



**SGS QUALIFOR**  
(Associated Documents)

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Page: **1 of 48**

Approved by: **Gerrit Marais**

## FOREST MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION REPORT

### SECTION A: PUBLIC SUMMARY

|   |   |                          |                   |
|---|---|--------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Project Nr:</b>                                | <b>9517-GB</b>  |                          |                   |
| <b>Client:</b>                                    | <b>Highfield Forestry Ltd</b>   |                          |                   |
| <b>Web Page:</b>                                  | <a href="http://www.highfieldforestry.com">www.highfieldforestry.com</a>  |                          |                   |
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| <b>Country:</b>                                   | United Kingdom  |                          |                   |
| <b>Certificate Nr.</b>                            | SGS-FM/COC-002512   | <b>Certificate Type:</b> | Forest Management |
| <b>Date of Issue</b>                              | 08 Feb 2011   | <b>Date of expiry:</b>   | 07 Feb 2016       |
| <b>Evaluation Standard</b>                        | FSC-UK Standard (FSCUK-FS-106 : v1-1) - UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)  |                          |                   |
| <b>Forest Zone:</b>                               | Temperate   |                          |                   |
| <b>Total Certified Area</b>                       | 1391 ha   |                          |                   |
| <b>Scope:</b>                                     | Forest Management of the Highfield Forestry Ltd resource manager certification scheme for forests in the UK producing softwood and hardwood round timber. |                          |                   |
| <b>Location of the FMUs included in the scope</b> | Scotland, Northern England and Wales.   |                          |                   |
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|   | <b>Dates:</b>   |                          |                   |
| <b>Main Evaluation</b>                            | 12 <sup>th</sup> , 13 <sup>th</sup> , 14 <sup>th</sup> January 2011   |                          |                   |
| <b>Surveillance 1</b>                             |   |                          |                   |
| <b>Surveillance 2</b>                             |   |                          |                   |

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**Surveillance 3**

**Surveillance 4**

**Date of last update:** 9 Feb. 2011

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## **ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS (not part of the Public Summary)**

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>AD 20:</b>   | <b>Evaluation Itinerary</b>                      |
| <b>AD 21:</b>   | <b>Attendance Record</b>                         |
| <b>AD 26:</b>   | <b>Corrective Action Requests</b>                |
| <b>AD 36-C:</b> | <b>Evaluation – Information on Group Members</b> |
| <b>AD 38:</b>   | <b>Peer Review Report</b>                        |
| <b>AD 40:</b>   | <b>Stakeholder Reports</b>                       |
|                 | <b>Evaluation team CV's</b>                      |
|                 | <b>List of stakeholders contacted</b>            |

## Complaints and Disputes

Procedures for submitting complaints, appeals and disputes, and the SGS processing of such are published on [www.sgs.com/forestry](http://www.sgs.com/forestry). This information is also available on request – refer contact details on the first page.

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the evaluation was to evaluate the operations of Highfield Forestry Ltd against the requirements of the QUALIFOR Programme, the SGS Group's forest certification programme accredited by Forest Stewardship Council.

### 1. SCOPE OF CERTIFICATE

The scope of the certificate falls within the Boreal and Temperate Forest Zones and includes 11 of Forest Management Units (FMUs) as described below.

| <b>Description of FMUs:</b>  |                                  |                  |                      |                     |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Description</b>   | <b>Ownership</b>                 | <b>Area (ha)</b> | <b>Longitude E/W</b> | <b>Latitude N/S</b> |
| Perth Head Office, Central Scotland<br><br>All the following FMUs are conifer plantations. | Highfield Forestry Ltd           |                  | 3' 25" West          | 56' 23" North       |
| Ribreck, near Elgin, North Scotland  | Carsten & Lars Bonlokke          | 120              | 3' 28' West          | 57' 30' North       |
| Rashiehill, near Falkirk, Central Scotland   | International Forestry Fund      | 81               | 3' 53' West          | 55' 55' North       |
| Soutra, near Edinburgh, Scottish Borders   | Soutra Forest Company            | 34               | 2' 53' West          | 55' 48' North       |
| Hollins Cleugh, near Carlisle, Scottish Borders  | H Cleugh Forest Company          | 147              | 2' 45' West          | 55' 06' North       |
| Gartochorrans, near Stirling, Central Scotland   | Premier Woodlands                | 199              | 4' 29' West          | 56' 02' North       |
| Derry, near Perth, Central Scotland  | F Batten Trust                   | 97               | 4' 11' West          | 56' 23' North       |
| Barstobrick, near Dumfries, Scottish Borders   | A Thompson                       | 80               | 4' 04' West          | 54' 55' North       |
| West Strone, near Dunoon, Ayrshire   | West Strone Forestry Partnership | 328              | 5' 17' West          | 55' 60' North       |
| Auchlin Rig, near Ayr, Ayrshire  | Auchlin Rig Forestry Company     | 106              | 4' 21' West          | 55' 24' North       |
| Pennal, Machynlleth, Wales   | Pennal Forestry Company          | 79               | 3' 56' West          | 52' 35' North       |
| Haford Fraith, Dolgellau, Wales  | A Grundy                         | 120              | 3' 52' West          | 52' 49' North       |
|  |                                  |                  |                      |                     |

| <b>Size of FMUs:</b> |                   |                  |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
|                      | <b>Nr of FMUs</b> | <b>Area (ha)</b> |
|                      |                   |                  |

|                            |           |             |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Less than 100ha            | 5         | 371         |
| 100 to 1000 ha in area     | 6         | 1020        |
| 1001 to 10000 ha in area   | 0         |             |
| More than 10000 ha in area | 0         |             |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>11</b> | <b>1391</b> |

| <b>Total Area in the Scope of the Certificate that is:</b> |                  |
|--|------------------|
|  | <b>Area (ha)</b> |
| Privately managed  | 1391             |
| State Managed  | 0                |
| Community Managed  | 0                |

| <b>Composition of the Certified Forest(s)</b>  |                  |
|--|------------------|
|  | <b>Area (ha)</b> |
| Area of forest protected from commercial harvesting of timber and managed primarily for conservation objectives<br><i>(A minority proportion of each FMU is managed primarily for conservation objectives)</i> | 0                |
| Area of forest protected from commercial harvesting of timber and managed primarily for production of NTFPs or services  | 0                |
| Area of forest classified as "high conservation value forest"  | 0                |
| Area of non-forest managed primarily for conservation objectives   | 0                |
| Total area of production forest (i.e. forest from which timber may be harvested)   | 1391             |
| Area of production forest classified as "plantation"   | 1391             |
| Area of production forest regenerated primarily by replanting or coppicing<br><i>100% of conifer and 60% of broadleaved areas</i>  |                  |
| Area of production forest regenerate primarily by natural regeneration<br><i>40% of broadleaved areas</i>  |                  |

| <b>List of High Conservation Values</b>   |              |
|---|--------------|
| <b>Description</b>  | <b>Notes</b> |
| No High Conservation Value Forests or sites of High Conservation Value are present at any of the Group Members' sites.. |              |

| <b>List of Timber Product Categories</b> |                         |                   |                 |  |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--|
| <b>Product Class</b>                     | <b>Product Type</b>     | <b>Trade Name</b> | <b>Category</b> | <b>Species</b>   |
| Wood in the rough                        | Logs of coniferous wood | Sawlogs           | Conifer         | <i>Larix europaea, Larix leptolepis, Larix x eurolepis, Picea abies,</i> |

| List of Timber Product Categories |                            |                 |          |  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|----------|--|
| Product Class                     | Product Type               | Trade Name      | Category | Species  |
|                                   |                            |                 |          | <i>Picea sitchensis, Pinus contorta, Pinus sylvestris, Pseudotsuga menziesii, Taxus baccata, Thuja plicata, Tsuga heterophylla.</i>  |
| Wood in the rough                 | Logs of coniferous wood    | Fencing         | Conifer  | <i>Larix europaea, Larix leptolepis, Larix x eurolepis, Picea abies, Picea sitchensis, Pinus contorta, Pinus sylvestris, Pseudotsuga menziesii, Thuja plicata, Tsuga heterophylla.</i> |
| Wood in the rough                 | Logs of coniferous wood    | OSB / MDF Chip  | Conifer  | <i>Larix europaea, Larix leptolepis, Larix x eurolepis, Picea abies, Picea sitchensis, Pinus contorta, Pinus sylvestris, Pseudotsuga menziesii, Thuja plicata, Tsuga heterophylla.</i> |
| Wood in the rough                 | Logs of coniferous wood    | Pulp            | Conifer  | <i>Picea abies, Picea sitchensis.</i>  |
| Wood in the rough                 | Logs of coniferous wood    | Fuel / Firewood | Conifer  | <i>Larix europaea, Larix leptolepis, Larix x eurolepis, Picea abies, Picea sitchensis, Pinus contorta, Pinus sylvestris, Pseudotsuga menziesii, Thuja plicata, Tsuga heterophylla.</i> |
| Other products of wood            | Residue of coniferous wood | Baled brush     | Conifer  | <i>Picea abies, Picea sitchensis, Pinus contorta, Pinus sylvestris, Pseudotsuga menziesii, Thuja plicata, Tsuga heterophylla.</i>  |
| Other products of wood            | Residue of coniferous wood | Stumps          | Conifer  | <i>Larix europaea, Larix leptolepis, Larix x eurolepis, Picea abies, Picea sitchensis, Pinus contorta, Pinus sylvestris, Pseudotsuga</i>   |



| List of Timber Product Categories |                               |                 |                      |   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---|
| Product Class                     | Product Type                  | Trade Name      | Category             | Species   |
|                                   |                               |                 |                      | <i>menziesii</i> , <i>Thuja plicata</i> , <i>Tsuga heterophylla</i> .   |
| Wood in the rough                 | Logs of deciduous broadleaves | Sawlogs         | Deciduous (Hardwood) | <i>Acer platanoides</i> , <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> , <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> , <i>Betula pendula</i> , <i>Betula pubescens</i> , <i>Carpinus betulus</i> , <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> , <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> , <i>Juglans regia</i> , <i>Prunus avium</i> , <i>Quercus robur</i> , <i>Quercus petraea</i> , <i>Ulmus glabra</i> . |
| Wood in the rough                 | Logs of deciduous broadleaves | Fuel / Firewood | Deciduous (Hardwood) | <i>Acer platanoides</i> , <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> , <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> , <i>Betula pendula</i> , <i>Betula pubescens</i> , <i>Carpinus betulus</i> , <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> , <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> , <i>Juglans regia</i> , <i>Prunus avium</i> , <i>Quercus robur</i> , <i>Quercus petraea</i> , <i>Ulmus glabra</i> . |
| Wood in the rough                 | Logs of deciduous broadleaves | Coppice         | Deciduous (Hardwood) | <i>Corylus avellana</i>   |

| Annual Timber Production  |   |           |  |                                 |
|---|---|-----------|--|---------------------------------|
| Species (botanical name)  | Species (common name)   | Area (ha) | Maximum Annual Sustainable Yield (m <sup>3</sup> )   |                                 |
|   |   |           | Projected  | Actual                          |
| <i>Picea sitchensis</i>   | Sitka spruce (90%)  |           |  |                                 |
| <i>Picea abies</i> , <i>Pinus sylvestris</i> , <i>Pinus contorta</i> , <i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i> , <i>Larix</i> spp. | Mixed conifers- mainly Norway spruce, Scots pine & Lodgepole pine, Douglas Fir, Larches |           |  |                                 |
| Totals  |   | 1391      | Average Yield Class 16 m <sup>3</sup> p.ha per year<br><br>Re. annual allowable cut - Individual forests are thinned and felled to UK yield model guidelines which aim to fell | 41,336.58 m <sup>3</sup> (2010) |

| <b>Annual Timber Production</b> |                       |           |  |        |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|--|--------|
| Species (botanical name)        | Species (common name) | Area (ha) | Maximum Annual Sustainable Yield (m <sup>3</sup> ) |        |
|                                 |                       |           | Projected  | Actual |
|                                 |                       |           | at age of maximum mean annual increment.           |        |

| <b>Approximate Annual Commercial Production of Non-Timber-Forest-Products</b> |                |              |                 |             |
|---|----------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Product   | Species        |              | Unit of measure | Total units |
|   | Botanical Name | Common Name) |                 |             |
| Not applicable  |                |              |                 |             |
|   |                |              |                 |             |

| <b>Lists of Pesticides</b>                                       |               |     |     |     |     |                     |     |     |     |     |
|--|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Product Name   | Quantity Used |     |     |     |     | Area of application |     |     |     |     |
|  | RA            | SA1 | SA2 | SA3 | SA4 | RA                  | SA1 | SA2 | SA3 | SA4 |
| Forester / Cypermethrin*<br>*(for which HF has valid derogation) | 15            |     |     |     |     | 16.5                |     |     |     |     |
|  |               |     |     |     |     |                     |     |     |     |     |

## 2. COMPANY BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Ownership

The company is privately owned by its shareholders. It aims to progressively manage more land via acquisition by its clients and sometimes with a part share in properties.

### 2.2 Company Key Objectives

| Objective   | Notes  |
|---|--|
| <b>Commercial</b>   |  |
| Primarily, profitable timber sales, cost effective restocking and increase in capital value of forest properties managed by the company. Other commercial income will be taken where opportunities arise. | Highfield Forestry Ltd manages commercial forests on behalf of its investment clients in order to maximise the commercial return from the forest consistent with sustainable forestry principles.                        |
| <b>Social</b>   |  |
| Employee and contractor skill base to facilitate the primary commercial objective.  | Highfield Forestry Ltd is a small-sized company employer. Both employees and contractors are engaged in forest management operations. Directors, Forest Managers and Administrative staff total 4. Many more contractors |

| Objective  | Notes  |
|--|--|
|  | are employed with a variety of different skills.   |
|  |  |
| <b>Environmental</b>   |  |
| Legal and FSC compliance to facilitate the primary commercial objective plus reinforce the company's reputation and credentials. | Environmental management provides a firm foundation for continuous improvements of environmental performance, as well as to an open dialogue with stakeholders. Environmental management procedures implemented throughout all operations follow a holistic approach, enable synergy effects and improve both environmental performance and the credibility of Highfield Forestry Ltd. |
|  |  |

### 2.3 Company History

Highfield Forestry Ltd was set up to source and advise investment forestry clients in 1981. In May 1999 it started to take on forest management on behalf of its clients. The company continues to progressively manage more woodland via acquisition by its existing clients and business appointments by new clients.

Highfield Forestry Ltd is an independent legal entity – registered UK company limited by guarantee.

This Group Scheme is a Resource Manager Group Scheme with Highfield Forestry as the sole managers.

### 2.4 Organisational Structure

Highfield Forestry is a Limited Company which provides services to investment forestry owners. It has an Operations Director with another executive director and a non-executive Director. It employs an Operations Manager and an Office Manager & Administrator. Forest operations are carried out by contractors on instruction by the Operations Director and the Operations Manager.

### 2.5 Ownership and Use Rights

Forest owners/ investors can be either individuals or partnerships or companies. All the woodlands are privately owned with associated UK legal property rights.

The general public have public access rights consistent with owners' discretion but underpinned by statute law and access codes, e.g. Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) / Countryside Code 2004 in England & Wales and the Land Reform (Scotland) Act in 2003 / The "Scottish Outdoor Access Code 2004.

Only forest related activities, including deer stalking for control of deer grazing, take place on most, if not all, of the managed properties at present. At Soutra Hill a large area of woodland has been removed from certification (152 ha) due to conversion of forest to wind farm development – Dunlaws Windfarm, which is now operational.

## **2.6 Legislative, Administrative and Land Use Context (not applicable to SLIMF)**

Highfield Forestry Ltd do not own land. All woodlands are owned by their clients and attract associated UK property rights. Forest owners/ investors can be either individuals or partnerships or companies.

The general public have access rights consistent with owners discretion but underpinned by statute law and access codes, eg the Land Reform (Scotland) Act, 2003 and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, 2004, together with the Countryside Rights of Way (CROW) Act in England and Wales.

Highfield Forestry Ltd manages woodlands for a variety of objectives, according to the owner's priorities and the type of property. Timber production and financial profit are usually important objectives, but the conservation of rare species and habitats and recreation are often important, especially where there are nature conservation designations. The restoration of native woodlands is a common aim in many properties.

Adjacent land uses primarily include adjacent forests, upland sheep farms and areas of high density deer range.

The Forestry Commission separately in Scotland, Wales and England implements forestry regulation in Great Britain. (Regulation in Northern Ireland is controlled separately through the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland (DARDNI).

The primary piece of legislation relating to forest management is the Forestry Act 1967. With certain exceptions, mainly relating to non-commercial situations, it is illegal to fell trees in Great Britain without the prior approval of the Forestry Commission. Permission is granted through a felling licence, normally conditional on regeneration or replanting, or through approval of a plan of operations for the site.

Following political devolution in the UK the Forestry Commission has similarly devolved its structure and operations. Its role as a regulatory authority remains very similar in each of Scotland, England and Wales.

Approval of grant aid under the various grant schemes applicable throughout the UK is also conditional upon compliance with a range of Forestry Commission environmental guidelines, which aim to ensure that forestry operations are conducted in a manner consistent with the maintenance, protection and/or enhancement of soil, water, landscape, biodiversity and heritage values.

Where felling licences or plans of operations affect areas designated for nature conservation or landscape value, there is an obligation to consult the relevant statutory bodies prior to approval.

The other major aspect of legal control is health and safety. The Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974, and the Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations, 1992, enforced in Great Britain by the Health and Safety Executive, regulate this. The required safety standards for forestry operations are contained in a number of Safety Guides, produced by the Forestry and Arboricultural Safety and Training Council and its successor, the Arboriculture & Forestry Advisory Group. See also Section 4.3 (below).

## **2.7 Other Land Uses**

Only forest related activities, including deer stalking for control of deer grazing, take place on the managed properties at present. Highfield Forestry have been briefed as to certification requirements in such event. Follow up at future surveillances.

## **2.8 Non-certified Forests**

Non certified forests were fully disclosed and discussed with the managers (a list is on SGS Qualifor files and is available if required). They are in the main young plantations which are not yet

timber producing. Some are owned by clients with certified properties. They are managed to the same Highfield Forestry Ltd standards and are subject to Forestry Commission guidelines and monitoring. Forest managers are clear that any timber production from non-certified forests has to be managed separately from certified timber.

One member of the HF scheme has been reduced in size with the area removed converted to non-forest use and its area excised from the HF scheme. Both areas remain under the same Soutra company ownership. However, this has been done in compliance with FSC excision policy requirements (full details are provided within the AD33 report).

The following are the FSC conditions for excising areas from the scope of the certificate where the land remains under the same ownership.

- i. There is no violation of traditional or civil rights; *None of these took place, the windfarm received legal planning approval.*
- ii. High Conservation Values are maintained and HCV forest is not harvested unless in compliance with the requirements of FSC Principle 9. *HCV was maintained through mitigation and enhancement (Native moorland conversion and Black Grouse measures) No HCVF was felled, only upland plantation of non-native conifers.*
- iii. There is no harvesting of Endangered Forest areas; *None.*
- iv. There is no planting of genetically modified (GM) trees; *None.*
- v. There is no illegal harvesting; *All harvesting was legally approved, either by the FC regulatory authority or via Planning Approval.*
- vi. There is no conversion of natural forest to plantations or non-forest uses, with the exception of community forest areas where they are part of a community endorsed Land Use Plan. *Only plantation was converted, there was no conversion of natural forest inc native woodland remnants.*

### **3. GROUP MANAGEMENT (DELETE THE WHOLE SECTION IF THIS IS NOT A GROUP)**

#### **3.1 Group Management System**

This is a Resource Manager Group Scheme with Highfield Forestry Ltd as the sole managers. Owners make a signed commitment to Highfield Forestry Ltd to this effect, giving them authority to undertake forest management in compliance with the UKWAS. Highfield Forestry Ltd as the Resource Manager for the Group Scheme implement and maintain comprehensive written procedures for membership of the Group covering all applicable requirements of the UK Forest Standard and the Forest Stewardship Standard.

There are no limits to the size of the Highfield Forestry Ltd Resource Group Scheme, and the growth of the group is anticipated to be modest but consistent.

In the management of the Highfield Forestry Ltd Resource Group Scheme, the Resource Group Manager, staff and Group members are all clearly aware of the Group's procedures. This includes a suitable internal compliance system.

#### **3.2 Membership of the Group**

The Highfield Forestry Resource Group Scheme is open to all woodland owners who wish to benefit from membership of the group.

Prior to entry to the Highfield Forestry Ltd Resource Group Scheme each proposed member is assessed against all of the FSC –UK (UKWAS) criteria. Owners make a signed commitment to Highfield Forestry Ltd giving them authority to undertake forest management in compliance with the FSC-UK (UKWAS).

Whilst it is not mandatory for all Highfield Forestry Ltd clients to join the Resource Group Scheme, the company has a policy of encouraging all other non-member clients (for whom the firm has a forest management remit) that their woodlands should be managed in a spirit of compliance with the UK Forestry Standard, the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and thus in accordance with FSC principles.

Highfield Forestry Ltd itself does not own woodland, but manages woodlands and forests on behalf of a wide range of clients or their agents. The Firm has therefore set up a group certification scheme to allow its clients to gain certified status should they wish to, and to satisfy steadily increasing demand for raw material from certified forests.

There are at present 11 separate forest properties with a total forest area of 1391 hectares within the scope of the scheme.

### 3.3 Monitoring of Group Members

This is a Resource Manager Group Scheme with Highfield Forestry as the sole managers. Qualified professional staff are employed to implement management. The Resource Group Managers, other staff and Group members are all clearly aware of the Group's procedures. This includes a suitable internal compliance system.

Prior to entry to the Highfield Forestry Ltd Resource Group Scheme each proposed member is assessed against all of the FSC-UK (UKWAS) criteria with systematic identification of any gaps against FSC-UK (UKWAS). Owners make a signed commitment to Highfield Forestry Ltd giving them authority to undertake forest management in compliance with the FSC-UK (UKWAS). Following entry to the Resource Group Scheme a programme of internal surveillance follow up and monitoring is implemented. This system includes a range of controlled documents to record and manage this process.

Owners make a signed commitment to Highfield Forestry Ltd giving them authority to undertake forest management in compliance with the FSC-UK (UKWAS).

All properties are under Highfield Forestry management and visited frequently at least twice per year, much more frequently during active operations. There is no need for Highfield Forestry Ltd to sample sites for evaluation.

There is a suitable Highfield Forestry internal compliance system for owners who are obliged to respond to any written Corrective Action Requests which Highfield Forestry cannot action without further instruction from owners. The Highfield Forestry scheme membership agreement specifies rules for expiry in the event of serious non-compliance.

The Highfield Forestry Ltd Resource Group Manager maintains up-to-date Resource Group records for a minimum of 5 years. Maintenance of records assists in management planning, particularly monitoring, are easily accessible as required. Data is maintained at the Highfield Forestry Head Office.

## 4. FOREST MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

### 4.1 Bio-physical setting

Britain has a relatively poor native tree flora of 32 species, including only 3 conifers. In addition, many exotic species have been introduced since Roman times, with large numbers of exotic conifer species introduced for commercial forestry purposes during the twentieth century.

Approximately 10% of Britain's land area carries tree cover (15% of Scotland, compared to 7% in England). This is an increase since the beginning of the 20th century, when forest cover stood at approximately 5%. However, this increase is composed predominantly of recent plantation forests, largely with exotic species. The UK has no remaining natural forests, but ancient semi-natural woodlands (ASNW) make up approximately 1% of land area. Since 1945 almost 50% of ancient semi-natural woodland has disappeared.

Large areas of degraded upland areas have been established during the last 50 years as even-aged plantations of exotic species such as Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*), Lodgepole Pine (*Pinus contorta*) and Larch (*Larix* spp). Other exotics managed are Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*), Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), true firs (*Abies* spp.), Western Hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*).

#### Geography:

Highfield Forestry's managed plantations are distributed widely throughout the UK, ranging from the far north of Scotland to the English Midlands, and located predominantly at higher elevation and as such the ground is of poor agricultural quality.

Due to the wide UK distribution of site, the topography and geological origin are therefore also wide and considerably varied.

**Ecology:**

In conjunction with the varied geography of the sites managed by Highfield Forestry, similarly, the climatic and biome/natural vegetation classification are also wide and varied. Given the UK's location on the western seaboard of Europe, quite frequently the climate can be exposed.

**Soils:**

As the majority of Highfield Forestry Ltd managed plantations are located on predominantly upland areas of the UK, soils as a result tend to be either thin or poorly drained. Predominant soil types are podzols, gleys and peaty gleys with occasional brown forest soils. In addition, the plantations are often located in exposed sites and in areas of high annual rainfall.

## 4.2 History of use

Britain's forests have been steadily denuded since the Bronze Age through both clearance and use of timber. As a result, by the beginning of the twentieth century very little forest remained. In response to this, the Forestry Commission was established in 1919 with the aims of establishing and maintaining adequate reserves of trees and production of timber, and of promoting the interests of British forestry.

The Forestry Commission had an active policy of reforestation, particularly from 1945 onwards, acquiring land and planting it mainly with exotic plantation species. In addition, it was also responsible for providing incentives for private forestry, aided in the 1970s and 80s by tax advantages. This resulted in the planting of predominantly exotic plantations in both the public and private sector.

By the 1980s there was increasing concern about wider forest goods and services, in particular landscape, recreation and biodiversity. As a result, incentives have been increasingly slanted towards encouraging multiple use forestry and increasing use of native species.

The Forestry Commission is represented by a Policy and Practice unit (previously the Forestry Authority) covering Great Britain with three national organisations in Scotland, Wales and England that are responsible for regulating forestry and providing grant aid to private owners. In Northern Ireland similar responsibilities are held by the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development for Northern Ireland (DARDNI).

Approximately two-thirds of the UK's woodland resource is privately owned, often as part of mixed estates or farms. Few private ownerships exceed 1000 ha. Most commercial private forestry is based on plantations. In recent decades, plantation crops of broadleaves or conifers have been established on many ancient woodland sites.

Management for timber production is not always the main objective of privately owned woodlands: management for game is common on mixed estates, and an increasing number of woods are managed specifically for recreation and conservation. Timber production is considered important in larger estates and company owned forests. Biodiversity and landscape conservation and recreational use are now almost always included as multiple objectives in management planning.

Highfield Forestry manages woodlands for a variety of objectives, according to the owner's priorities and the type of property. Timber production and financial profit are usually important objectives, but the conservation of rare species and habitats is also well managed, especially where there are nature conservation designations.

## 4.3 Planning process

Permission from the Forestry Commission is required for the felling of all trees in Great Britain (with certain limited exceptions). The FC regulates felling in private woodlands by granting a licence, approving a plan associated with a grant scheme (generally Woodland Grant Scheme, WGS or new devolved country variants) or approving a long-term forest design plan for larger forests. Most planting (and re-establishment through natural regeneration) on private land takes place with the assistance of grants made by the Forestry Commission.

Woodland Grant Scheme contracts identify overall management objectives and include a basic schedule of operations, describing the management activities planned over a 5-year period. Prescriptions are described in general terms for compartments. These documents often form the basis for the management plan.

Environmental Impact Assessments are used to assess large scale (+100 hectares) afforestation proposals where required by the Forestry Commission. Thinning is regulated by either a Felling Licence (subject to Forestry Act 1967) or a WGS contract.

All properties within the Highfield Forestry certification scheme have management plans that are reviewed every five years. In addition, many woodlands (or part of woodlands) are the subject of Forestry Commission WGS contracts, which may give an outline of planned management operations for a 5 year period (including felling, thinning, new planting and restocking by replanting



or by natural regeneration). Increasing use is made of 'Long Term Forest Plans' which are FC contracts to give longer approval for felling and restocking operations, giving 10 years in detail and a further 10 years in outline approval. All Highfield Forestry properties have 'property files' which monitor both forest operations and financial performance.

#### **4.4 Harvest and regeneration**

Clear felling followed by restocking by planting is the method generally employed for upland plantation management in Great Britain. Felling coupe size and shape are expected to comply with Forest Landscape Design Guidelines. Irregular systems and natural regeneration are increasingly used in ASNWs.

Motor-manual and mechanical whole tree, tree length and short wood harvesting systems with a variety of extraction methods including skidding, forwarding and cable crane may be utilised depending on site conditions and topography. Mechanical harvester felling followed by mechanical forwarder extraction is now the norm for most UK conditions.

In general, the aim, for commercial areas, is to grow crops to age of Maximum Mean Annual Increment (Max MAI) and then to fell. However, restructuring and the establishment of retentions as part of an agreed forest design plan or WGS contract may involve felling at ages other than Max MAI. Highfield Forestry managers use local experience or mensuration techniques to assess yield forecast of thinning or felling before harvesting.

Highfield Forestry employs a range of silvicultural practices, including clearfelling, thinning and retention of trees beyond economic rotation age. Continuous cover forestry systems are being used in semi-natural woodlands and are also being tried experimentally in a few windfirm conifer plantations.

Restocking and afforestation in the UK is generally by planting. Natural regeneration is employed where realistic and is used more frequently for semi-natural woodland. Ground preparation is often carried out using mounding or scarification. Insect attack and weed competition are mitigated by such ground preparation techniques and choice of plant size. Use of chemical insecticides and herbicides are used when required if there is no realistic alternative not entailing excessive cost. HF has a general policy aim to reduce chemical use in this context. Burning of lop and top following felling is much less common but may be justified on some sites, e.g. for rabbit control.

In the UK the building of new forest roads and quarrying for such roads is governed by Environmental Impact Assessment regulations. This process is administered by the Forestry Commission and it is a process with which the company is familiar.

Fencing is sometimes necessary to protect against stock, deer and rabbits, coupled with control of game and pest species by shooting.

Afforestation of new native woodlands on semi-natural degraded sites usually involves direct notch planting with minimum ground preparation and maintenance.

The age-class distribution of each FMU is contained within the Management Plan.

#### **4.5 Monitoring processes**

Where a woodland is subject to a WGS or Scottish Rural Development Plan (SRDP) contract, implementation of the prescribed management is checked by the Forestry Commission at a sample of sites. Other monitoring may be carried out on an ad hoc basis by statutory bodies or conservation NGOs where there are particular features of interest.

Regular visits are made to all properties and further visits as appropriate to vulnerable, sensitive and operational sites by Highfield Forestry Ltd staff. Records are maintained of site visits, operations undertaken and production. Monitoring results are fed into Management Plan revisions, which normally take place every 5 years.

The Highfield Forestry Ltd Resource Group Manager maintains up-to-date Resource Group records for a minimum of 5 years.

Maintenance of records assists in management planning, particularly monitoring, are easily accessible as required, with data maintained at the Highfield Forestry Head Office. Environmental

monitoring takes place as applicable on sites which have environmental designations, either on the site or adjacent, e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Highfield Forestry work in collaboration with regulatory authorities, e.g. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Natural England who also monitor designated sites – with data publicly available on their organisations’ web-sites.

**5. HIGHFIELD FORESTRY MAINTAIN EXTENSIVE RECORDS FOR EACH FOREST MANAGEMENT UNIT UNDER THEIR MANAGEMENT, AND THIS INCLUDES: SITE VISIT RECORDS, TIMBER YIELDS, STOCKING DENSITY ASSESSMENTS, TIMBER PRICING AND PLANT HEALTH MONITORING. SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT**

**5.1 Social aspects**

|  | Male  | Female   |
|--|---|----------|
| Number of own workers  | 3   | 1        |
| Number of contract workers                                   | Variable  | Variable |
| Minimum daily wage for agricultural/forestry workers         | > UK min. wage £5.93 per hour   |          |
| Infant mortality rates (under 5 years)                       | Very low  |          |
| Proportion of workers employed from the local population (%) | Variable & low.<br>Local people are being employed, but there are not that many that need to be employed from the local population for the scale of work concerned. It involves contractors & machinery as required. Local employment is appropriate for scale and intensity of operations. |          |

The social conditions in the main commercially productive conifer forest areas of the UK are similar, involving mainly Scotland, Wales, parts of Northern England and Northern Ireland. The rural economy is fragile within them all. Tourism is particularly important and landscape values are correspondingly high in many but not all parts of these areas. Whilst tourism can be important, woodlands in the other areas of the UK are equally important for economic regeneration policies and their amenity and recreational value to nearby urban populations (e.g. Scottish central belt, Southern England).

The UK now has a minimum wage structure and health and education standards are relatively high and comparable with the rest of Western Europe. Infant mortality is very low and literacy rates are very high.

The UK timber production and processing industry is under economic pressure from the relatively high currency value of UK sterling and the impact of timber imports. The increase in UK landfill tax has meant that recycling of paper and card waste products has greatly increased, resulting in less demand for raw timber for these products. The overall effect has been serious reduction in timber prices to the disadvantage of timber growers in particular. This is another aspect of the pressures on the UK rural economy where farming is also under serious economic pressure.

Issues relating to amenity, specifically access and recreation are of major importance in the overall context of rural land management in the UK.

Where Long Term Forest Plans are prepared, a “scoping” meeting may be held with statutory consultees and local representatives to discuss proposals and exchange information prior to the preparation of the plan.

The legal access situation has recently changed in all three countries. The general thrust is to legally increase the public's opportunities for access subject to following a formalised code of responsible behaviour.

It has been generally accepted in the past in Scotland that the general public is at liberty to walk over any land provided he or she does so without causing damage to crops, fences and wildlife. This applied to the whole country with the exception of private gardens or grounds that form the curtilage of a dwelling house or other private residence.

The newly devolved Scottish Executive passed part 1 of The Land Reform (Scotland) Act in 2003. This law came into force in 2004 and gives everyone statutory rights of non-motorised access to land and inland water, subject to responsible use and respect for land management practice & employment. The "Scottish Outdoor Access Code" is the official advice that supports the Act.

In England and Wales the situation in the past has been more complex with many restrictions on public access to private land.

In England and Wales the areas being opened up under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 ('CROW') are usually mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land. The new rights cover most recreation activities carried out on foot, including walking, sightseeing, bird watching, climbing and running. Walking dogs must be on a lead in certain situations. The new right of open access does not include cycling, horse riding, driving a vehicle or camping unless already permitted. Gardens, parks and arable land are excluded together with closures and restrictions by farmers and landowners for up to 28 days for any reason or long term if necessary for land management, safety or fire prevention reasons. The "Countryside Code" launched in July 2004 is the official advice that supports the CROW Act.

The new legislation started to come into effect from September 19<sup>th</sup> 2004, applying to designated regions of England with completion at the end of 2005. New access legislation began being effective throughout Wales from May 2005. Some landowners are dedicating areas for permanent open access, e.g. the Forestry Commission.

In general, Highfield Forestry encourages public access on the land that it manages. However, the owner has the final decision on access rights (subject to legal requirements, as per preceding background information). Formalised Public Rights of Way exist in some woodlands and are respected.

## 5.2 Environmental aspects

The UK has approximately 2 million hectares of forest of which 575,000 hectares are estimated to be on Ancient woodland sites. Approximately 300,000 hectares of this can be described as Ancient and Semi Natural (ASNW) woodland, the balance having been converted into plantation, i.e. Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS).

Ancient woodlands are those that have had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD in England and Wales, and since 1750 AD in Scotland. The term ASNW covers all stands of ancient origins that do not obviously originate from planting. This may include stands with naturalised alien species such as sycamore or beech.

ASNW represent the least modified semi-natural woodlands in Britain; they represent an unbroken link with the natural forests that developed after the end of the last glaciation, some 8,000 years ago. For example, native pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), or Caledonian pine forests as they are often called have been shown to contain several sub-populations of Scots pine that collectively form a genetically and biologically distinct western outlier of the natural distribution of this species. The pine-dominated Caledonian forest may once have covered more than 1.5 million hectares of the Highlands but the present area of native pinewood is now thought to be only 16,000 hectares of which more than half is scattered pine.

Areas within woodlands of particular significance for biological or geological reasons are given statutory designations as areas of special scientific interest (SSSIs) and have statutory protection.

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) includes specific guidance and costed targets for a wide range of species and habitats that are the subject of Species Action Plans (SAPs) and Habitat Action Plans (HAPs). Individual local authorities have developed their own Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs).

The GB Forestry Commission and the Forest Service of Northern Ireland have developed the UK Forestry Standard and have published 'Guidelines' for Nature Conservation, Archaeology, Recreation, Landscape, Soil and Water.

Forest management is expected to meet the requirements of these guidelines and standards. There are also complex laws relating to the conservation of many species and habitats in the UK (e.g. The Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981).

### 5.3 Administration, Legislation and Guidelines

The following table lists the key national legislation, regulations, guidelines and codes of best practice that are relevant to forestry in the commercial, environmental and social sectors. This list does not purport to be comprehensive, but indicates information that is key to the forestry sector.

| <b>Legislation and regulation</b>   | <b>Notes</b>  |
|---|---|
| UK Forestry Act 1967  | Inc. Felling licence regulations  |
| Forestry Commission / Forest Service grant scheme contracts   |   |
| European Environmental Impact Assessment regulations  | As an EU member state, UK is affected   |
| Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations 1992  |   |
| Wildlife and Countryside Act* 1981  | Inc. Sites of Special Scientific Interest   |
| Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004   | Largely updates W and C Act* 1981   |
| European NATURA legislation   | As an EU member state, UK is affected   |
| UK Environmental Protection law inc. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulations                                | Several layers and / or country variants  |
| UK Employment law inc. minimum wage   | Several layers and / or country variants  |
| UK Property law   | Several layers and / or country variants  |
| UK Planning law   | Several layers and / or country variants  |
| Road Traffic law  | Several layers and / or country variants  |
| <b>Guidelines and Codes of Best Practice</b>  | <b>Notes</b>  |
| Safety Guides   | Produced by the Arboricultural and Forestry Advisory Group (AFAG) to the Health & Safety Executive. |
| Forestry Commission / Forest Service Guidelines covering Archaeology, Landscape, Nature Conservation, Recreation, Soils and Water | It is a requirement of UKWAS that this guidance is adhered to                                       |
| FC and HSE chemicals use advisory guidelines & code of practice   | Including herbicides and insecticides   |
| Road Haulage of Round Timber Code of Practice   |   |
| FSC endorsed UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS)   | UKWAS standard was approved in 1999 and revised in 2006.  |
| Forest Practice Guides Nos. 1-8 for the management of semi-natural woodlands in the UK.   | It is a requirement of UKWAS that this guidance is adhered to.                                      |

The Forestry Commission separately in Scotland, Wales and England implements forestry regulation in Great Britain. (Regulation in Northern Ireland is controlled separately through the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland (DARDNI)).

The primary piece of legislation relating to forest management is the Forestry Act 1967. With certain exceptions, mainly relating to non-commercial situations, it is illegal to fell trees in Great Britain without the prior approval of the Forestry Commission. Permission is granted through a felling licence, normally conditional on regeneration or replanting, or through approval of a plan of operations for the site. The latter is an integral component of grant aid provided under the Forestry Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) and its recently devolved country variants.

Following recent political devolution in the UK the Forestry Commission has similarly devolved its structure and operations. Its role as a regulatory authority remains very similar in each of Scotland, England and Wales.

Approval of grant aid under the WGS is also conditional upon compliance with a range of Forestry Commission environmental guidelines, which aim to ensure that forestry operations are conducted in a manner consistent with the maintenance, protection and/or enhancement of soil, water, landscape, biodiversity and heritage values.

Where felling licences or plans of operations affect areas designated for nature conservation or landscape value, there is an obligation to consult the relevant statutory bodies prior to approval.

The other major aspect of legal control is health and safety. The Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974, and the Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations, 1992, enforced in Great Britain by the Health and Safety Executive, regulate this. The required safety standards for forestry operations are contained in a number of Safety Guides, produced by the Forestry and Arboricultural Safety and Training Council and its successor, the Arboriculture & Forestry Advisory Group.

The local standard used for this assessment was the FSC endorsed UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) which was approved in 1999. The UKWAS reflects the FSC GB standard and is now accepted as *the* forest management 'standard' in the UK. The UKWAS was used in conjunction with the SGS QUALIFOR Programme. In addition, the requirements of the UK Forestry Standard were also taken into account.

The UK Forestry Standard, developed by the GB Forestry Commission and the Forest Service of Northern Ireland, is underpinned by a series of 'Guidelines' covering Archaeology, Landscape, Nature Conservation, Recreation, Soils and Water. Forest Practice Guides Nos. 1-8 also covers guidance for the management of semi-natural woodlands in the UK. It is a requirement of UKWAS that this guidance is adhered to.

Following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the UK government became a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Statement on Climatic Change, and adopted the declaration on Sustainable Development and the Statement of Forest Principles. This led to the publication of Sustainable Forestry: the UK Programme and Biodiversity: the UK Action Plan, which committed the UK to the pursuit of sustainable forestry and the conservation of biological diversity.

The UK programme on forestry evolved as European countries signed the resolutions proposed by the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe at Helsinki in 1993 (the Helsinki Resolutions). These resolutions provided guidance for countries on sustainable forestry management, conserving biodiversity, co-operating with countries with transitional economies and managing forests in relation to climatic change. The UKWAS adopts the principles and requirements laid down in these international agreements.

The Habitats and Birds Directives provide for a network of protected areas (Natura 2000) in the European Union and require member states to establish such sites and to develop systems to prevent damage to certain endangered species. This legislation is translated into GB law in the 'Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994'. The process of selection and approval of Natura 2000 sites in the UK is almost complete. Preceding Natura 2000, the UK Government's policies on nature conservation have been largely implemented through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which established a system of designates sites known as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and provided for the protection and conservation of many UK species and habitats. This has been largely updated in Scotland via the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. The UKWAS requires participants to meet all of these requirements.

There are many other laws relating to the protection and welfare of animals. Those of most importance to forest certification concern anti-poaching legislation and close seasons for hunting game species, including the Deer Act Scotland 1996 and the Deer Act England and Wales 1963. Environmental Impact Assessment legislation covers all deforestation, afforestation and road building proposals that might have a significant environmental impact.

## 6. CHANGES IN MANAGEMENT, HARVESTING, SILVICULTURE AND MONITORING

The following table shows significant changes that took place in the management, monitoring, harvesting and regeneration practices of the certificate holder over the certificate period.

| Description of Change | Notes |
|-----------------------|-------|
| <b>SURVEILLANCE 1</b> |       |
|                       |       |
|                       |       |
| <b>SURVEILLANCE 2</b> |       |
|                       |       |
|                       |       |
| <b>SURVEILLANCE 3</b> |       |
|                       |       |
|                       |       |
| <b>SURVEILLANCE 4</b> |       |
|                       |       |
|                       |       |

## 7. PREPARATION FOR THE EVALUATION

### 7.1 Schedule

The Evaluation was preceded by a pre-evaluation by SGS QUALIFOR during November 2010. This examined the management systems and identified any gaps that might preclude certification. Information gathered was used to plan the main evaluation. Key stakeholders were identified.

### 7.2 Team

The table below shows the team that conducted the main evaluation and the independent specialist(s) that were selected to review the main evaluation report before certification is considered.

| Evaluation Team    | Notes   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Team Leader</b> | Has a Masters of Science degree in forest management, 25 years experience in forestry or related field such as land management, based in Scotland with 39 days FSC auditing experience. |

### 7.3 Checklist Preparation

A checklist was prepared that consisted of the documents listed below. This checklist was prepared using the FSC-endorsed national or regional standard.

This adaptation included canvassing comments from stakeholders 4 weeks before the field evaluation. Comments were received from 3 stakeholders that included 4 ENGOs, 0 Government Departments and 0 Academics.

| Standard Used in Evaluation   | Effective Date | Version Nr | Changes to Standard  |
|---|----------------|------------|--|
| FSC Accredited National Standard for the United Kingdom = the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS). | 1 Nov 2006     | 2          | 1 <sup>st</sup> edition published 1999. This revised 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition published 1 Nov 2006. |

#### 7.4 Stakeholder notification

A wide range of stakeholders were contacted 6 weeks before the planned evaluation to inform them of the evaluation and ask for their views on relevant forest management issues. These included environmental interest groups, local government agencies and forestry authorities, forest user groups, and workers' unions. Responses received and comments from interviews are recorded at the end of this Public Summary.

### 8. THE MAIN EVALUATION WAS CONDUCTED IN THE STEPS OUTLINED BELOW.

#### 8.1 Opening meeting

An opening meeting was held at Ribreck Forest, Elgin. The scope of the evaluation was explained and schedules were determined. Record was kept of all persons that attended this meeting.

#### 8.2 Document review

A review of the main forest management documentation was conducted to evaluate the adequacy of coverage of the QUALIFOR Programme requirements. This involved examination of policies, management plans, systems, procedures, instructions and controls.

#### 8.3 Sampling and Evaluation Approach

A detailed record of the following is available in section B of the evaluation report. This section does not form part of the public summary, but includes information on:

- Sampling methodology and rationale;
- FMUs included in the sample;
- Sites visited during the field evaluation; and
- Man-day allocation.

Highfield Forestry Resource Group managed properties are widely distributed throughout Scotland but with the core areas being in the Central and Borders areas of Scotland. Other properties are located in the Highland area of Scotland, north England and Wales. Sites were selected taking operational activity and practical logistics into consideration. Two active sites, and one site which has had certified area recently reduced due to conversion to non-forested land, were sampled. This allowed the coverage of a wide range of forest management operations and issues. Other areas will be visited at future surveillances. All eleven sites involved are already certified via individual membership of a group certification scheme. Excluding planning, preparation and

report writing, three auditor man days were involved for the evaluation including field assessment and office-based evaluation including stakeholder consultations

The Highfield Forestry head office in Perth was visited. The operations director, operations manager and operations assistant plus office & accounts administrator were interviewed. This covered everyone in the company who is actively involved in forest management and timber sales.

#### 8.4 Field assessments

Field assessments aimed to determine how closely activities in the field complied with documented management systems and QUALIFOR Programme requirements. Interviews with staff, operators and contractors were conducted to determine their familiarity with and their application of policies, procedures and practices that are relevant to their activities. A carefully selected sample of sites was visited to evaluate whether practices met the required performance levels.

#### 8.5 Stakeholder interviews

Meetings or telephone interviews were held with stakeholders as determined by the responses to notification letters and SGS discretion as to key stakeholders that should be interviewed. These aimed to:

- clarify any issues raised and the company's responses to them;
- obtain additional information where necessary; and
- obtain the views of key stakeholders that did not respond to the written invitation sent out before the evaluation.

| Nr of Stakeholders contacted | Nr of Interviews with |            |       |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|-------|
|                              | NGOs                  | Government | Other |
| <b>MAIN EVALUATION</b>       |                       |            |       |
| 61                           | 1                     | 2          | 3     |
| <b>SURVEILLANCE 1</b>        |                       |            |       |
|                              |                       |            |       |
| <b>SURVEILLANCE 2</b>        |                       |            |       |
|                              |                       |            |       |
| <b>SURVEILLANCE 3</b>        |                       |            |       |
|                              |                       |            |       |
| <b>SURVEILLANCE 4</b>        |                       |            |       |
|                              |                       |            |       |

Responses received and comments from interviews are recorded under paragraph 14 of this Public Summary.

#### 8.6 Summing up and closing meeting

At the conclusion of the field evaluation, findings were presented to company management at a closing meeting. Any areas of non-conformance with the QUALIFOR Programme were raised as one of two types of Corrective Action Request (CAR):



- ❑ Major CARs - which must be addressed and re-assessed before certification can proceed
- ❑ Minor CARs - which do not preclude certification, but must be addressed within an agreed time frame, and will be checked at the first surveillance visit

A record was kept of persons that attended this meeting.

## 9. EVALUATION RESULTS

Detailed evaluation findings are included in Section B of the evaluation report. This does not form part of the public summary. For each QUALIFOR requirement, these show the related findings, and any observations or corrective actions raised. The main issues are discussed below.

### 9.1 Findings related to the general QUALIFOR Programme

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>PRINCIPLE 1: COMPLIANCE WITH LAW AND FSC PRINCIPLES</b>   |   |
| <b><i>Criterion 1.1 Respect for national and local laws and administrative requirements</i></b>    |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>   |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | Good efforts are being made to integrate up-to-date guidance and best practice into tactical management with suitable reference made within management planning documentation, e.g. details of applicable AFAG safety guides within risk assessment documentation, as reviewed during the audit documentation review process. |
| <b><i>Criterion 1.2 Payment of legally prescribed fees, royalties, taxes and other charges</i></b> |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>   |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | No evidence of non-payment<br>Highfield Forestry Ltd management pay all fees, royalties, taxes and charges as applicable.   |
| <b><i>Criterion 1.3 Respect for provisions of international agreements</i></b>                     |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>   |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | Highfield Forestry Ltd management are aware of relevant international agreements and their impact on forest management in the UK.   |
| <b><i>Criterion 1.4 Conflicts between laws and regulations, and the FSC P&amp;C</i></b>            |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>   |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | There is no evidence of substantiated outstanding claims of non-compliance related to woodland management.<br>No legal disputes are current.  |
| <b><i>Criterion 1.5 Protection of forests from illegal activities</i></b>                          |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>   | The forest managers and contractors have clearly placed an importance to the issue of security at Rashiehill Forest and are acting in a pro-active fashion to mitigate any possible further problems.   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | <p>No evidence of ongoing illegal activities.</p> <p>There is awareness of potential problems relating to illegal activity, with suitable procedures in place to deal with them as required, including the involvement of the Police if appropriate.</p>   |
| <b><i>Criterion 1.6 Demonstration of a long-term commitment to the FSC P&amp;C</i></b> |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>   | Highfield Forestry Ltd have declared their commitment to compliance with the UKWAS standard on their website ( <a href="http://www.highfieldforestry.com">www.highfieldforestry.com</a> ).   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | <p>The Highfield Forestry Ltd – Resource Manager Policy Statement declares its commitment to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard which is endorsed by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).</p> <p>The policy statement also states that ‘members are required to abide by a membership agreement including their own commitment to the UKWAS.’</p>   |
| <b>PRINCIPLE 2: TENURE AND USE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES</b>                         |  |
| <b><i>Criterion 2.1 Demonstration of land tenure and forest use rights</i></b>         |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>   |  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | <p>Properties are owned by individual and corporate clients, with Highfield Forestry Ltd as managers.</p> <p>Documentation is available to prove ownership under the UK’s long established property laws. Legal title documents for all three sites sampled and visited reviewed. It is normal practice for each resource group member to have a legal representative for each forest management unit (FMU) who deal with instances relating to issues of land tenure.</p> |
| <b><i>Criterion 2.2 Local communities’ legal or customary tenure or use rights</i></b> |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>   |  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | No permissive or traditional uses, other than the provision of recreation, were encountered.   |
| <b><i>Criterion 2.3 Disputes over tenure claims and use rights</i></b>                 |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>   |  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | <p>No legal disputes are current or applicable.</p> <p>Legal title documents are normally being held by clients’ legal representative for each forest management unit (FMU) and are made available for review on request.</p>  |
| <b>PRINCIPLE 3: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ RIGHTS</b>   |  |
| <b><i>Criterion 3.1 Indigenous peoples’ control of forest management</i></b>           |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>   |  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | Within international context, “Indigenous Peoples”, as defined under FSC, are not considered   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | to be present in the UK.  |
| <b>Criterion 3.2 Maintenance of indigenous peoples' resources or tenure rights</b>   |   |
| Strengths  |   |
| Weaknesses   |   |
| Compliance   | Within international context, "Indigenous Peoples", as defined under FSC, are not considered to be present in the UK.   |
| <b>Criterion 3.3 Protection of sites of special cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance to indigenous peoples</b> |   |
| Strengths  |   |
| Weaknesses   |   |
| Compliance   | Within international context, "Indigenous Peoples", as defined under FSC, are not considered to be present in the UK.<br><br>Please refer to Criterion 4.4 for information on the management of special sites.  |
| <b>Criterion 3.4 Compensation of indigenous peoples for the application of their traditional knowledge</b>                         |   |
| Strengths  |   |
| Weaknesses   |   |
| Compliance   | Within international context, "Indigenous Peoples", as defined under FSC, are not considered to be present in the UK.   |
| <b>PRINCIPLE 4: COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND WORKERS RIGHTS</b>   |   |
| <b>Criterion 4.1 Employment, training, and other services for local communities</b>  |   |
| Strengths  |   |
| Weaknesses   |   |
| Compliance   | An operations policy is in place which identifies that local contractors are employed work if at all possible<br><br>Good use is made of local area based harvesting managers & contractors. The majority of timber is sold to markets.   |
| <b>Criterion 4.2 Compliance with health and safety regulations</b>   |   |
| Strengths  |   |
| Weaknesses   | The Highfield Forestry Ltd Health & Safety and Emergency Planning Policy does not include sufficient contingency planning information relating to detailed evacuation procedures from operational sites during an emergency situation, nor does contract risk assessment documents include detail on specific appropriate emergency evacuation measures.<br><br>Minor CAR 03, under UKWAS 8.1.1 raised                                  |
| Compliance   | Highfield Forestry Ltd ensure that all staff and contractors have relevant training in safe working practices and that first aid training is undertaken by those for whom it is appropriate. Copies of training and competency certificates were suitably inspected.<br><br>Emergency response planning is in use covering fire, pollution and accidents, and risk assessments and contractor checklists are issued to all contractors. |
| <b>Criterion 4.3 Workers' rights to organise and negotiate with employers</b>  |   |
| Strengths  |   |

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| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | From interview with the Highfield Forestry Ltd Forest Managers, there was verbal confirmation that they are not deterred from joining a trades union or employee association, nor from negotiating collectively with employers.   |
| <b><i>Criterion 4.4 Social impact evaluations and consultation</i></b>   |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>   | Highfield Forestry Ltd maintain an up-to-date and very comprehensive well-laid out stakeholder list applicable to all Highfield Forestry Ltd certified woodlands.. In addition, a general stakeholders list is maintained for each certified FMU under the Highfield Forestry Resource Group Scheme.  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | <p>Highfield Forestry Ltd have declared their commitment to compliance with the UKWAS standard on their website (<a href="http://www.highfieldforestry.com">www.highfieldforestry.com</a>), in addition, the web site has provision for contact with the company</p> <p>Managers were able to provide evidence of plentiful and documented communication with a wide range of stakeholders, including local people and organisations, e.g. letters, e-mails and notes on site inspection forms.</p> <p>All sites visited are covered by approved FC Forest Plans and have therefore undergone extensive public consultation via stakeholder consultation as required by the approval process (including scoping and placement on the FC Public Register).</p> <p>Members of the general public access are not restricted from accessing the FMUs other than for reasons of health &amp; safety during forestry operations or deer control at either of the sites visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill). Normal access to all of the sites visited is welcomed, and each of the relevant approved FC Forest Plans contain a section on public access provision and management, as reviewed. No permissive or traditional uses, other than the provision of informal recreation were encountered.</p> |
| <b><i>Criterion 4.5 Resolution of grievances and settlement of compensation claims</i></b>                           |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>   |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | <p>Highfield Forestry Ltd Managers respond constructively to complaints and the assessment process reviewed generates confidence that they follow established legal process should this become necessary.</p> <p>From review of documentation and stakeholder interview, no complaints or cases of legal non compliance was identified as being applicable to any of the sites sampled and visited as part of the audit assessment</p>  |
| <b>PRINCIPLE 5: BENEFITS FROM THE FOREST</b>   |   |
| <b><i>Criterion 5.1 Economic viability taking full environmental, social, and operational costs into account</i></b> |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>   |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | <p>Sufficient evidence of production being optimised whilst investing in social and ecological value of the resource.</p> <p>Approved FC Forest Plans are subject to FC requirements via the plan approval scoping process, covering environmental, social and economic impacts. Therefore, the investment should be in place to ensure maintenance of ecological value.</p> <p>Restructuring in line with the approved FC Forest Plans (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill) is leading to a more diverse age structure with improvements in the creation of future windfirm edges for coupes as previous large areas of a single age class are broken up with</p>   |

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|   | <p>felling.</p> <p>Windthrow hazard assessments are used to anticipate problems and plan accordingly. Increasing diversity of plantations should help to reduce the threat of pest and disease problems.</p> <p>No evidence was seen of any inappropriate use of fencing during the audit assessment at any of the sites visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill).</p>  |
| <b>Criterion 5.2 Optimal use and local processing of forest products</b>            |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>The majority of timber is sold to markets in the respective local areas, predominantly in the southern half of Scotland which is a core management area of Highfield Forestry Ltd.</p> <p>Minor species are used optimally with the major species.</p> <p>Local processing opportunities are always considered and taken where appropriate.</p>   |
| <b>Criterion 5.3 Waste minimisation and avoidance of damage to forest resources</b> |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>Timber at the clear-fell sites visited which were active (Rashiehill) or had been previously harvested (Ribreck) were found to have been harvested efficiently with minimal loss or damage to residual crops and providing very good sites for restocking.</p> <p>Managers demonstrated via interview that they are aware of the UKWAS compliance not to burn lop &amp; top without a valid justifiable reason, e.g. for rabbit control. No lop and top encountered during the site visits (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill).</p> <p>No whole tree harvesting is currently being practiced by Highfield Forestry Ltd at any of the sites visited.</p> |
| <b>Criterion 5.4 Forest management and the local economy</b>                        |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>Highfield Forestry Ltd have an operations policy of offering local contractors work if at all possible. At Rashiehill and Soutra Hill, the deer management is leased to suitable locally based shooting tenants.</p> <p>Highfield Forestry Ltd make good use of local area based harvesting managers &amp; contractors, e.g. at Ribreck and Rashiehills for the construction of the new roads and for harvesting. The majority of timber is sold to markets in the respective local areas.</p>  |
| <b>Criterion 5.5 Maintenance of the value of forest services and resources</b>      |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>Forest managers are well aware of the range of services and resources and undertake measures for their maintenance, e.g. wind power.</p>  |
| <b>Criterion 5.6 Harvest levels</b>   |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>  | <p>The approach and implementation of the restructuring operations to transform even-aged first rotation conifer plantations into mosaics of productive conifer species, mixed native species and designed open ground is in full compliance and justifies particular commendation.</p>  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>All three of the sites sampled and visited as part of the audit assessment (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill) have approved FC Forest Plans, and all have compliant phased felling and</p>   |

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|   | <p>restocking plans and are being restructured appropriately</p> <p>Of the three sites visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill), suitable financial records and annual budgets for income &amp; expenditure were reviewed. Ribreck was the only site to have timber removed during 2010 – amounting to 2,803.58 tonnes from a wind blown clearfelled site (Compartment 1).</p> <p>Control of yield is usually carried out on an appropriate area basis with reconciliation of actual production versus forecast. Highfield Forestry Ltd maintain thinning records on a cumulative basis so that total yield can be assessed when required.</p> <p>Harvesting of non-timber products is not practiced at the sites visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill).</p>  |
| <b>PRINCIPLE 6: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT</b>  |  |
| <b><i>Criterion 6.1 Environmental impacts evaluation</i></b>                      |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>  | <p>The approach that the Highfield Forestry Ltd take towards overall operational planning is commendable. E.g at Ribreck the adjustments made to the planting programme, given the difficulty in obtaining appropriate contractors to carry out the recent restocking operations; and, at Rashiehill, the approach taken to enable the current harvesting operations to continue in spite of the constraints placed on the site due to the poor weather conditions, including the monitoring and management of removal of timber from site, and the issues relating to site security.</p>  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>All sites visited have approved FC Forest Plans, and approval for these has involved extensive consultation with external statutory bodies such as Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Local Authorities, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)</p> <p>Forest operations contracts detail specified special conditions of operation or restrictions to ensure special features are protected and best practice followed. E.g. the Highfield Forestry Ltd Work Agreement in relation to the restocking operations at Ribreck was reviewed and found to be of a high standard.</p> <p>Monitoring of contracts takes place for all forest operations with site inspection forms completed after every visit, operational inspection forms and reporting carried out as applicable.</p> <p>Harvesting operations seen (active at Rashiehill) were not resulting in any significant off-site impacts.</p> <p>Forestry Managers understand and implement safety precautions, environmental protection plans and emergency procedures as evidenced from discussion and documentation observed during the audit assessment.</p> <p>Emergency response planning is in use covering fire, pollution and accidents and a risk assessment and contractor checklist is issued to all contractors.</p> |
| <b><i>Criterion 6.2 Protection of rare, threatened and endangered species</i></b> |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>  | <p>Highfield Forestry Ltd maintain a concise company Deadwood Habitat Policy and the forest managers interviewed clearly demonstrated an awareness of deadwood management in compliance with UKWAS, with the pursuit of opportunities on a site specific basis.</p>  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   | <p>.</p> <p>Highfield Forestry Ltd do not implement a fully pro-active approach to the progressive identification, documentation and monitoring of some species of special significance as part of their identified procedures. Observation 04, UKWAS 6.1.1</p> <p>At Soutra Hill, the cull records show that a number of hares have been taken from the site, however the records do not distinguish between brown and mountain hares, both of which are classified as UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) species. The shooting contract, dated 21.09.10 does not specify permission to shoot hares.</p> <p>Minor CAR 02, UKWAS 6.4.2, refers.</p>   |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>The approved FC Forest Plans reviewed as part of the audit assessment (all contain, as one</p>  |

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|   | <p>of their listed objectives, the aim to enhance the biodiversity and conservation of each site and contain a section on conservation which identifies habitats and species of particular significance.</p> <p>The statutory Forest Plan scoping exercise for Ribreck provided clear evidence of communication and consultation with statutory bodies and local authorities in relation to areas and features of significance for biodiversity.</p> <p>At least 15% of the forest area of each of the sites visited (Ribreck and Rashiehill) are being managed primarily for the conservation of biodiversity. The company's style of management planning documentation, including approved FC Forest Plans provide a clear and effective summary of the areas and percentages.</p> <p>Management of wild deer including culling occurs at all properties sampled and visited during the audit assessment (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill), and clearly follows best practice and British Association of Shooting and Conservation (BACS) Code of Practice, as detailed within the management planning documentation and shooting lease agreements.</p> <p>No evidence was seen of any inappropriate use of fencing during the audit assessment at any of the sites visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill).</p> <p>The approved FC Forest Plans, management planning documentation and site visits to Ribreck and Rashiehill confirmed that the concept of Natural Reserves (NRs) and Long Term Retentions (LTRs) is understood by the Highfield Forestry Ltd Forestry Managers</p> |
| <b><i>Criterion 6.3 Maintenance of ecological functions and values</i></b>  |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>The even-aged FMUs are being restructured appropriately, the approved FC Forest Plans (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill) confirming that in addition to the retention as far as possible of existing broadleaves there is the intention to plant native mixed broadleaves mixtures, including birch, willow, alder and rowan, to aid diversity.</p> <p>No felling of native woodlands is being undertaken at either of the sites visited during the audit inspection (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill).</p> <p>Management of wild deer including culling occurs at all properties sampled, and clearly follows best practice and British Association of Shooting and Conservation (BACS) Code of Practice. Prescription for wild deer management is described adequately management planning documentation and is based soundly on the measurement of impacts. A clear deer damage monitoring policy is clearly defined with each approved FC Forest Plans. Cull returns are retained within the management planning documentation, including appending to the approved FC Forest Plans for each site.</p> <p>None of the sites visited during the audit inspection (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra) have any areas of SNW, ASNW and PAWS.</p>   |
| <b><i>Criterion 6.4 Protection of representative samples of existing ecosystems</i></b>                               |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>None of the sites visited during the audit inspection (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill) have any areas of SNW, ASNW and PAWS, and no conversion to non-forested land is taking place, as confirmed by interview and from review of approved FC Forest Plans and management planning documentation.</p> <p>The forest managers carry out a FC Land Information Search (LIS) as a constraints check, and review of the SNH Ancient Woodland Inventory as part of management planning to check and confirm whether any such designation apply to each FMU.</p>   |
| <b><i>Criterion 6.5 Protection against damage to soils, residual forest and water resources during operations</i></b> |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |  |

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| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>At Ribreck significant clearfelling has been implemented, and this is appropriate given its upland plantation situation and clear commercial objectives, as outlined within the approved FC Forest Plan. The felling and restocking design plans included within the approved FC Forest Plans for all of the sites visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill) demonstrate compliance. The previously harvested site at Ribreck (windblow Lodgepole pine) as inspected was found to have been harvested efficiently with minimal loss or damage.</p> <p>The active clearfelling operations taking place at Rashiehill was seen to be fully compliant given the scale of the FMU and its situation. The Highfield Forestry Forest Managers confirmed during interview that they do practice thinning where conditions are suitable as per the approval given by the FC in the appropriate FMU Forest Plans.</p> <p>Design and implementation of the new roads constructed during 2010 to facilitate access at both Ribreck and Rashiehill was inspected as being consistent with current best practice.</p>  |
| <b>Criterion 6.6 Chemical pest management</b>   |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>Highfield Forestry Ltd maintain a positive approach to minimising the use of pesticide management, with full compliance against UKWAS, both in their management processes and in their approach to minimising the use of pesticides. They maintain a generic Pesticide Use and Disposal Policy which is held within the management planning documentation for each FMU, in addition to keeping comprehensive records of products used.</p> <p>From discussion and interview with the Highfield Forestry Ltd Forest Managers there was confirmation of implementation of best practice guidance and a careful and considered approach to the use of chemicals is used.</p> <p>Highfield Forestry Ltd implement the reduction in the use of pesticides e.g carrying out ground preparation such as mounding, where appropriate, and the use of plants supplied by nurseries already treated ('dipped') with insecticide where the risk of insect attack is judged to be sufficiently high.</p> <p>Pesticide records were examined, and confirmed a commitment to very low levels of usage. Records demonstrate that use over the last 6 years has been confined to combating the pine weevil, <i>Hylobius abietis</i>. Highfield Forestry Ltd do not hold stocks of chemicals, having passed this responsibility onto contractors.</p> <p>No chemicals were applied during the last year (2010) at either of the three sites visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill), although pre-treated (dipped) plants were used in the restocking operations at Ribreck (see 5.2.1, above).</p> <p>Biological control agents are not used on any of the properties sampled (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill).</p> <p>No highly hazardous chemicals are being used by Highfield Forestry at any of the sites visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill). Highfield Forestry Ltd maintain valid derogation for the use of Cypermethrin for assistance in combating <i>Hylobius abietis</i>, but have not implemented the use of this chemical during 2010.</p> <p>Interview with managers confirmed that no fertilisers or bio-solids are being used by Highfield Forestry Ltd at any of the sites visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill).</p> |
| <b>Criterion 6.7 Use and disposal of chemicals, containers, liquid and solid non-organic wastes</b> |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>  | Highfield Forestry maintain a written statement (version, 'revision 2010') which identifies the policy to arrange for waste disposal to be carried out by approved operators. Highfield Forestry Ltd also maintain their own waste carrier's licence (registration number SCO/333300) as an extra security to ensure all waste is disposed of appropriately.   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | During the site visit to Rashiehill where active harvesting operations were being implemented, the harvester machine operator and forwarder operator interviewed were able to clearly demonstrate that there were suitable plans and equipment in place to deal with accidental  |



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|   | <p>spillages. The applicable Highfield Forestry Ltd Standing Sales Contract, and the Site Handbook &amp; Health &amp; Safety Framework document provided by the timber buyer for the operations also contained reference to provision of spillage control kits by contractors. Contractors are responsible for their own waste and remove it from site.</p> <p>It is the Highfield Forestry Ltd policy to specify where practicable the use of biodegradable lubricants by contractors being employed within certified forests.</p> <p>The Work Agreement, which included a work-site risk assessment; oil, chemical and product inventory, and Health &amp; Safety emergency procedures (including avoidance of water contamination measures and action in the event of a spillage), for the previous restocking operations at Ribreck were reviewed and confirmed compliance.</p>   |
| <b><i>Criterion 6.8 Use of biological control agents and genetically modified organisms</i></b> |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | Interviews with Highfield Forestry Ltd managers, and review of their Pesticide Strategy confirmed that no genetically modified organisms nor Biological Control Agents are used by the company on any of their managed woodland sites   |
| <b><i>Criterion 6.9 The use of exotic species</i></b>   |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>There were no examples of forest harvested commercial Christmas trees within the sites sampled and visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill).</p> <p>No examples of non-native species being introduced was encountered during the audit assessment at any of the sites visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill).</p>   |
| <b><i>Criterion 6.10 Forest conversion to plantations or non-forest land uses</i></b>           |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>Only examples of current conversion to non forest land were of small areas with archaeology with the approval of expert bodies.</p> <p>No conversion of natural forest to plantation.</p>  |
| <b>PRINCIPLE 7: MANAGEMENT PLAN</b>   |   |
| <b><i>Criterion 7.1 Management plan requirements</i></b>  |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>  | The overall standard of management planning reviewed for Highfield Forestry Ltd managed woodlands were found to be compliant and of a high standard, including detailed mapping.  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>All three Highfield Forestry Ltd properties visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill) have approved FC Forest Plans and associated management planning folders containing the items detailed as per UKWAS requirements in A-I.</p> <p>Rashiehill is included in the wider scope of the approved plan called Rashieknowes, which includes both Rashiehill and the neighbouring younger conifer plantation of Sheilknowes. Soutra Hill also covers two distinct areas, one of which has been removed from certification as it is now the subject to a constructed and operational wind farm development. The smaller area remaining under certification has now been summarised in a summary forest plan document (currently under further review and development). All plans were inspected during the audit and confirmed as compliant, both as documents and in their design and implementation, as well as in the field.</p> |
| <b><i>Criterion 7.2 Management plan revision</i></b>  |   |

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| <b>Strengths</b>  | The Highfield Forestry Ltd Forest Managers interviewed demonstrated a very good level of familiarity with the areas of woodland under their management, as confirmed by the FMUs visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill).   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   | Some Highfield Forestry Ltd management planning documentation as reviewed during the audit assessment is out of date e.g. the Highfield Forestry Health & Safety and Emergency Planning Policy is scheduled for review as it currently details various inaccurate information relating to industry codes of practice and guidance – listing of FASTCo guides now superseded by AFAG. Observation 02 under UKWAS 2.1.3 refers.   |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>Highfield Forestry Ltd maintain a generic Management Planning Review Policy Statement (version dated March 2010) and implement the review of management planning documentation at five yearly intervals as well as on an on-going process, with annotations and details of review being carried out. This process was substantiated by review of the approved Rashiehill Forest Plan whereby during 2010 the plan has been updated to include changes to the number and location of deer towers, and to include the now adoption of the adjacent designated Special Protection Area (SPA).</p> <p>Management planning documentation, including approved FC Forest Plans, contain monitoring sections which incorporate ongoing updates after every site visit as appropriate.</p> <p>The company have in place a suitable electronic system held in the form of a spreadsheet which assists and enables the forest managers to monitor and identify detail relating to FMU management planning documentation review.</p>   |
| <b><i>Criterion 7.3 Training and supervision of forest workers</i></b>          |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>Managers interviewed were found to be aware of, and to comply with the spirit of relevant codes of practice. The forest managers keep up to date on FSC and UKWAS and other new forestry management developments through the forestry business trade press, professional development via the Institute of Chartered Foresters and by general dissemination via company meetings and internal communications etc.</p> <p>It is Highfield Forestry Ltd policy, as detailed within their Health &amp; Safety and Emergency Planning Policy, that all staff and contractors have relevant training in safe working practices and that first aid training is undertaken by those for whom it is appropriate. First aid kits were present and reviewed as compliant on the active working site visited at Rashiehill</p> <p>Forest Manager managers ensure that contractors and operators have the required level of competence. Copies of training certificates and competency certificates were seen for forest machinery operators at Rashiehill in relation to the active harvesting operations.</p> <p>All timber buyers contracted by Highfield Forestry Ltd are required under the terms of their applicable contracts to provide their own written Health &amp; Safety policy statement.</p> |
| <b><i>Criterion 7.4 Public availability of the management plan elements</i></b> |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>Management planning documentation is available for all Highfield Forestry Ltd managed properties and the Highfield Forestry Forest Managers confirmed during interview that they are willing to make this information publicly available upon request as required – an information request form is included on the Highfield Forestry Ltd web site <a href="http://www.highfieldforestry.com">www.highfieldforestry.com</a>.</p> <p>Those FMUs covered by approved FC Forest Plans, as applicable to all three sites visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill), have undergone extensive public consultation via stakeholder consultation as required by the approval process (including scoping and placement on the FC Public Register).</p>   |

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|  | <p>To date no requests have been received for management planning information outside of the FC scheme consultations implemented as part of the forest plan approval process.</p> <p>See also Criterion 9.3 (below).</p>  |
| <b>PRINCIPLE 8: MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b>  |   |
| <b><i>Criterion 8.1 Frequency, intensity and consistency of monitoring</i></b>           |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>   |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | <p>Highfield Forestry Ltd maintains a generic monitoring policy which is comprehensive, clear and compliant, as reviewed. Specific activities detailed in this document for monitoring include: harvesting yield; chemicals and pesticides; woodland composition and structure; issues and records relating to fauna and flora; and economic and social aspects.</p> <p>Forest Managers interviewed clearly understand the relevance of monitoring for the purpose of analysis, and the approved FC Forest Plans and associated management planning documentation reviewed for the sites visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill) confirm a commitment by Highfield Forestry Ltd to make use of monitoring data.</p> <p>Monitoring is undertaken on a continual basis with frequent visits whilst forest operations are taking place. Details held on site inspection forms, including the recording of any UKWAS non-compliance, which are then transferred and summarised on monitoring sheets, and thereafter appended on an on-going basis to the management planning documentation for management planning action as required. In addition, further specific operational detail is held and transferred as appropriate. Suitable monitoring records were reviewed as compliant.</p> <p>An effective electronic system on spreadsheet format for monitoring management planning review is maintained by the Highfield Forestry Forest Managers.</p> <p>See also Criterion 8.4 &amp; 10.8, (below).</p> |
| <b><i>Criterion 8.2 Research and data collection for monitoring</i></b>                  |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>   |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | <p>There were some very good examples of monitoring, e.g. monitoring records for General Site Inspection applicable to monitoring of Hylobius presence at Ribreck, as reviewed (dated 20.8.10)</p>  |
| <b><i>Criterion 8.3 Chain of custody</i></b>   |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>   |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | <p>Highfield Forestry Ltd maintain a good, robust chain of custody system that is well understood by accounts administrators and forest managers.</p> <p>Weight tickets (Rashiehill) and invoice records (both Rashiehill and Ribreck) were checked and clearly showed traceability of timber to forest of origin, plus Highfield Forestry's Chain of Custody code SGS-FM/COC-002512 being detailed in the correct format. Several samples were randomly selected, e.g. Highfield Forestry Ltd invoice no. 3993 of 18.07.10, and the applicable timber buyer's Supplier Notification form, for week ending 18.07.10.</p>  |
| <b><i>Criterion 8.4 Incorporation of monitoring results into the management plan</i></b> |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>   |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | <p>Monitoring is undertaken on a continual basis with frequent visits whilst forest operations are taking place. Details held on site inspection forms, including the recording of any UKWAS non-compliance, are then transferred and summarised on monitoring sheets, and thereafter appended on an on-going basis to the management planning documentation for management planning action as required. In addition, further specific operational detail is held and</p>   |

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|   | transferred as appropriate, e.g. felling reports.<br>See also Criterion 8.2 (above).  |
| <b><i>Criterion 8.5 Publicly available summary of monitoring</i></b>                            |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>Highfield Forestry Ltd confirmed during interview and discussion that they can make monitoring summary detail publicly available if requested, although no actual request for any monitoring summary has as yet been requested.</p> <p>From interview and discussion, managers understand the relevance of monitoring for the purpose of analysis, particularly for forest plan and management planning documentation reviews. The company maintain a generic monitoring policy which is comprehensive, clear and suitable and this was suitably reviewed during the audit assessment.</p>   |
| <b>PRINCIPLE 9: HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE FORESTS</b>   |   |
| <b><i>Criterion 9.1 Evaluation to determine high conservation value attributes</i></b>          |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>None of the sites visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill) have any areas of SNW, ASNW and PAWS, and no conversion to non-forested land is taking place, as confirmed by interview with the Highfield Forestry Ltd Forest Managers, in addition to review of approved FC Forest Plans and associated management planning documentation. The forest managers carry out a FC Land Information Search (LIS) as a constraints check, and review of the SNH Ancient Woodland Inventory as part of management planning to check and confirm whether any such designation apply to each FMU. This is in addition to the evaluation carried out as part of the approved FC Forest Plan scoping and approval process (applicable to all sites visited during the audit assessment).</p>  |
| <b><i>Criterion 9.2 Consultation process</i></b>  |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>A comprehensive, current and well-laid out stakeholder list applicable to all Highfield Forestry Ltd certified woodlands was reviewed as fully compliant. It contains a general list of stakeholders in addition to those applicable to each certified FMU under the Highfield Forestry Resource Group Scheme.</p> <p>Highfield Forestry Ltd have declared their commitment to compliance with the UKWAS standard on their website (<a href="http://www.highfieldforestry.com">www.highfieldforestry.com</a>) and the web site has a facility to enable stakeholders to contact the company.</p> <p>Those FMUs covered by approved FC Forest Plans, as applicable to all three sites visited during the audit (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill), have undergone extensive public consultation via stakeholder consultation as required by the approval process (including scoping and placement on the FC Public Register).</p> <p>Forest Managers were able to provide evidence of plentiful and documented communication with a wide range of stakeholders, including local people and organisations, e.g. letters, e-mails and notes on site inspection forms. In addition, all sites visited as part of the audit assessment are all covered by approved FC Forest Plans (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill), and as such have undergone extensive public consultation via stakeholder consultation as required by the approval process (including scoping and placement on the FC Public Register).</p> |
| <b><i>Criterion 9.3 Measures to maintain and enhance high conservation value attributes</i></b> |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |   |

|   |  |
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| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>No such designated sites were present at any of the sites visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill &amp; Soutra Hill). There is however a recently adopted Special Protection Area (SPA) located adjacent to Rashiehill in consideration of the important Bean Goose which the approved FC Forest Plan makes consideration for in the text and on the mapping.</p> <p>Those FMUs covered by approved FC Forest Plans, as applicable to all three sites visited during the audit (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill), have undergone extensive public consultation via stakeholder consultation as required by the approval process (including scoping and placement on the FC Public Register).</p> |
| <b><i>Criterion 9.4 Monitoring to assess effectiveness</i></b>              |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>Highfield Forestry Ltd maintain a generic Monitoring Planning Review Policy, as reviewed, with specific activities detailed in this document for monitoring which include issues and records relating to fauna and flora.</p> <p>Of the Highfield Forestry Ltd managed FMU's visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill), analysis to date, including the scoping exercise carried out as part of the approval process for each FC Forest Plans valid over each FMU, and the results of this audit, confirm that no features of particular significance have been identified under this requirement, and therefore no evidence of non-compliance encountered.</p>                       |
| <b>PRINCIPLE 10: PLANTATIONS</b>  |  |
| <b><i>Criterion 10.1 Statement of objectives in the management plan</i></b> |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>Objectives are clearly stated within the approved FC Forest Plans, management plans and management planning documentation.</p> <p>See Criterion 7.1, (above).</p>   |
| <b><i>Criterion 10.2 Plantation design and layout</i></b>                   |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>  | <p>At Ribreck, the planning of restructuring of the larger area of even-aged conifer forest, where Ribreck is located centrally, has been previously developed part of a Forestry Commission led initiative to aid collaboration of neighbouring owners to restructure in compliment with each other. Although this initiative is no longer operational, the positive which have results from this previous effort and collaboration is clearly evident, e.g. the improved landscape character and habitat network enhancement.</p>  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>No new planting has taken place at any of the sites sampled and visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill). Other planting has taken place in the form of restocking (Ribreck) and these operations are consistent with current trends in the UK.</p> <p>Highfield Forestry Ltd follow best practice guidelines and obtain FC approval criteria for any new planting projects (as confirmed by review of the approved FC Forest Plans for all sites (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill).</p>   |
| <b><i>Criterion 10.3 Diversity in composition</i></b>                       |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>  |  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>All three of the sites visited as part of the audit assessment (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill - all even aged conifer plantations), have approved FC Forest Plans, and all have compliant phased felling and restocking plans to enable resultant diversity.</p> <p>At Rashiehill, sensitive planning has enabled the retention of small areas of native</p>  |

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|  | broadleaves which will be enhanced by additional broadleaved planting. Five areas of conifer retentions throughout the entire FMU are planned to be retained during the period of the approved plan as minimum intervention areas, as confirmed by the applicable approved FC Forest Plan.  |
| <b><i>Criterion 10.4 Species selection</i></b>             |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>   |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | <p>The Highfield Forestry Ltd approved FC Forest Plans (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill) and the management planning documentation reviewed (including maps), provide a clear and effective summary of the areas and percentages of different species for each site. E.g. the inclusion in each plan, as confirmed by review; a sub-compartment schedule which details compartment number; sub-compartment number; species; planting year, and area in hectares. Site visits confirmed compliance.</p> <p>The even-aged FMUs are being restructured appropriately with the approved FC Forest Plans reviewed (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill) confirming that in addition to the retention as far as possible of existing broadleaves, as seen at Rashiehill, there is the intention to plant native mixed broadleaves mixtures, including birch, willow, alder and rowan, to aid diversity.</p> <p>Planting is to be concentrated within the riparian zones of the minor watercourses present (Ribreck &amp; Rashiehill) and this is to assist with age-class diversity, landscape and biodiversity enhancement. Planting design will be mainly in species clumps on suitable soil types. All planted trees will be from native stock.</p> <p>No new woodlands were encountered during the audit.</p> |
| <b><i>Criterion 10.5 Restoration of natural forest</i></b> |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>   |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  | At Soutra Hill, the cull records (return dated 31.3.10) show that a number of hares have been taken from the site, however the records do not distinguish between brown and mountain hares, both of which are classified as UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) species. The shooting contract, dated 21.09.10 does not specify permission to shoot hares. No evidence is available to demonstrate that the impact of culling hares is required and that there is a specified management requirement to do so. See Minor CAR 02, UKWAS 6.4.2.   |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | <p>No cases of restoration of natural forest were encountered at any of the sites visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill).</p> <p>Forest Managers interviewed are aware of this requirement, and in a minor scale context, immediate open ground is maintained around archaeological sites. Appropriate details are outlined on maps and within the approved FC Forest Plan text as reviewed as compliant.</p>  |
| <b><i>Criterion 10.6 Impacts on soil and water</i></b>     |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>   |   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | <p>The felling and restocking design plans included within the approved FC Forest Plans for all of the sites visited (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill) comply with the UK Forest Water Guidelines and UKWAS.</p> <p>At both Ribreck and Rashiehill (an active harvesting site) coupe sizes are large, with felling coupes in excess of 20 hectares - the FC Forest Plan design plan provides approval for this and the scale of felling coupes seen was reviewed as compatible with landscape considerations and current plantation design. Operations also were seen to be making good consideration of the protection and maintenance of the soils and water.</p>   |
| <b><i>Criterion 10.7 Pests and diseases</i></b>            |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>   |   |

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| <b>Weaknesses</b>   | <p>Given that Ribreck is a block of forest that is contiguous with a number of large forest neighbours an association with the local fire group would be advantageous.</p> <p>The Highfield Forestry Ltd Standard Generic Fire Plan document outlines the requirement for each forest to have fire beaters visibly displayed in beater stands at established access points and other points within the FMUs. Each of the sites visited during the audit assessment (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra) did not appear to follow this policy guidance. Observation 03, UKWAS 5.1.5.</p>   |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>Highfield Forestry management is well aware of national plant health issues via information disseminated through the FC, Institute of Chartered Foresters and the forestry press, e.g. the particular concern at the present regarding Red Band Needle Blight on lodgepole pine (a species predominant at Ribreck and Rashiehill).</p> <p>Restructuring in line with the approved FC Forest Plans (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill) is leading to a more diverse age structure with improvements in the creation of future windfirm edges for coupes as previous large areas of a single age class are broken up with felling. From site inspection, there was visible evidence of increasing structural diversity of operational restructuring at Ribreck and Rashiehill, and that which is proposed for Soutra Hill. A more diverse forest structure will reduce the speed of fire movement. It will also allow more natural forest climate conditions including passage of air and incomplete canopy connection, both of which should make for less suitable conditions for the swift spread of pests and disease.</p> <p>Windthrow hazard assessments are used to anticipate problems and plan accordingly. Increasing diversity of plantations should help to reduce the threat of pest and disease problems. Managers interviewed had a good knowledge of the risks.</p> <p>Highfield Forestry Ltd Forestry Managers undertake site monitoring on a continual basis, which includes tree health, e.g. general Site Inspection forms.</p> <p>FC Forest Plan also contains reference to fire planning, including fire prevention.</p> <p>Management of wild deer including culling occurs at all properties sampled and visited during the audit assessment (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill), and clearly follows best practice and British Association of Shooting and Conservation (BACS) Code of Practice, as detailed within the management planning documentation and shooting lease agreements, as reviewed. Deer Management Plans are included within the approved FC Forest Plans (as reviewed for Ribreck and Rashiehill). A deer damage monitoring policy is clearly defined with each approved FC Forest Plans. At all sites sampled and visited there is effective deer control via contracts with the sporting tenant (Rashiehill and Soutra Hill) and by the Danish owners themselves at Ribreck.</p> <p>Highfield Forestry Ltd maintain a suitable Standard Generic Fire Plan document which is included in management planning documentation, as reviewed for Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill. Each approved FC Forest Plan also contains reference to fire planning, including fire prevention. (See 5.1.5 and 5.1.6 below) as reviewed as compliant during the audit inspection</p> <p>Managers are aware of best practice guidance and a careful and considered approach to the use of chemicals for assisting against potential pine weevil, <i>Hylobius abietis</i>, attack, and only implement application of suitable chemical control in certain cases. Other key methods used by Highfield Forestry Ltd Forest Managers to reduce the use of pesticides involve ground preparation such as mounding, where appropriate, and the use of plants supplied by nurseries already treated ('dipped') with insecticide where they judge the risk of attack insect to be sufficiently high. E.g. at Ribreck the restocking operations viewed have been planted using nursery applied pre-treated plants (Cyclohexanone – not listed on FSC Highly Hazardous list).</p> |
| <b><i>Criterion 10.8 Monitoring of impacts, species testing and tenure rights</i></b> |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>  | <p>Highfield Forestry Ltd maintains a generic monitoring policy which is comprehensive, clear and complaint, as reviewed during the audit. Specific activities detailed in this document for monitoring include: harvesting yield; chemicals and pesticides; woodland composition and structure; issues and records relating to fauna and flora; and economic and social aspects.</p>   |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>   |   |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | <p>Forest Managers interviewed understand the relevance of monitoring for the purpose of analysis, and the approved FC Forest Plans and associated management planning</p>  |

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|  | <p>documentation reviewed (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill) confirm a commitment by Highfield Forestry Ltd to make use of monitoring data. An effective electronic system on spreadsheet format for monitoring management planning review is maintained by the Highfield Forestry Ltd Forest Managers.</p> <p>Monitoring is undertaken on a continual basis with details held on site inspection forms, including the recording of any UKWAS non-compliance, which are then transferred and summarised on monitoring sheets, and thereafter appended on an on-going basis to the management planning documentation for management planning action as required. In addition, further specific operational detail is held and transferred as appropriate, e.g. felling reports. At site level, constraints maps and risk assessments are used to ensure that potentially impacted elements are identified prior to commencement of works, as reviewed for Ribreck (recent clearfelling of windblow, and restocking) and Rashiehill (current live clearfelling operations).</p> <p>Suitable monitoring records were reviewed as being recorded within the approved FC Forest Plans and associated management planning documentation for Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill.</p> <p>All sites visited are all covered by approved FC Forest Plans (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill), and have therefore undergone extensive public consultation via stakeholder consultation as required by the approval process (including scoping and placement on the FC Public Register). Review of communication was reviewed as confirmation – Rashieknowes Forest Plan Scoping report, which incorporates Rashiehill.</p> <p>Warning signs for current harvesting operations at Rashiehill were in evidence on site during the audit assessment.</p> <p>There was no evidence of public access restrictions other than for reasons of health &amp; safety during forestry operations or deer control at either of the sites sampled and visited during the audit assessment (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra Hill).</p> <p>No permissive or traditional uses, other than the provision of informal recreation were encountered.</p> |
| <b><i>Criterion 10.9 Plantations established in areas converted from natural forests after November 1994</i></b> |  |
| <b>Strengths</b>   |  |
| <b>Weaknesses</b>  |  |
| <b>Compliance</b>  | No plantations in this category.   |

## 10. CERTIFICATION DECISION

SGS considers that Highfield Forestry's forest management of its resource manager certification scheme can be certified as:

- i. There are no outstanding Major Corrective Action Requests
- ii. The outstanding Minor Corrective Action Requests do not preclude certification, but Highfield Forestry is required to take the agreed actions before January 2012. These will be verified by SGS QUALIFOR at the first surveillance to be carried out about 6 months from the date of the issuance of the certificate. If satisfactory actions have been taken, the CARs will be 'closed out'; otherwise, Minor CARs will be raised to Major CARs.
- iii. The management system, if implemented as described, is capable of ensuring that all of the requirements of the applicable standard(s) are met over the whole forest area covered by the scope of the evaluation;
- iv. The certificate holder has demonstrated, subject to the specified corrective actions, that the described system of management is being implemented consistently over the whole forest area covered by the scope of the certificate.



## 11. MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION

During the surveillance evaluation, it is assessed if there is continuing compliance with the requirements of the Qualifor Programme. Any areas of non-conformance with the QUALIFOR Programme are raised as one of two types of Corrective Action Request (CAR):

1. **Major CARs** - which must be addressed and closed out urgently with an agreed short time frame since the organisation is already a QUALIFOR certified organisation. Failure to close out within the agreed time frame can lead to suspension of the certificate.
2. **Minor CARs** - which must be addressed within an agreed time frame, and will normally be checked at the next surveillance visit

The full record of CARs raised over the certification period is listed under section 12 below.

The table below provides a progressive summary of findings for each surveillance. A complete record of observations demonstrating compliance or non-compliance with each criterion of the Forest Stewardship Standard is contained in a separate document that does not form part of the public summary.

| <b>MAIN EVALUATION</b>                 |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Issues that were hard to assess</b> | None  |
| <b>Number of CARs raised</b>           | No Major CARs and 3 minor CARs were raised. |
| <b>SURVEILLANCE 1</b>                  |   |
| <b>Issues that were hard to assess</b> |   |
| <b>Number of CARs closed</b>           |   |
| <b>Nr of CARs remaining open</b>       |   |
| <b>New CARs raised</b>                 |   |
| <b>Recommendation</b>                  |   |
| <b>SURVEILLANCE 2</b>                  |   |
| <b>Issues that were hard to assess</b> |   |
| <b>Number of CARs closed</b>           |   |
| <b>Nr of CARs remaining open</b>       |   |
| <b>Nr of New CARs raised</b>           |   |
| <b>Recommendation</b>                  |   |
| <b>SURVEILLANCE 3</b>                  |   |
| <b>Issues that were hard to assess</b> |   |
| <b>Number of CARs closed</b>           |   |
| <b>Nr of CARs remaining open</b>       |   |
| <b>Nr of New CARs raised</b>           |   |
| <b>Recommendation</b>                  |   |
| <b>SURVEILLANCE 4</b>                  |   |
| <b>Issues that were hard to assess</b> |   |
| <b>Number of CARs closed</b>           |   |

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Nr of CARs remaining open |  |
| Nr of New CARs raised     |  |
| Recommendation            |  |

## 12. RECORD OF CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUESTS (CARS)

There were no CARs outstanding from the previous certification period.

| CAR # | Indicator   | CAR Detail   |             |           |                   |              |           |
|-------|---|--|-------------|-----------|-------------------|--------------|-----------|
|       |   | Date Recorded>   | 14 Jan 2011 | Due Date> | Next surveillance | Date Closed> | dd mmm yy |
| 01    | SGS Qualifor<br>Group Scheme Checklist<br>AD34 (S.6.2d) | Date Recorded>   | 14 Jan 2011 | Due Date> | Next surveillance | Date Closed> | dd mmm yy |
|       |   | <b>Non-Conformance: Compliance &amp; conformance</b>   |             |           |                   |              |           |
|       |   | The Highfield Forestry Ltd Resource Group Scheme Membership records are not current and accurate.  |             |           |                   |              |           |
|       |   | <b>Objective Evidence:</b>   |             |           |                   |              |           |
|       |   | At Soutra Hill, although there is a separate summary forest plan for the certified area (which has been significantly reduced since the last certificate due to wind farm development), there still requires to be very clear distinction in the documents between the certified area and the non-certified area and as such the completion of the review and up-date requires some urgency. Furthermore, the Highfield Forestry Ltd document; 'Group Certification Scheme – Highfield Forestry Clients, Membership List', which lists all certified members, was reviewed as detailing the wrong certified area for Rashiehill (150 hectares rather than the current accurate area of 81 hectares). It is important that systematic and timeous updating of documentation takes place to enable compliant management practices to take place. |             |           |                   |              |           |
|       |   | Member records require to be accurate to comply with the SGS Associated Document: 'AD34-02 SGS Qualifor Group and Resource Scheme Checklist'; Section 6.2d 'Document Control - Control of Members' Records'.   |             |           |                   |              |           |
| 02    | UKWAS 6.4.2<br>FSC-UK 6.2 7                             | Date Recorded>   | 14 Jan 2011 | Due Date> | Next surveillance | Date Closed> | dd mmm yy |
|       |   | <b>Non-Conformance: Native game &amp; quarry</b>   |             |           |                   |              |           |
|       |   | Shooting of hares, a UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) species is taking place at Soutra Hill with no evidence that Highfield Forestry Ltd has considered the impacts of culling on this species. The shooting contract, dated 21.09.10 does not specify permission to shoot hares and the cull records do not distinguish between brown or mountain hares.  |             |           |                   |              |           |
|       |   | <b>Objective Evidence:</b>   |             |           |                   |              |           |
|       |   | Highfield Forestry Ltd Forest Managers have not considered the impact of culling on the population of hares at Soutra Hill, nor provided clarification that culling is required as part of management planning. There is no clear identification of the actual location where the hares have been shot, and this is particularly significant given that at Soutra Hill the area of certified forest has been significantly reduced due to the Dunlaws windfarm development and now only encompasses the remaining afforested area.   |             |           |                   |              |           |
|       |   | <b>Close-out evidence:</b>   |             |           |                   |              |           |
| 03    | UKWAS 8.1.1   | Date Recorded>   | 14 Jan 2011 | Due Date> | Next surveillance | Date Closed> | dd mmm yy |
|       |   | <b>Non-Conformance: Health &amp; Safety – Emergency Planning</b>   |             |           |                   |              |           |

| CAR # | Indicator       | CAR Detail  |
|-------|-----------------|---|
|       | FSC-UK<br>4.2.1 | <p>The Highfield Forestry Ltd Health &amp; Safety and Emergency Planning Policy does not include sufficient contingency planning information relating to detailed evacuation procedures from operational sites during an emergency situation, nor does the contract risk assessment documents include detail on appropriate emergency evacuation measures.</p> <p><b>Objective Evidence:</b></p> <p>Although the Highfield Forestry Ltd work agreement document includes an appropriate work-site risk assessment with identification of reference to the AFAG industry guides and codes of practice; general contact information and details; and, Health &amp; Safety Emergency Procedures, there is no reference within these documents applicable to contingency planning for emergency evacuation procedures.</p> <p>The Highfield Forestry Ltd Health &amp; Safety and Emergency Planning Policy does not include sufficient contingency planning information relating to detailed evacuation procedures from operational sites during an emergency situation, nor does the contract risk assessment documents include detail on specific appropriate emergency evacuation measures from remote locations, particularly those sites with rough or limited access, e.g. for conventional ambulance vehicles or helicopters. Fire beaters were not present at prominent locations at either of the three sites visited during the audit assessment (observation 03, 5.1.5 also refers).</p> <p><b>Close-out evidence:</b></p> |

### 13. RECORD OF OBSERVATIONS

|    |   |  |              |                        |             |
|----|---|--|--------------|------------------------|-------------|
| 24 | UKWAS<br>5.1.3<br><br>FSCUK<br>6.2.4    | <b>Date Recorded&gt;</b>   | 29 July 2010 | <b>Date Closed&gt;</b> | 14 Jan 2011 |
|    |   | <b>Observation: Cooperative deer management</b>  |              |                        |             |
|    |   | Although there is a sound approach to regulating the impact of deer there is potential for development of cooperative deer management. West Strone is a block of forest that is contiguous with large holdings belonging to UPM Tilhill and Forest Enterprise. Although there is some contact between these organisations a fully coordinated approach is lacking.   |              |                        |             |
|    |   | <b>Follow-up evidence:</b>   |              |                        |             |
| 27 | UKWAS<br>6.2.1<br><br>FSCUK<br>10.5.2   | <b>Date Recorded&gt;</b>   | 29 July 2010 | <b>Date Closed&gt;</b> | 14 Jan 2011 |
|    |   | <b>Observation: Natural Reserves</b>   |              |                        |             |
|    |   | As designations for different types of conservation management, there is confusion between Long Term Retentions (LTRs) and Natural Reserves (NRs). At Barstobrick, Auchlin Rig and West Strone some NRs are referred to in Management Plans as LTRs, though they are clearly being managed as NRs.   |              |                        |             |
|    |   | <b>Follow-up evidence:</b>   |              |                        |             |
| 01 | UKWAS<br>1.1.1<br><br>FSC - UK<br>1.1.1 | <b>Date Recorded&gt;</b>   | 14 Jan 2010  | <b>Date Closed&gt;</b> | dd MMM yy   |
|    |   | <b>Observation: Compliance and Conformance</b>   |              |                        |             |
|    |   | Throughout the audit and during verbal interview with the Highfield Forestry Ltd Forest Managers there was frequent use of un-technical terminology in relation to the reference to the UKWAS and the FSC Forestry Standard. There requires to be a clear distinction made between the terminology used to describe the FSC Forestry Standard and the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS), thus preventing any potential confusion in communication within the certification chain. |              |                        |             |
|    |   | <b>Follow-up evidence:</b>   |              |                        |             |

|    |                                     |  |             |              |           |
|----|-------------------------------------|--|-------------|--------------|-----------|
| 02 | UKWAS<br>2.1.3<br>FSC - UK<br>7.2.1 | Date Recorded>   | 14 Jan 2010 | Date Closed> | dd MMM yy |
|    |                                     | <b>Observation: Management Planning Review</b>   |             |              |           |
|    |                                     | The Highfield Forestry Ltd Forest Managers carry out on-going management planning review by incorporating site visit information into management planning documentation, and also by the use of an electronic system in the form of a spreadsheet which assists and enables them to monitor and identify detail relating to FMU management planning documentation review. It is important however, that systematic and timeous updating of documentation takes place to enable compliant management practices to take place.<br><br>In addition, the Highfield Forestry Ltd Health & Safety and Emergency Planning Policy is scheduled for review and this is evidently required due to various detailed inaccuracies relating to industry codes of practice and guidance – listing of FASTCo guides now superseded by AFAG. |             |              |           |
|    |                                     | <b>Follow-up evidence:</b>   |             |              |           |
| 03 | UKWAS<br>5.1.5<br>FSC- UK<br>10.7.8 | Date Recorded>   | 14 Jan 2010 | Date Closed> | dd MMM yy |
|    |                                     | <b>Observation: Fire planning</b>  |             |              |           |
|    |                                     | The Highfield Forestry Ltd Standard Generic Fire Plan document outlines the requirement for each forest to have fire beaters visibly displayed in beater stands at established access points and other points within the FMUs. Each of the sites visited during the audit assessment (Ribreck, Rashiehill and Soutra) did not appear to follow this policy guidance  |             |              |           |
|    |                                     | <b>Follow-up evidence:</b>   |             |              |           |
| 04 | UKWAS<br>6.1.1<br>FSC – UK<br>9.1.1 | Date Recorded>   | 14 Jan 2010 | Date Closed> | dd MMM yy |
|    |                                     | <b>Observation: Protection of rare species, habitats and natural resources</b>   |             |              |           |
|    |                                     | Given that both the approved FC Forest Plans for Ribreck (November 2010), and Rashiehill, outlines a programme of continuing increasing forest restructuring operations there requires to be a more focused pro-active approach adopted by Highfield Forestry Ltd Forestry Managers to identify, document and monitor species of significance and value within each site which may colonise and establish, e.g. badger, otters, pine martin, and red squirrel.   |             |              |           |
|    |                                     | <b>Follow-up evidence:</b>   |             |              |           |
| 05 | UKWAS<br>6.2.2<br>FSC – UK<br>6.2.1 | Date Recorded>   | 14 Jan 2010 | Date Closed> | dd MMM yy |
|    |                                     | <b>Observation: Deadwood</b>   |             |              |           |
|    |                                     | Although the Highfield Forestry Ltd Forest Managers interviewed clearly demonstrated an awareness of deadwood management ,with the pursuit of opportunities on a site specific basis, and each of the approved Forest Plans reviewed for the sites visited (Ribreck and Rashiehill) make reference to deadwood conservation, it would be useful to further expand site specific deadwood.  |             |              |           |
|    |                                     | <b>Follow-up evidence:</b>   |             |              |           |
| 06 | UKWAS<br>8.4.1                      | Date Recorded>   | 14 Jan 2010 | Date Closed> | dd MMM yy |
|    |                                     | <b>Observation: Insurance</b>  |             |              |           |

|  |                           |  |
|--|---------------------------|--|
|  | <b>FSC – UK<br/>4.5.3</b> | The Standard requires that public liability insurance specification for timber harvesting operations is consistent with industry recognised levels regarded as adequate. The forest industry expected normal for contractor insurance cover - third party and public liability, is £5,000,000 and this was suitably specified in the contract documentation seen as applicable to the most recent standing sale at Ribreck. For the current live standing timber sale applicable to Rashiehill however, the specified amount as reviewed was detailed as a minimum of £3,000,000 (although £5,000,000 was maintained by contractor). Highfield Forestry Ltd is required to maintain consistency in the specification of a minimum insurance cover for contractors of £5,000,000 to mitigate against any unnecessary risk exposure. |
|  |                           | <b>Follow-up evidence:</b>   |
|  |                           |  |

#### 14. RECORD OF STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS AND INTERVIEWS

| Nr                     | Comment  | Response   |
|------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Main Evaluation</b> |  |  |
| 1                      | ENGO:<br>No comment to make  | No comment   |
| 2                      | ENGO<br>No comment to make   | No comment   |
| 3                      | Private utility provider:<br>Little experience with dealing with Highfield Forestry representative, so no further comment to make.   | Acknowledged and passed on to Highfield Forestry.  |
| 4                      | Statutory Authority:<br>Assistant Inspector for Ancient Monuments<br>Wales:<br>No management issues of concern.  | Acknowledged and passed on to Highfield Forestry.  |
| 5                      | Statutory Authority: Scottish Natural Heritage, Area Officer – Grampian, - Ribreck, Dallas:<br><br>In line with the comments raised during the Forest Plan approval scoping exercise, no concerns regarding the level and input of management in relation to habitats and species of significance. Although there are UK BAB species known to be present in the locality, the current awareness of this by forest managers is sufficient.<br><br>Pleased that positive restructuring of even-aged conifer forest is taking place to enable the encouragement of diversity to provide long-term biodiversity enhancement. | Acknowledged and passed on to Highfield Forestry.<br><br>Follow up at next surveillance opportunity – particularly identification and monitoring of any species found to be present. |

| Nr                     | Comment  | Response  |
|------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Main Evaluation</b> |  |   |
| 1                      | <p>ENGO:<br/>No comment to make</p>  | No comment  |
| 2                      | <p>ENGO<br/>No comment to make</p>   | No comment  |
| 3                      | <p>Private utility provider:<br/>Little experience with dealing with Highfield Forestry representative, so no further comment to make.</p>   | Acknowledged and passed on to Highfield Forestry. |
| 4                      | <p>Statutory Authority:<br/>Assistant Inspector for Ancient Monuments<br/>Wales:<br/>No management issues of concern.</p>  | Acknowledged and passed on to Highfield Forestry. |
| 6                      | <p>Statutory Authority: Forestry Commission<br/>Scotland Woodland Officer, Central<br/>Scotland Conservancy - Rashiehills, Falkirk:<br/>'Highfield Forestry managers are highly competent and very well regarded.'<br/>Aware that FMU is FSC certified.<br/>Relatively content with lines of communication with Highfield Forestry and</p> | Acknowledged and passed on to Highfield Forestry. |
| 7                      | <p>Private Limited company: Operations &amp; Maintenance Manager for Dunlaw Windfarm, Soutra Hill:<br/><br/>Have had very little requirement to deal with Highfield Forestry in past, although is aware that this will most likely change as the remaining area of Soutra Forest which is standing begins to be operational.</p>           | Acknowledged and passed on to Highfield Forestry. |
| 8                      | <p>Stalker maintaining lease agreement for deer control at Soutra Hill:<br/><br/>Good working relationship with Highfield Forestry Ltd and this has been in place for over 10 years.</p>   | Acknowledged and passed on to Highfield Forestry. |
| 9                      | <p>Owner of adjacent, but not contiguous woodland at Ribreck, Elgin:<br/><br/>Does not live permanently at the site, but has had good lines of communication with Highfield Forestry Forest Managers, and no concerns.</p>   | Acknowledged and passed on to Highfield Forestry. |
| 10                     | <p>ENGO: Keeper of Archaeology with Falkirk Museum –<br/><br/>No comment to make.</p>  | No comment  |
| <b>Surveillance 1</b>  |  |   |
|                        |  |   |

| Nr                     | Comment  | Response  |
|------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Main Evaluation</b> |  |   |
| 1                      | ENGO:<br>No comment to make  | No comment  |
| 2                      | ENGO<br>No comment to make   | No comment  |
| 3                      | Private utility provider:<br>Little experience with dealing with Highfield Forestry representative, so no further comment to make. | Acknowledged and passed on to Highfield Forestry. |
| 4                      | Statutory Authority:<br>Assistant Inspector for Ancient Monuments<br>Wales:<br>No management issues of concern.                    | Acknowledged and passed on to Highfield Forestry. |
| <b>Surveillance 2</b>  |  |   |
|                        |  |   |
|                        |  |   |
| <b>Surveillance 3</b>  |  |   |
|                        |  |   |
|                        |  |   |
| <b>Surveillance 4</b>  |  |   |
|                        |  |   |
|                        |  |   |

## 15. RECORD OF COMPLAINTS

| Nr | Detail                                    |                 |           |
|----|---|-----------------|-----------|
|    | Complaint:                                | Date Recorded > | dd MMM yy |
|    | No complaints have been received to date. |                 |           |
|    | Objective evidence obtained:              |                 |           |
|    |   |                 |           |
|    | Close-out information:                    | Date Closed >   | dd MMM yy |
|    |   |                 |           |

## ANNEXURE 1

### List of Group Certificate Members

| Name of member                                  | Contact Details                           | Geographical Co-ordinates |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| H.Cleugh Forest Co (Hollins Cleugh)             | All members, per:                         | 55deg 6' N, 2deg 45' W    |
| Premier Woodlands (Gartochorrans)               | Highfield Forestry Ltd                    | 56deg 2' N, 4deg 29' W    |
| F.Batten Trust (Derry)                          | Suite A2, Moncrieff Business              | 56deg 23' N, 4deg 11' W   |
| A.Thomson (Barstobrick)                         | Centre                                    | 54deg 55' N, 4deg 4' W    |
| West Strone Forest Partnership<br>(West Strone) | Riverside Business Park.<br>Friarton Road | 55deg 60' N, 5deg 17' W   |
| Auchlin Rig Forest Co. (Auchlin Rig)            | PERTH, PH2 8DF                            | 55deg 24'N, 4deg 21'W     |
| Pennal Forestry Co (Pennal)                     |   | 52deg 35'N, 3deg 56'W     |
| A Grundy (Hafod Fraith)                         |   | 52deg 49'N, 3deg 52'W     |
| Carsten & Lars Bonlokke (Ribreck)               |   | 57deg 30'N, 3deg 28'W     |
| International Forestry Fund<br>(Rashiehill)     |   | 55deg 55'N, 3deg 53'W     |
| Soutra Forest Company (Soutra Hill)             |   | 55deg 48'N, 2deg 53'W     |

**End of Public Summary**