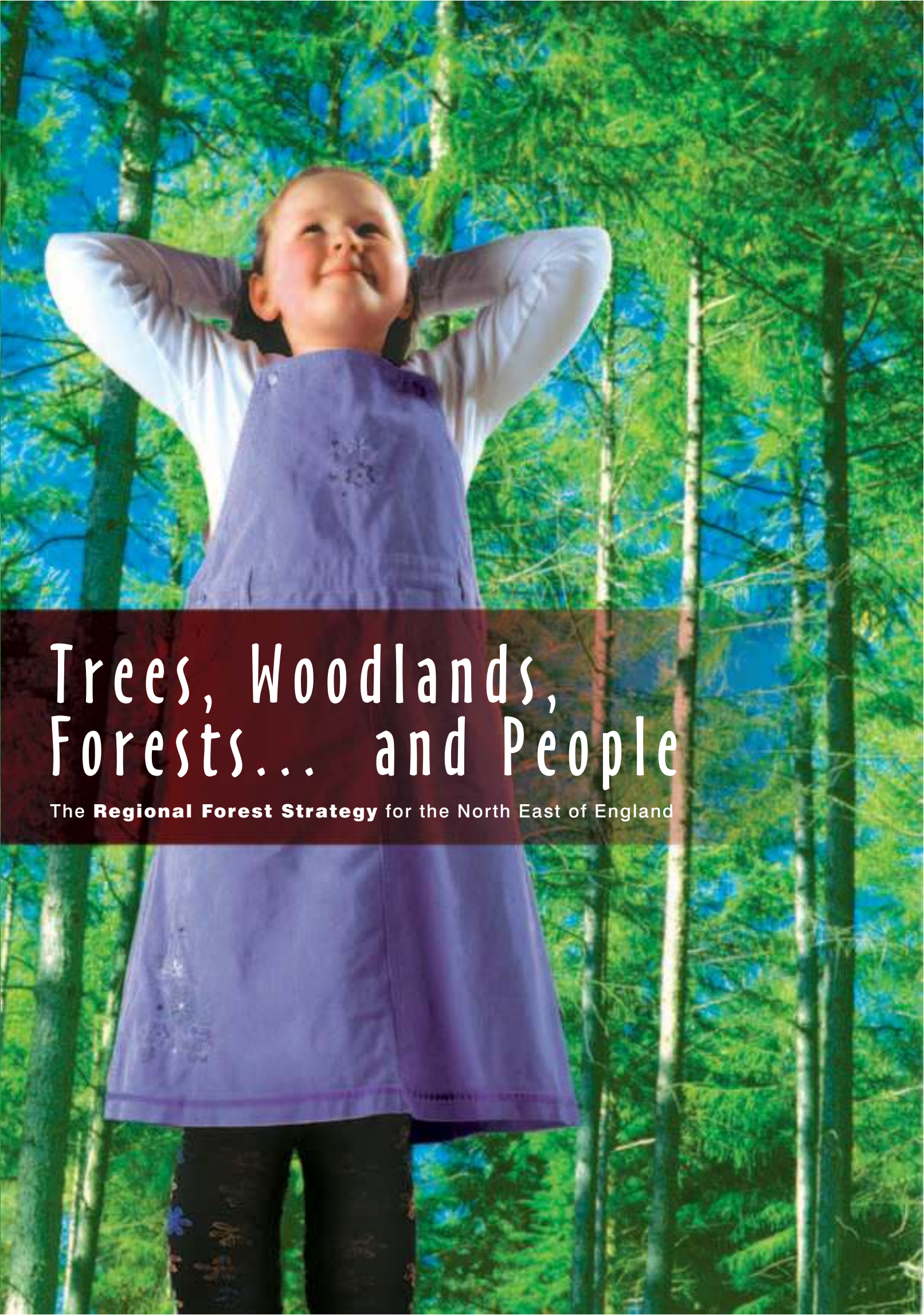

Trees, Woodlands, Forests... and People

The **Regional Forest Strategy** for the North East of England

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The Regional Forest Strategy [RFS] process was initiated in 2002 by the then NE Forestry Action Group [NEFAG] comprising many public and private sector representatives in the wider forestry sector. To oversee the RFS, NEFAG created a Steering Group representing the following bodies.

Funding has been provided by One NorthEast, Forestry Commission, Countryside Agency and the Government Office for the North East.

Sustainability North East – welcomes publication of the Regional Forest Strategy

Dear Colleague

I am delighted that we have now published the North East's first Regional Forest Strategy after a very successful public consultation. It sets out the role our trees, woodlands and forests will have over the next twenty years and beyond in making the region a better place for us all to live, work, visit and do business.

The draft Strategy was published last year, and we have now taken into account everyone's responses. Your views have confirmed widespread support for this visionary Strategy that touches on many areas of our life together in the region, including sustainable communities, better health and quality of life, economic growth, tourism and improving the environment.

You might ask, why are woodlands so important? By managing our woodlands sustainably we can often achieve a wide range of outcomes at the same time and in a cost effective way. Woodlands are a uniquely multifunctional resource. Woodland can for example, provide a recreation facility, a wildlife habitat, an educational resource and a workplace. At the same time it would be improving air quality, screening noise, reducing flood risk, improving the landscape and reducing carbon dioxide emissions by providing environmentally-friendly timber products and woodfuel, and by absorbing atmospheric carbon.

Crucially we have already started to pull together all these strands of delivery, and the first year's Actions are being published jointly with this Strategy in the Annual Delivery Plan for 2005-06.

The Strategy depends for its effectiveness on many regional partners contributing towards the delivery of the priority outcomes. For each activity, a Lead Partner has agreed to coordinate delivery and to seek the involvement of other partner organisations. They will need the support of many partners in the region, so do let us know if you can help to deliver any of the Actions. Please send offers of support for delivering this Strategy, or any further ideas, to the contact point shown on the back cover.

Delivery of strategies is an ongoing process, and we intend to produce an Annual Delivery Plan each year. We will report on progress at the end of the year, by producing an Annual Monitoring Report.

With the support of organisations like yours, I am confident that the first report in 2006 will show that through the framework provided by the Regional Forest Strategy, trees woodlands and forests are playing an increasingly significant role in securing and enhancing the quality of life for everyone in the North East.

Jonathan Blackie

Jonathan Blackie
Regional Director
Government Office for the North East

Executive Summary

The trees, woodlands and forests of North East England are a renewable natural resource which already make significant contributions to the regions economic growth, to our quality of life and towards protecting and improving our environment.

Our vision is for our trees and woodlands to play an increasing role in the sustainable development of the region, helping to make the North East a better place for us all to live, work, visit and do business.

In this region we have over 100,000 hectares of woodlands, covering 12% of our land area. They support an important timber industry that contributes over £450million GVA per annum to the region's economy and has investments in the pipeline that could lead to a further £80m GVA per annum.

Our woodlands are a vital component of the natural environment, both in their own right as in the case of ancient woodlands, of which we have less than any other region in England and because they provide important habitats for wildlife, as in the case of Kielder forest which is home to 80% of England's red squirrels.

Summary of the Key Regional Outcomes linked to the Regional Forest Strategy

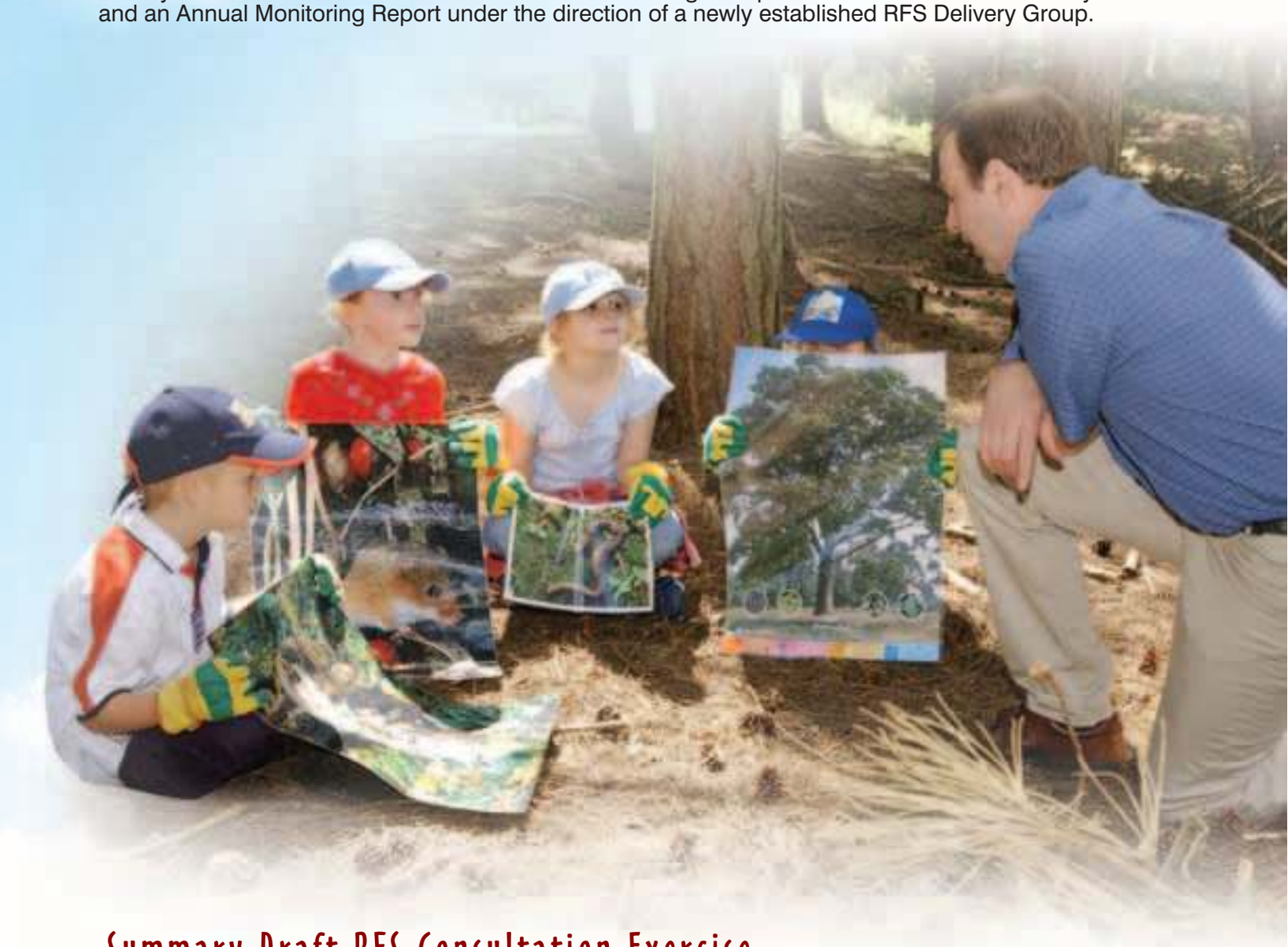
Surprisingly perhaps, most people enjoy the greatest benefits from trees and woodlands when they experience them regularly as part of their local environment, close to where they live and work. Through the work of the region's community forests, the social value of trees and woodlands in the urban environment is increasingly being recognised and built into new and existing developments to help create sustainable communities.

Trees, Woodlands, Forests… and People sets out a framework for the future development of trees, woodlands and forestry in North East England.

This Regional Forest Strategy has been structured around four interrelated objectives, each of which has been related to a number of key high level regional outcomes. The Strategy maps out how the range of activities carried out by the forestry sector relate to and can contribute to the delivery of these key regional outcomes.

These regional outcomes are the key priorities within the RFS. The potential contribution of the RFS to these outcomes is detailed in a series of four detailed action plans. The action plans include over 100 separate actions, many of which have already commenced, that will be carried out in order to help realise the potential of the regions Trees, Woodlands and Forests. Further prioritisation will take place through the programming of implementation.

Activity within the RFS framework will be monitored through the production of an Annual Delivery Plan and an Annual Monitoring Report under the direction of a newly established RFS Delivery Group.



Summary Draft RFS Consultation Exercise

The 2004 consultation draft RFS received 52 written responses. Respondents were generally positive and supportive of both the content of the draft RFS document and the wider RFS development process. The innovative layout of the draft was well received and considered by most respondents to be a very effective way of communicating the role of trees, woodlands and forests in North East England. 92% of respondents felt that the RFS vision adequately captured the potential of trees, woodlands and forests. Many suggestions for improvements were made by consultees and these were taken into account during the preparation of this version of the Strategy.

National Context – Sustainable Forestry in the UK

Sustainable development means looking after our natural heritage so that our children, and the children of the future generations, can also enjoy it. There is worldwide recognition that the protection and management of forests have a vital and distinct role to play.

The over-riding international priority for woods and forests is to manage them sustainably. This is at the heart of Government policy on forestry, which is set out in the England Forestry Strategy and the UK Forestry Standard.

“Others look to the UK to see whether we are adopting high standards of forest management to match our vital interest in the management and protection of forests in other parts of the world.” Tony Blair, Jan 1998

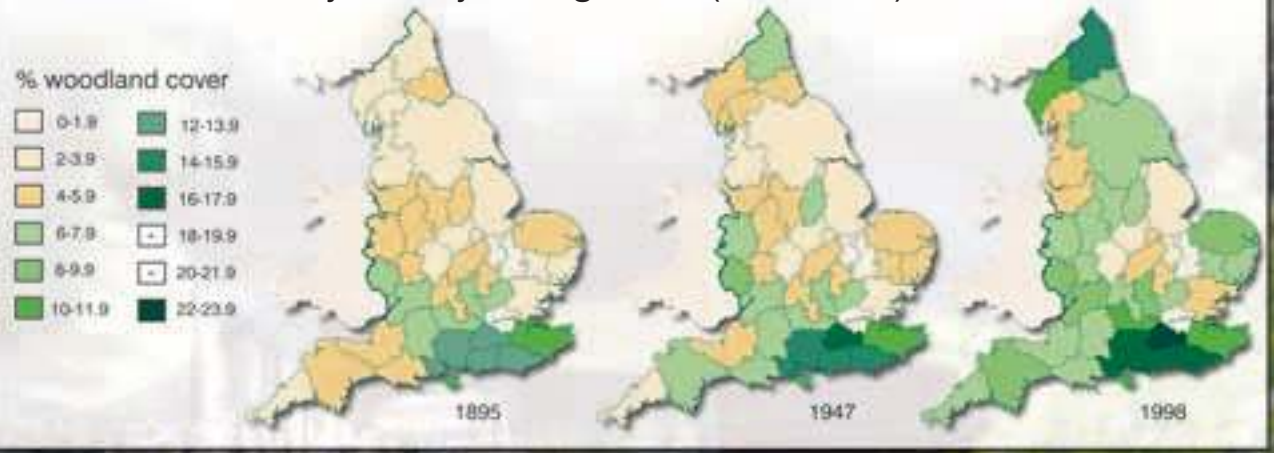
In England, there are over a million hectares of woodlands, but they cover only 8.4% of the land, whereas the average woodland cover in Europe is over 30%. National policies aim to steadily expand the area of woodland to provide more benefits to society and the environment.

The Government is directly involved with forestry through managing woodlands in public ownership and offering grants to meet national objectives. This enables it to secure these public benefits and increase the wider contribution of trees, woodlands and forestry to society and the environment.

By managing our woodlands sustainably, as defined in the UK Forestry Standard, we ensure that, in benefiting from them today, we do not compromise the ability of future generations to gain whatever important benefits they will need. The Government is committed to making the development of society more sustainable. Sustainably-managed woodlands contribute to this objective:

- protecting natural resources and the environment
- creating and sustaining healthy environments for living, working and recreation
- providing funding through timber sales that can be used to offset the cost of providing benefits
- increasing the use of wood from sustainable sources.

Woodland Cover by County through time (1895-1998)

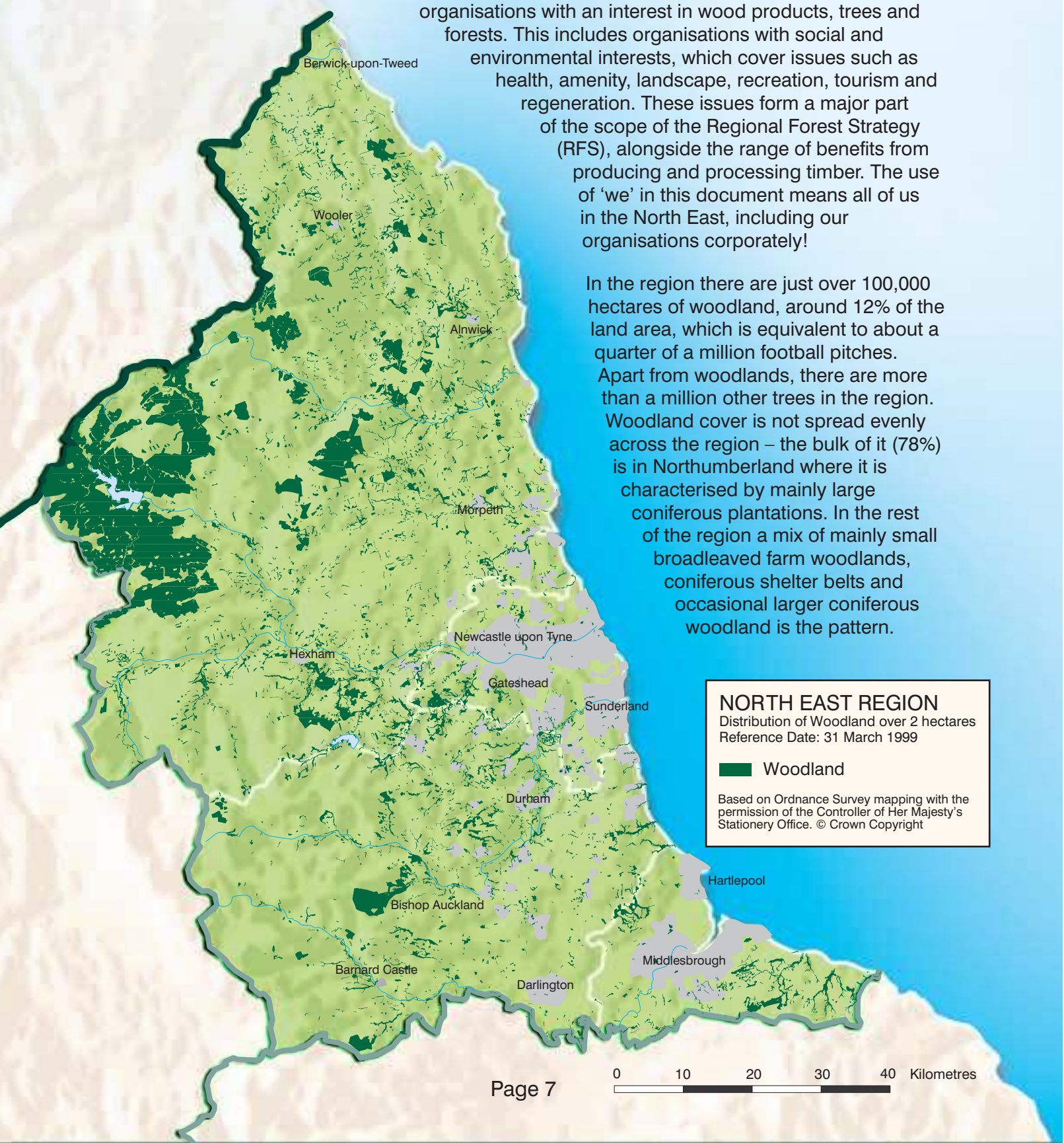


Regional Context

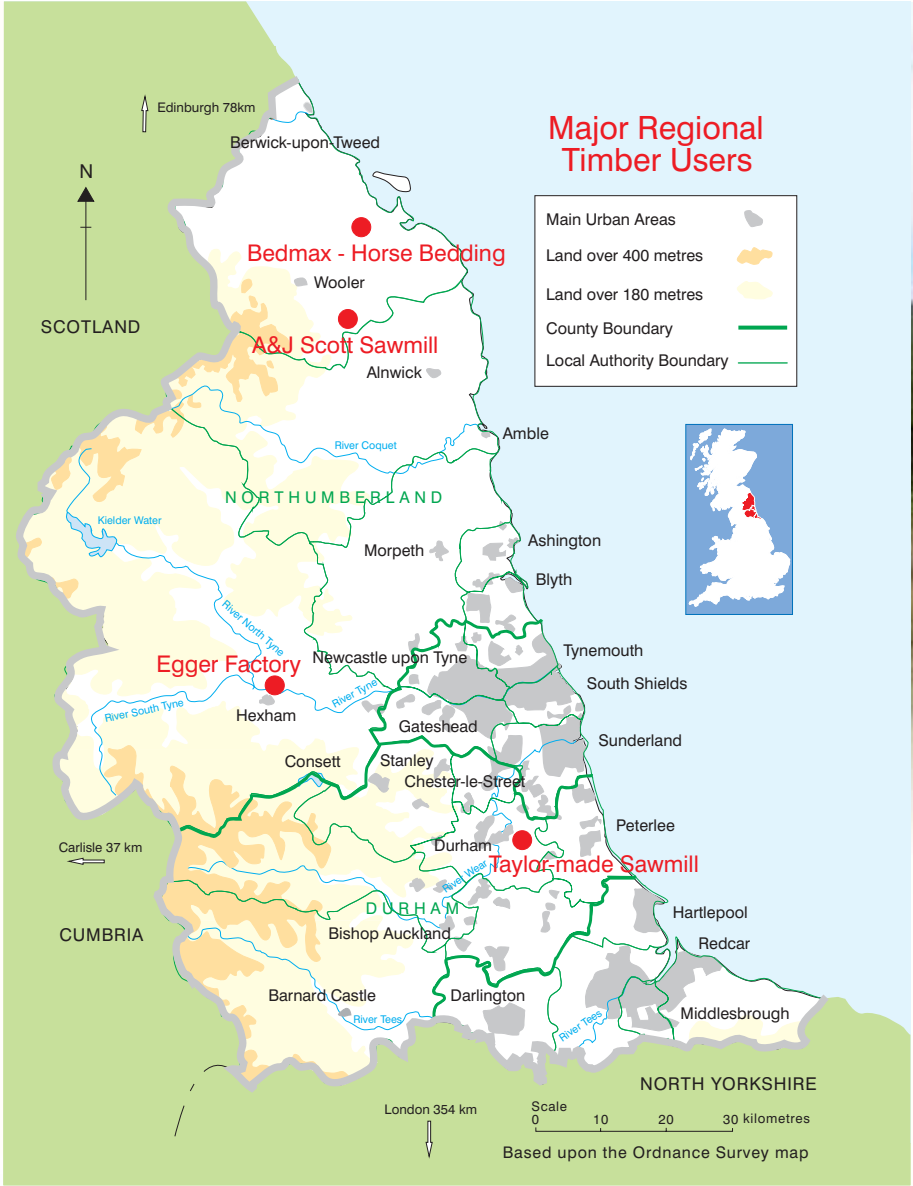
The North East is a region where forestry can make a significant contribution to all three facets of sustainable development. Compared with the other regions of England the North East is relatively small in terms of both land area and population. We are a region that is working hard to drive up our economic performance and standards of health. We have a great environment and we are a region known for it's good quality of life.

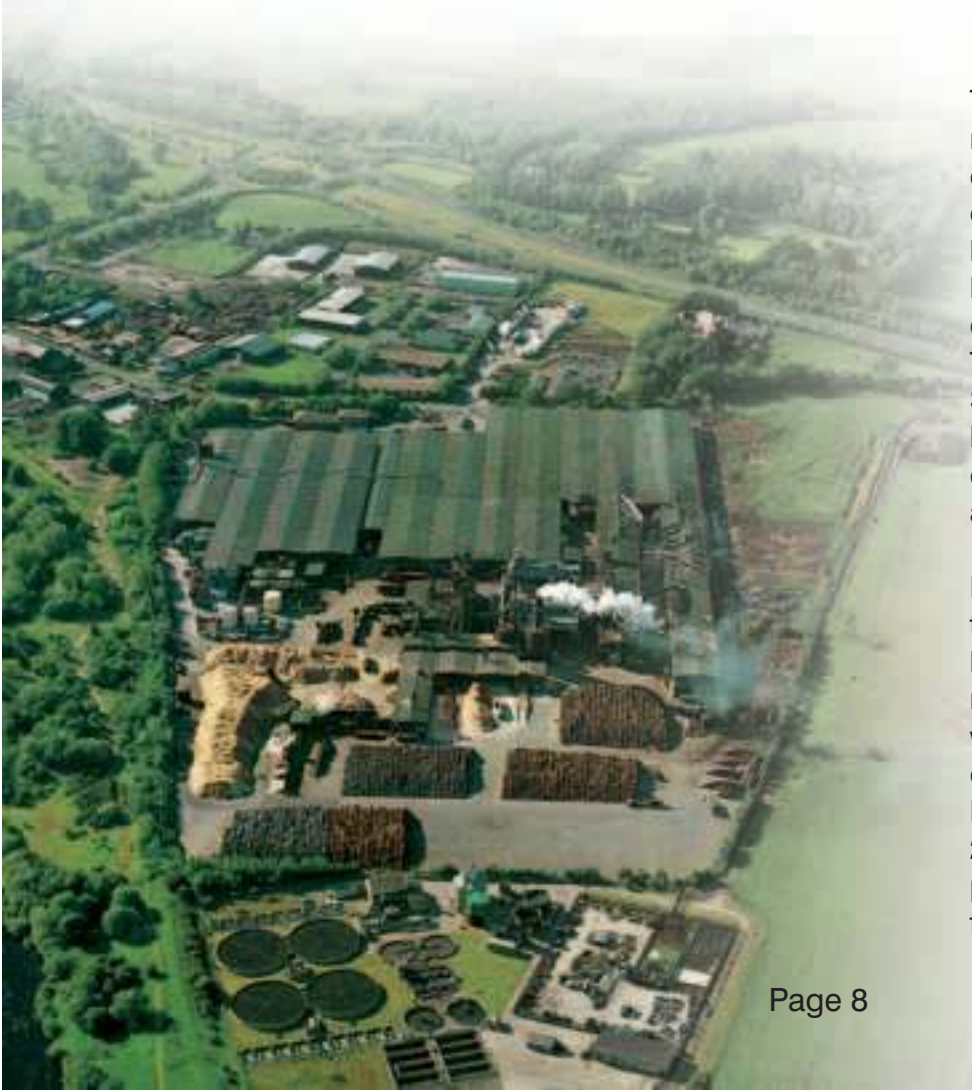
The region's "forestry sector" – is broad-based, covering all organisations with an interest in wood products, trees and forests. This includes organisations with social and environmental interests, which cover issues such as health, amenity, landscape, recreation, tourism and regeneration. These issues form a major part of the scope of the Regional Forest Strategy (RFS), alongside the range of benefits from producing and processing timber. The use of 'we' in this document means all of us in the North East, including our organisations corporately!

In the region there are just over 100,000 hectares of woodland, around 12% of the land area, which is equivalent to about a quarter of a million football pitches. Apart from woodlands, there are more than a million other trees in the region. Woodland cover is not spread evenly across the region – the bulk of it (78%) is in Northumberland where it is characterised by mainly large coniferous plantations. In the rest of the region a mix of mainly small broadleaved farm woodlands, coniferous shelter belts and occasional larger coniferous woodland is the pattern.



The area of woodland in the region has increased dramatically over the last century, with over 75% of the region's woodland having been planted since 1930. Much of the early new woodland was predominantly coniferous, including Kielder Forest, Europe's largest contiguous plantation forest. These woodlands now provide a valuable timber and recreational resource, supporting over 2,000 jobs. Increasingly, they are also providing an important wildlife resource, for example by acting as a refuge for the dwindling English red squirrel population. Management activity over the last 15 years has also enhanced their broader biodiversity value through native woodland restoration work and forest restructuring to increase the amount of open space and species diversity





The North East is unique among the regions of England in the species composition and pattern of ownership of its woodlands in that slightly over half of our woods are owned or leased by the Forestry Commission and 64% of our woodland area is coniferous. This is a situation more typical of Scotland than the rest of England and brings with it many interesting opportunities for this strategy to identify and respond to.

Each year, over half a million tonnes of timber – 20,000 lorry loads – are harvested in the North East, and over a million tonnes of virgin and recycled wood are processed by the region's chipboard and sawmill industries. However, the region actually consumes 2.5 million tonnes of wood and wood products each year – a tonne of wood for every person in the region

In the wider area of northern England and southern Scotland, timber production is predicted to double in the next 10 years, which provides the opportunity for our timber processing industry to expand significantly. Despite the problems associated with current low timber prices (only partially relieved by the 14% increase in prices during 2003) there is potential for the NE forestry industry to invest in new timber processing capacity and associated added-value sectors.

The forestry industry already contributes around £450 million to the region's economy (Northumberland County Council, 1999). The regions processing industry has seen significant increases in capacity in recent years and no includes the second and third largest saw mill in England. A recent study concluded that the timber industry could contribute a further £80 million GVA per annum to the NE economy (Jaako Poyry, 2004).

In addition to timber processing opportunities, our woodlands have the potential to deliver a wide range of public benefits, including recreation, tourism, biodiversity, renewable energy, improved health and quality of life – and the particular importance of woodlands close to where people live is increasingly being recognised.

Since 1980, woodland cover has increased by about 8,000ha from 11% to 12% of land area. In the last 10 years, the emphasis in tree planting has shifted towards woodlands that deliver a broad range of social, environmental and economic objectives. During 2003 and 2004, over 1,000ha of new woodland has been created with the benefit of Forestry Commission grant aid, 94% of which is broadleaved. Since 1995 over 700ha of new native woodland was created on formerly open land in Northumberland National Park. Although we can never truly replace lost ancient woodland these woods will come to mimic the former natural tree cover supporting an array of woodland wildlife and transforming part of the landscape to its more natural state.

Over the last 10 years, almost half of our new woodlands have been created in the urban fringe, mainly within the Great North Forest and Tees Forest areas. By creating new woodlands on the urban fringe and previously developed – brownfield – land, and by increasing levels of community engagement, these two Community Forests have demonstrated the potential of our woodlands for economic regeneration. Existing community forest plans include targets for creating over 10,000 hectares of new woodland in the next 20 years.

The value of 'green infrastructure' in urban environments is increasingly being acknowledged and now features within priority Government programmes, such as those for achieving Sustainable Communities. Recent work by the North East Community Forests has helped to further increase the understanding of the role of 'green infrastructure' in the north east and how it can contribute to key strategic initiatives such as the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Northern Way and the developing City Region action plans.

Through the Regional Forest Strategy, we aim to identify where our trees, woodlands and forests can deliver public benefits that will make the greatest contribution to the sustainable development of the North East. In turn this will support the region in playing our part in the sustainable development of the UK as a whole.

Regional Forest Strategy Vision 2005-2025

Sustainable Development

Social and Communities

Our trees, woodlands and forests will:

be accessible and promote social well-being for the region's people and visitors

Environment and Natural Resources

Our trees, woodlands and forests will:

provide a healthy and diverse environment

Implementation and Leadership

Our trees, woodlands and forests will:

be recognised, promoted, invested in and cherished as a key regional resource

Economic Regeneration and Growth

Our trees, woodlands and forests will:

be a sustainable economic resource

Vision

Our trees, woodlands and forests will:

help this region become a better place for us all to live, work, visit and do business

Guide to Vision Wheel

Our Strategy is based around the following model to show how the Vision can be delivered through Actions.

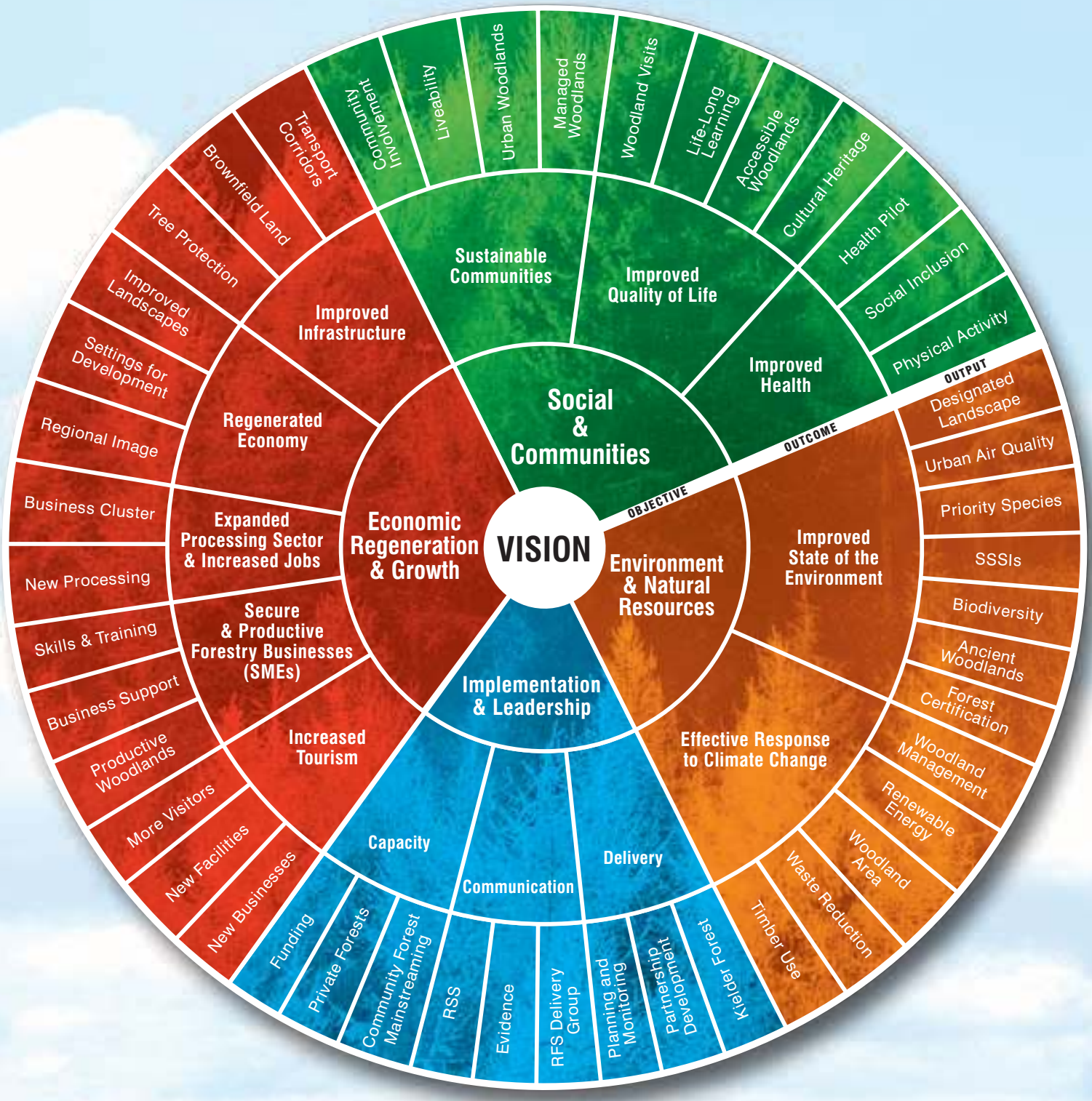
- The Vision comprises four Objectives.
- Each Objective will be delivered by a range of Outcomes.
- Each Outcome is the result of a number of Outputs.
- Each Output is a consequence of a series of Actions.

- Each Action can contribute to more than one Outcome.
- The Outcomes are also driven by National and Regional Policies.

This diagram shows the links between the various aspects of the Strategy.

Vision into Actions

This Vision Wheel shows which Outputs contribute to which Outcomes. On the following pages, each sector of the Wheel is expanded into an Action Plan to show how the Outputs can be delivered.



Glossary

Ancient woodland - Land which has been continuously wooded since at least 1600

AONB - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, designated for landscape qualities to conserve and enhance their natural beauty

BAP - Biodiversity Action Plan. UK Government response to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992. It describes UK biological resources, commits a detailed plan for protecting these resources through Species and Habitat Action Plans, and Local Biodiversity Action Plans.

Biodiversity - The variety of life in all its forms. This includes ecosystems diversity, species diversity and genetic diversity.

BIG - Biomass Implementation Group. Delivers the NE Biomass Action Plan

Broadleaves - Broadleaved tree species have leaves which are usually shed in winter. Examples include oak, beech and ash, and produce timber known as 'hardwood'.

Brownfield land – Abandoned or underused areas of land, often former industrial sites, where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived contamination.

Conifers - Conifers have needles and are usually evergreen. Pine, spruce and fir are examples of coniferous trees. They produce softwood timber.

DCMS - Department for Culture, Media & Sport

Defra - Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

DfES - Department for Education & Skills

DfT - Department for Transport

DTI - Department of Trade & Industry

DWP - Department for Work & Pensions

EN - English Nature

FC - Forestry Commission

Forestry - The activity of woodland management; in the context of this publication particularly for commercial purposes.

FTA - Forestry and Timber Association

GfG - Greening for Growth - partnership in SE Northumberland to deliver long-term environmental improvements

GO-NE - Government Office for the North East

GP - General Practitioner. Local doctor

Green space - All kinds of vegetated open space – from formal parks, gardens and sports pitches, to less formal meadows, woodlands, heath and downland, for example

HDA - Health Development Agency

LA - Local Authority

Native woodland - is composed of species which occur naturally on the site.

NEA - North East Assembly. The local government voice for the region

NECF - North East Community Forests. Oversees Great North Forest & Tees Forest

NEFF - North East Forestry Forum. Comprises public and private sector representatives of the wider forestry sector

NNPA - Northumberland National Park Authority

ODPM - Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

ONE - One NorthEast. The Regional Development Agency

PCT - Primary Care Trust - public health care

PSA - Public Service Agreement

R&R - Renewables and Recyclables Project. Aims to increase use of woodfuel and liquid biofuels

RES - Regional Economic Strategy. Policy guidelines for economic development

Restoration - converting more recent plantations on ancient woodland sites, back to a species composition native to the site.

RFS - Regional Forest Strategy for the NE

RSS - Regional Spatial Strategy. Policy guidelines to help in locational decisions

SMEs - Small and medium-sized enterprises

Social exclusion - Occurs when individuals are 'socially excluded' from participating effectively in social, economic, political and cultural life. Particularly vulnerable groups are those in poverty, the elderly, disabled and ethnic minorities.

SRPs - Sub-Regional Partnerships. One in each County area, enables ONE to target funding more effectively through them to local areas

SSSI - Site of Special Scientific Interest. The UK's best wildlife and geological sites

Sustainable development – Meeting the social, environmental and economic needs of today's population without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

TNEI - The Northern Energy Initiative. A consultancy service for new & renewable energy

UKWAS - UK Woodland Assurance Standard - the benchmark for independent evaluation and certification of woodland to internationally recognised standards

WfG - Wood for Good. A campaign to promote wider use of timber as a sustainable building

Woodland management - The care and stewardship of woodlands. material

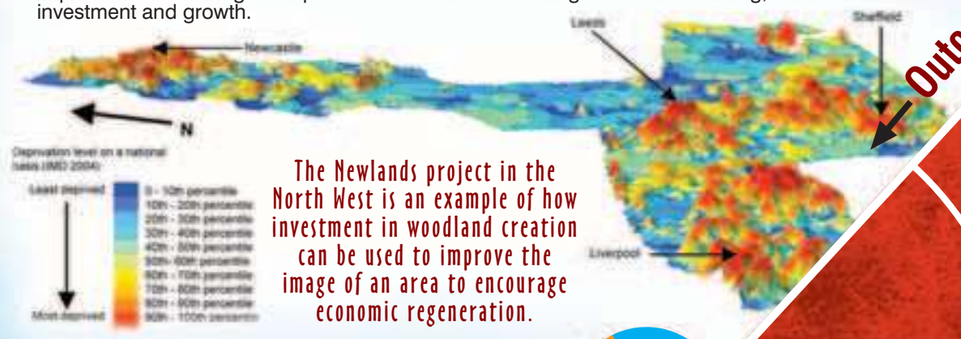
WWF - Worldwide Fund for Nature

Summary of Outcomes:

Economic Regeneration and Growth

Regenerated Economy

We will stimulate more investment and economic activity by helping to create higher quality environments in urban and urban fringe areas. By establishing more woodland and other greenspaces we will improve the local image and provide more attractive settings for house building, business investment and growth.



The Newlands project in the North West is an example of how investment in woodland creation can be used to improve the image of an area to encourage economic regeneration.

The Business Case for the Environment (RSK Environment Ltd, 2003) shows the flow of economic benefits that will result from the environmental improvements proposed for south-east Northumberland.

Improved Infrastructure

Green infrastructure, particularly trees and woodlands play a vital role in helping to reduce the environmental impact of the region's essential transport and development land infrastructure. Planting and protecting trees along transport corridors and on brown field and derelict land improves the landscape and can help reduce noise pollution and improve local air quality.

Expanded Processing Sector & Increased Jobs

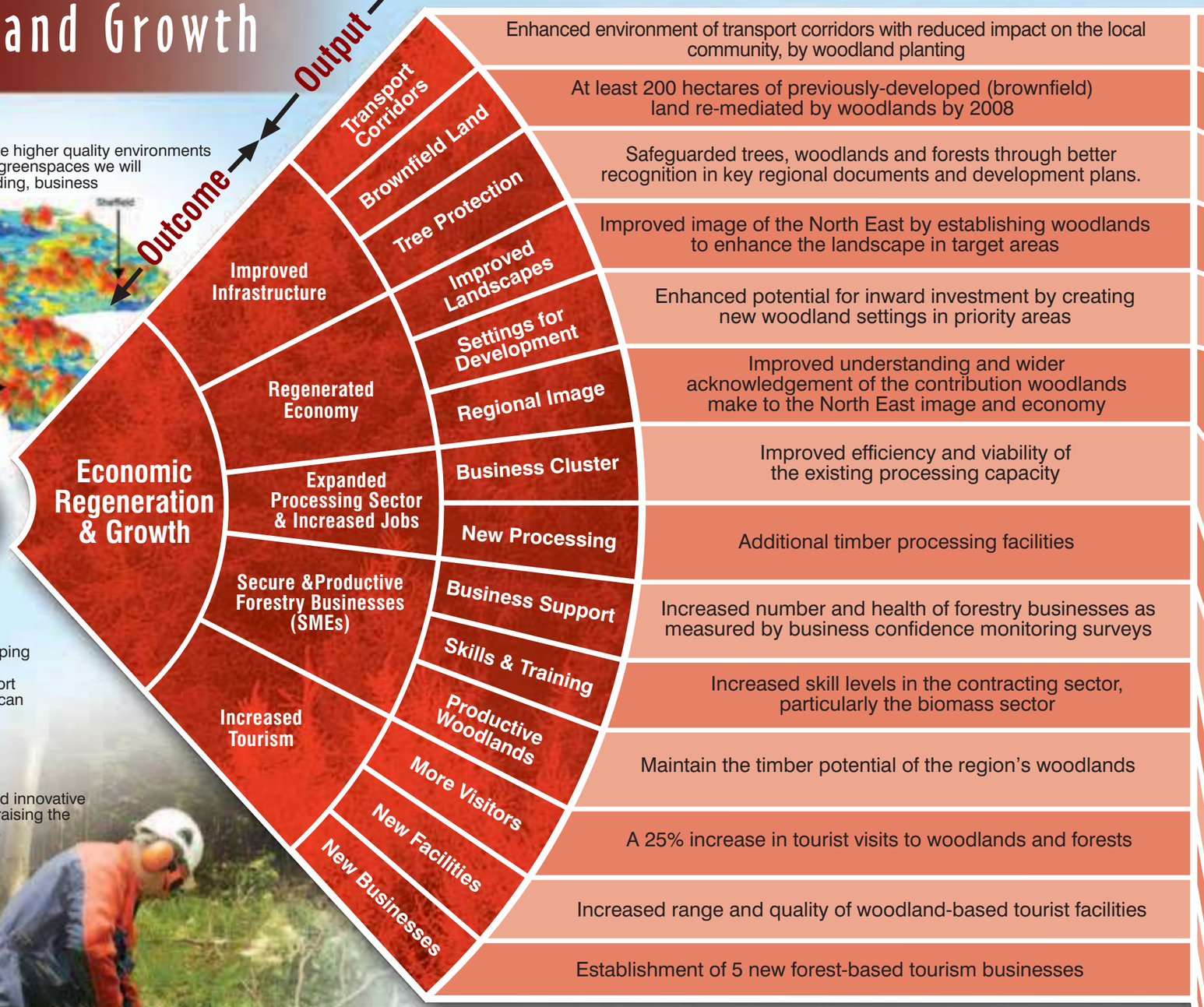
Our region has a strong timber processing sector with many progressive and innovative companies. We can improve the stability and performance of the sector by raising the profile of the industry and providing a supportive environment for its growth.

The economic value of clustering and integrating timber processing facilities around a single site is highlighted in the recent Hexham Timber Opportunities Report prepared by Jaako Poyry (2004).

Secure & Productive Forestry Businesses (SMEs)

Timber growers and forestry contractors are critical elements of the industry. They are operating in an environment of tight margins and many are under capitalised. We can support them by providing high quality training, business support and by facilitating access to grants and finance. This should help to strengthen and diversify these businesses enabling them to take advantage of new markets and other opportunities.

The Biomass Sector Skills Audit (2004) recently completed by Northwoods, flags up the training requirements for forestry SME's and others to respond effectively to bioenergy business opportunities.



Increased Tourism

Woodlands and wild natural landscapes help attract tourists to the North East. High quality forest based recreation facilities and more effective promotion, will increase the number of people visiting the region and create new tourism business opportunities. There is scope to develop high profile woodland based tourist attractions such as state of the art mountain bike trails or dramatic aerial walkways.

Visitor numbers at Whinlatter in the Lake District have soared as a result of Ospreys nesting there. The RSPB (2004) estimate that these visitors spent £1.26 million, supporting over 100 jobs, in the Whinlatter area during the four month Osprey breeding season in 2003.

Tweed Valley Forest Park increased visitor numbers from 234,000 to 364,000 in 2003 as a result of the new "Best in Britain" Glentress mountain bike trail.

Action Plan 2005 - 2008

The separate Annual Delivery Plans will show which Actions will take place each year.

1. Increase the role of woodlands in new developments to help deal with surface water by evapo-transpiration (sustainable drainage systems)
2. Investigate potential for linking roadside tree planting with more strategic woodland corridors and plantings

1. Analyse brownfield land data to identify sites where woodlands may be the most appropriate, and encourage this end-use
2. Promote achievements of woodlands in re-mediating brownfield land

1. Initiate a promotional campaign to protect and maintain trees in the built environment
2. Make better use of the powers available through the planning system to protect trees and woodlands from development pressures, particularly veteran trees and ancient woodlands.

1. Improve the evidence base for the contribution of woodland to the region's image and economic development,
2. Pilot innovative mechanisms to demonstrate the role of landscape improvement in economic regeneration

1. Promote temporary greening of derelict or underused sites in advance of development - as piloted by Middlesbrough REACT
2. Conduct further research to better understand the effect of quality landscapes on business relocation and expansion decisions

1. Establish a regional resource of woodland images
2. Compare the use of woodland imagery for marketing with related investment in trees and woodland
3. Ensure that the role of trees and forests is reflected in the Regional Image Strategy
4. Conduct market research to underpin a marketing strategy to promote woodlands, forests and their products to people & businesses

1. Seek investment in an virtual e-business timber cluster which would increase the collaboration between the region's timber-related businesses
2. Investigate the potential to establish a physical cluster of timber-related businesses in the NE, linked to the development of new processing capacity adjacent to existing facilities at Hexham and Teesside
3. Provide a supportive environment for developing primary and secondary wood-processing capacity
4. Work with the Scottish Forestry Cluster to ensure that cross-border links are developed.

1. Evaluate the case for a new sawmill and other processing capacity in the NE, particularly at sites in Hexham, adjacent to Egger
2. Produce a short and long term forecast of timber availability and movements within the region

1. Ensure the new 'Brokerage model' for business support includes forestry expertise and understanding
2. Establish an Internet Portal for forestry and woodland-related businesses
3. Run seminars on the role of forestry in rural development, focusing on opportunities for business growth and diversification.
4. Launch a forestry 'Harvesting Processing and Marketing Grant' pilot scheme to encourage and develop the small-scale timber processing and value-added sector
5. Set up a woodfuel producer group and support the establishment of a functioning woodfuel market
6. Develop a project to establish new markets for timber and woodland products

1. Carry out a sector skills audit
2. Establish a training and skills development project, initially focusing on wood-fuel, to build entrepreneurial and marketing skills amongst forestry businesses

1. Increase the sustainable timber harvest, measured as a percentage of the total annual growth in timber volume
2. Support sustainable forest management, including replanting, that maintains the timber production potential of woodlands

1. Promote major forest recreation sites such as Kielder Forest as part of the tourism package – particularly outside the region
2. Improve information on woodland based recreation available to visitors

1. Maximise the recreation and tourism potential of private woodlands through targeted support and business advice
2. Investigate the potential for new woodland-based leisure developments that contribute to the sustainable development of rural economies.

1. Work with providers of outdoor recreation to grow the tourism economy and business opportunities
2. Increase the range of sports facilities in woodlands such as those for equestrian and mountain bike activities

Healey Estate – Commercial Recreation and Wood Production from a Traditional Private Estate

Woodlands have been actively managed for timber production and country sports on Healey Estate since they were planted during the 19th Century.

As timber prices fell, Tom Warde Oldham of High Plains farm began to search for alternative ways of generating income from his woodlands. He recognised that the farm buildings surrounded by attractive woodlands provided an opportunity to tap into the growing demand for horse livery. The subsequent success of his equestrian venture has largely been a result of the attractive setting and the challenging and interesting riding afforded by the woodland.

Woodland operations continue, although now horse riders pay for the privilege of enjoying the magnificent woodland setting.

Egger (UK) Ltd.

Egger is one of the worlds leading manufacturers of wood based panels with 15 plants across Europe. The Egger (UK) Hexham chipboard factory of is among the largest wood processing plants in the UK. They manufacture a range of products including kitchen worktops, flooring and board for furniture, using sawdust from sawmills, small logs from local forests and recycled wood.

In December 2004 Egger (UK) announced major £100million reinvestment plans involving a new state of the art production line that will increase the output and efficiency of the plant, safeguarding 460 direct jobs and almost 2000 indirect jobs in mainly rural businesses. Egger hopes to see a cluster of integrated timber businesses develop on the Hexham site to benefit from the synergy that such clustering brings.

Darlington West Park

West Park is an exciting new mixed-use development of nearly 50 hectares on the north west edge of Darlington. One of the first operations was to create a hill top parkland and plant thousands of trees. Over the next ten years as the woodlands develop a sustainable community will arise on this former chemical works and waste site. When complete the site will incorporate a hospital, a new school, a new rugby ground, affordable housing, a community village and sustainable transport infrastructure. West Park will achieve all this whilst devoting over 15% of the land area to tree planting.

Summary of Outcomes:

Environment and Natural Resources

Improved State of the Environment

The North East has many rich habitats including wildlife and landscape designated areas.

Woodlands and forests play an essential role in many of these. Through appropriate expansion, re-design and better management of our woodlands and forests we will improve the quality of these special areas and, therefore, the environmental quality of the region.

The Biodiversity Indicators and Targets for the North East of England (Street and Brodin, 2004) details the priorities for the region's precious ancient woodland resource and nationally important woodland species.

Effective Response to Climate Change

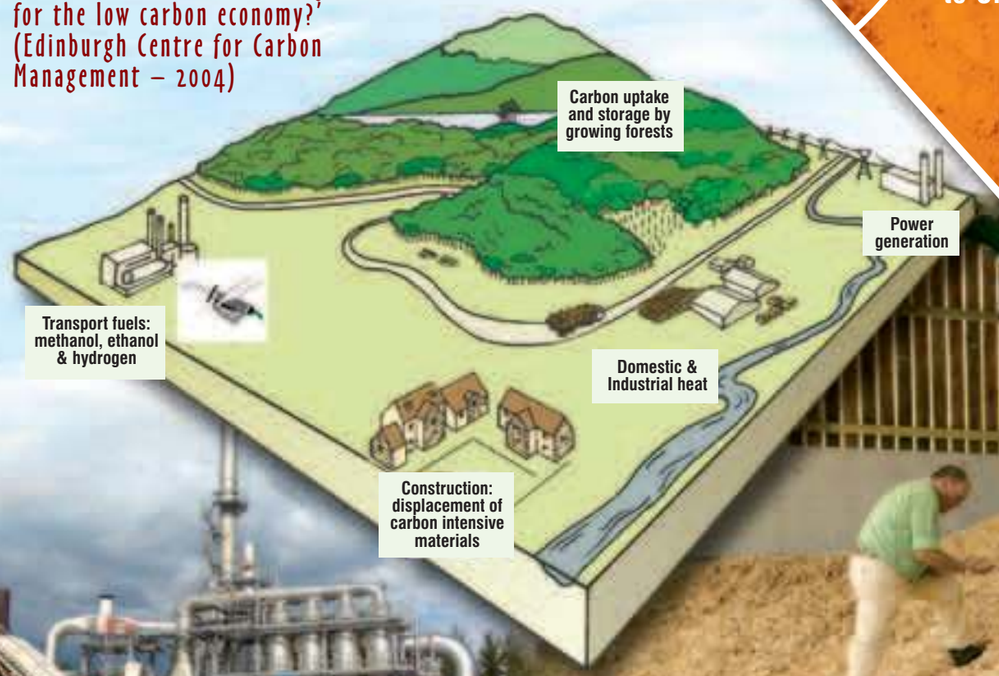
Climate change is now accepted as the greatest environmental threat of the 21st Century. We need to significantly reduce carbon dioxide emissions in order to stabilise global warming.

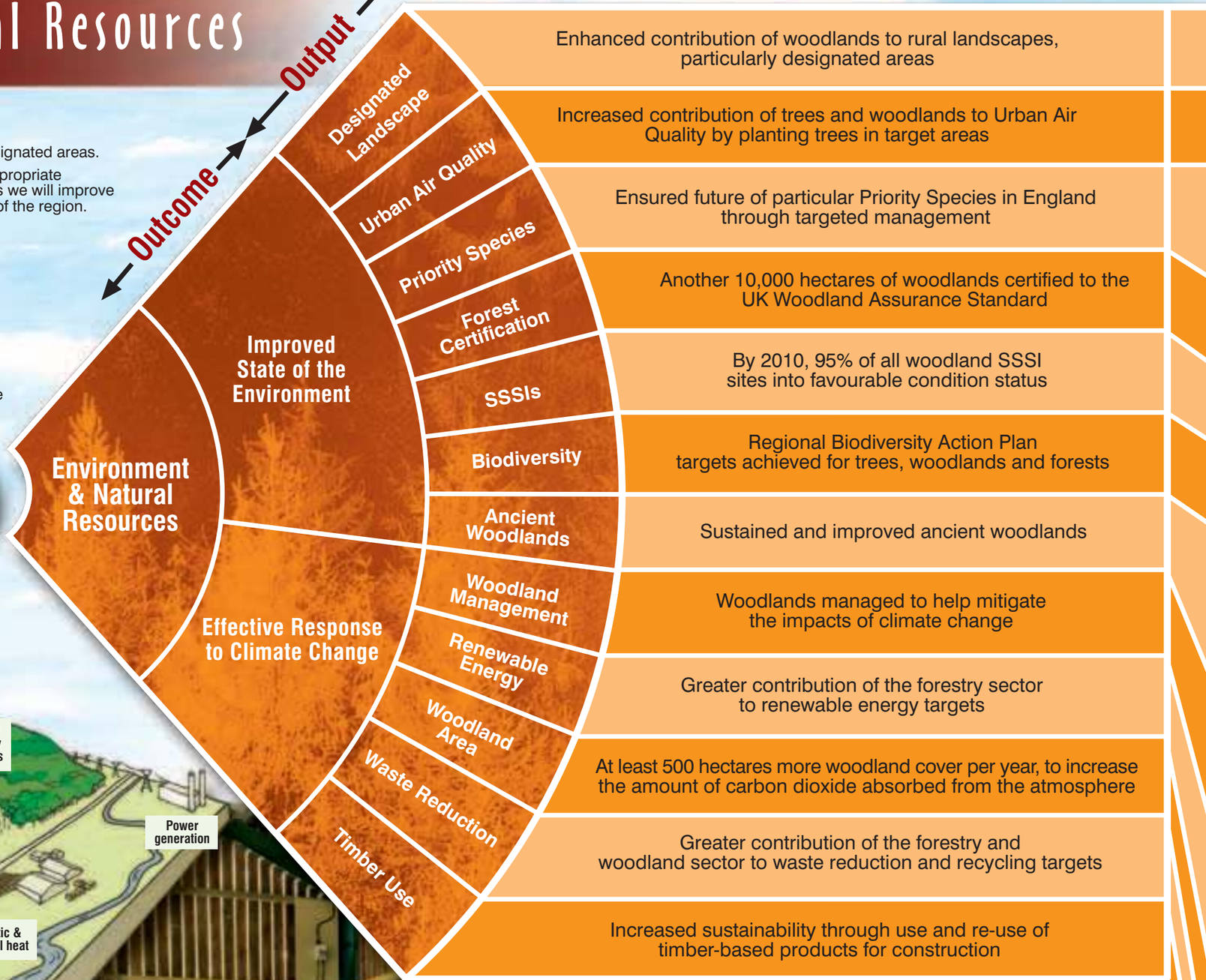
The potential carbon benefits of growing forests, timber products and the use of wood as a substitute for fossil fuels could help reduce the UK emissions by 10% or around 8 Million tonnes carbon per year. (Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Management –2004)

Woodlands can also have an important role in mitigating the adverse effects of climate change such as by lowering peak flows and so reducing the flooding.

What are the carbon benefits of forests?

From: 'The UK's Forest: a neglected resource for the low carbon economy?' (Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Management – 2004)





Action Plan 2005 - 2008

The separate Annual Delivery Plans will show which Actions will take place each year.

1. Develop a framework and successor Challenge Funding scheme to create new native woodlands and reduce the impact of inappropriate existing woodlands in National Park and AONB areas

2. Extend the scope of existing landscape plans to consider the impact of new woodlands and minimal intervention ‘re-wilding’ initiatives

1. Promote the role of tree planting to improve Urban Air Quality

2. Audit the current and potential role of trees in filtering out fine particles in two North East cities

1. Develop a North of England wide project to secure the future of the Red Squirrel

2. Put in place detailed management plans for woodlands, where they provide the habitat for priority species, such as in Red Squirrel and Black Grouse target zones

3. Investigate the establishment of a North East deer management group

1. Launch Woodland Management Grant to support woodland owners who manage to the UKWAS Certification Standard

2. Support woodland owners towards achieving the UKWAS Certification Standard, using the Woodland Planning Grant

1. Agree management plans for all woodland SSSI’s and open-ground SSSI’s adversely affected by inappropriate forestry, and target action where site condition needs to be improved

1. Develop regional priority areas for creating and extending native woodlands, building on existing work in the NE

2. Align the regional scoring and targeting of the new England Woodland Grant Scheme, for new and existing woodlands, to better reflect local and UK BAP priorities

1. Conduct an assessment of the condition of Ancient and Semi Natural woodland

2. Address threats to Ancient Semi-Natural Woodlands, improve their condition and support the implementation of management plans

3. Promote the restoration of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites and support the implementation of management plans

4. Protect ancient woodlands, including Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, veteran and rare trees, and prevent further loss through development by liaising with planning authorities and responding to consultations

1. Increase awareness of the potential impact of climate change on trees and woodland habitats

2. Investigate the potential role of new and existing woodlands in helping to find solutions to flood prevention through Catchment Flood Management Plans

3. Support sustainable forest management (and woodland creation) to help ensure a continued supply of environmentally-friendly timber for the future

4. Organise Forest Health Days to update woodland owners and managers about tree and woodland health issues

1. Support delivery of the Biomass Action Plan

2. Identify potential for an integrated approach to renewable energy generation in the Kielder area, including wind farms and biomass

3. Disseminate best practice and lessons learned from Kielder heating scheme

4. Support 10 small or medium Wood Heat projects

1. Promote and develop the role of woodlands for rural diversification, as part of the wider integrated approach to land management

2. Develop a regional publication encouraging woodland creation and identifying target areas for the England Woodland Grant Scheme

3. Increase the proportion of locally-sourced native trees used in tree planting

1. Set up pilot “Tree Stations” to increase recycling of wood waste

2. Produce guidance and disseminate best practice on management of tree and wood waste

1. Promote the use of sustainably-sourced timber in construction, particularly targeting the use of timber-framed houses

2. Support and extend existing sustainable construction and procurement initiatives to promote timber use

Red Squirrel conservation

The great coniferous forests of Northumberland, are critical to the survival of the beloved red squirrel in England. They form key components of a north England wide strategy to conserve the species.

A broad partnership of organisations including the Wildlife Trusts, English Nature, private landowners, the Forestry Commission and Defra are working together to finalise a scientifically based conservation strategy. This will involve securing funding to implement targeted woodland management and control grey squirrels.

As well as safeguarding red squirrels, success will bring economic benefits through enhanced tourism and rural jobs.

New native woodlands

The NE has less ancient woodland than any other English region – approximately 11,500 hectares covering just 1.4 % of the land area. It is therefore a critical and irreplaceable remnant of our natural heritage.

Planting new native woodlands provides many of the conservation benefits associated with ancient woodland. Since 1995, the Forestry Commission and Northumberland National Park Authority have worked together to create almost 700 hectares of new native woodland in the National Park. This has doubled the area of semi-natural woodland in the National Park – a remarkable achievement. In addition, a further 1,500 hectares of native woodlands have been established as a result of redesigning conifer plantations to increase their biodiversity, recreational and landscape value.

Kielder district heating scheme

On Tuesday 15 June 2004, Margaret Fay, chairman of regional development agency, One NorthEast switched on the country's first wood fuelled district heating scheme. The system supplies heat to a range of buildings in Kielder village. Although a UK first, the scheme utilises established technology that is now very common the other parts of Europe.

The scheme was spearheaded by Tynedale Council, the local community, One NorthEast with the Forestry Commission’s Kielder forest providing the 250 tonnes of wood chips required each year.

Wood chips are a carbon neutral fuel and schemes such as this help to reduce green house gas emissions and so slow the rate of climate change.

Summary of Outcomes:

Social and Communities

Sustainable Communities

By extending the countryside into our towns and cities, we will make the benefits of nature more accessible to a more diverse range of people. In these more attractive areas housing demand will be sustained, as they will be better places for us to live, work and play. We will seek to empower local communities to develop vibrant and meaningful green space projects. These communities will be more sustainable with green spaces locally rather than a car journey away.

Improved Quality of Life

By increasing peoples use and enjoyment of woodlands and trees, particularly in our urban and suburban areas and parts of the region suffering from the environmental legacy of mining and other heavy industries, we will improve the quality of life for a large proportion of the region's population. We will do this by providing more opportunities for recreation and creativity.

The importance of green spaces to quality of life is endorsed by ODPM (2004) in Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener.

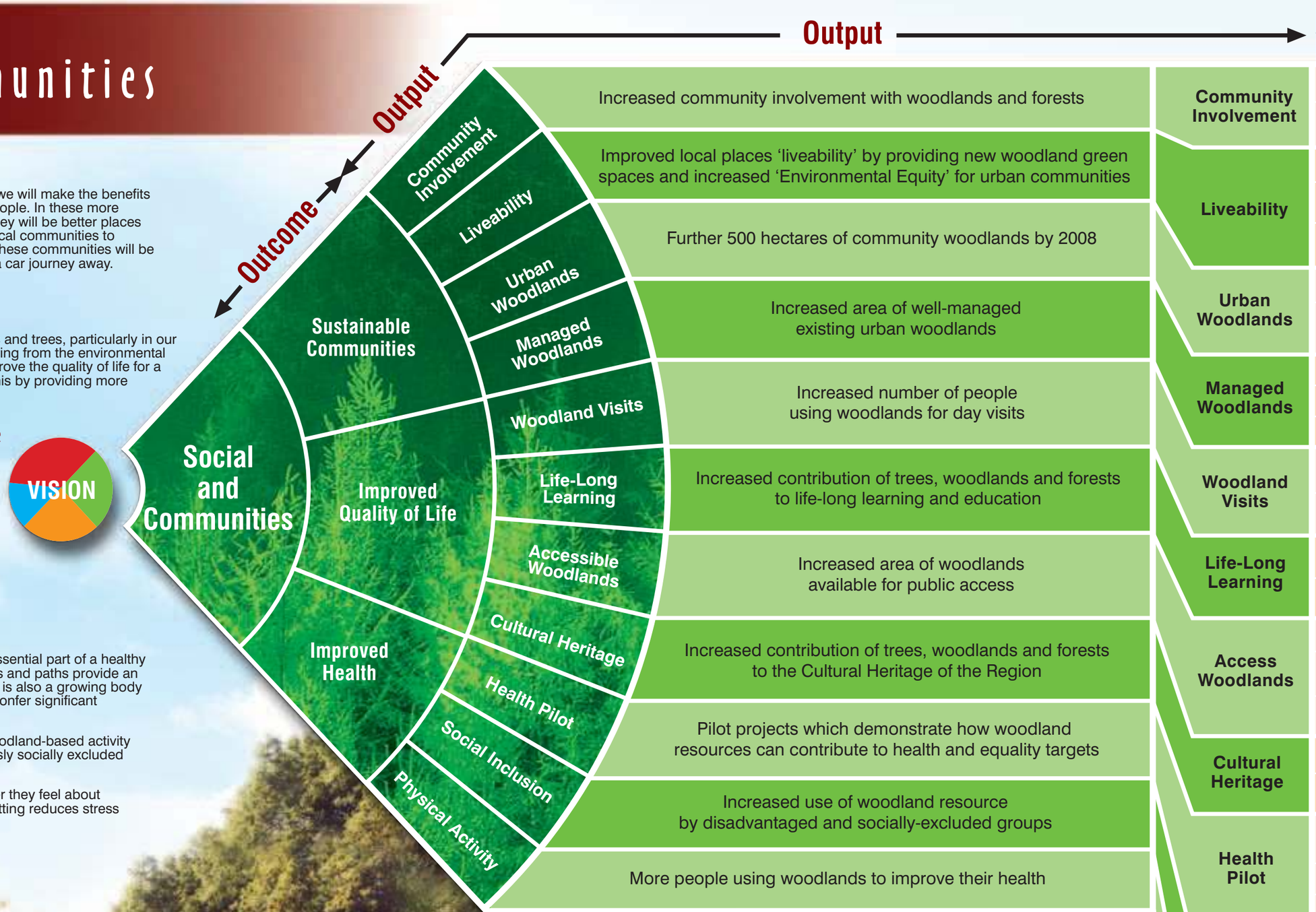
The Woodland Trusts 2004 report Making Woodland Count: It's contribution to our Quality of Life outlines the wide range of benefits from woodlands.

Improved Health

It is well established that regular physical activity is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle. Woods and forests with networks of rides, roads and paths provide an excellent environment for many forms of exercise. There is also a growing body of evidence that these attractive outdoor environments confer significant psychological and emotional benefits.

A major challenge is to ensure that health benefits of woodland-based activity are enjoyed by a all groups in society, including previously socially excluded communities.

The better people feel about their environment, the better they feel about themselves. Living and working in an attractive green setting reduces stress making us healthier and more resilient.



Action Plan 2005 - 2008

The separate Annual Delivery Plans will show which Actions will take place each year.

1. Organise more events and visits so that more people can participate in woodland-based activities
2. Help to establish community forest projects, including community owned woodlands where the demand exists, in 5 new local authority areas

1. Encourage developers to include accessible and appropriate areas of green space, trees and woodlands in all new developments
2. Investigate innovative funding solutions for green infrastructure in new developments, such as through annual property maintenance charges
3. Promote the use of tree and woodland planting and maintenance to help deliver community strategy and neighbourhood management plans

1. Encourage Local Authorities to incorporate tree and woodland plans in their Development Plans
2. Expand the current coverage of Local Management Zone strategies as piloted in the Great North Forest, promoting their role as non-statutory guidance

1. Promote good establishment and sustainable maintenance practices for urban woodlands and trees
2. Promote and target FC grants to encourage woodland owners to maximise the public benefit from their trees, woodlands and forests
3. Encourage all Local Authorities to put FC-approved woodland plans in place covering woodlands in their ownership

1. Promote 'Exploring Woodland – 101 Walks' and other books covering access woodlands
2. Improve facilities and quality of experience at woodland recreation sites

1. Expand Forest Education Initiatives and Forest Schools, and develop links between trees, woodlands & forestry and education providers, professional bodies and universities
2. Increase opportunities for all children growing up in the NE to visit woodlands and plant trees

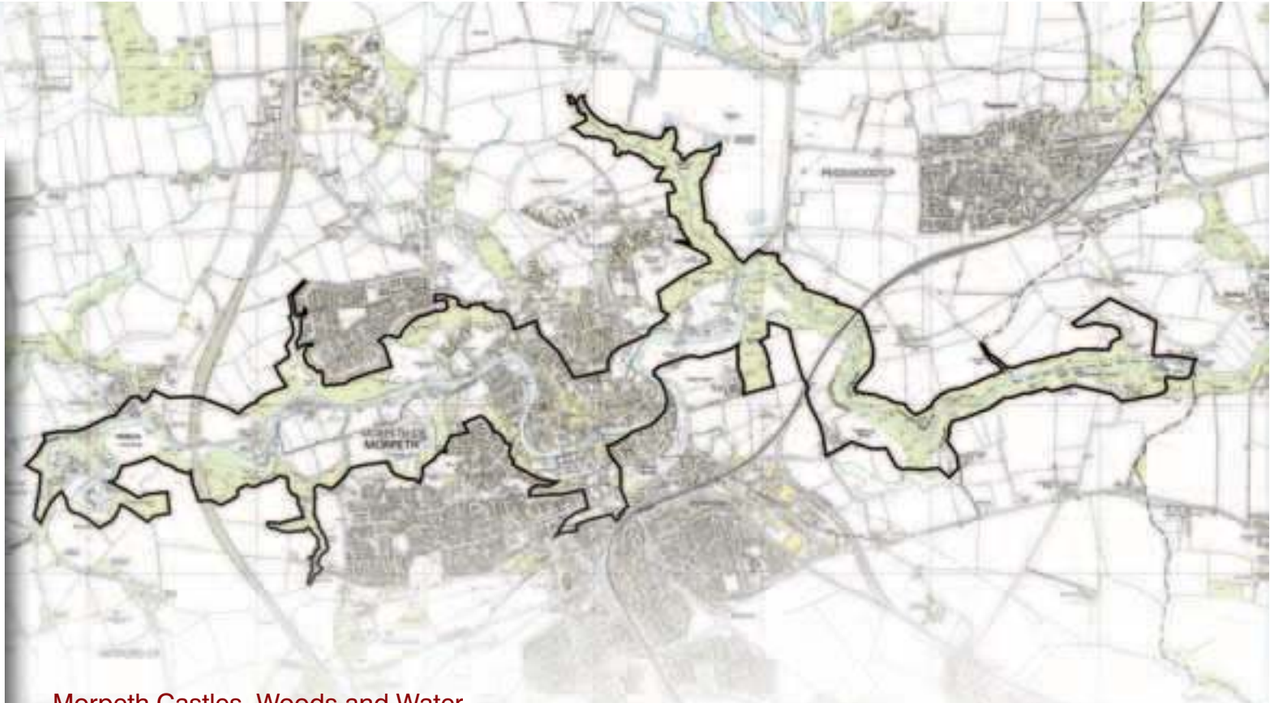
1. Produce a map of the region's public access woodlands to enable better planning and promotion
2. Identify where major gaps exist in the availability of public access woodlands, in line with the Woodland Trust's Accessible Woodland Standard
3. Dedicate woodlands to secure public access

1. Promote the cultural and heritage benefits of trees, woodlands and forestry through publications and events
2. Develop an activity plan, building on Chopwell and Kielder forest festivals to support the annual Tree Week

1. Produce a health and well-being publication highlighting the role of North East woodlands in the health field, and providing guidance for health professionals
2. Set up a pilot GP woodland-based exercise referral programme
3. Set up a pilot school visits programme to support the healthy schools standard

1. Map and promote the region's woodlands with good access provision for different abilities
2. Build on the Great North Forest pilot to establish quality information on public transport services to access woodlands
3. Raise awareness amongst socially-excluded groups of the opportunities woodlands offer for recreational use, as piloted by Greenstart

1. Develop promotional leaflets about local woods for health and well-being
2. Update woodland walk leaflets and facilities to encourage and support physical activity in woodlands
3. Increase use of woodlands and forests for formal sports activities



Morpeth Castles, Woods and Water

'Castles, Woods and Water' is an exciting project supported by the government but owned by the communities of castle Morpeth. It will help these communities improve and make the most of the historic buildings, ancient woodland and river from Mitford to Bothal. It's about offering the people of Morpeth information and access top that they can explore, enjoy and share their"extended back garden" for years to come.

This project is supported by a £2.6 million grant that castle Morpeth Borough Council have secured from the ODPM and is one of the Government's liveability projects aimed at making public spaces cleaner, safer and greener

Greenstart

Greening for Growth, the south-east Northumberland environmentally led regeneration project, has been operating the Countryside Agency's Greenstart scheme in this part of the region for the last three years. Greenstart has successfully demonstrated the important role of woodlands, and other forms of green space, in the education and development of pre-school children.

Chopwell Health Pilot

In June 2004 the Forestry Commission, the local Primary Care Trusts and others unveiled a UK-first project to promote healthier living in the North East. A GP exercise referral scheme and a healthy schools link which will tap the potential of woodlands to contribute to the Government Health targets is being piloted at Chopwell Woodland park in Gateshead.

Summary of Outcomes:

Implementation and Leadership

Capacity

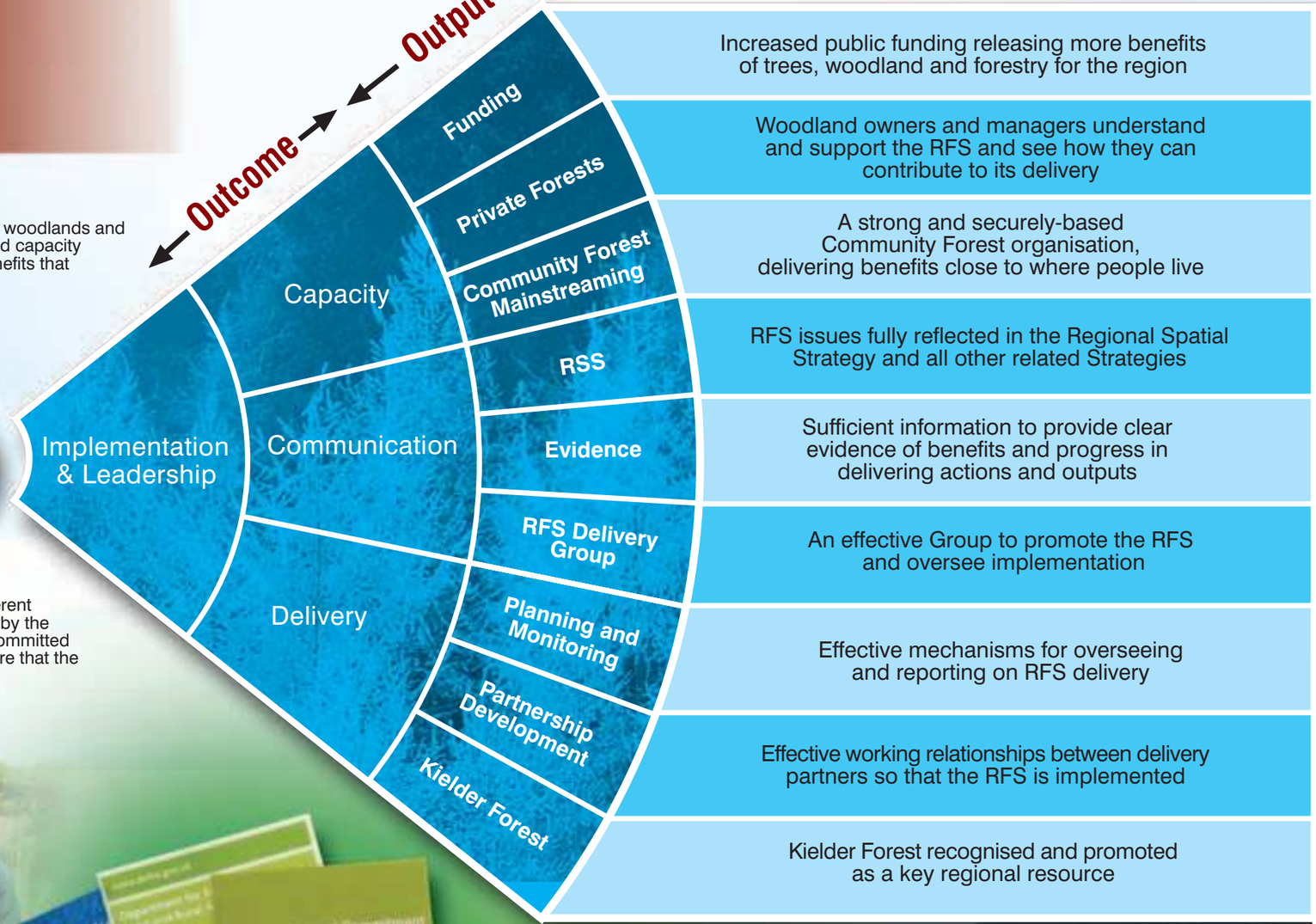
The forestry sector is very small in relation to the vast array of benefits that woodlands and forestry can deliver. For the sector to deliver these benefits we need to build capacity and provide it with resources: the region will then be provided with the benefits that the sector has the potential to deliver.

Communication

We need to harness the drive and enthusiasm of our champions and entrepreneurs and continue communicate the relevance of forestry to the delivery of a wide range of social, economic and environmental goals. To deliver this Strategy effectively, there needs to be good communication of priorities and we need an effective mechanism to marshal our resources to achieve our shared goals. The Regional Forestry Forum will take a lead in driving forward the strategy and will monitor our performance on delivery.

Delivery

The North East has an excellent track record of co-operation between different sectors and organisations. The relationships that have been strengthened by the process of producing this strategy provide the basis for a sustained and committed period of co-ordinated delivery. The annual delivery plans will help to ensure that the actions identified in the strategy are delivered.



Action Plan 2005 - 2008

The separate Annual Delivery Plans will show which Actions will take place each year.

1. Take opportunities to fund tree, woodland and forestry organisations to deliver regional priorities

2. Utilise the expertise within the region's universities to develop the evidence base where required to support RFS delivery

3. Ensure that new England Rural Development Programme (Environmental Stewardship) schemes including ELS, HLS and EWGS are targeted to support the delivery of the RFS

1. Improve communication channels and networks to ensure more effective sharing of information within the sector

2. Produce a woodland owners' guide to the RFS explaining how they can contribute to its delivery

3. Establish two pilot projects to demonstrate the potential of private woodlands to deliver the RFS

1. Secure replacement funding for NE Community Forests as central Government funding decreases annually from 2005

2. Obtain additional funding to increase capacity to deliver relevant RFS priorities through Community Forestry

1. Ensure the Regional Spatial Strategy includes appropriate woodland and forestry policies and targets that can be cascaded to Local Development Plans

2. Promote the role of 'green infrastructure' within 'The Northern Way' and the Regional Housing Strategy

1. Outline benefits of trees, woodlands and forestry to meet targets for environmental quality, brownfield reclamation, and waste

2. Ensure ready access to knowledge, advice and baseline information for woodland owners, developers and public agency staff

1. Establish a NE Forestry Forum, with wide sector representation, to oversee the development and delivery of the RFS

2. Implement marketing campaign to secure commitment to RFS objectives by the public and in regionally policies

1. Produce an Annual Delivery Plan, with targets and identified delivery bodies

2. Produce an Annual Monitoring Report, including progress against Annual Delivery Plan targets, RSS targets, plus examples of good practice and human interest stories

1. Link the contribution of trees, woodlands and forestry to partners' targets, particularly under national Public Service Agreements; the Government's Regional Outcome targets ("Tier 2"); ONE's Output targets ("Tier 3"); and the Integrated Regional Framework

2. Co-ordinate the work of public sector bodies which offer incentives, grants and advice to land owners through implementing the Regional Rural Delivery Framework

3. Include RFS targets in Local Authorities' service plans

1. Harness the potential of Kielder Forest as the largest publicly-owned area of land, to help deliver key regional outcomes

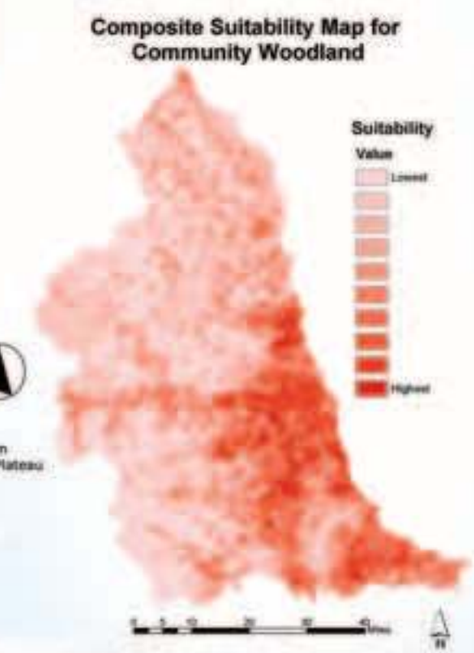
Ignite

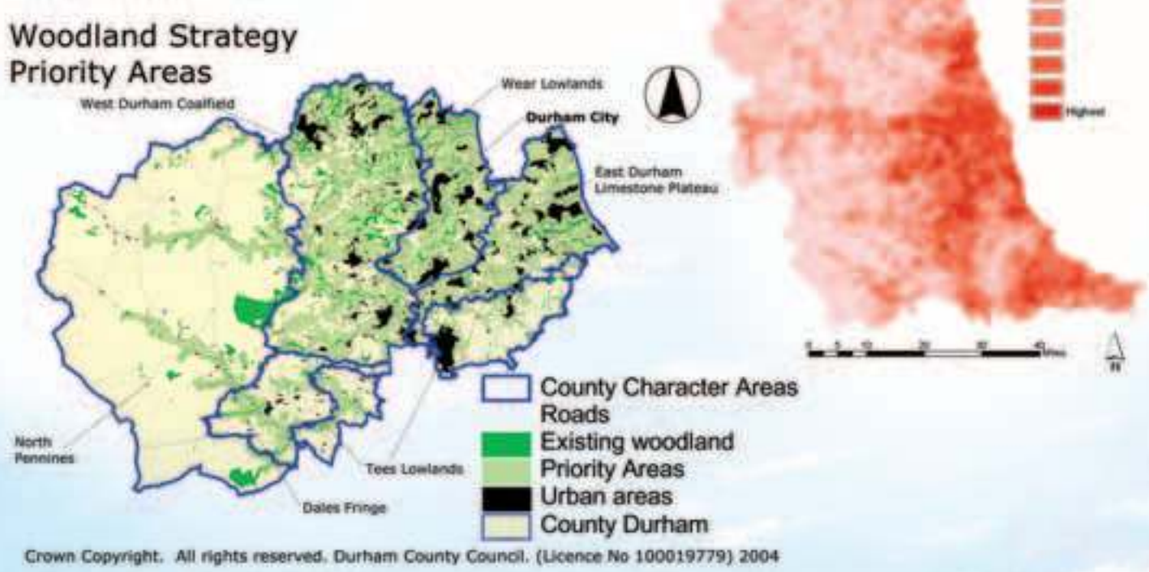
Northwoods, with the support of the Learning and Skills Council have developed and are delivering Ignite; the first formal woodfuel training course in Britain. They have also undertaken a biomass sector skills audit which is being picked up by Defra and DTI as the starting point for national work on this. Ignite is soon to be accredited by Lantra Awards as a VRQ in Renewable Energy (wood fuel). Provision of this training is an important step in developing the woodfuel supply infrastructure and is helping to deliver the region's aspiration to become the biomass capital of Britain.

Mapping priority areas for woodland creation

North East Community Forests have been working with the University of Northumbria to map priority area for community woodland creation based on the level of public benefit that they are likely to deliver. The Regional Forestry Forum intends to build on both of these pieces of work to identify priority areas for woodland creation across the region.

Durham County Council have produced a landscape strategy for County Durham which incorporates a woodland strategy. Detailed analysis has enabled preferred areas for woodland creation to be mapped.





Identifying Woodland's Contribution to our Quality of Life

The Woodland Trust have recently published a report that illustrates the contribution that woodland makes to our quality of life and provides a sound policy rationale for continued public support for woodland and forestry in the UK. Woodland has the ability to contribute to the improvement of 11 of the 15 Government quality of life indicators.

Annual Delivery & Accountability

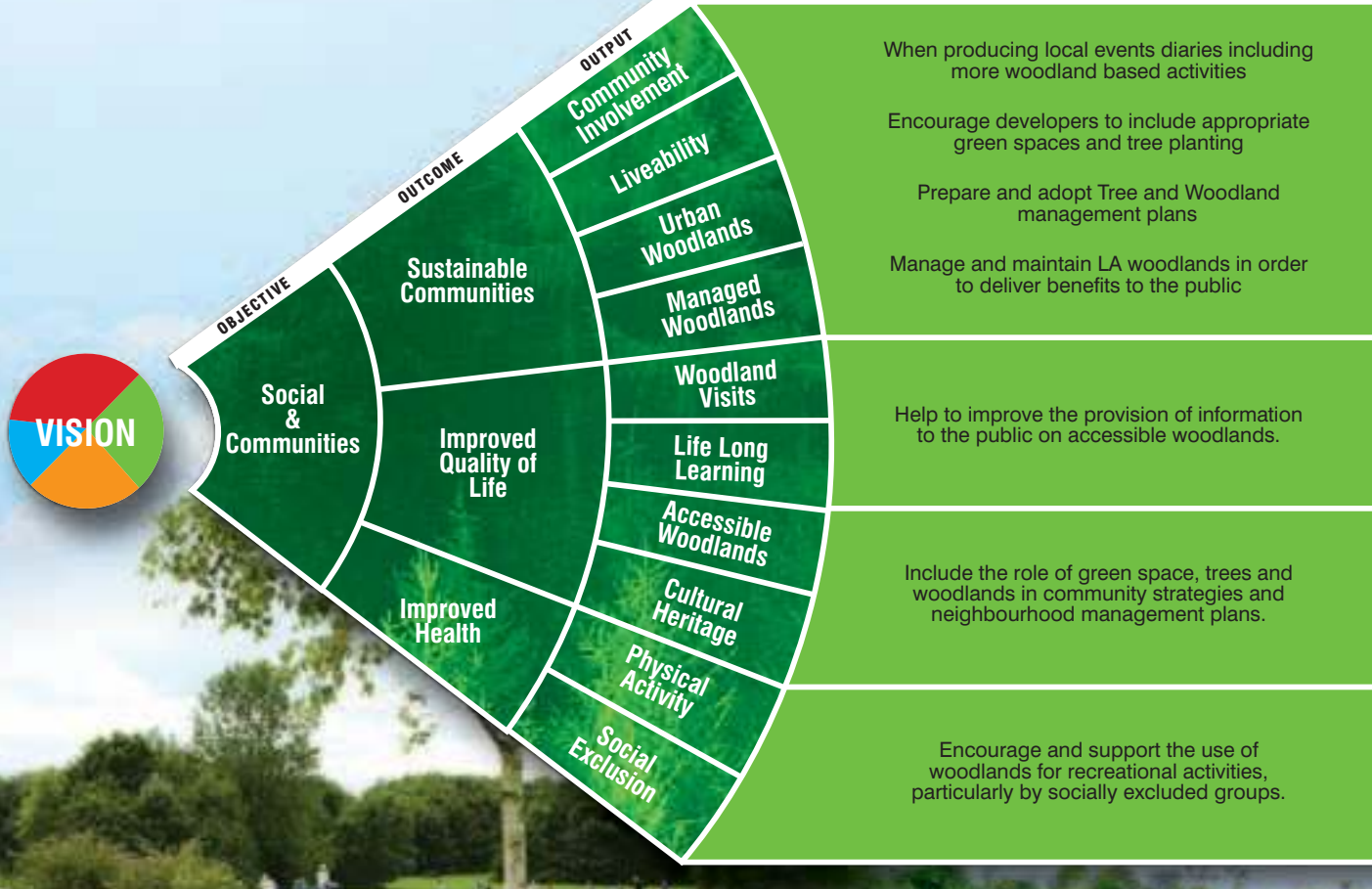
RFS Delivery Group – their role is to produce an Annual Delivery Plan each year, in conjunction with the Lead Partners, and to use the progress reports by Lead Partners to keep track of changes in circumstances. The Group will facilitate partnership development as appropriate, and as more Actions come forward, they will ensure coordination between Lead Partners.

Lead Partners – their role is to ensure that their Actions are delivered in conjuction with their other partners, who may well provide some or all of the funding or other resources. Lead Partners will meet at the Launch of the Strategy, and then once or twice a year, to ensure they have the support they need, and are coordinating their Actions to best effect. They advise and report on their Actions to the RFS Delivery Group.

Annual Delivery Plan – at the start of each year, the RFS Delivery Group will publish a Plan showing what Actions are proposed in the coming year, and explaining how those Actions will be delivered to meet targets.

Annual Monitoring Report – at the end of each year, the RFS Delivery Group will publish a Report covering the progress made towards the various Objectives.

Delivery of the Social & Communities



Examples of Delivery

Partners' broad range of Actions

Over the next three years, the Annual Delivery Plans will gradually capture the 100+ Actions that are identified in the Action Plans on pages 15-30. These Actions reflect the broad range of partners' work which, in practice, includes a much wider range of Actions than can be captured in this Strategy.

Delivery Diagrams

The diagrams on these pages show how partners' wider Actions are supporting delivery of the Strategy, from the points of view of woodland owners - across the full range of Objectives - and of Local Authorities, where we have concentrated more specifically on the Social & Communities Objective.

Objective by Local Authorities

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES
Many events are being run by partner bodies and promotion would increase participation at little cost.
Improved greener environments.
Tree management better understood and planned.
Woodlands often have very low management costs compared to gardens and grass areas. Regular maintenance helps to prevent problems such as litter.
In many cases LA's simply need to provide or confirm information for partners to publish and promote.
Trees and woodlands can play an important and cost effective role in many local strategies, contributing to the environment, image, local health and self esteem.
Many initiatives are already trying to do this, but require LA support. Woodland recreation facilities are low cost, require little subsidy but suit many people who don't like gyms.

Delivery of RFS Objectives by Woodland Owners

HOW WOODLAND OWNERS COULD CONTRIBUTE TO RFS DELIVERY	POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO WOODLAND OWNERS
Annual visit by local wildlife group to woodlands to see red squirrels and woodland birds	Increased likelihood of being able to access public sector funding Managed and controlled public access can often reduce problems associated with unplanned public access Potential to generate revenue that contributes to woodland management costs Positive local image Would help to meet requirements for forest certification
Local school children involved in bird box scheme	
Limited permit access system put in place to allow managed access to part of woodlands	
Area of woodland let for organised countryside sports activities	
Plan woodland Management operations particularly felling and restocking to improve the long term contribution to local landscape	Contributes to local economy, land and property prices. Likely to mean more straightforward approval of felling plans
Maintain up to date forest inventory records and plans and participate in private sector production forecast experiment	Enables good forest and business planning A more accurate regional timber forecast could help secure further timber processing investments
Participate in the NE Regional Forestry Portal Project as a supplier	Potential to access new markets for timber products
Join the NE Woodfuel Producer group	
Manage woodland sustainability, supply timber to the regions processors	Timber by far the largest source of income for woodland owners
Enter into a partnership with local equestrian business allowing access for horse riding in the forest	Potential to generate income and develop businesses
Take account of the requirements of black grouse and red squirrels when preparing forest plans	Will improve the diversity and amenity value of woodland Increased likelihood of being able to access public sector funding
Include Plans to restore PAWS to native species in long term Forest Plans	
Enter woodlands into UKWAS certification scheme	Full access to timber markets Increased likelihood of being able to secure public sector funding
Manage woodlands to ensure continued supply of environmentally friendly timber and woodfuel products	Maintains income generating potential of woodland into the future
Replant using a mixture of locally-sourced native trees and more southerly provenance where appropriate	Local provenance's are more likely to be adapted to current climates where as more southerly provenance's should cope with future climate forecasts
As a timber grower, take opportunities to promote the use of timber through your own contacts and networks	We can all contribute to promoting timber and should gain benefits from stronger markets in the future
Keep abreast of and contribute to forestry developments by taking opportunities to participate in forestry meetings and seminars	By getting involved you will know what is going on and be able to influence the delivery of the RFS and see how it affects you

Annexes

Sustainability Appraisal Table	**34-35**
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Sustainability Appraisal Table

Regional Forestry Strategy Assessment against the Integrated Regional Framework – Integrated Regional Matrix

The Integrated Regional Framework has established a shared vision to guide the development of strategies, plans, programmes and policy decisions throughout the region. The Integrated Regional Matrix is an appraisal tool that anyone can use to assess how their work can contribute to the social, economic and environmental objectives of the region. The Table shown opposite shows how the Regional Forest Strategy links to the Integrated Regional Framework and assesses the likely impact on the IRF objectives.

Will your strategy…..
1. Increase the economic wealth of the region?
2. Increase the level of investment in infrastructure?
3. Increase the level of investment in training?
4. Increase the level of investment in clean technologies?
5. Increase the level of investment in sustainable leisure and tourism?
6. Increase employment levels?
7. Reduce the need to travel?
8. Encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport?
9. Help to improve the image of the region?
10. Encourage the reclamation of derelict land?
11. Accelerate regeneration and optimise the use of brownfield sites?
12. Alleviate local poverty levels?
13. Encourage local communities to be actively involved in local decision-making?
14. Increase access to jobs, facilities, goods and services?
15. Decrease the major causes of ill-health and death in the community?
16. Improve the housing conditions of the community?
17. Decrease the level of crime?
18. Decrease fear of crime?
19. Create opportunities for education, training and life-long learning?
20. Contribute to the protection of landscape character?
21. Contribute to the enhancement of landscape character?
22. Protect land which serves a strategic function, even where not designated as open space.
23. Contribute to the creation of habitats?
24. Contribute to the protection of habitats & species?
25. Contribute to the enhancement of habitats and species?
26. Contribute to protecting air quality?
27. Contribute to the conservation of water resources?
28. Contribute to the protection of water quality?
29. Minimise the use of natural resources?
30. Promote the minimisation of waste?
31. Increase recycling and waste recovery rates?
32. Increase the proportion of energy generated from sustainable and renewable resources?
33. Promote regional distinctiveness?
34. Conserve the historic environment?
35. Enhance the historic environment?

Yes	No	No effect	How?
X			There is potential for increased economic activity in timber processing and tourism. There is even greater potential for trees and woodlands to contribute as environmentally led regeneration projects.
X			'Green Infrastructure', including trees and woodlands are an important component of our built environment
X			Training identified as a activity within the RFS
X			Redevelopment and investment by timber processors will involve investment in modern environmentally friendly technology.
X			Strongly theme within the RFS.
X			There will be some potential for job creation in timber processing and in tourism supported by woodland facilities. Forestry will also play a part in improving the attractiveness of the region facilitating investment and job creation.
X			Providing access woodlands close to where people live should help reduce the need to travel. Tourism developments should aim to lengthen the duration of stay rather than increasing day visitor numbers arriving by car.
X			Strong theme throughout the RFS.
X			Through contribution to landscape and environmental quality.
X			Woodlands are a major after use for derelict industrial land.
X			Woodlands are an important component of brownfield land regeneration providing a cost effective alternative to redevelopment.
X			Through environmentally led regeneration projects.
X			Through regeneration projects and the increase in public access to woodlands.
X			Through greater community involvement in woodland activities and woodland management.
X			By encouraging physical activity, through walking and cycling in woodlands
X			By advocating the inclusion of green space in housing developments the RFS will help to improve the quality of environments in which people live.
X			There is less crime in communities where the environment is of high quality and includes 'green space'
	X		Some people perceive that woodlands provide cover for criminals. We need to overcome the myth that woodlands are dangerous places to visit. In reality they are much safer than your average shopping centre
X			Woods as locations for play, informal learning and formal educational activities.
X			Trees and woodlands directly contribute to the landscape, but RFS also accepts that have been some in appropriate woodland plantings in the past.
X			There is strong recognition of the cultural and natural environment.
X			RFS advocates use of temporary greening projects.
X			Positive contribution to native woodlands, but value of open land habitats also recognised.
X			Mainly through woodland planting, but in some cases through the removal of trees in inappropriate places.
X			Through management of native woodlands and projects to support red squirrel and black grouse.
X			Through the filtering of fine particles by urban trees.
		X	Woodlands prevent rapid run off and can help to moderate high and low flows in catchments.
X			Woodlands stabilise soils and prevent agricultural sprays reaching watercourses.
X			RFS advocates the use of renewable resources i.e. timber.
X			Recycling and recovery of energy from wood by products.
X			Promotes recovery and reuse in key areas.
X			Increase in energy produced from biomass and potential for forest land to host windfarm developments.
X			By focusing on issues such as environmental regeneration and commercial timber production.
X			Managing woodlands and trees is often part of conserving the historic environment.
X			Same as above.

Will have a strong positive impact
Will have a slight positive impact
Will have a strong negative impact
Will have a slight negative impact
Unlikely to have an effect

Regional Strategies - Summaries

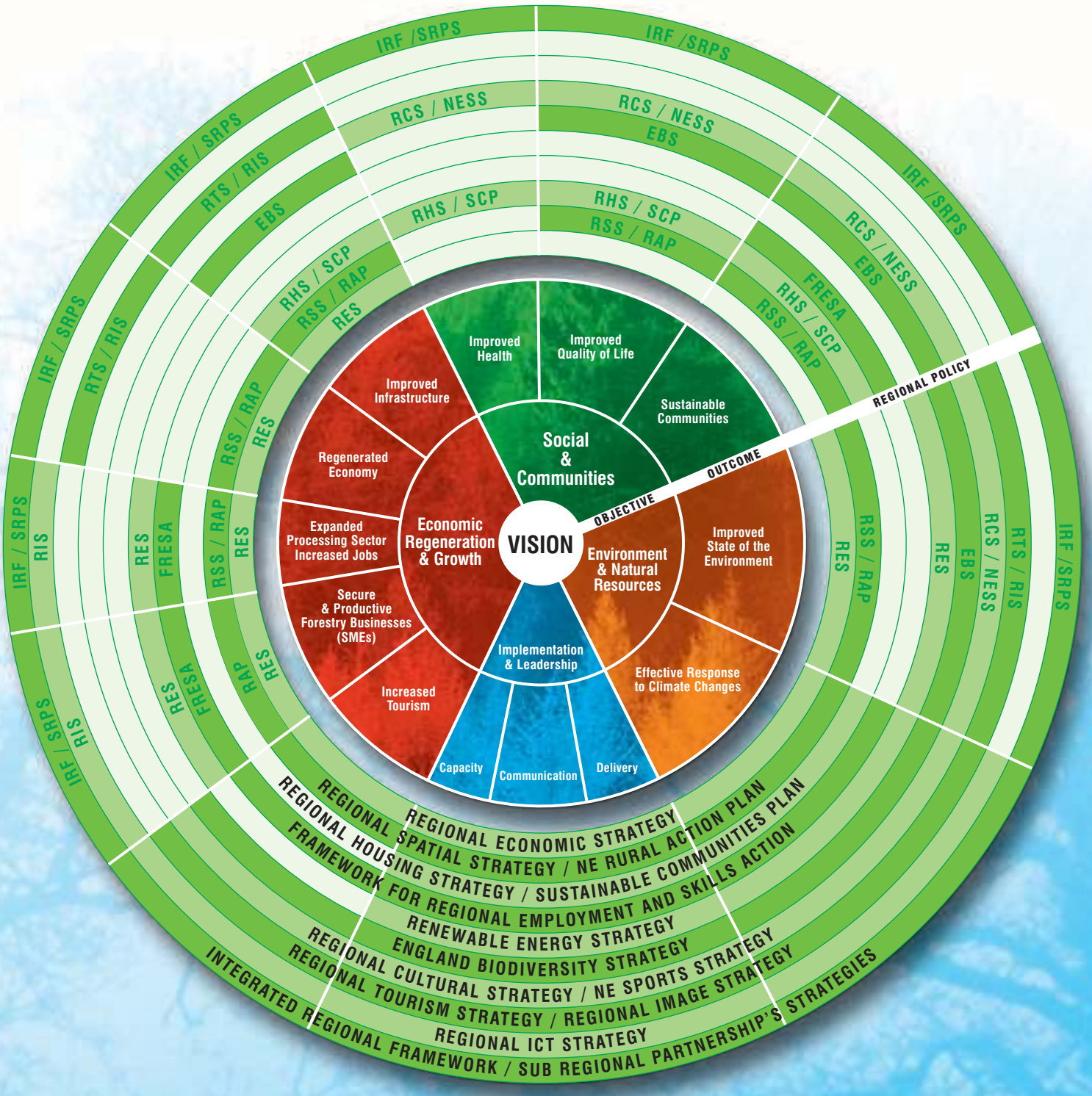
Document	Purpose
Integrated Regional Framework	To provide key indicators of how sustainably the region is developing to guide all regional decision-making. www.sustaine.com
Regional Spatial Strategy	To establish an integrated approach to revitalise the region to achieve social, economic and environmental goals for present and future generations. www.viewnortheast.com
Sustainable Communities Plan	To provide the region with the tools and resources to make a difference by building partnerships. www.odpm.gov.uk
Regional Economic Strategy	To harness and enhance resources to raise the region's profile by making it vibrant, ambitious and outward looking. www.onenortheast.co.uk
Regional Housing Strategy	To offer a choice of good quality housing in successful, secure and sustainable neighbourhoods. www.go-ne.gov.uk
Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action	To create a healthy labour market by providing learning and professional development opportunities. www.onenortheast.co.uk
England Rural Development Programme 2000-06	To explain what schemes will be implemented to support the strategy for environmental improvement and rural development. www.defra.gov.uk/erdp
NE Rural Action Plan	To identify actions to revive the region's rural economy; soon to be superseded by the Regional Rural Delivery Framework to set clearer joint priorities, at regional, sub-regional and local level. www.onenortheast.co.uk
Sustainable Farming and Food Delivery Plan	To promote a competitive and efficient Farming and Food sector which protects and enhances our countryside and wider environment, and contributes to health and prosperity of all our communities. www.nesffs.com
England Biodiversity Strategy	To identify what wider issues or processes need to be addressed to conserve the most important species and habitats. www.ukbap.org.uk/ebg
Renewable Energy Strategy	To promote the use of natural, sustainable resources that are available to improve the environment. www.northeastassembly.gov.uk
Regional Cultural Strategy	To offer everyone the opportunity to improve the quality of life through sports and cultural activity. www.culturenortheast.org
NE England Tourism Strategy 2005-10	To build solid tourism foundations and improve the quality of the tourism products , in the region. www.tourismnortheast.co.uk
Regional Plan for Sport and Physical Activity 2004-08	To integrate sporting opportunities into everyone's lives and promote wider, sustainable enjoyment of built facilities and countryside. www.sportengland.org
Regional Image Strategy	To increase awareness and positive perceptions of the region and its superb assets, and attract more visitors, investment and talented people to live in the region.. www.onenortheast.co.uk
Regional ICT Strategy 'Towards an e-Region v3.0'	To turn the region into a world class, effective and competitive global location to conduct business. www.onenortheast.co.uk
Sub-Regional Partnerships' Strategies	To provide strategies for the appropriate sub-regional partnerships to bring together stakeholders within a supportive framework in the interests of economic, social and environmental development.

The four Sub-Regional Partnerships, listed below, are each currently developing a Single Programme Investment Plan for 2005-08

Northumberland Strategic Partnership:	www.nsp.org.uk
Tynewear Partnership: Tynewear	www.tynewearpartnership.org.uk
County Durham Strategic Partnership:	www.countydurhampartnership.co.uk
Tees Valley Partnership –	www.teesvalley-jsu.gov.uk

Regional Policy Links

For each Outcome we have shown using green shading how they will contribute to, or share outcomes with, other strategies. Summaries of these strategies are shown on the left.



Regional Monitoring and Progress Indicators

Monitoring progress towards achieving the RFS Outcomes

The implementation of the Regional Forest Strategy will be co-ordinated through the Annual Delivery Plan and Monitoring Report process outlined on page 31. This work will inevitably focus on the achievement of specific Actions and Outputs. A number of higher-level and longer-term measures will be used to monitor progress towards the overall RFS Vision.

This diagram shows the indicators and targets that will be used to monitor progress over longer time scales against each of the 10 regional Outcomes shown around the inner wheel.

National Government Targets under Public Service Agreements (PSAs)

Reference list of relevant targets as set in the Government's 2002 Spending Review

There will be revised targets from April 2005, based upon the 2004 Spending Review, but they were not agreed at the time of publication.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

1. Promote sustainable development across Government and the country as a whole as measured by achieving positive trends in the Government's headline indicators of sustainable development.
2. Improve the environment and the sustainable use of natural resources, including through the use of energy saving technologies, to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5% from 1990 levels and moving towards a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010.
3. Care for our natural heritage, make the countryside attractive and enjoyable for all, and preserve biological diversity by:
   (a) reversing the long-term decline in the number of farmland birds by 2020, as measured annually against underlying trends (joint target with FC-PSA12);
   (b) bringing into favourable condition by 2010 95% of all nationally important wildlife sites (joint target with FC-PSA10);
   (c) opening up public access to mountain, moor, heath and down and registered common land by the end of 2005.
4. Reduce the gap in productivity between the least well performing quartile of rural areas and the English median by 2006, and improve the accessibility of services for rural people.
6. Enable 25% of household waste to be recycled or composted by 2005-06.
8. Improve air quality by meeting our National Air Quality Strategy objectives for carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, particles, sulphur dioxide, benzene and 1-3 butadiene. (Joint target with DfT-PSA6)

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)

1. Promote better policy integration nationally, regionally and locally; in particular to work with departments to help them meet their PSA floor targets for neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion.
2. Make sustainable improvements in the economic performance of all English regions and over the long term reduce the persistent gap in growth rates between the regions, defining measures to improve performance and reporting progress against these measures by 2006. (Joint target with DTI-PSA7 and HM Treasury-PSA6)
5. Achieve a better balance between housing availability and the demand for housing in all English regions while protecting valuable countryside around our towns, cities and in the greenbelt - and the sustainability of existing towns and cities - through specific measures to be set out in the Service Delivery Agreement.

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)

6. Help to build an enterprise society in which small firms of all kinds thrive and achieve their potential, with (i) an increase in the number of people considering going into business, (ii) an improvement in the overall productivity of small firms, and (iii) more enterprise in disadvantaged communities.
7. Joint target with ODPM-PSA2 and HM Treasury-PSA6
8. Make the UK the best place in the world for e-business, with an extensive and competitive broadband market, judged using international comparative measures of business uptake and use of information and communication techniques.

Home Office (HO)

8. Increase voluntary and community sector activity, including increasing community participation, by 5% by 2006.

Department of Health (DoH)

6. Reduce substantially the mortality rates from the major killer diseases by 2010: from heart disease by at least 40 % in people under 75; from cancer by at least 20% in people under 75.
7. Improve life outcomes of adults and children with mental health problems through year on year improvements in access to crisis and CAMHS services, and reduce the mortality rate from suicide and undetermined injury by at least 20% by 2010.
11. By 2010 reduce inequalities in health outcomes by 10% as measured by infant mortality and life expectancy at birth.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES)

4. Enhance the take-up of sporting opportunities by 5-16 year olds by increasing the percentage of school children who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum from 25% in 2002 to 75% by 2006. (Joint target with DCMS-PSA1)
11. Reduce by at least 40% the number of adults in the UK workforce who lack NVQ 2 or equivalent qualifications by 2010. Working towards this, one million adults already in the workforce to achieve level 2 between 2003 and 2006.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)

1. Joint target with DfES-PSA4
2. Increase significantly the take-up of cultural and sporting opportunities by new users aged 20 and above from priority groups.
3. Improve the productivity of the tourism, creative and leisure industries.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

3. Demonstrate progress by Spring 2006 on increasing the employment rate and reducing the unemployment rate over the economic cycle. (Joint target with HM Treasury-PSA7)
4. Over the three years to Spring 2006, increase the employment rates of disadvantaged areas and groups, taking account of the economic cycle, lone parents, ethnic minorities, people aged 50 and over, those with the lowest qualifications, and the 30 local authority districts with the poorest initial labour market position, and significantly reduce the difference between their employment rates and the overall rate.

Forestry Commission (FC) Sevice Delivery Agreements under Defra PSA targets

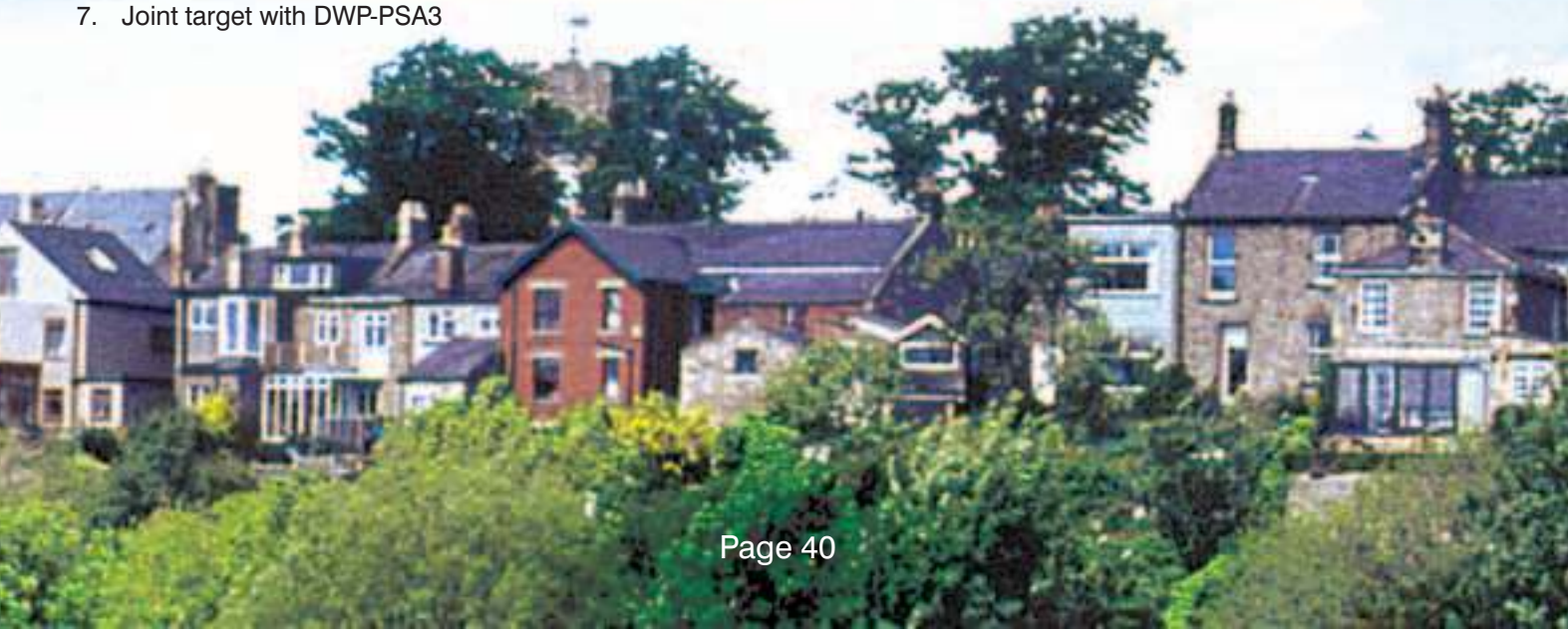
1. Lead the preparation of expressions of the England ForestryStrategy for each region by 2004.
2. Create 15,000 hectares of new woodland from 2003 to 2006.
3. Promote an increase in the area of woodland certified againstthe UK Woodland Assurance Standard for sustainable forest management in England from 300,000 hectares (27%) to 350,000 hectares (32%) by 2006.
4. Promote the sustainable utilisation of England's woodland resource by facilitating the harvesting of 38% of the annual timber growth each year until 2006.
5. Carry out a baseline study to establish the confidence of woodland and forestry related businesses and set a target for improvement.
6. Create 2700 hectares of new woodlands in priority areas (eg Coalfield Areas and the 'top' 20% of most deprived wards both as defined by OPDM) from 2003 to 2006.
7. Expand the area of woodlands with public access by 10,000 hectares over the period 2003-2006 in priority areas established by the 2003 baseline study.
8. Increase the number of day visits to woods and forests to 350 million by 2006.
9. Bring into favourable condition by 2010, 95% of all SSSIs where the Forestry Commission has statutory responsibilities
10. Lead the implementation of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan Habitat Action Plan for woodlands in England for delivery by 2015 .
11 Reverse the long-term decline in the number of woodland birds by 2020 as measured annually against underlying trends using the Woodland Birds Index.

Department for Transport (DfT)

6. Joint Target with Defra-PSA8.

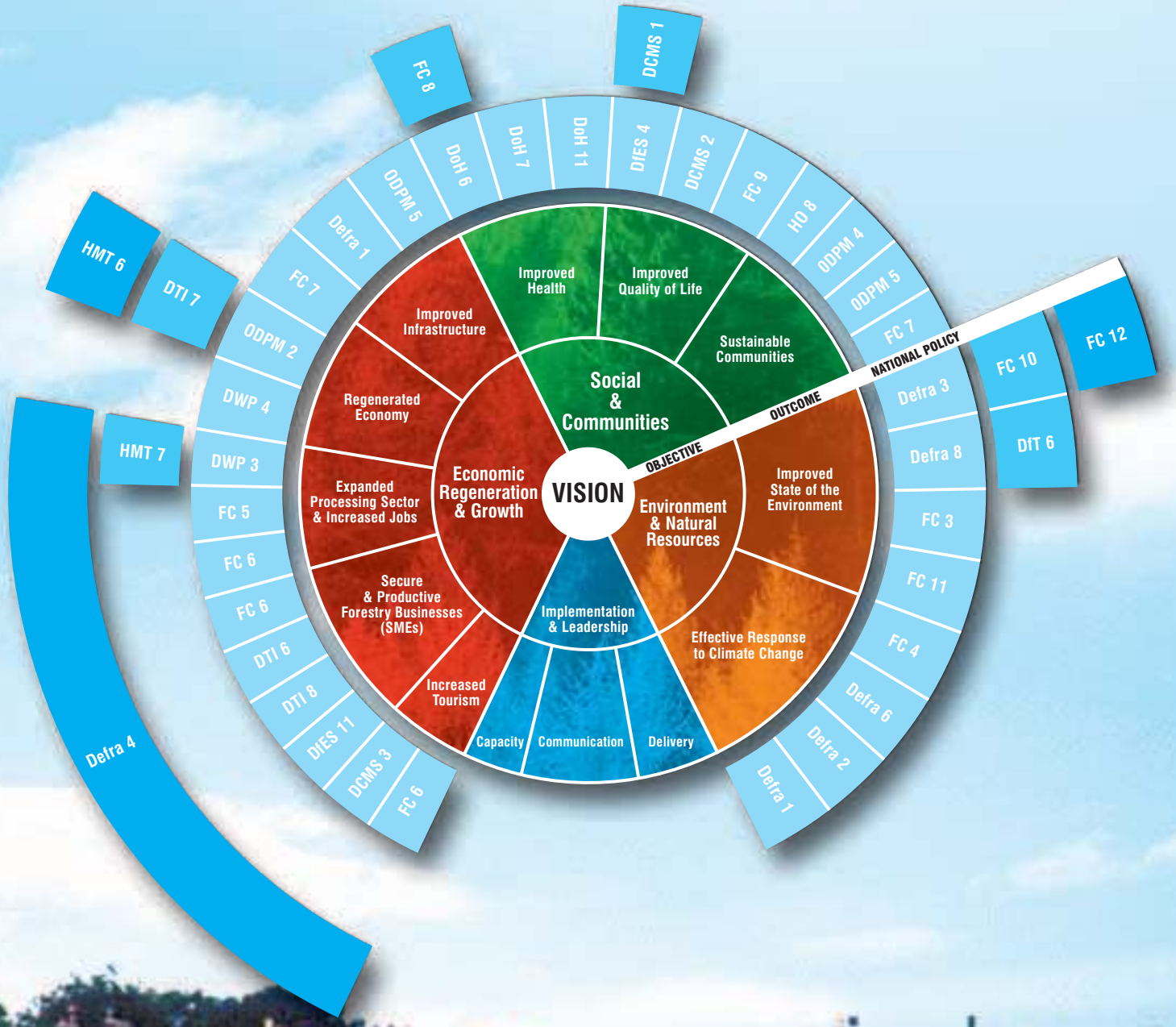
Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT)

6. Joint target with ODPM-PSA2 and DTI-PSA7.
7. Joint target with DWP-PSA3



National Policy Context

For each Outcome we have shown the relevant Government targets – known as Public Service Agreement [PSA] targets.
Details of the targets are shown opposite.



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Land Designations and Boundaries

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