enhance and consolidate its function as a key habitat network asset.

In addition there must be an aspiration to improve the quality and diversity of existing riparian habitats.

2.3 Project Stages and Outputs,

Project Stages:

The following table provides a breakdown of the work required to take forward project development work within the five Core Areas. As referred to previously (1.5), the work needs to be undertaken in 2 stages for each area.

- i) Scoping and Consultation with landowners and stakeholder groups
- ii) Detailed Specification and Development

Detailed Outputs:

Stage 1: Analysis, Scoping and Consultation

- Analysis of existing woodland resource in each of the five priority areas.
- Analysis of context/ constraints in each of the five priority areas.
- Site assessment of each of the five identified core areas
- Detailed analysis of woodland resource in terms of current condition and management.
- Evaluation and Identification of opportunities and constraints
- Consultation with landowners and stakeholder groups to determine feasibilities and identify need for further intervention through stage 2 (30 landowners)
- Identification of Delivery Mechanisms

Stage 2: Project Development – Scheme Design and Specification

- Development including design and specification of 10 individual woodland management, enhancement or creation projects (2 per core area) arising for stage 1.

2.4 Timescales and Resourcing

Timescales - Estimate of required work:

The following table illustrates actions required and the timescales involved for each of the 2 stages:

STAGE 1 – Scoping and Consultation (Core Areas 1- 5)		Person Days
1.1 Desktop Survey		
	Desktop analysis of existing woodland resource in each of the five priority areas.	3
	Desktop analysis of context/ constraints in each of the five priority areas.	2
1.2 Site Survey		
	Site visits and assessment of each of the five identified priority areas	10
	Detailed analysis of woodland resource in terms of current condition and management.	5
1.3 Landowner Consultation*		
	Consultation with landowners and stakeholder groups to determine feasibilities and identify need for further incentives (assume 30 landowners)	30
1.4 Evaluation and identification of opportunities		
	Evaluation for Core Area proposals including Identification of opportunities and constraints	5
1.5 Delivery Mechanisms		
	Identification of Mechanisms	2.5
	Total Person Days (Stage 1)	57.5

STAGE 2 - Project Development (Core Areas 1- 5)		Person Days
	Estimate 10 Projects (2 per area) Project Development and specification* (4 days per project)	40
	Total Person Days (Stage 1 and 2)	97.5

* To be undertaken by consultants and staff of partner organisations (as feasible)

Resources available:

The availability of new funding has recently been announced from the Central Scotland Green Network Development Fund. This £500k fund has recently been made available to develop projects which take forward the agenda of the CSGN. The fund favours projects which link closely with CSGN aims and objectives. Given the priority accorded to the Pentland Hills within the draft CSGN Action Plan (Regional Priorities), it is suggested that the project should be eligible for funding and that an application should be submitted. The strong opportunity for partnership working that the Pentland Hills affords, should also help to promote the project

Importantly, the CSGN fund can pay 100% of costs. At present there are no other obvious sources of funding and partner organisations do not have sufficient resources to make significant financial contributions. There is potential for some limited seedcorn funding from Forestry Commission Scotland, however it is felt that an application to the CSGN Development Fund should be the starting point.

There is however the potential for using staff time from within existing Partner organisations. This could include potentially;

- Lothians and Fife Green Network
- Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust
- Central Scotland Forest Trust
- Pentland Hills Regional Park Ranger Service
- Local Authority Staff

In addition to this development work can also be taken forward using consultants where appropriate. In the longer term landowners may wish to use their own agents for taking forward actions on the ground which result from the scheme.

2.5 Next steps and Conclusion:

Next steps:

The next steps for taking the Plan process forward are:

- Agree plan content and methodology by partners
- Funding application to the CSGN Development Fund
- Take forward stages 1 and 2 of Project Development subject to funding;
 - i) Undertake initial scoping of each priority area
Consultation with landowners and stakeholder groups
 - ii) Develop detailed proposals and specifications
- Submission of applications to the SRDP or other funding sources as identified through stages 1 and 2 of development work

Conclusion:

The Action Plan provides an excellent opportunity to take forward the process of developing a strategic approach to woodland management within, and surrounding the Pentland Hills Regional Park.

The diverse range of stakeholders working in partnership and the scale of the task to be tackled provide an excellent opportunity to create a model of best practice for the developing Central Scotland Green Network and for green network planning on a Regional scale.

Most importantly however, the Action Plan and resultant development work must lead to targeted action on the ground including new woodland establishment and management activities. Through extensive consultation this must receive the buy-in and backing of local landowners and stakeholder groups to create truly sustainable land management options for the future of the Pentland Hills.