



## Equality Impact Assessment Template

Before carrying out EqlA, you should familiarise yourself with the University's EqlA Policy Statement and Guidance and Checklist Notes, and undertake our online training on Equality and Diversity and EqlA. These, along with further information and resources, are available at [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/equality-diversity/impact-assessment](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/equality-diversity/impact-assessment)

EqlA covers policies, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services, but will be referred to as 'policy/practice' hereinafter.

**A. Policy/Practice (name or brief description): **Forest and Peatland Programme****

The Forest and Peatland programme sits within the Department of Social Responsibility and is the University of Edinburgh's long-term commitment to capture and store its unavoidable carbon emissions, and benefit nature, through restoring peatlands and expanding forests in Scotland. The Forest and Peatland programme will create woodland and restore peatlands on sites both owned by the university and in partnerships with other landowners in Scotland. The programme will sequester carbon, increase biodiversity, provide research opportunities for academics and students and engage with local communities to maximise community benefits.

**B. Reason for Equality Impact Assessment (Mark **yes** against the applicable reason):**

- Proposed new policy/practice - **Yes**
- Proposed change to an existing policy/practice
- Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice
- Other (please state):

**C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:**

Name: Yvonne Edwards

Job title: Forest, Peat and Rural Land Manager

School/service/unit: Department of Social Responsibility and Sustainability

**D. An Impact Assessment should be carried out if any of the following apply to the policy/practice, if it:**

- affects primary or high level functions of the University. **Yes**
- is relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty 'needs' as set out in the Policy and Guidance)? **Yes**
- It is one which interested parties could reasonably expect the University to have carried out an EqlA? **Yes**

The University of Edinburgh has committed to become zero carbon by 2040. The University's Climate Strategy 2016 lays out a comprehensive whole institution approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation in order to achieve its ambitious targets. The Forest and Peatland Programme is responsible for delivering the University's long-term commitment to capture and store its unavoidable carbon emissions, and benefit nature, through restoring peatlands and expanding forests in Scotland.

Over an initial period of 50 years, by investing in tree planting and restoring peatlands in partnership with others, the University expects to remove almost 1 million tonnes of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. This will also yield significant benefits to the institution's core purposes of research, learning and teaching, as well as enhancing biodiversity for the sites.

The programme has a varied approach and will be working on land that the university already owns, through the acquisition of new land and by partnering and co-investing with landowners seeking sustainable land use. All sites will be in Scotland and have public access provided for by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and Scottish Outdoor Access Code. The landscape of the project areas will change over time as peatlands are restored, open habitats improved and woodlands developed. The approach for each site will depend on its location and natural characteristics. The programme will change the land use of sites and may necessitate herbivore management, tree protection measures through temporary fencing / tree guards, and conservation grazing.

In addition to carbon capture and biodiversity gain there is a focus on community. In line with the university's Community Plan 2025, the Forest and Peatland team will:

- aim to operate on a 'no surprises' basis with community partners on developments of our estate which could impact local communities and be as open and transparent as possible about our future plans.
- work with community partners to protect our shared cultural heritage and enhance access to green spaces.
- facilitate knowledge exchange between the University and local communities, including community groups.
- continue to regularly engage with elected representatives, community councils and neighbourhood groups as part of our 'business as usual', in order to build and maintain long-lasting relationships.

Internally within the university the Forest and Peatland programme will provide opportunities for research by academic staff, and a variety of student projects e.g. living labs, PhDs. Externally the project team will work with communities around our owned sites through community consultation, access to research findings, and provide opportunities for people to connect with our sites through volunteering, public events, educational opportunities, and targeted outreach. On partnership sites we will work with our partners to promote and support engagement opportunities.

The university owned sites are:

- **Drumbrae:** 430-hectare site in the Ochils, northeast of Bridge of Allan, near the city of Stirling. No public transport access to site, formal car park at Pendreich, informal parking at Cockburn Woods and road side parking.
- **Rullion Green Wood:** 30-hectare site in the Pentland Hills Regional Park. Accessed from Flotterstone car park and has public transport bus links from Edinburgh.
- **Barvick Burn Woods:** 431-hectare site, previously part of the Glenturret Estate, near Crieff in Perthshire. No public transport to site, formal car park at Loch Turret reservoir.

While owned projects sites are within a two-hour drive of Edinburgh, partnership sites may be located anywhere in Scotland. Our partnership agreements will cover a range of landowners from large estates to community-based initiatives.

## E. Equality Groups

To which equality groups is the policy/practice relevant and why? (add notes against the following applicable equality group/s)

- age
- disability
- race (including ethnicity and nationality)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- marriage or civil partnership

The Forest and Peatland programme will involve working with local communities, members of the public, landowners, staff and students across the University, therefore it has the potential to impact all nine protected characteristics. In particular, we feel that the protected characteristics of age, disability and race are most likely to be impacted.

The programme will provide positive benefits to local communities and people through the restoration of peatland, open habitat improvements and woodland creation to help tackle the climate and nature crisis. Likewise, there will be increased opportunities for learning, research and knowledge exchange both within the University and externally with communities.

When considering disability, research has shown that access to nature brings benefits to physical health and mental being. It should be noted that our sites are upland in nature, and all areas of the sites may not be accessible to some disabled people, due to ground conditions, lack of welfare facilities, and the general landscape characteristics. We aim to make access as easy as possible for as many people as possible in line with Paths for All Outdoor Accessibility Guidance. We will work with

university staff and groups to facilitate site visits. We will provide advice and support adjustments, which could include help with transport, personal assistance, visiting parts of the sites with formal paths and tracks.

All sites will be in Scotland and have public access provided for by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and Scottish Outdoor Access Code. Anyone can access our sites freely and without the need to provide any personal information. Through our community engagement activities, we aim to work with a wide range of people to maximise benefits and remove any barriers as far as possible. Information may be collected from groups and individuals that we work with for Equality, Inclusion and Diversity monitoring and also to ensure the Health and Safety of everyone involved.

As the Forest and Peatland programme is a long-term project, over an initial 50 years, we understand that things will likely change over time. The EqIA will be reviewed annually, and this will allow for amendments following new research or through feedback and engagement with communities.

The table in the following pages, examines potential impacts on the three protected equality groups we feel may be most likely to be affected and proposed mitigation measures.

Equality Group	Research	Impacts	Mitigation for negative impacts
<p><b>Age</b></p>	<p>University student population (49,740 students) by age in 2022/23: 17 years or under 6%, 18-20 years 46%, 21-24 years 23%, 25+ years 25% (<a href="#">Factsheet of Student Figures, 2023</a>)</p> <p>According to recent research by <a href="#">Students Organising for Sustainability</a> in 2023, 88% of student respondents feel that they can have fun and enjoy themselves in nature; however only 1% of respondents actively engage in conservation activities. 64% of respondents feel that their university or college should provide opportunities for students to experience nature.</p> <p>Scotland's population is ageing. There are now over one million people aged 65 and over (1,091,000). This is over a quarter of a million higher than the number of people under 15 (832,300) (<a href="#">Scotland's Census, 2022</a>).</p> <p>Visits more likely to involve a walk of less than 2 miles included those taken by people aged 55 or over (<a href="#">SNH, 2017-18</a>).</p> <p>Barriers for older people using the outdoors are multiple and more complex than reduced health</p>	<p>All age groups will have access to project sites, which will be more biodiverse and provide access to nature.</p> <p>Potential of positive impacts through outreach work by the Community Ranger to facilitate opportunities for a range of people to get involved, visit, learn about our sites and connect with nature. Externally this could include schools, youth groups, organisations that support families, and older age groups.</p> <p>Potential positive impact on student and staff population with the university with opportunities to get involved through research, volunteering, learning, study visits, nature connection.</p>	<p>Follow Paths for All <a href="#">Outdoor Accessibility Guidance</a>.</p> <p>Community consultation and research at each site to understand who uses the site, how people use the site, where they access and where they go. Findings used to inform land management plan and community outreach work to target missing audiences.</p> <p>Use least restrictive option, so that access is as easy as it can be for as many people as possible. This could include looking at seating and resting points for people on more accessible routes or locations.</p> <p>Community Ranger will work with local groups to promote and facilitate visits and activity, with a focus on reducing barriers that</p>

Equality Group	Research	Impacts	Mitigation for negative impacts
	<p>and mobility associated with aging. Other barriers included lack of or reduced social connections, feelings of fragility and vulnerability, lack of motivation and negative attitudes towards outdoor recreation (<a href="#">James Hutton Institute, 2018</a>).</p> <p>Outdoor learning is a key element of the Curriculum for Excellence. A report by the Scottish Government identified the need to 'enhance opportunities for outdoor learning so they are more frequent and broader in scope'. (<a href="#">Nature Scot Research Report 1313, 2023</a>)</p> <p>The frequency of childhood visits to woodlands is the single most important predictor of how often people visit woodlands as adults. Those who visited woodlands often as children are more likely to go walking alone in woodlands as adults. (<a href="#">Forestry Commission Scotland, 2004</a>)</p>	<p>Potential negative impact for older population due to complex barriers that people may face accessing the outdoors and our sites.</p>	<p>any age groups may face, including older age groups.</p>
<b>Disability</b>	<p>According to the <a href="#">Scottish Census, 2011</a>, 19.6% of people were limited by a long-term health problem or disability. Two of the most common disabilities were: deafness or partial hearing</p>	<p>Our project sites are upland environments, remote in places, with varying path surfaces, steep slopes, uneven ground, and have</p>	<p>Follow Paths for All <a href="#">Outdoor Accessibility Guidance</a> and meet legislative requirements under the Equality Act 2010. Use least restrictive option, so that access is</p>

Equality Group	Research	Impacts	Mitigation for negative impacts
	<p>loss and physical disability. Each of these affected about 7% of Scotland’s population.</p> <p>Within the University student population certain disabilities are common; those related to mental health, neurodiversity and specific learning differences such as dyslexia but others, such as mobility disabilities, are lower than the population average based on 2011 Census (<a href="#">Disability &amp; Learning Support Service Student Statistics 2022/23</a>).</p> <p>5.1% of University staff have declared a disability (<a href="#">EDI Data Report, 2023</a>).</p> <p>Disabled people are one of the population groups least likely to report using the outdoors on a weekly basis (<a href="#">James Hutton Institute, 2018</a>).</p> <p>Visits more likely to involve a walk of less than 2 miles included those taken by people with a long-term illness or disability (52% of these visits compared to 30% of visits taken by people without a long-term condition) (<a href="#">SNH, 2017-18</a>).</p>	<p>very limited facilities, e.g. no visitor centres, waymarked trails, toilets. This means that all areas of our sites are unlikely to be accessible to all.</p> <p>The introduction of temporary deer fencing and changes to ground conditions may have a negative impact on all people including people with disabilities accessing parts of the landscape.</p> <p>Improvements to access arrangements can have a positive effect by removing barriers for all people but can particularly increase access for people with a physical disability or sensory impairment. Improvements could include removing redundant gates and providing gaps instead.</p>	<p>as easy as it can be for as many people as possible. For example, providing gaps, two-way self-closing gates for deer fences, no stiles, removing redundant gates. Where formal paths or areas of hard standing exist, they will be maintained.</p> <p>Target access improvements to the areas where they would bring the most benefit and improve access to the landscape.</p> <p>At our Drumbrae and Rullion Green Wood sites, we will provide community activity areas. These will be designated at more accessible locations, e.g. on flatter ground, accessible from roads, formal paths, parking available nearby. Accessibility will be considered in the design or development of these areas to</p>

Equality Group	Research	Impacts	Mitigation for negative impacts
	<p>There is a wealth of evidence that supports the physical and mental health benefits of being outdoors, in nature and woodlands. The value of health benefits associated with outdoor recreation within the UK was estimated to be between £6.2 billion and £8.4 billion in 2020 (<a href="#">ONS, 2022</a>).</p>	<p>Where formal paths or areas of hard standing exist, they will be maintained. Improvements to access will be focussed to areas of our sites where they will have the biggest positive impact.</p> <p>Potential of positive impacts through outreach work by the Community Ranger to facilitate opportunities for a diverse range of people to get involved, visit and learn about our sites. This includes both internal and external audiences.</p> <p>Promotion of health and wellbeing benefits of spending time outdoors and in nature. Some benefits include improving your mood, reducing stress, helping with anxiety and depression, boosting relaxation,</p>	<p>allow access to as many people as possible.</p> <p>Community consultation and research at each site to understand who uses the site, how people use the site, where they access and where they go. Findings used to inform land management plan and community outreach work to target missing audiences.</p> <p>Community Ranger will work with communities and Land Manager to resolve any access issues.</p> <p>Community Ranger and Academic Manager will work with the academic community and internal groups to ensure no disabled student or staff member is unfairly disadvantaged and that opportunities are open to everyone. This could include assisting with transport, personal</p>



Equality Group	Research	Impacts	Mitigation for negative impacts
		<p>encouraging activity, helping you feel more connected to nature.</p>	<p>support, visiting the most accessible parts of a site, providing access to resources for learning, or through classroom-based activities.</p> <p>Accessibility must be considered when we produce any new materials or resources. We will work with our department Communications team and ensure that accessibility requirements are included and adhered to in any work with external consultants.</p> <p>Provide simple and accurate information on any on site signage / interpretation / websites to allow people to make informed decisions about taking access.</p> <p>When hosting public events off site, we will provide access information and use venues that have appropriate facilities, e.g.</p>

Equality Group	Research	Impacts	Mitigation for negative impacts
			<p>parking, wheelchair access, toilet facilities, hearing induction loops.</p> <p>For on-site events, we will provide clear access information and make events as inclusive as possible by using more accessible areas of our sites wherever possible.</p> <p>We will meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2, AA. Our EdWeb pages are regularly tested and have up to date accessibility statement in line with The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.</p> <p>Our Geospatial Analyst will undertake manual accessibility testing and provide accessibility statements for any GIS story maps / dashboards.</p>

Equality Group	Research	Impacts	Mitigation for negative impacts
<p><b>Race</b></p>	<p>In the latest census the majority of people in Scotland chose 'Scottish' (77.7%) or 'Other British' (9.4%) within the White category.</p> <p>12.9% of people in Scotland had a minority ethnic background. 'Minority ethnic group' is used here to refer to all other ethnic groups. This includes some ethnic groups that were in the White category on the census form such as Irish, Polish, Gypsy/Traveller, Roma and Showman/Showwoman.</p> <p>7% of the population identified as Asian, African, Caribbean or Black, Arab, Mixed or Other ethnic groups. (<a href="#">Scottish Census, 2022</a>)</p> <p>13.2% of University staff belong to a black, Asian, minority ethnic group. Non-UK domiciled BAME students account for 64.5% of undergraduate entrants in 2021/2. UK-domiciled BAME students constitute a much smaller proportion of the University's undergraduate entrants, representing 14.1% of UK entrants at this level in 2021/22 (<a href="#">EDI Data Report, 2023</a>).</p>	<p>Potential of positive impacts through outreach work by the Community Ranger to facilitate opportunities for a diverse range of people to get involved, visit and learn about our sites. This includes both internal and external audiences.</p> <p>Community Ranger will work with local groups to promote and facilitate visits and activity, with a focus on reducing barriers that ethnic minority groups may experience.</p> <p>Community Ranger will work with groups within the university; for example, the Centre for Open Learning who provide English language courses and support international students</p>	<p>Follow Paths of All <a href="#">Outdoor Accessibility Guidance</a>.</p> <p>Community consultation and research at each site to understand who uses the site, how people use the site, where they access and where they go. Findings used to inform land management plan and community outreach work to target missing audiences.</p> <p>For onsite signage, interpretation, website, use simple language, and consider diagrams / images to help communicate information for those whose first language is not English.</p> <p>In publicity and promotion use welcoming and inclusive imagery.</p> <p>Consider when to provide information in different languages. To be based on feedback from</p>

Equality Group	Research	Impacts	Mitigation for negative impacts
	<p>Members of black and minority ethnic population were all less likely than the average to visit forests and woodlands (<a href="#">SNH, 2017-18</a>).</p> <p>Black and other non-white minority ethnic groups are one of the population groups least likely to report using the outdoors on a weekly basis (<a href="#">James Hutton Institute, 2018</a>).</p> <p>Particular barriers faced more by those of ethnic minority groups can include economic factors, fear, unease or feeling unwelcome or out of place (particularly in relation to rural settings), and language barriers (<a href="#">James Hutton Institute, 2018</a>).</p> <p>94.2% of people said they speak, read and write English well or very well. (<a href="#">Scottish Census, 2022</a>)</p> <p>The most common languages used at home outside of English and Scots were Polish, Urdu, Punjabi languages, Chinese languages and French (<a href="#">Scottish Census, 2011</a>).</p> <p>Across all races, ethnicities and nationalities, adult literacy is likely still a challenge in</p>	<p>through the International Foundation Programme.</p> <p>People with literacy challenges or those whose first language is not English, may not be able to read on site information, interpretation, websites.</p>	<p>communities / groups we work with.</p> <p>For online information, people can use free translation tools to translate information on web pages, such as google translate.</p>

Equality Group	Research	Impacts	Mitigation for negative impacts
	Scotland, with a 2009 survey showing 3.6% of the adult population had serious literacy challenges and 26.7% had some ( <a href="#">Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies 2009: Report of Findings</a> ).		

## E. Equality Groups continued

Add notes against the following applicable statements:

- On any available information about the needs of relevant equality groups:

See table for information. Paths of All Outdoor Accessibility Guidance provides guidance and information about the needs of different equality groups and highlights best practice. Specific needs of equality groups will be identified as we build relationships with both internal and external communities that we will be working with.

For our owned sites there will be a public consultation on our woodland design to gather feedback via a public survey. To date we have undertaken public consultations at Drumbrae in autumn 2023 and Rullion Green Wood in early 2024. The responses from these consultations highlight some common themes including: promoting public access, improving site accessibility, increasing biodiversity and providing opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to learn and engage in community and student activities.

Additionally, we have consulted the SRS Department Equality and Inclusion Manager, Head of HR Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and with groups within the university including EUSA, Staff Disability Network, Student Disability and Learning Support Service and the University Disability Information Team.

- Any gaps in evidence/insufficient information to properly assess the policy, and how this will be addressed:

The Forest and Peatland Project covers multiple sites, both owned and through partnership arrangements. There will likely be different approaches across the sites depending on land ownership, site conditions, location and the local community. For owned sites the Community Ranger will coordinate public consultations, identify current site users and missing audiences, carry out site surveys, develop relationships with community groups / organisations and deliver events based on community needs / interests with a view to widening participation.

For partnership sites the Community Ranger will work with partners to support community engagement specific to their site.

Internally within the University we will also build relationships and provide opportunities for a wide range of staff and students to be involved. The Forest and Peatland team will gather data from those involved in the project to allow us to monitor who we engage with during the programme lifetime. Information will be reviewed on a yearly basis, and we will refine or adapt our approach as required.

We feel that we have sufficient information at this stage to proceed, however we will continue to monitor all feedback, positive or negative, from the community, staff or student users.

- If application of this policy/practice leads to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups:

We do not believe that the Forest and Peatlands Programme will result in any form of prohibited conduct, for the reasons detailed above and below. We recognise it will be physically impossible to make all sites fully accessible given their nature but will aim to do so as far as possible.

Moreover, we will continually review the policy, whereby all feedback, positive or negative, related to any of the nine protected characteristics will be appraised and acted on accordingly. Should disabled users prove unable to access the site or any content relating to this project, and we are unable to rectify the issue, reasonable adjustments would be put in place. We recognise it will not be possible to make all sites fully accessible, but we will ensure accessibility is considered and maintained at a high a level as possible and reasonable adjustments put in place. We will work with the academic community to ensure that students will not suffer any disadvantage if they can't access our sites as part of their studies. We will work with the academic community to provide a range of ways for students to be involved which could include sharing photos, videos, data gathered from the sites, classroom-based activities and presentations.

- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity<sup>1</sup>

The Forest and Peatland programme will contribute to the advancing the equality of opportunity in a number of ways. Where we can improve site accessibility we will. This could be by applying accessible design principles in our community areas and removing any unnecessary barriers to access, e.g. removing redundant gates. Where we have to make changes to access arrangements will use the least restrictive option, so that access is as easy as it can be for as many people as possible. For example, using two-way self-closing gates in deer fences and providing information on the location of gates / access points.

When communicating information on webpages, resources, on site signage and interpretation we will use plain English supplemented with images to communicate messages. The Community Ranger will also engage with wide range of people and encourage participation with a focus on groups who may be underrepresented in the outdoors.

- If there is an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations:

The programme will bring people together from different backgrounds and life experiences and promote understanding and partnership working to create woodland, restore peatland and provide community benefits. There are opportunities to foster good relations between residents, university staff and students, landowners, key stakeholders, community organisations. This will include through engagement activities, consultation processes, onsite research, collaborating on projects, and dissemination of academic studies and research. It is hoped that by considering impacts, positive and negative, on all the nine protected characteristics via the implementation of the Forest and Peatlands project, and subsequently this EqIA, we are showing that the University is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. We have considered ways to mitigate and provide support and information to users in these groups.

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<sup>1</sup> This question does not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage or civil partnership

- If the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups?

Our project sites are located throughout Scotland, and there is no cost to access our sites, however some sites are not accessible by public transport. This means it will be harder for people without access to a car to visit our sites; likely to impact those in lower socioeconomic groups. Through outreach the Community Ranger may be able to reduce this barrier by assisting with transport, providing engagement opportunities off site, or through access to online resources.

- How the communication of the policy/practice is made accessible to all groups, if relevant?

This EqIA document will be published on the University website and alternative formats will be made available on request free of charge.

Wider programme communications will take varied forms including posters, leaflets, webpages, emails, and we will look to ensure these are accessible as possible and offer alternative formats free of charge on request. Our websites and digital resources such as ESRI Story Maps will be tested and accessibility statements provided as per The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

For community activities and events, we will plan these to encourage wide participation. This could include providing a mix of days and times, not only during working hours, using more accessible parts of our sites, using accessible community venues, e.g. wheelchair accessible, hearing induction loops, parking, toilet facilities, not in buildings serving alcohol. We will ensure access information is provided for all events and activities and on our site webpages.

- How equality groups or communities are involved in the development, review and/or monitoring of the policy or practice?

Within the Forest and Peatland programme there is a Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) framework. The Community Ranger will be gathering information about participants, volunteers, and people we engage with to inform future decision making. Information will also be gathered from partnership sites on an annual basis, and the Community Ranger can support partners with promoting inclusion and wider engagement.

For our three owned sites, there will be an annual meeting for each site. This will be open to the public to share what we have achieved and to look forward to the next year. This will provide an opportunity to bring together a wide range of people, get direct feedback from people which will be used to inform future decisions.

The engagement work of the Community Ranger will be key to monitoring the effectiveness of our approach. They will be responsible for building relationships with different groups / communities, providing opportunities for involvement, and be the main feedback mechanism between local communities and the Forest and Peatland programme. Likewise, the Academic Manager will work with the academic community



within the university to support research, learning and teaching on our sites and provide an internal feedback mechanism to the Forest and Peatland programme. We will welcome all feedback and review for any comments – positive or negative related to the 9 protected characteristics and act accordingly, including consulting with relevant stakeholders.

- Any potential or actual impact of applying the policy or practice, with regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and promote good relations:

Nothing other than stated above and below.

#### **F. Equality Impact Assessment Outcome**

Select one of the four options below to indicate how the development/review of the policy/practice will be progressed and state the rationale for the decision

**Option 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.**

Option 2: Adjust the policy or practice – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations.

Option 3: Continue the policy or practice despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be mitigated/or justified

Option 4: Stop the policy or practice as there are adverse effects cannot be prevented/mitigated/or justified.

#### **G. Action and Monitoring**

1. Specify the actions required for implementing findings of this EqIA and how the policy or practice will be monitored in relation to its equality impact (or note where this is specified above).

The equality impact of the Forest and Peatland programme will be monitored in a number of ways including reviewing data collected as part of our community engagement work, through reporting to our Programme Board, our public annual stakeholder meetings and as part of discussions at team meetings.

The EqIA will be considered and reviewed as appropriate during various programme stages, e.g. prior to and after major site operations / work. It will also be reviewed on the publication of new research or CPD, which might affect our approach or understanding of protected characteristics and any equality impacts

The Community Ranger will be working closely with internal and external communities; delivering public consultations, annual meetings, educational visits, outreach activities and public events. Information, data and feedback gathered by the Community Ranger and Academic Manager will be used to monitor the programmes equality impact and also inform any changes or amendments needed to the EQIA.

Additionally, we will monitor all feedback for any comments, positive or negative, related to any of the nine protected characteristics and act accordingly. We will also advise staff involved with the programme of the need to make reasonable adjustments where appropriate, including providing information in alternative formats, free of charge, upon request.

2. When will the policy/practice next be reviewed?

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, with the first review due in July 2025. We will also review as part of our annual reporting and MRV framework and when we receive any feedback – positive or negative related to the nine protected characteristics.

#### H. Publication of EqIA

Can this EqIA be published in full, now? **Yes**

If No – please specify when it may be published or indicate restrictions that apply:

#### I. Sign-off

EqIA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)):

Julie Wilson, Community Ranger, Forest and Peatland Programme, Department of Social Responsibility and Sustainability.

Accepted by (name):

Yvonne Edwards, Forest, Peat and Rural Land Manager, Forest and Peatland Programme, Department of Social Responsibility and Sustainability.

Date: 07/08/2024

Retain a copy of this form for your own records and send a copy to [equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk](mailto:equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk)