

# **Supporting Good Decisions**

**Promoting Equality and Human Rights;  
Reducing Poverty; and  
Protecting the Environment**

## **Integrated Impact Assessment Form**

## **Promoting Equality and Human Rights; Reducing Poverty; and Protecting the Environment**

<b>Title of Policy/ Proposal</b>	Forestry and Woodland Strategy for East Lothian (FWSEL)
<b>Timescale for Implementation</b>	Consultation May 2023 – July 2023 Adoption February 2024 the earliest. No end date, but expected to cover a 10 year period.
<b>IIA Completion Date</b>	[xx]
<b>Completed by</b>	Planning Service
<b>Lead officer</b>	[xx]

### **Section 1: Screening**

#### **1.1 Briefly describe the policy/proposal/activity you are assessing.**

Set out a clear understanding of the purpose of the policy/ proposal/ activity being developed or reviewed (e.g. objectives, aims) including the context within which it will operate.

The production of the Forestry and Woodland Strategy for East Lothian is a statutory requirement under Section A159 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning Scotland Act 2019. It requires the planning authority to identify woodlands of high nature conservation value in their area, and set out its policies and proposals as to

- (i) the development of forestry and woodlands,
  - (ii) the protection and enhancement of woodlands, in particular those mentioned in paragraph (a),
  - (iii) the resilience to climate change of woodlands, in particular those mentioned in paragraph (a),
  - (iv) the expansion of woodlands of a range of types to provide multiple benefits to the physical, cultural, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area;
- and any other matter which the planning authority consider appropriate.

## 1.2 What will change as a result of this policy?

The Council has committed to a Climate Forest of 2 million trees planted from 2019 – 2029. This Strategy will help deliver this, guiding tree planting and woodland creation considering places where it should and should not occur. The Strategy contains Targets which are:

- Creation of the East Lothian Climate Forest of at least 80-200 ha of new woodland annually to provide 2 million new trees by 2029
- Improve resilience of East Lothian’s environment by securing native woodland connections through East Lothian to support migration of species under climate change; forming a lowland corridor between Scottish Borders and Midlothian and corridors between lowlands and uplands and increasing native riparian woodland to 60%
- Improve biodiversity value of East Lothian’s woodland habitats in line with the Green Network strategy, including by doubling the area of native woodland; improving connectivity of the Central Scotland Green Network broadleaf and yew habitat network; increasing the total length of hedgerow by 20%, retaining ancient woodland and restoring 30% of plantation on ancient woodland sites to native woodland
- Increasing access to trees and woodland for all by retaining or increasing tree canopy coverage to 30% in settlements over 500 homes, and the most deprived 30% SIMD areas and improving and increasing access so that 98% of properties meet at least one of the Woodland Trusts accessibility standards, and the number of properties with access to a 2ha wood within 500m from 42% to 55%
- Create 300 ha of new small farm woodlands and shelterbelts
- Improve recognition and protection of trees with cultural heritage value
- Improve landscapes through woodland creation by structural planting at Cockenzie/Blindwells and developing of an ash dieback plan In addition the policies provide for protection of woodland of high nature conservation value, alongside other valued habitat.

Mapping is included which shows a strategic overview of what the strategy intends to achieve. There is also mapping of constraints and opportunities, aimed at guiding woodland creation at project level. As a result of the strategy, the woodland and trees of East Lothian would become better adapted to climate change, better able to play their part in reducing flooding, and increase shade and shelter within settlement. The biodiversity, cultural and landscape value of trees would be more widely appreciated, and further taken into account in planning decisions.

## 1.3 Deciding if a full Impact Assessment is needed.

Please answer the following questions:

	Yes	No
1. The policy/ proposal has consequences for or affects people e.g. how they can access a service?	Yes	--
2. The policy/proposal has potential to make a significant impact on equality and human rights, socio-economic disadvantage, the council's role as a corporate parent, or the council's commitment to tackling climate change?	Yes	--
3. The policy/proposal is likely to have a significant environmental impact as defined by the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005?	Yes	--
4. The policy/ proposal involves a data processing activity (storage / collection of personal data) that is likely to result in a high risk to individuals as determined by Article 35 of the General Data Protection Regulation?	--	No

- If you have answered yes to questions 1 and 2 above, please proceed to complete the Integrated Impact Assessment. If you have answered No then an IIA does not need to be completed. Please keep a copy of the screening paperwork.
  - If you have answered yes to question 3, you will need to consider whether you need to complete a Strategic Environmental Assessment.
  - If you have answered yes to question 4, you will need to consider whether you need to complete a Data Protection Impact Assessment. Please seek further advice from the Team Manager Information Governance.
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## Section 2: Integrated Impact Assessment

### 2.1 Have those who are directly affected by the policy had the opportunity to comment on new proposals?

Yes. Consultation is taking place on the draft Tree and Woodland Strategy for East Lothian, and the associated draft Environment Report and on this document.

### 2.2 What information/data have you used to inform the development of the policy to date?

The draft Environment Report related to this Strategy has a list of documents consulted and background information sought. The most relevant to this assessment is that for impacts on human health and population.

Other information includes

- Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029 Equality Impact Assessment (Scottish Government, 2019) available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/equality-impact-assessment-egia-scotlands-forestry-strategy-2019-2029/>
- Active Scotland outcomes indicator Equality Analysis (Scottish Government, 2015) here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/active-scotland-outcomes-indicator-equality-analysis/>
- Office of National Statistics – access to private outdoor space [https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/articles/oneineightbritishhouseholdshasnogarden/2020-05-14#:~:text=The%20median%20garden%20size%20for,in%20Scotland%20\(the%20largest\).](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/articles/oneineightbritishhouseholdshasnogarden/2020-05-14#:~:text=The%20median%20garden%20size%20for,in%20Scotland%20(the%20largest).)
- Scottish Census – Datashine <https://scotland.datashine.org.uk/>
- Scottish People and Nature Survey, NatureScot
- Disability Access All Areas (ESSS Outline, Annelies Allcock, 2018), here: <https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/esss-outlines/disability-access-leisure>
- Scottish Government Equality Evidence Finder, at <http://www.equalityevidence.scot/>
- Scottish Household Survey data explorer, available here: <https://scotland.shinyapps.io/sg-scottish-household-survey-data-explorer/>
- Scottish Public Health Observatory <https://www.scotpho.org.uk/life-circumstances/homelessness/data/demographics/>
- Forestry Commission (2006) "Race Equality and the Forestry Commission" <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/accessibility-and-racial-equality-in-the-forestry-commission/>

### 2.3 What does the evidence/ research suggest about the policy's actual or likely impact on equality groups and those vulnerable/ or experiencing socio-economic disadvantage?

Evidence	Comment	
Which groups are in particular need of this service?	<p>This is not a service but a Strategy. Its main benefits will be to tackle climate change, change air quality, improve townscape and increase woodland recreational opportunities close to where people live</p> <p><b>Groups most in need:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All groups, but especially the young and those vulnerable to poverty; ecosystem services including climate change mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity loss. Young people need this service more as they are more likely to be alive to experience future climatic and biodiversity conditions. Ecosystem service of avoiding flooding is more needed by those least able to recover from the effects of flooding. Positive impacts are contribution to climate change mitigation, adaptation and reduce biodiversity loss.</li> <li>• Those living in poor physical environments. This is likely to include groups with less access to income, which may include single parents who are mostly women, disabled people, older people.</li> <li>• Those who do not get the recommended levels of physical activity. This includes more disabled people xx others? Those vulnerable to developing physical health conditions linked to lack of physical activity may benefit from improved accessibility to woodland which would encourage them to be active. The positive outcome is easier access to a quality, free, accessible outdoor activity. by providing an accessible environment for activity.</li> </ul>	
What level of service uptake/ access is there from protected and vulnerable groups?		
Can you identify positive outcomes for service users		
What is the service user experience of those from protected or vulnerable groups?		
What opportunity have those from protected groups had to co-produce or comment on the service/ plans?		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People with conditions made worse by poor air quality. The Strategy should improve air quality by providing barriers between the source and the receptor. There is a risk that some trees may increase ground level ozone, which is an air pollutant which exacerbates some health problems.</li> <li>• People with or susceptible to allergies. As more trees are planted especially in urban areas tree pollen is likely to increase. Birch pollen is especially problematic as it can lead to cross-sensitivity to some foods. The Strategy tries to steer planning of birch trees away from concentrations of potentially vulnerable receptors by identifying places where there are large numbers of young and older people (schools and residential care homes) as these groups can be more susceptible.</li> <li>• Those with some mental health conditions may also benefit from having more accessible natural places in which to spend time.</li> <li>• Groups vulnerable to being or falling into poverty may benefit from access to a quality, free outdoor recreational experience.</li> </ul> <p><b>What level of service uptake/ access is there from protected and vulnerable groups? What is the service user experience of those from protected or vulnerable groups?</b></p> <p>All groups experience a daily living environment. There is likely to be both landscape and townscape change. The Strategy aims to increase urban tree canopy cover, which is generally seen as beneficial to townscape. However, some individual people may not experience this as a benefit. There are two main categories where this is the case. Firstly, where people experience the change to their own home as adverse, for example if it becomes more shaded or there are issues with leaves &amp;c. Secondly, people may</p>
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	<p>experience the change to the public realm as adverse, for example if it appears to them as dark and/or dangerous rather than shady and pleasant. The first is likely to affect those in social housing and the lower end of private ownership more than others as they have less choice over their location. The second is likely to affect some groups more than others, being those which are likely to have more concerns over their personal safety. This includes women, the disabled, those visibly from a BAME or trans background, and potentially non-heterosexual people.</p> <p><a href="#">Scotland's People and Nature Survey</a> looked at adults accessing the outdoors for recreation, and found the of adults who rarely or never visited the outdoors for recreation, the main barriers were lack of time (36%), poor health (23%), old age (8%), and affordability (4%), though these last were below no particular reason (8%) and last was below lack of interest (5%) .</p> <p>People who are likely to be time poor, such as single parents or carers, or those working long hours, may therefore not use the woodland that there is. Increasing accessible woodland may benefit these groups as visiting woodland would become easier and cheaper. However some groups may not benefit in the same way as others from an increase in woodland as a recreational resource.</p> <p>For outdoor visits altogether, 82% of all adults visit at all, and 57% at least once a week. Those aged under 55 visit slightly more than this, those older, slightly less. 90% of those in social grades AB visit at all, and 67% at least once a week. This falls through the grades, with only 68% those in social grade DE visiting at all, and 44% visiting each week. Rural dwellers are more likely to visit but not by all that much. People not in employment are however considerably less likely to visit, as are those with disabilities or poor health. Those who are not of white ethnic origin are slightly more likely to have visited at all, but less likely</p>
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	<p>to do so regularly. Research (Forestry Commission, 2006) shows that BAME communities have varied attitudes and behaviour in relation to woodland but overall there is some evidence that these groups are under-represented in visitors to woodland.</p> <p>NatureScot research on countryside recreation has also found this. The report listed a number of reasons why this may be the case, including financial reasons, lack of awareness, cultural attitudes and not feeling welcome.</p> <p>Positive outcomes for services users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution to mitigating and adapting to climate change, and addressing biodiversity loss with consequent beneficial (though diffuse) effects</li> <li>• Generally, an improvement in air quality</li> <li>• Improvement to amenity in urban areas including in lower SIMD areas</li> <li>• Increased access to woodland</li> </ul> <p>In terms of physical activity, walking is an important 'leveller'. For most protected characteristics, where walking is not included in assessment of physical activity, inequalities widen. This should therefore particularly benefit those groups that engage less in other forms of active recreation, and are most at risk of being physically inactive. These are: those with disability or longstanding poor health, older age groups, women, teenage girls and ethnic minorities (especially south Asian). People from lower socio-economic groups are more likely to become significantly less active as they enter adulthood (Active Scotland Outcomes, above). The strategy supports increased levels of walking for recreation and active travel by promoting improvements to townscape and accessibility of woodland and therefore continued physical activity in these groups. There are likely to be positive effects on health and well-being.</p> <p>Climate change is likely to have severe impacts on all groups. The impacts are likely to be felt most by the poor,</p>
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	<p>who may not be able to afford to take measures that would protect themselves from some impacts. There are also likely to be greater impacts on the old and very young from more extreme weather such as heat or cold, and their carers, likely often to be women. People who are young now are likely to experience more adverse effects of climate change and biodiversity loss over their lifetimes than those who are old. The strategy, cumulatively with other actions, projects and strategies aimed at mitigating climate change and biodiversity loss, will benefit these groups.</p> <p><b>What opportunity have those from protected groups had to co-produce or comment on the service/ plans?</b></p> <p>The Strategy has been consulted on giving everybody the chance to comment. The Strategy has been drawn up by council officials in partnership with other key agencies however there has not been co-design at this strategic level. Those producing Local Place Plans are encouraged to include policy for trees in their plans, and this Strategy gives the background to allow them to do this in an informed way. At project level community involvement is encouraged. Through this there is potential for co-design at the local and project level.</p>
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**2.4 How does the policy meet the different needs of groups in the community?**

	<b>Comments</b>
<p><b>Equality Groups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older people, people in the middle years</li> <li>• Children and young people children</li> </ul>	<p>The Strategy will meet the needs of all groups through improved townscape and landscape, biodiversity and climate change related benefits. Most groups will also benefit from increased access to woodland for recreation. The intention is that the plans, policies and projects that stem from the strategy will have a positive (or at worst a neutral) impact on individuals with protected characteristics. Projects which come forward under the</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women, men and transgender people (includes issues relating to pregnancy and maternity)</li> <li>• Disabled people (includes physical disability, learning disability, sensory impairment, long-term medical conditions, mental health problems)</li> <li>• Minority ethnic people (includes Gypsy/Travellers, migrant workers)</li> <li>• Refugees and asylum seekers</li> <li>• People with different religions or beliefs (includes people with no religion or belief)</li> <li>• Lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual people</li> <li>• People who are unmarried, married or in a civil partnership</li> </ul>	<p>strategy may, depending on their scale and location, benefit from being subject to separate equality impact mechanisms.</p> <p>All groups are expected to need a safe, attractive environment, accessible woodland, respect for cultural heritage. What is a safe environment may be different for different people and groups. Children and young people need opportunity to play in nature and as they will live longer (on average) into the future, have more need for solutions to climate change and a habitable planet to spend their future in.</p> <p>Specific potential effects on needs for different groups are identified as follows:</p> <p><b>Older People:</b></p> <p>Safety issues and anti-social behaviour - increased woodland, and tree planting in urban areas, could lead to real and perceived safety issues. This could come from an increase in potential hiding places for attackers or those indulging in anti-social behaviour to lurk, arising from an increase in trees and woodland in urban areas. This disproportionately affects some groups, in particular older people, women, some disabled people, some ethnic minorities, and some LGBT people. Vulnerability can be increased by a person having more than one protected characteristic, for example disabled women may feel particularly vulnerable. It is not the intention of the TWSEL that this effect occurs. The effects of trees are generally positive. However this must be carefully considered at implementation stage to make sure this does not occur.</p> <p>The effects of more trees in the urban area may lead to damage to footways which could disproportionately affect older people as they are more vulnerable to falls.</p> <p>More trees may also be associated with nuisance from leaves, sap, aphid drop &amp;c which older people may have more difficulty dealing with.</p> <p>More trees in urban areas will reduce the heat island effect, predicted to be greater with climatic change. Older people are more vulnerable to heatwaves as their bodies are not as good at regulating temperature. The reduction of this impact, is therefore is of more benefit to them than other groups.</p> <p><b>Children and younger people:</b> effects should be positive through improvements to townscape and accessible woodland which increase opportunities for play. Air quality changes (positive and negative) are likely to affect children more as they are particularly vulnerable to both poor air quality and allergens. Schools are identified in the strategy so at project level designs can avoid placing trees with highly allergenic pollen close by. Young people are more likely to benefit from</p>
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	<p>townscape/landscape changes as trees take time to reach maturity so the full effect will not be felt for some time. Younger people are more likely to live to have to cope with the more extreme effects of climate change and biodiversity loss. This strategy, cumulatively with many other projects and plans, aims to address this, and will particularly benefit younger people. <b>Men</b> are likely to benefit from increased employment as tree work tends to attract fewer women.</p> <p><b>Women</b> – Increased canopy in urban areas may make more places appear dangerous though that is not the intention of the TWSEL which includes advice on avoiding this. All the same it is hard to increase urban canopy coverage without risking this. Improved urban environments may also reduce street harassment though.</p> <p><b>Disabled people.</b> Safety issues and anti-social behaviour, as above. More trees in urban areas is likely to lead to more issues with leaves, blockage of footways by branches and minor damage to footways, although it is not the intention of the strategy that this occurs and it should mostly avoidable through good design, which the Strategy advocates. However, it may occur, and would affect physically disabled and visually impaired people more as they are less able to address the hazard.</p> <p><b>Young people with disabilities</b> are currently less likely to experience active play every day. Increasing woodland cover may increase the opportunities for children and young people to play near their homes, which could help address this.</p> <p>The Strategy seeks to meet the Woodland Trusts Standard on accessible woodland, which is based on distance to woodland rather than access for all once there. Disabled people are likely to have more difficulty than non-disabled people in accessing woodland.</p> <p><b>Minority ethnic groups</b> As noted above the interaction between minority ethnic groups and trees and woodland is varied. Where cost and lack of time are a reason for not visiting woodland, the Strategy should ease this by increasing the accessibility of woodland. The Strategy includes a section on cultural heritage, which includes protecting and improving historic gardens and designed landscapes.</p> <p>Some ethnic minority people may have greater fears for personal safety and so have greater need for their environment to feel safe (see 'older people' above).</p> <p><b>Gypsies and travellers</b> may have cultural heritage related to trees which is not recognised by the strategy, unlike settled people's heritage, which is. This group may also have greater</p>
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	<p>fears for personal safety and so have greater need for their environment to feel safe (see 'older people' above).</p> <p><b>Refugees and asylum seekers</b> – Some may have greater fears for personal safety and so have greater need for their environment to feel safe (see 'older people' above).</p> <p><b>Religious belief</b> – early celtic religion had beliefs or symbolism related to trees, and there is some new age revival of this, including in East Lothian. In Christianity trees are often planted in churchyards (or churches were built in places which had existing symbolism related to trees), often yew, holly or weeping ash. There are also some old yew trees which were the site of early Protestant or covenanter preaching. The Strategy seeks to protect trees with spiritual value so this would help meet the need to maintain religious symbols and respect for beliefs.</p> <p><b>Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual people</b> -some people who are lesbian/gay/bi may have greater fears for personal safety and so have greater need for their environment to feel safe (see 'older people' above).</p> <p><b>Single people</b> – some may have greater fears for personal safety and so have greater need for their environment to feel safe (see 'older people' above).</p>
<p><b>Those vulnerable to falling into poverty</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployed</li> <li>• People on benefits</li> <li>• Lone Parents</li> <li>• Care experienced children and young people</li> <li>• Carers (including young carers)</li> <li>• Homeless people</li> <li>• Those involved in the community justice system</li> <li>• People with low literacy/numeracy</li> <li>• Families with 3 or more children</li> <li>• Those with a child/ children under 1</li> </ul>	<p><b>All groups vulnerable to falling into poverty:</b></p> <p>Everyone needs a home that they consider gives them an acceptable living environment. The Strategy aims to increase canopy coverage, in particular in lower SIMD areas. This should generally improve environmental quality. However, this canopy increase could bring issues for some people regarding either particular trees, or an increase in trees in general.</p> <p>Trees may be experienced negatively where they block views, give unwanted shade or lead to issues with bird dropping or aphid dew. It is not the intention of the Strategy that this should happen, and the strategy includes guidance to reduce the possibility that it will. Nonetheless, as the effect is to some extent subjective it is likely there will be some people who experience this change as a negative. Where people are on a low income they may be less able to choose their home, and some groups may be or feel less able to articulate the issue to decision makers, leading to stress from unwanted or poorly located trees. People on lower incomes may also live in housing that have less garden ground, so that the trees they do not control are closer to their actual house.</p> <p>An increase in trees and woodland, which is promoted in the Strategy, potentially risk becoming a focus for anti-social behaviour (fly tipping, litter, drink/drug abuse, fires) This may</p>

	<p>affect people on low incomes more as this may be more likely to occur in lower SIMD areas.</p> <p>Climate change and biodiversity loss are likely to have severe impacts on all groups. The impacts are likely to be felt most by the poor, who may not be able to afford to take measures that would protect themselves from some impacts. The strategy, cumulatively with other actions, projects and strategies aimed at mitigating climate change, will benefit.</p> <p>Some lower income groups (and potentially some ethnic groups) may have traditional practices relating to exploitation of woodland resources which are not recognised in the Strategy. Sometimes this may be at odds with majority ideas of property ownership, such as use of foraged food or wood, or taking of game.</p> <p><b>Unemployed people</b> – need employment and cheap, good quality activities. The Strategy supports employment opportunities related to trees including tourism, and so should increase employment although on a small scale. Increasing the accessibility of woodland provides a good quality cheap activity.</p> <p><b>People on benefits/Lone parents/families with 3 or more children/those with of children under 1</b> are also likely to have a greater need for good quality, healthy, affordable activities, which accessible woodland can provide. The activity can be carried out with their peers without a significant cost barrier, supporting inclusion. They are also likely to need their local environment to be of good quality as it may be harder for them to move house if they don't like the area.</p> <p><b>Care experienced</b> – no specific needs related to this strategy. As with people on benefits, <b>carers</b> may be less able to move home and so more reliant on being in a good quality environment. They may be time poor and on a low income. By increasing woodland close to where people live, this will reduce the time needed to access exercise and recreation, so could fit in around caring responsibilities.</p> <p><b>Homeless people</b> – there is no census of rough sleeping in Scotland but numbers are reportedly falling, and concentrated in cities (<a href="#">Scotpho website</a>). However, if you are in that situation bushes and trees can provide cover, shelter and sometimes also food.</p> <p><b>Community justice system</b> – community payback sentences could include tree planting which provides a sentence with a meaningful outcome.</p> <p><b>Low literacy/numeracy</b> – the Strategy could increase options for outdoor learning which could help children with low literacy and numeracy engage with learning. The Strategy should also be</p>
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	written in plain English helping meet needs to participate in civic life.
<p><b>Geographical communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural/ semi rural communities</li> <li>• Urban Communities</li> <li>• Coastal communities</li> <li>• Those living in the most deprived communities (bottom 20% SIMD areas)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Rural communities</b> should benefit through environmental improvement, and also through increasing rural employment.</p> <p><b>Urban communities</b> will benefit through townscape improvement, amenity improvement such as reduction in heat island effect, general improvement in air quality and noise improvements. There could be some adverse effects from nuisance from leaves, branches &amp;c from trees, potentially increased allergy-causing pollen, small potential for an increase in vector borne illness (tick related), which can affect people and also their pets</p> <p><b>Coastal communities</b> – neutral</p> <p><b>Bottom 20% SIMD areas</b> : as <b>urban</b> areas above. It will benefit those in the most deprived communities through an improved townscape, which focusses on those communities.</p>
<p><b>People with communication needs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaelic Language Speakers {refer if necessary to the Council’s Gaelic Language Plan}</li> <li>• British Sign Language (BSL) users {refer if necessary to the Council’s BSL Plan}</li> <li>• English as a Second Language</li> <li>• Other e.g. DeafBlind, Plain English, Large Print</li> </ul>	<p><b>Gaelic language:</b> There could be an opportunity to support Gaelic language through interpretation, for example naming of trees in Gaelic on boards, or through naming of new woods.</p> <p><b>BSL -</b></p> <p><b>English as a second language and plain English:</b> The Strategy and supporting documents should be written to be understandable. The Flesch Kincaid Reading Ease score shows how hard a text is to understand. The Strategy should aim to be easily read by a general reader, which is a Flesch Kincaid score of between 60 and 80, with a higher score being easier to read. The aim is to come as close to this as possible. The Environment Report is unlikely to hit this target as it is a technical document. However it’s non-Technical Summary will aim for a score of 70 or more.</p>

**2.5 Are there any other factors which will affect the way this policy impacts on the community or staff groups?**

The strategy aims to increase tree canopy coverage in settlements of over 500 homes, where it is below 30%. This may help improve the environment around some workplaces.

**2.6 Is any part of this policy/ service to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?**

If yes, how have you included equality and human rights considerations into the contract?

The Council is currently considering how to deliver the Climate Forest, which aims to plant 2 million trees in East Lothian over the next 10 years, and is part of the TWSEL. If this goes to external contractors, this will go through the Council’s agreed procurement process, which is expected to address this issue in drafting a procurement brief. Any such work would be managed by a Steering Group, which would monitor compliance.

**2.7 Have you considered how you will communicate information about this policy or policy change to those affected e.g. to those with hearing loss, speech impairment or English as a second language?**

The written Strategy will include information about how copies can be obtained in other languages or in braille, using the Council’s interpretation service. Consultation on the Strategy will be carried out mainly online, where it is expected that participants will have assistive technology. Venues for in person events are wheelchair accessible.

**2.8 Please consider how your policy will impact on each of the following?**

**Equality and Human rights**

- Promotes / advances equality of opportunity e.g. improves access to and quality of services
- Promotes good relations within and between people with protected characteristics and tackles harassment
- Promotes participation, is inclusive and gives people control over decisions which affect them
- Preserves dignity and self-respect of individuals (does not lead to degrading treatment or stigma)
- Builds support networks, resilience, community capacity

Increasing the amount of accessible woodland will give the opportunity for community cohesion, for example, walking as an activity is popular among different generations, for both men and women. For most groups, where walking is not included in measures of physical activity, the gap between groups is wider. Encouraging walking therefore supports equalities. It also brings the opportunity for community coherence. As woodland recreation is generally free, this encourages participation in the

activity including those on low incomes. The strategy aims to increase the accessibility of woodland for people with disabilities, and on low incomes. This will increase community cohesion, but also extend equality of opportunity, as more people will have good access to outdoor recreational opportunities closer to their communities. As this is generally a free activity, it supports dignity by allowing participation for all in the activity.

The Strategy must ensure that increasing woodland cover and the number of trees in urban areas does not increase feelings of not being safe among vulnerable groups. Badly designed or sited woodland or streetscape could also give the opportunity for harassment and victimisation. This is not the intention of the strategy but there is the potential for this to occur, and care is needed at project level as noted above.

**Socio-Economic Disadvantage / reducing poverty**

- Maximises income and/or reduces income inequality
- Helps young people into positive destinations
- Aids those returning to and those progressing within the labour market
- Improves employability skills, including literacy and numeracy
- Reduces the costs of taking part in activities and opportunities
- Reduces the cost of living

The strategy aims to reduce the effects of socio-economic disadvantage by improving the environment overall, with a focus on areas that score lower on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. It aims to increase the accessibility of woodland, both through expanding woodland and increasing its accessibility. This will make it easier for more people to visit woodland, which is generally a good quality, low or no cost activity. This helps reduce the effect of low income. As a free activity this helps people live well for less. It also brings educational opportunities, where learners can use the woodland as an educational resource to learn about the natural world, or even to learn in a different environment which may suit some learners better.

The strategy aims to increase employment related to forestry, woodland and trees, which will help provide jobs, including for young people.

The strategy also promotes growing of fruit and nuts locally both in gardens and community orchards, which will help reduce living costs.

**Tackling Climate Change**

- Reduces the need to travel or increases access to sustainable forms of transport
- Minimises waste / encourages resource efficiency / contributes to the circular economy
- Ensures goods / services are from ethical, responsible and sustainable sources

- Improves energy efficiency / uses low carbon energy sources
- Protects and/or enhances natural environments / habitats / biodiversity
- Promotes the transition to a low carbon economy
- Prepares and/or adapts communities for climate change impacts

Comments:

Climate Change and biodiversity are considered through Strategic Environmental Assessment. Please see the relevant chapters of that document.

**Corporate Parenting and Care Experienced Young People**

- Impacts on care experienced young people
- Provides opportunities or reduces opportunities to participate in activities which are designed to promote the wellbeing of young people
- Adversely affects the wellbeing of young people
- Adversely impacts on outcomes for care experienced young people

Comments:

The strategy promotes an increase in accessible woodland. It will do this by increasing the total amount of woodland, and better management of existing woodland. This will provide potential opportunities to play and experience nature, which should benefit the physical and mental wellbeing of children and young people in care.

### Section 3. Action Plan

What, if any changes will be made to the proposal/ policy as a result of the assessment?

Equalities issues have been considered from the outset.. Comments on equalities issues will be sought through consultation and considered for the final Strategy.

Changes to be made	Expected outcome of the change	Resources Required	Timeline	Responsible person
The strategy will include a recommendation that personal safety issues related to design of trees schemes are considered at the project stage.	Personal safety issues will be considered at the project stage.	GIS mapping resources Resource to consult with vulnerable groups	Policy formation stage Implementation stage	
Make explicit provision for people with different disabilities (mobility impairments, sensory issues, learning disability) to access woodland	Accessible forests should include: shallow path gradients with suitable surfacing, clear signage, sensitive seating and resting points to ensure equal opportunities to access green spaces &c. (toilets?). The needs of people with visual or hearing impairment and learning disability should be considered. Information about woodland should be clear and accurate, including accessibility information.	Resource to consult with groups affected May need some additional resource (over and above that for creating the woodland) to provide for additional needs.	Policy formation stage Implementation stage	
Consider how to make woodlands more accessible/appealing to black and ethnic minority groups	All people feel welcome in woodland.	Resource to consult with relevant groups	Policy formation stage Implementation stage	

<p>Consider how to encourage the use of forests/treed open space by other groups who have lower levels of physical activity (teenage girls, women of Asian origin, lower socio-economic groups, the elderly)</p>	<p>Woodlands are enjoyed by all groups.</p>	<p>Resource to consult with relevant groups and/or prepare material to encourage use of woods by less active groups.</p>	<p>Implementation stage</p>	
<p>Make provision for play specifically for disabled children</p>	<p>Woodland will have areas designed with the needs of children with a range of disabilities in mind.</p>	<p>May need some additional resource (over and above that for creating the woodland) to provide for additional needs.</p>	<p><b>Implementation stage</b></p>	
<p>Volunteering; how can this be encouraged among people on lower incomes, or with protected characteristics?</p>	<p>More people from lesser represented groups will become involved in volunteering within woodland (for example walk leaders).</p>	<p>Resource to engage with different groups.</p>		
<p>Clydeplan found that schools in deprived areas had more difficulty accessing outdoor learning, is that true here and can TWSEL help?</p>	<p>Development of woodlands in school grounds gives alternate outdoor learning resource. Where there is insufficient space within existing school grounds access to local woodland resource for outdoor learning</p>			

	accessible by the school will be provided			
Encouragement of community management and action in relation to woodland and trees should try and include groups that are less likely to volunteer, including those on low incomes.	More people from lesser represented groups will become involved in the management of woodland.	Resource to engage with different groups. Advice for people taking on management roles as to risks and responsibilities.		
Gaelic Language	Gaelic language will be considered in interpretation (as in boards) and in naming of new woodlands.	Gaelic speaker	Implementation stage	
The Strategy should be easy to read by the general reader.	The Strategy achieves a score of over 60 on the Flesch Kincaid reading ease scale. Supporting documents are as close to this as possible. The non-Technical Summary of the Environment Report will aim to score 70 or more.	Staff time, usual council IT equipment	At consultation and publication stage	

**For consideration of the Head of Service**

Can you identify any cumulative impacts on equality groups or vulnerable people arising from this policy, when considered alongside other changes across other services?

**Sign off by Head of Service**

Name:

Date:

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- To make a comment, suggestion or complaint about a council service, download a feedback form online at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk) or pick one up at your local office

 Versions of this leaflet can be supplied in Braille, large print, audiotape or in your own language. Please phone Customer Services if you require assistance on 01620 827199