

Stakeholder Meeting – 31st August 2023

Summary notes

Introduction

Feedback on document shared end of July. Steve gave thanks for the circa 90` different points of feedback which NRW have been considering.

Item 1 WG

Proposed implementation date of 1st April. Advice is currently with the Minister proposing an implementation date of 1st April, WG will provide an update as soon as the Minister gives this due consideration. (*Implementation date of 1st April is now confirmed by WG*).

Item 2 Update

Documents uploaded to the Citizen Space page for review, apologies that these were late. Documents released:

- updated Baseline and Tier 2 Conditions
- updated guidance for amending, suspending and revoking licences

Review of comments received end of July, some points are still outstanding

Revisions to Baseline Conditions

- update on incident reporting amended in line with other NRW regimes
- veteran trees amended in line with UKFS
- deadwood – updated
- EPS and W&CA reviewed wording for *a suitably experienced individual, preferably an ecologist*,
- Birds nesting and Schedule 1 birds – add guidance to website and buffer zones

Feedback

- will there be additional consideration for the impact of erosion on soils? Baseline condition is inline with UKFS requirements.
- consider for INNS? This will need to be considered as part of the felling operation and biosecurity put in place.
- will the Conditions apply to the Welsh Government Woodland Estate?
The Welsh Government Woodland Estate is crown land, therefore it is exempt from the Felling Licence Process. Forest Resource plans are developed and delivered

for the Welsh Government Woodland Estate, these are in line with UKFS and UKWAS requirements.

- veteran trees, how can these be identified? The UKFS definition will be used to identify Veteran Trees.
- which Baseline Conditions go over and above UKFS? Only those where stakeholder feedback has been such that the Baseline conditions have been increased over and above UKFS.
- will training on the UK Forestry Standard be provided for relevant NRW Staff? If needed, this will be identified in training plans.

Tier 2 Conditions

These will be identified and added to the Felling Licence in consultation with the applicant.

Feedback:

- why is there no condition for bats? NRW is developing guidance for applicants to identify and manage their woodland specifically focused on bats.
- concern raised over the timing of felling around the Red Squirrel Focal areas. Due consideration needs to be given to the commercial impact of this limitation and impact of encouraging good forest management. NRW to consider feedback.
- Ancient Woodland conditions, need to review terminology and the timing of felling on sites where ground conditions may be challenged. NRW to consider feedback.

Amend, Suspend and Revoke

- reviewed draft guidance
- NRW have reviewed and now removed the limitation of 10% for amendments
- NRW are proposing 60 days for processing amendments
- references to legislation have been added as per external stakeholder request

Update on the Website

Working with digital colleagues to develop the following:

- guidance to help applicants navigate the application process
- guidance on how to appeal will be delivered by Welsh Government, with links to their webpage added to the NRW Site.
- giving consideration to revising and developing the application form

Next Steps

- meeting for 27th September, hope to share mocked up website
- provide information and proposed dates for awareness raising sessions
- working with our colleagues in Communications to identify opportunities to raise awareness of the new powers across the Forestry and Agri Sector