

Woodland Management Plan Guidance Document

Table of Contents

1	Introduction to Management Plans.....	3
	Overview	3
	The Benefits of Preparing a Management Plan	3
	The Role of the Forestry Commission.....	3
2	Regulatory Cover.....	4
	Consent for work in a Site of Special Scientific Interest.....	4
	Category B	4
3	The Management Plan Template.....	4
	Macros	4
	UKFS Management Planning Criteria.....	6
	Section 1 – Property Details	6
	Section 2 – Vision and Objectives	6
	Section 3 – Achievements.....	6
	Section 4 – Woodland Survey.....	6
	Section 5 – Woodland Protection.....	7
	Section 6 – Management Strategy	8
	Section 7 – Stakeholder Engagement	9
	Section 8 – Monitoring	9
4	Plan of Operations.....	9
	Sub-compartment Record	9
	Felling & Restocking.....	9
	Work Programme	10
	Species List	10
5	Small Woodland Management Plan.....	10
	Approval Criteria	11

Guidance Document

Completing the Small Woodland Management Plan..... 11
Section 4 – Woodland Survey 11
Section 8 – Felling & Restocking 11
6 Maps..... 11
Indicative Maps 12
7 Submission and Review 12
Approval Process 12
Felling Licence..... 12

Revision History

Date	Version	Comments
16/09/13	0	Pilot Version
20/12/13	1	Final
01/07/14	1.1	Updated to reflect changes in EUTR
15/01/15	1.2	Countryside Stewardship

1 Introduction to Management Plans

Overview

This guidance document is intended to provide support for people preparing a management plan using the FC template(s). A UKFS compliant management plan requires three parts to be completed - the management plan template, the plan of operations and associated maps. This guidance document covers each in turn as well as providing information on the Small Woodland Management Plan.

The Woodland Management Plan template has been updated to better reflect the requirements set out in the 2011 edition of the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) and the DEFRA forest policy statement made in January 2013. The UKFS is the reference standard for sustainable forest management in the UK. The template also aims to better reflect the diverse scale and complexity of woodlands in England.

The UKFS, supported by a series of Guidelines, outlines the context for forestry in the UK, sets out the approach of the UK Government to sustainable forest management, defines standards and requirements, and provides a basis for regulation and monitoring. This includes setting out what should be included within a woodland management plan.

The Benefits of Preparing a Management Plan

The Woodland Management Plan template and associated Plan of Operations have been designed to help woodland owners and agents maintain or bring woodland in to sustainable management. There are a number of benefits for well managed woodland including;

- Improve economic viability, for example through appropriate thinning and felling activities;
- Consider and plan for protection against pests and disease and improve access;
- Help provide structural diversity that creates a wide range of habitat for both plant and animal life; and
- Look at opportunities for people to benefit directly or indirectly for example through recreation or improved local amenity.

The Role of the Forestry Commission

Forestry Commission England is the government department responsible for the protection and expansion of forests and woodlands in England. This includes licensing tree felling and providing grant aid. A management plan must be reviewed and approved by the FC should it require a licence to thin or fell trees or if it is intended to be used as the basis for accessing FC grants.

The structure of the management plan is based on the information set out in the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS). Forestry Commission England is responsible for the regulation and monitoring of the UKFS and associated Guidelines in England.

2 Regulatory Cover

Consent for work in a Site of Special Scientific Interest

Land managers must **always** obtain consent from Natural England for any operations listed in the SSSI notification, even when the work will take place as part of an approved woodland management plan (WMP). This requirement applies over and above any consultation the Forestry Commission (FC) may undertake with Natural England on the WMP. Formal consent is not required for work adjacent to a SSSI but Natural England may wish to advise the land manager of precautions to consider so that their work does not cause damage to the features of interest.

To streamline the process, we will obtain Natural England's consent for you when we process your application to us. This means that when we submit your WMP we will also send Natural England's consent (which may include conditions).

To enable us to do this you must complete a [Supplementary Notice of Operations within a SSSI](#) and send this to us with your draft WMP. **If you do not provide this form or are unable to provide the information required by this form at the time you prepare the management plan you must obtain consent from Natural England independently before undertaking the work.**

If you're preparing a management plan (either full or small management plan) on a SSSI we advise early liaison with your Natural England advisor. We will also try to arrange a joint pre-application or application site visit with them to discuss the work in the WMP.

Category B

The Category B chain of custody allows woodland owners to supply timber to Government procurement contracts, without the need for full Certification. Linking a management plan with work proposals and woodland operations through an associated felling licence is one way for woodland owners in England to provide Category B evidence.

3 The Management Plan Template

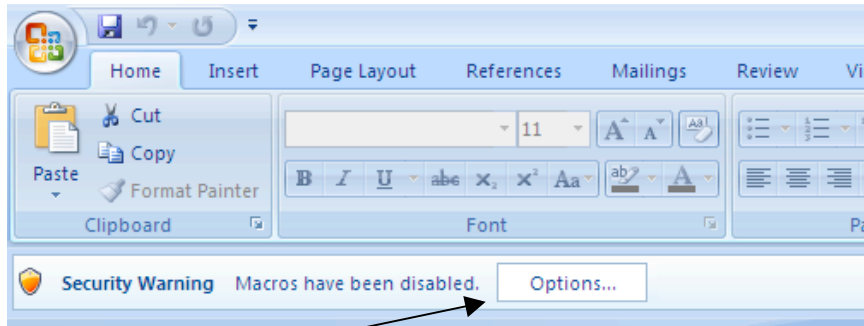
Macros

There are two versions of the full management plan template:

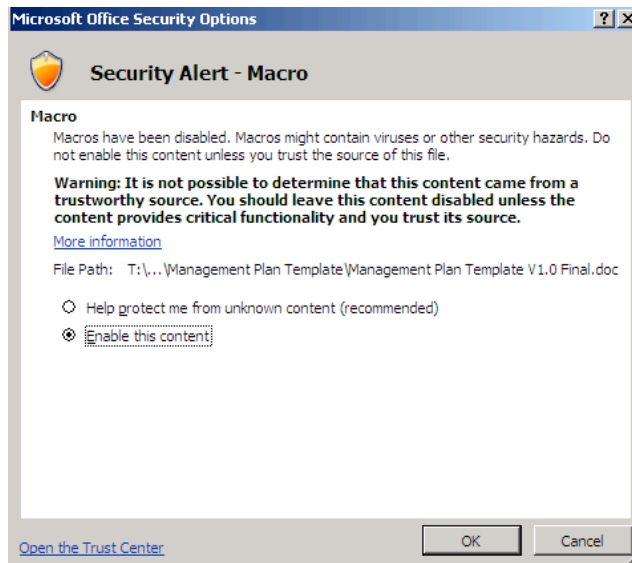
- 1) Macro enabled – suitable for use in Word 2007 onward, this version of the template includes added functionality such as help boxes and drop down lists to assist with completing the template;
- 2) Macro disabled – suitable for all versions of MS Word.

Guidance Document

Upon opening the macro enabled version of the template the following prompt should appear;



Click on 'options' and the following box will open:



Select 'enable the content', click 'ok' and macros are now enabled in the document.

If the above prompts do not appear you can also enable macros through the 'trust centre' this can be accessed within word via the Microsoft Office Button in the top left hand corner of the screen. From the list of options select 'word options', 'trust centre', 'trust centre settings', 'macro settings' and choose to 'enable all macros'.

If you cannot or do not wish to enable macros please use the macro disabled version of the template.

Microsoft Office offer a compatibility pack for Word and Excel that allows you to open, edit and save documents and workbooks that were created in newer versions of the software. The pack can be downloaded free of charge from the [Microsoft website](#).

UKFS Management Planning Criteria

This section of the template provides an overview of the management plan criteria set out in the UKFS. The associated approval criteria reflects the type of considerations that an FC Woodland Officer will have in mind when reviewing the management plan and as such provides guidance to the owner/agent on what to include. Working through and checking each section prior to submission will help to ensure your plan contains the relevant information required to demonstrate UKFS compliance.

Section 1 – Property Details

This section sets out general details about the woodland property, the owner and if applicable the agent. This information is used to help locate the woodland, the SBI number will help to identify your business and is a requirement for grant support. Registering your business with the Rural Payments Agency will generate an SBI number. To obtain grant aid your land must also be on the Rural Land Registry.

The table in section 1 also contains a tick box to indicate whether you intend to use the management plan to obtain a licence for thinning or felling trees. Please also list the maps associated with the management plan in this section, much of the information required in a management plan can be presented on a map and these should be used wherever possible.

Section 2 – Vision and Objectives

To develop your long term vision, you need to express as clearly as possible the overall direction of management for the woodland and how you envisage it will be in the future, perhaps even your reasons for ownership. This can be quite brief but should be specific to your woodland.

Based on your aspirations and long-term vision you will have to decide what your key objectives are for the woodland. That is, what you hope to achieve or change within the woodland over the next ten years. Objectives are a set of specific, quantifiable statements that represent what needs to happen to achieve the long term vision.

Section 3 – Achievements

This section should be used to identify achievements made against previous plan objectives or could take in to account previous achievements made prior to writing the management plan. This section should also be completed at the 5 year review and could be informed through monitoring activities that have been undertaken.

Section 4 – Woodland Survey

This section covers a range of information about the current condition of your woodland. This includes a brief description that should provide an overview of the woodland in its wider context and could cover information such as location, history, landscape, access

routes, topography, soil types and ecological features, the predominant use of the woodland (commercial, recreational) and neighbouring land use.

Information

Section 4.2 'Information' covers a number of the topics set out in the UKFS. The majority of the information required relates solely to the woodland on which the plan is based. Designations can however be identified as situated either on or adjacent to the woodland property. Further information about designated areas can be found on the ['Magic'](#) website and also from the [Joint Nature Conservation web page](#) and the [Natural England web page](#).

In section 4.2 please identify the compartments within which the features are located, this could cover the whole woodland in which case you would simply need to write 'all' in the 'Cpts' column. If you have mapped the feature please note down the map reference number within the table.

Habitat Types

Section 4.3 'Habitat Types' is for identifying the different habitats within your woodland(s). Larger non-wooded areas within the woodland should be classified according to broad habitat type, where relevant this information should also help inform your management decisions.

Structure

The table in section 4.4 is designed to give an overview of structural diversity within the woodland property as a whole. The table lists six different woodland types (native broadleaf, non-native broadleaf, conifer, coppice, open space and intimate mix) it could be that the woodland is for example 100% coniferous or a mix of different types. This can be indicated by completing the 'percentage of mgt plan area' column.

The UKFS (page 54) recommends that no more than 75% of woodland is allocated to one species with a minimum of 10% open space, 10% other species and 5% native broadleaved trees or shrubs incorporated.

Section 5 – Woodland Protection

Woodland management should maintain or enhance the resilience of woodlands and woodland ecosystems in order to reduce the risks posed, for example by pests/diseases or to help improve climate change resilience.

To assist with the management of these threats this section of the management plan provides a system for scoring risk helping to inform and prioritise control measures. Woodland protection is split into a number of individually headed sections (plant health, environment, climate change etc) some of the sections contain a list of potential threats, you are not expected to assess each in turn but rather to pick out those which are relevant to your woodland.

For each potential threat that you have identified you need to score both the likelihood that the threat is present and also a score for the impact this would have on the woodland. These scores can then be cross referenced against the risk matrix provided in the management plan template, helping to indicate the overall level of risk and action to be taken. The response to each risk although informed by the risk matrix should not

solely state the advised level of action (i.e. monitor, plan for action, action) but instead should elaborate on and describe what you intend to do.

Although subjective there is information available to help support your assessment of risk.

In section 5.2 there are a number of 'threats' listed under the heading of plant health, including Ash Dieback, *Phytophthora ramorum*, and *Phytophthora kernoviae*. Further information about pest and disease threats to trees in Britain can be viewed on the [FC website](#). These pages also contain information about distribution which may help to inform your assessment of the likelihood of presence. The site also contains management/control information. Here are direct links to outbreak maps and distribution information for [Ash Dieback](#), [Phytophthora Ramorum](#), and [Phytophthora Kernoviae](#).

Wild mammals and domestic livestock can cause damage to forests and woodlands, particularly at the establishment stage. Some, such as deer, can require co-operative action for effective control. Information on the [Deer Initiative website](#) provides details about different species of deer, their distribution and guidance on deer management. This may help inform your assessment of risk. Similar information can be found on the [FC website](#) regarding grey squirrels.

The soil and water section covers soil erosion, pollution and potential acidification of water. You must plan any waste disposal to ensure that it meets relevant legal requirements (including removal of planting bags, tree tubes and chemical containers). Pollution must also be controlled through careful planning, if you are considering operations that run a risk of a pollution incident you should detail here how you intend to minimise risk.

Existing knowledge of the site should inform your assessment of the risk posed by environmental factors such as fire and flooding. In this section you can identify if there is a risk of anti social behaviour (fly tipping or vandalism) and indicate what you are going to do to avoid or control this.

Further information about how the potential impact of Climate Change and how this can be considered through woodland management can be found on the [FC website](#), this includes details about likely impacts and potential mitigation/control measures that can be taken to improve woodland resilience.

Section 6 – Management Strategy

This section requires a statement of intent, setting out how you intend to achieve your management objectives and manage important features identified within the previous sections of the plan.

If you are going to harvest timber then this section could include information on your harvesting system(s) with associated justification and details of restocking or regeneration. If you have a biodiversity objective you could use this section to broadly set out measures to protect or enhance given features such as open space, rides, veteran trees and riparian areas etc. In addition this section could include details relating to maintaining or improving designations or public access. In the case of European Protected Species (EPS) you will be expected to follow the relevant good practice guidelines or licensing options.

A detailed sub-compartment level database is included in the Plan of Operations against which felling information for a felling licence and a detailed work programme can be set out.

Section 7 – Stakeholder Engagement

The Forestry Commission consults local authorities and other organisations with statutory powers in relation to land use before deciding whether to approve applications for woodland planning and tree felling. Notifying interested parties including neighbours whose properties might be affected and recording this through the management plan could potentially help to speed up the review process. There is no fixed timescale for consultation although it is advisable to allow sufficient time for the consultee to review and respond to the information provided.

Further information about stakeholder engagement for Woodland Management Plans can be found in [Operations Note 35](#). This sets out where there is a requirement on the FC or owner/agent to undertake stakeholder engagement and who to contact.

Section 8 – Monitoring

This section allows for an evaluation of progress, the information collected and recorded can help to evaluate management and indicate whether objectives have been met. The management plan should be periodically reviewed and updated to remain current. Formally this should happen every 5 years. The most straightforward type of monitoring is operation monitoring, checking what has been planned has actually been done in practice. In addition monitoring can also be used to make sure that the actions and operations undertaken result in achieving the management plan objectives.

4 Plan of Operations

The Plan of Operations must be completed if you wish to gain felling licence approval through the management plan. The Plan of Operations is presented in an Excel Spreadsheet with different tabs used for the sub-compartment record, felling & restock information, and the work programme.

Sub-compartment Record

This tab enables you to set out detailed information for each sub-compartment, the information included in the first six columns (A-F) will automatically populate on the subsequent tabs in the spreadsheet. This information is considered mandatory. There is also the option to include inventory information dependent on the level of detail that you have available and wish to include.

Felling & Restocking

This tab sets out the information required for a felling licence application and a Woodland Regeneration Grant. The first six columns will have automatically populated based on the information provided in the sub-compartment record.

To remain compliant with EU Timber Regulations all species that account for more than 20% of the volume of timber that will be felled must be listed. Individual species at or below 20% need to be grouped as mixed broadleaf (MB) or mixed conifer (MC). Species

Guidance Document

mixtures (i.e. both broadleaf and conifer species) can be presented on a single row but the estimated volume (m³) must be split by broadleaf and conifer using the two columns provided.

Where you have more than one type of felling within a sub compartment you will need to add a new row to the table. To do this click on the row number (to the left of the screen) below where you want the new row to appear, then right click the mouse and from the options list select 'insert'.

To copy formulas in to the new row click on the cell above, place the mouse cursor in the bottom right hand corner of the cell, hold down the left button of the mouse and drag downward. The formula will have now copied in to the new cell.

The plan of operations covers a ten year period, if over this time frame you intend to carry out two thinnings within the same sub-cpt you can show this by simply increasing the volume of timber to be removed. The subsequent licence covers the overall volume to be removed over a 10yr period irrespective of the number of interventions. This can be further clarified by adding a comment in the notes column.

Adjacent to the felling information there is a restock section, here you need to record information on your restocking activities. In the first column of this section is the restock area, this will automatically copy across from column G 'Area to be felled'. If this is incorrect you can type over the cell. In the adjacent column you need to state the percentage of open space you will be creating (if any). The restocking information that you provide needs to be split by species and show the percentage of the restock area each species accounts for.

Work Programme

The work programme sheet allows you to communicate your planned activities to support achievement of your objectives. Use the work programme to provide more detail by sub compartment for the forest operations proposed over the life of the management plan. Generally the first year is planned in detail, with slightly less detail for each subsequent year. Information might include an outline of any major operation planned, PAWS restoration, new access routes or restructuring of the woodland. This information would be well supported with accompanying maps.

Species List

This final tab is purely for reference and provides a list of abbreviations for broadleaves and conifers that may help you in completing the species information in the Felling & Restock tab.

5 Small Woodland Management Plan

Similar to the full Woodland Management Plan Template there are two versions of the Small Woodland Management Plan:

- 1) Macro enabled – suitable for use in Word 2007 onward, this version of the template includes added functionality such as help boxes and drop down lists to assist with completing the template;
- 2) Macro disabled – suitable for all versions of MS Word and Mac users.

The process for enabling macros is outlined in page 6-7 of this document.

Overall the Small Woodland Management Plan is a condensed version of the full template and has been designed to be appropriate for the scale and complexity of smaller woodlands (those under 10 hectares).

The Small Woodland Management plan template is not eligible for Woodland Planning Grant. However the information provided can be used to generate a ten year felling licence and evidence category B compliance. Ultimately the information could be expanded to complete the full management plan template.

Approval Criteria

The template includes three core criteria against which the plan will be assessed and approved these are stated on the front of the document to set out the minimum information that is required.

Completing the Small Woodland Management Plan

The majority of sections within the Small Woodland Management Plan are broadly similar (if not identical) to the same sections in the full template for which details are provided on page 7-11 of this document. The greatest difference is the reduced level of information required for the woodland survey, the removal of the woodland protection risk matrix and inclusion of a felling & restocking table in place of a Plan of Operations. This is described in more detail in the following sections.

Section 4 – Woodland Survey

This section has been condensed to focus on the brief description of the woodland property. This should provide an overview of the woodland in its wider context and could cover information such as location, history, landscape, access routes, topography, soil types, and ecological features, the predominant use of the woodland (commercial, recreational) and neighbouring land use. It is also important to identify within this section any designations i.e. SSSIs, SAMs and also any Tree Preservation Orders.

Section 8 – Felling & Restocking

Unlike the full Management Plan Template the Small Woodland Management Plan does not have an associated Plan of Operations. Instead information relating to felling and restock is captured in section 8 of the template. This information is required in order for a felling licence application to be processed from the management plan. To remain compliant with EU Timber Regulations all species that account for more than 20% of the volume of timber that will be felled must be listed. Individual species at or below 20% need to be grouped as mixed broadleaf (MB) or mixed conifer (MC). Species mixtures (i.e. both broadleaf and conifer species) can be presented on a single row.

6 Maps

There are two types of map that can accompany a management plan; these are application maps and indicative maps.

Indicative Maps

Indicative maps can be submitted alongside any woodland management plan to illustrate work proposals such as felling, thinning, restocking or constraints. However, indicative maps are not limited to only these activities and could be used to show a range of woodland information including species, age class and management improvements.

The maps do not need to be based on Ordnance Survey MasterMap or use boundaries from the Rural Land Registry. The [Sylva Foundation](#) offer a free mapping composer that can be used to produce indicative maps in support of a management plan, you can also use this system to produce a felling map (required in order to process a felling licence application – and as such required to accompany the Plan of Operations). A PDF map of the woodland boundary could also be submitted to the Forestry Commission as the 'copy map' required in support of a completed map request form.

7 Submission and Review

Approval Process

If you are receiving funding to complete your management plan you must present the draft management plan to the FC for review by December of the agreed claim year.

Plans that have been prepared and submitted without funding (prepared to demonstrate UKFS compliance or to enable access to other woodland grants) and plans prepared using the Small Woodland Management Plan template can still be reviewed by the Forestry Commission. There is no fixed date for submission. To assist with this process, it is recommended that you contact your local [FC Office](#) prior to submission.

Felling Licence

Should you indicate on your Management Plan that you require a felling or thinning licence as part of your management activities and you have submitted a Plan of Operations or completed section 8 of the small woodland plan then following FC approval and the 28 day consultation period on the public register, you will receive a felling licence certificate. Work must not commence until a felling licence has been issued.

END