

Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000:

PROPOSAL FOR A LONG TERM DIRECTION BY THE RELEVANT AUTHORITY

SUMMARY FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION Prepared by Forestry Commission

1. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Case Reference Number: 2019098973
Name of site/land parcel: **Smoothing Sike - COUPE 75160 – NY 6430 8290**

Access Authority: **Northumberland County Council**
Relevant Authority: Forestry Commission
Local Access Forum: Northumberland National Park & Countryside Joint LAF

The Forestry Commission has received an application under section 25 (1b) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (the Act) for a direction to exclude the public from the site indicated on the attached map, in order to carry out timber harvesting operations.

Having considered the application, the Forestry Commission now proposes to give a direction on the site that would last for longer than 6 months continuously for **400** days between the **1st February 2020** and **31st March 2023**. The Act requires us to consult publicly on all such proposals for 'long-term directions'.

This is a summary of our proposal, explaining the reasoning in support of our proposal. It is accompanied by a map of the site which can be seen on the Open Access website:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?publication_filter_option=consultations

To access the consultation enter "Open Access" into the free text box titled "Contains" and then filter by "Natural England" in the Department drop down. Other documents relating to the proposed direction may be inspected and copies obtained by contacting the Forestry Commission at Buller's Hill, Kennford, Nr Exeter, EX6 7XR; e-mail: cca@forestry.gsi.gov.uk.

2. SUMMARY OF RELEVANT AUTHORITY PROPOSAL

i) Summary of proposed direction to restrict access

Long Term Outline Direction

ii) Why is a statutory restriction necessary?

On Public Safety Grounds

iii) What is lowest level of restriction required?

Full Exclusion of Public access

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO SUPPORT THE APPLICATION FOR OUTLINE DIRECTION OF LONG TERM CLOSURE

Smoothing Sike – COUPE 75160– NORTH ENGLAND FOREST DISTRICT

The proposed felling coupe, to be known as Smoothing Sike is projected to produce around 25968M³ / 20943T of timber to supply local and national markets. The site covers approximately 55.68 hectares (Gross).

The parcel will be worked as part of the long term standing sales contract commencing early 2020 (est. Feb/ March). Due to the reliance on timber markets, precise timings of harvesting operations are not currently known, but it is planned that work will start on schedule and the site will be worked in one continuous operation.

The risk assessment carried out identifies that timber harvesting operations present a risk to public safety; it is therefore necessary to exclude the public from the site during operations.

The work will be carried out using normal forest harvesting techniques, i.e. harvester/forwarder. The site has some soft & steeper ground sections and while normal mechanised harvesting techniques will be used, a lower output of around 480 tonnes per week is expected. Given this level of production and allowing for unforeseen circumstances, it is estimated that harvesting operations will take approximately 54 weeks.

In addition to the exclusion of the public other controls will include the use of warning and prohibition signs placed at strategic points around the worksite. Signs will also be placed on the forest roads approaching the worksite.

To maintain operational flexibility it is not feasible to split the coupe into any smaller areas. We will need to have the ability to react to changes in the timber markets and changes in weather conditions by moving production around the site.

I hope that this additional information is of use to support the application for direction.

Ian Green
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3. SUBMITTING COMMENTS ON THE REVIEW:

If you wish to comment on the review of this direction then you must do so before 15 November 2019 directly to the Forestry Commission at Buller's Hill, Kennford, Nr Exeter, EX6 7XR; e-mail: cca@forestry.gsi.gov.uk.

A map accompanies this notice and can be seen on the Open Access website:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?publication_filter_option=consultations

If, following consultation, we decide to give a long-term direction, we must formally review the decision, not more than 5 years after it is given. We may also revoke or vary the direction at any other time, if new evidence comes to light showing that the circumstances have changed.