



FOREST
ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP
Delivering a thriving economy

Seeing the Wood for the Trees

Additional Research on Forest We Want Data
to Highlight Findings and Caveats

BIOSPHERE RESERVE ACTION GROUP, FOREST ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

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Seeing the Wood for the Trees Summary

The results from the Forest We Want (FWW) show significant levels of agreement on the various questions posed. Such perceived high levels of agreement pose their own dangers and underplay the amount of work that still needs to be done. This Seeing the Wood for the Trees (SWFT) report highlights some of the caveats of the study and proposes what can and should reasonably form the basis of ongoing communication in the next phase. It also highlights some of the further work that is required to confirm that a Biosphere Reserve would have the necessary support from those living and working in the District of the Forest of Dean.

FWW is a very early-stage marketing study that put some initial ideas to the potential audience to understand what concepts might have traction, what concerns there might be based upon the information provided through an arts-based campaign/prior knowledge and what questions might arise. Its intent was to inform not to provide firm conclusions. As such it should always be referred to as a survey. It is categorically not a consultation, which has significant other meanings and will come later in the process.

FEP is focused on enabling practical improvements. Following this summary are a list of future actions which fall out from the analysis of the data and its limitations. Some are specific and others more general. All can be discussed and implemented or discarded as those taking the project forward see fit.

The Forest We Want survey broadly achieved its aims and objectives of beginning the process of informing the District about the concept of Biosphere Reserves through the sharing of Arts Council funded artefacts. It stimulated ongoing discussion and galvanised a sense of place upon which the next stages can grow.

The Wood for the Trees report focuses on the 491 respondents who lived in the District of the Forest of Dean and provided significantly complete surveys. The latter means they attempted all questions, but may not have provided free form comments. In simple terms the vast majority of the response was from individuals below the A40. Given the consistency of the response, this may not change the conclusions of the survey, but does highlight the work that needs to be done to fully engage all; if there is to be a Biosphere Reserve based on the District of the Forest of Dean.

Those aged between 10 and 24 did not complete the survey in proportion to their representation in the population. Again, an area that needs to be addressed. The response was skewed to older generations. The concern that social media would exclude the older was unfounded. The sample does represent a good cross-sample of the District.

40% of the sample had lived in the Forest for at least 20 years. Some younger respondents also ticked the 20+ box to reflect their families were Foresters. A further 20% had lived here for more than 11 years. The survey is not biased towards recent incomers.

More than 10 different communication channels were cited by respondents. From parish councils through to Points West and from traditional media to apps and specific organisations. There is no discernible bias to any particular grouping; although those connected to FEP are likely having discussed Biospheres for over 3 years and can claim more knowledge than others. Significant work was undertaken to cross-segment data to establish whether there were any distorting influences. None were found that provided statistically valid variation.

Of those surveyed, 82% agreed that conservation aims provided typical of Biosphere Reserves were highly important. 69% believed that the sustainable economy and learning and education aims were highly important. Overall, the least positive aim was learning and education where 5% were neutral or lower in importance.

Of the Economic Concepts, sustainable farming and forestry practices was the most strongly supported by respondents with 82% rating highly important. Almost two thirds thought that local sourcing was highly important, but only 29% rated Forest branding as highly important and may therefore have missed the link as to how this enables the former to be more easily achieved. Only half of respondents believed that growing Forest-based businesses was highly important although 40% did rate it important. The big negative for respondents was increasing tourism with only 20% rating as highly and 30% important. These set baselines for the work that needs to be done to expand and clarify what is meant by each concept and how it could apply to the District.

The Ecological Aims in isolation had very high levels of agreement. Only CO2 storage and re-introduction of species were not seen as highly important by more than 75% of those surveyed. Both of these had neutral ratings of 11.5% of respondents, which could be seen to translate to tell me more because I have insufficient information to make a decision.

Broadly, two thirds of respondents believed the environmental sustainability practices were highly important and a quarter as important. Flood prevention had the highest neutral rating at 7.6%. Each of these practices needs to be explained further and for some localised to the District.

55% of those surveyed believed that it was highly likely that as a whole the Forest of Dean District would benefit from becoming a Biosphere Reserve. 31% thought it likely. This total of 86% shows extremely high interest levels. It warrants going forward with the necessary works to engage further with communities and organisations in discussions on what Biosphere Reserve status could mean for the District. Then the majority of residents can form and express their view in consultations through a process to possible application.

The other projections of likely results based on current levels of knowledge are also positive. 44% believe that unnecessary restrictions are unlikely and 32% neutral. This reflect an understanding that there would/could be restrictions but they would have a logical basis consistent with the aims. 84% believe it is likely to make the area a better place to live and 86% that it manages the better relationship between people and nature. 85% thought it likely that balanced development would result and 87% it would be likely to increase sustainability and provide the means to communicate this.

The survey received significant feedback on concerns that fell into the following groups (in no particular order) of:

- Business
- Tourism including cycle tourism
- Housing generally
- Housing specifically related to locals' needs
- Development per se
- Transport
- Planning primarily focusing on greenery
- Maintaining balance and the challenges this presents
- Going forward
- Restrictions such as the limiting of freedom to roam
- Maintaining local heritage or creating new local rights
- Greenism, a suggestion by 3 respondents that BR is underhand
- Other which are a range of concerns that could not be easily group or do not provide sufficient detail to confirm what is meant.

The final questions fell into 7 main headings of which the majority were in:

- The issues and challenges going forward to achieving Biosphere Reserve status if that is the course agreed to.
- Specific questions about potential impact on a range of factors.
- Statements which tended to be fuller responses with many valuable ideas and views for and against, all of which need specific consideration.

The analysis of the Arts Council results was particularly challenging. There was no direct link between an artefact and a response to provide context and some may have seen other information from other sources. Of the 200+ respondents who identified they had seen the artefacts and then scored them on levels of engagement and of increased understanding, in each case half believed they were engaged and had increased knowledge. Some reported being not at all engaged but had high levels of increased understanding: and others the complete reverse. This of course is the nature of art. Using an arts-based approach to start this process of information and feedback was a success.

Suggested Future Actions

Future Action 1: Substantial effort required above the A40 to promote understanding of and engagement (both positive and negative) with BR by residents	13
Future Action 2: Provide clarity that BR is for the District not the Statutory Forest or any other definition of Forest that might be presumed by inhabitants, workers, learners or visitors.....	13
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Future Action 4: Engage with under 25's to determine their views and their role in making change happen as part of the overall views of all age groups.	15
Future Action 5: Promote that 40% of initial survey has lived in the District for more than 20 years.....	15
Future Action 6 For a light touch baseline survey, the digital approach worked supplemented with mainstream broadcast media. For more detailed consultation type work this should be augmented by face to face and/or hard copy routes to prevent an accusation of exclusion.	17
Future Action 7: High agreement levels on concepts rated in isolation will not transfer to the defined BR. The next stage of research must rank or trade off the underlying aims to inform the future design.	18
Future Action 8: High agreement levels on conservation does not mean that this would convert more to the cause of BR by focusing any campaign on this issue.	18
Future Action 9: Each of the economic concepts needs to be fully developed and explained to both the inhabitant and the business audiences to understand the positives and the negatives. Ranking in importance might also be useful.	19
Future Action 10: The tourism balance is going to be the most difficult to maintain. Promoting adoption of a BR on the basis of tourism is the most likely way for the concept not to be agreed. Tourism in particular needs careful handling to explain the potential increased value through spend for a similar number of visitors.....	20
Future Action 11: Increase clarity of what is meant by some of the ecological benefits. What is a carbon store and how this could be increased in the district? What is the benefit of native species re-introduction to the wider community against the potential loss of access to an area? etc	20
Future Action 12: Sustainability is not a well-understood concept and is not helped by greenwashing. For BR the specifics need to be developed which have clear benefits and downsides for inhabitants. A useful point to start would be what are the current baselines in simple terms of each concept.	21
Future Action 13: Next stages should articulate the need for an agreed balance with discussion before the event to reduce and simplify the potential conflicting demands. That discussion is part of the process.....	25
Future Action 14: Regular dripfeed of communication of responses to concerns by theme publishable on FEP website. That feed includes yes, no, possible and frankly we have no idea at this time and for all let's continue the conversation for solutions to be found.	25
Future Action 15: Provide clarity of process including the roadmap through the comms channels. Emphasise the evolving nature of the approach with use of version numbers on documents (point 1 etc on minor changes and first digit change on major changes upgrades eg bid development funding secured)	26

Future Action 16: Continuously confirm that this is an ongoing discussion to form agreed views on which a formal consultation will be made once there is consensus as to what a BR might mean in the District. Comms to avoid superlative statements and provide objectivity.26

Future Action 17: An outcome can be that no application is made for BR because it does not fit/provide the benefits that the whole District wants. The evidence and ideas uncovered have significant value for the District regardless and will act as enablers.....26

Future Action 18: Ensure that best-intentioned partner actions do not impact on conclusions that might be drawn from project data27

Future Action 19: Ensure there are simple opinion counters as well as more complex surveys so the value of the communication approach can be evaluated.27

Future Action 20: responses indicate that using arts-based artefacts leads generally to engagement with the artefact and convey information to individuals at a variety of levels. While it does not work for everyone, it's a useful tool going forward to convey information and start the conversation.28

1. Introduction

This second report on the Forest We Want data is necessary to:

- Provide context to the survey
- Highlight limitations of the findings
- Identify issues that need addressing in the future work focused to achieving a Biosphere Reserve (BR) centred on the District of the Forest of Dean.

It is not primarily intended for general publication as it may serve as a route map for the forthcoming work. It is intended that some of its findings are used for justifications in bidding documents to secure external funding to undertake the 2-year process of engagement and shaping of a potential BR application.

It should always be remembered that the objective of the survey was to test the water of the wider community. It was designed to see whether that wider community had a similar starting point of agreeing with the core values of a biosphere. It did not present a firm picture of what a district BR could be. It cannot therefore be ever described as a consultation where a model is proposed to be knocked down or modified.

The data does provide some important steers as the work that needs to be done on:

- engagement of the whole district,
- communication of the positives and negatives that would flow from achieving the status
- discussing the initial concerns and questions within broad groupings.

One of the significant dangers of the type of research undertaken in FWW is that the findings are given too much weight. This means in turn that the positives are pushed too much because they chime with the thinking of the small group that has been working on a project. This is a natural psychological process whereby we latch onto the positives because they reflect our own worldview and must be self-evidently true. The negatives lack that anchor to our own reality and become played down or overlooked. Perversely therefore the most useful parts of this type of research are the negatives either in the limitations of the sample, the lower scoring or the freeform comments. These are the areas that need addressing in phase 2 to enable an agreed concept to emerge upon which individuals can then express their support or not.

2 The Relevant Contexts

2.1 Development of the BR Project

Within FEP, the concept of a BR has been discussed as part of the Transport and Infrastructure (T&I) Sub-group and by the general Stakeholders quarterly meetings. When originally presented to T&I as an environmental opportunity, it was firmly rejected. When brought back as an economic undertaking creating and preserving the balance of the district as a basis of sustainable development with planning and environmental enhancement benefits, it was approved to undertake an economic assessment.

With the assistance of Office for National Statistics staff that assessment was undertaken and showed a significant return on investment when many of the negatives could be costed; even if some of the benefits lacked robust statistical models to be included in the return computation. FEP stakeholders agreed that on the basis of that report that the next step was to engage with:

- the wider communities of the District of the Forest of Dean to see whether they had an appetite to pursue an application and;
- the necessary other stakeholders and partners that would be involved in the creation and running of a BR

2.2 Arts Council Funding

The arrival of Covid halted the National Lottery bid to fund phase 2 as all such funding was reassigned to the emergency needs of the cultural and visitor sector. An alternative was found through Arts Council Funding to run a limited study which combined arts-based artefacts as a means of raising awareness and reconnection to place with an early-stage questionnaire about broad concepts.

The survey was in part an evaluation of impact of the artefacts, but also a wider testing of the feelings around the core concepts. The survey was by necessity light touch and designed to be open to all through promoted links.

2.3 Promotional Channels of Survey Impact on Results

The aim of the project was to engage with the greatest number of individuals, ideally residents in the District of the Forest of Dean. It was promoted through:

- FEP to its members
- FoDDC and some local councils to its constituents
- Arts groups and communities in the district
- Activists.

Most of these promoters used broadcast media such as social media and email either as a direct email or with a newsletter. Most of the above introduce bias into the results alongside the bias that those who answer general surveys are motivated to do so by pre-formed views either in favour or against. The most obvious group for this would be activists in this case environmentalists or nimbys.

The results of this are seen most clearly in response to the question on knowledge about BR, which is high.

The contrary source might be those who were motivated to respond from the television news article or local paper which accounted for an eighth of the overall sample. The difficulty that arises is whether those stating these sources had also received information through other channels or were completely independent.

The channels by which individuals are asked to respond affect the statistical reliability of the survey. This was an open survey promoted through existing connections. It was not a survey that was targeted at a representative sample of the inhabitants of the district in order to provide a full district view in the same way as election polls handpick respondents. The results are therefore percentages of the respondents to this survey which may reflect some of the wider feelings/opinions. It is not a percentage of the inhabitants who have that view; that is an objective of the next phase in order to develop a widely agreed BR.

2.4 Survey Design

There was much discussion over the uptake of a survey at a time when there were so many surveys being promoted. A number of those surveys would be better termed consultations aiming to provide definitive answers on completely formed concepts to enable the next stage of their development. Unfortunately, a public view of surveys is that they all carry the same weight. This fails to recognise that the survey tool is used at many different stages of the project development process.

This survey was designed as a market tester of a BR not as a market decider. Its aim was to ask whether there was a potential appetite among residents of the District for BR; not what do you want to eat and does it meet your expectation. The results should therefore be seen to be woolly rather than concrete. It establishes some broad baselines of knowledge and motivations not percentage point differences that flow through to winning or losing.

The vast majority of questions are closed questions asking respondents to rank on a repeated scale. The statements being ranked are typically 'motherhood' statements asked within groups of related concepts. It

did not ask respondents to rank the statements in order of importance. This increases the likelihood that all could be marked as highly important because specific context is lacking. An analogy would be do you like lambs in a field and do you like lamb chops, which are seen to be both highly important until the third associated question is how likely are to you slaughter a lamb. This might change the second answer or have no impact at all. The contrary danger of a consistent scale is a respondent recognises that they are always ranking highly and then arbitrarily marks the next as 'important' to flag they are 'discerning'. Again, the outcome is to treat the results broadly and leading to broad hypotheses not to defined answers.

Two open questions were asked. These were on questions arising and concerns. As open box questions responses ranged in length and in some ways are the most useful part of the survey. Again, these can be brought into rough broad groupings to highlight the initial responses of respondents of areas requiring communication to take BR forward. BR is a complicated concept with many facets making effective communication difficult to the wider audience. It needs to provide certainty of answers of benefit to a defined geographical area at the same time as answering the question of what's in it for me as a 'XXX'?

The Arts Council evaluation questions have their own design restrictions. We have no way of knowing whether the individual actually viewed the artefacts and if they did which ones. Some 63 respondents completed the questionnaire up to this point then dropped out. A presumption might be they hadn't viewed the material and thus felt unable to complete the rest of the questionnaire. The question of what the others viewed is compounded by the creation by FoDDC of other material available at the same time about BR. This is what might have been viewed rather than the Arts Council funded artefacts. These in part may or may not explain the widely ranging views on the engagement and understanding ratings.

The final impact of design on the survey was the creation by committee and a lack of a separate final proofing and survey run through. The former can be seen in the typos in questions/statements which might alter the sense and meaning of the phrase or at least affect the flow of the reader. The latter is seen in the scoring scales for example on question 7, which is a sliding bar stated to be 1 to 5 but is actually 1 to 100. Both add elements of uncertainty on how the respondent acted. Once more this leads to the need for broad conclusions suitable for further work rather than viewing the results ipso facto as conclusive.

2.5 The Current Sustainable Economic Context of the District

The Forest of Dean District is officially classified by DEFRA as being 95% rural. Forestry and agriculture have been traditional mainstays of the economy and each still employ 6.9% of the workforce.

For the District relative isolation was made easier by the rivers Severn and Wye providing natural boundaries and geology creating issues for road-building. This also made it easier to establish and maintain a better environmental balance. The Forest has always been a working forest where timber production and silviculture is important. District residents talk freely about 'the Forest' but often disagree on its boundaries. For some it is *the* woods often aligned with the statutory forest; for others any woodlands; for others the hilly wooded bit to the South, West or North of here -wherever here is! Few define it as the electoral district of the Council.

If a visitor or inhabitant looks at the district as a rural place built on agriculture/tourism and solely reliant upon it economically, they would be mistaken as 86% of the workforce are not employed in those sectors. 15.9% of its employees are in manufacturing with sites spread across the District in large and local business parks and small individual premises. This is twice the urban national average and 4% higher than the rural national average. And more than those employed in tourism and agriculture combined. 4%, the highest proportion in Gloucestershire, work in transport and storage aka logistics. While education and health & social care make up almost a quarter of the workforce. The diversity of the environment is matched by the diversity of the economy.

The District's 4,300 companies are by ONS categories typically small and medium-sized enterprises. But within those companies are niche world-beaters with significant export markets as well as the more traditional local business. There are sizeable numbers of micro businesses employing fewer than 5 and often 'sole traders' active in the knowledge and creative economies.

The whole workforce in the District is not just those employed in District-based businesses. With greater work-life flexibility and the opportunities offered by the digital world; it is apparent that a number of managers and specialist staff work from home for a number of days per week. During the lockdowns those numbers swelled and are still high with the general adjustments in work-life balance. This is a switch back to a more sustainable economy and further erodes the distinction between business and domestic premises created by the 1st Industrial Revolution.

This context is important. The balances between economy and environment and individual and corporate rights have always been central to discussions. Early commentators include Admiral Nelson's report. BR is a way to gain agreement on that balance for the benefit of all. It's an opportunity to reap the benefits of the 4th Industrial Revolution, where environment is not an afterthought for remediation, but front and centre.

The survey did not attempt to gain a 'business' voice but took an overall view. The danger to this is the lack of clarity of how the individual might be responding and which persona (domestic or work) is primary. For example, as an individual I like to think I have the right to roam freely in the woods; as a worker getting to work is fraught with those tourist cyclists slowing me down! With the future stages as the process becomes more consultative in nature with a firmer concept then context may also be clearer. This enables better interpretation of the views and projection of their importance across the district.

3. FWW Aims and Objectives

The FEP project proposal summarised the (italicised) activities and aims as follows (comments in normal text):

Aims:

- *to increase public understanding of the benefits of Forest of Dean (FoD) gaining designation as a Biosphere Reserve (BR) through UNESCO;*
- *to commission 2 artists to engage FoD communities in a creative interpretation of landscape & place through film, audio content, photography & digital media;*
- *to garner community responses and sentiment in response to the potential of a BR designation;*
- *to prepare for a wider Biosphere Reserve nomination application for the Forest of Dean with UNESCO.*

Objectives:

- *to stimulate discussion about the potential of BR designation for the area through lens-based media online/offline*
- *to engage the collective imaginations of the resident population of FoD through artistic processes*
- *to galvanise a sense of place, community, culture and nature to secure a long-term, economically viable future, for FoD and its bio-economy.*

All above aims and objectives have been broadly met as is clear from the responses.

SMART Aims

To raise the understanding of the Biosphere Reserve concept among those who live, work, play and study in the District of the Forest of Dean. The anticipated outputs of this project starting in January include:

1. *Creation of 2 new works of art in film/audio formats by April 2021*
A mix of longer and short works created by a partnership of artists. 6 video-based and 3 podcasts
2. *Share those works through FEP's and partner organisations web-based sites and links from interested organisations and through non-virtual events where possible. April to June+2021*
Works shared widely through social media. Limited non-virtual events such as a Businesswomen's meeting
3. *Engage with a wide cross-section of the population so specific campaigns for a wide demographic of local people- including the young and the old, and those who do not rely on the internet for information.*
Details later on the sample of those engaged show a wide demographic was engaged, but with a geographic caveat for the District and actual engagement of the younger audiences in the survey.

Project Engagement Targets:

- *5% of the population exposed to the BR concept. (Estimated 4,325 individuals will view the works on-line or in person April- end of June 2021). This will be evidenced by website diagnostics of views/ clicks and a head count of attendance to events (if possible).*
Engagement counts on social media are an imprecise art. The same individual can watch the on-line works multiple times or let them play while being distracted elsewhere. The same individual could view all the artefacts and be counted individually on each. The social media also have different definitions of viewing ranging from 'they look at it when scrolling through' to 'they watched it from start to end'. However, from FEP's own platforms there were over 16,500 views. This gives the necessary leeway to presume that at least 5% of the 86,000-district population viewed the artefacts as each one would need c4 views/listens to be less than this. While some views will have been outside of the district eg in the wider creative community or contacts of those sharing and there is the potential for industrial streaming; both are seen to have a low likelihood to distort this conclusion
- *A further approx. 10% of this 4,325 will engage with and understand the concept. (Estimated 430 individuals evidenced by views, shares & comments and by responses to simple polls from April-June21).*
Total survey responses were 602. Excluding incomplete responses and those not resident in the district, the sample in this report is 491 providing a district address. A review of respondent ip addresses was undertaken and other reviews of response patterns; no relevant duplications were found.
- *Of these approximately 1% of those who understand, will engage further. (Estimated. 30-50 individuals share the links to others with comment, click on links to more info from the FoD Biosphere Reserve working group).*
No specific numeric data is available from the FWW report. However, there is some evidence for engagement in the podcasts of individuals and business, from the on-line stakeholder meetings where this has been reported and from the updates to the T&I sub-group. Offers of assistance and next steps questions in the comments also suggest this has been covertly achieved.
- *Delivery of a publishable summary report on the support and impact on potential for a Biosphere Reserve, based on independent evaluation of the engagement processes. July 2021*
The Forest We Want data report was published and is publicly available on the FEP website. This provides the broad data set. A very short separate evaluation report was delivered by an independent evaluator. This is not publicly available.

What the above aims and objectives did not cover was the need to evaluate for the Arts Council of those seeing the videos or hearing the podcasts. The aims of this specific survey, as opposed to the whole FWW project, were to:

- measure how engaged individuals were by the artefacts and whether they increased understanding of BR potential

- understand more fully the baseline feelings around residents' knowledge of biosphere reserves; alignment of their views with some concepts related to BR and current perceived likelihood of potential effects of adoption based on that knowledge and views.
- get as wide a response as possible from a district wide perspective to flag up where further work needs to be done.

4. The Sample

4.1 Exclusions

The success of no survey should ever be measured on the total number of responses. Surveys always provide incomplete replies. Often, they can be distorted by those who think they can respond multiple times or are not in the target sample. Multiple responses from outside of the UK would be irrelevant to a survey such as this. Thankfully neither of these was evident from the sample through the means possible for checking. Indeed, what is surprising is the high levels of agreement across the various segments.

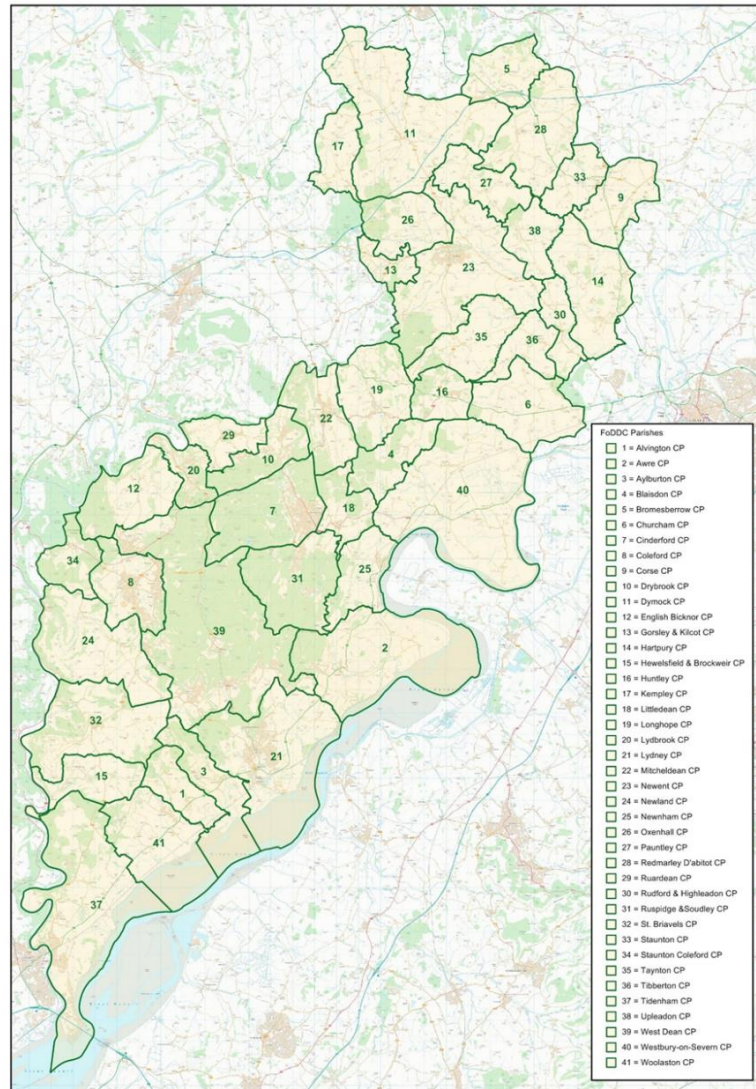
While 602 individuals answered the survey; this analysis focuses only on those claiming residence in the District and completing the whole survey. It therefore excludes the 30 respondents outside of the District and the 81 respondents providing substantially incomplete questionnaires. Those skipping a question or two were included.

4.2 Geography

On the next page is a District map split by parishes and below a table of FWW respondents from each parish on sample of 491.

Map Key	Appendix Key	Parish Name	Number of responses	Map Key	Appendix Key	Parish Name	Number of responses
1	122	Alvington CP	3	22	143	Mitcheldean CP	19
2	123	Awre CP	27	23	144	Newent CP	10
3	124	Aylburton CP	4	24	145	Newland CP	14
4	125	Blaisdon CP	6	25	146	Newnham CP	20
5	126	Bromesberrow CP	-	26	147	Oxenhall CP	-
6	127	Churcham CP	3	27	148	Pauntley CP	-
7	128	Cinderford CP	49	28	149	Redmarley D'abito CP	4
8	129	Coleford CP	54	29	150	Ruardean CP	17
9	130	Corse CP	-	30	151	Rudford and Highleadon CP	-
10	131	Drybrook CP	6	31	152	Ruspidge and Soudley CP	19
11	132	Dymock CP	-	32	153	St. Briavels CP	14
12	133	English Bicknor CP	7	33	154	Staunton Coleford CP	2
13	134	Gorsley and Kilcot CP	-	34	155	Staunton CP	4
14	135	Hartpury CP	4	35	156	Taynton CP	2
15	136	Hewelsfield and Brockweir CP	3	36	157	Tibberton CP	-
16	137	Huntley CP	3	37	158	Tidenham CP	12
17	138	Kempley CP	1	38	159	Upleadon CP	1
18	139	Littledean CP	11	39	160	West Dean CP	84
19	140	Longhope CP	12	40	161	Westbury-on-Severn CP	6
20	141	Lydbrook CP	18	41	162	Woolaston CP	3
21	142	Lydney CP	50				

From 7 parishes there were no responses. A further 12 parishes had 4 or fewer responses. Taking the total number of parishes, this means that just under half did not have a statistically valid response from which any conclusions might be drawn. Contrary to this is that the parishes are of uneven size and population so for example those in the 4 towns would always have a higher response rate in number. But even Newent has only 10 respondents.



Geographically the sample is strongly skewed. It cannot claim to be a representative sample of all inhabitants in the district. What it does reveal is the actions that need to be taken in the next phases to overcome this issue.

In parishes that lie wholly above the A40; there are 9 with 1 or no responses and 26 responses in total. As a comparator, How Fast How Good 1 gained 76 responses in these parishes. Perhaps individuals thought it was not relevant to them. It is best to think of the results reflecting the views of the District below the A40.

[Future Action 1: Substantial effort required above the A40 to promote understanding of and engagement \(both positive and negative\) with BR by residents.](#)

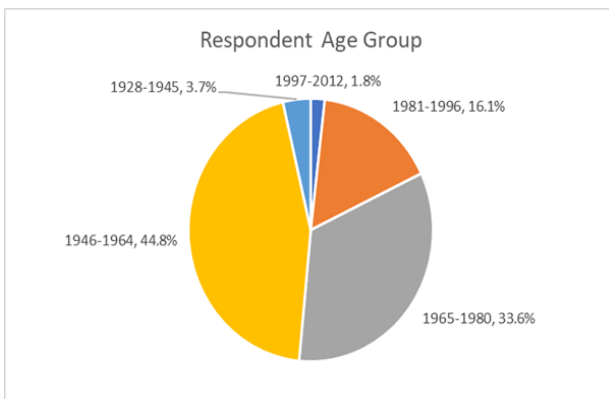
Looking further at the distribution of responses, Churcham, Huntley and Westbury total 12. This is surprising given the vehemence of the campaign against the proposed new town. Given BR's agreed zoning approach and opportunity to influence future decisions, a higher response would have been expected if the understanding of BR existed. Similarly, Aylburton, Alvington, Woolaston, Hewelsfield and Tidenham muster 25 responses, with 12 in the latter. FEP has already discovered the 13 different meanings of "forest" that exist, but retitling the project the District We Want might not have overcome this.

[Future Action 2: Provide clarity that BR is for the District not the Statutory Forest or any other definition of Forest that might be presumed by inhabitants, workers, learners or visitors.](#)

Future Action 3 The proposal is for the District to provide the basis of a BR. The BR concept has significance opportunities across all three of its aims not just conservation in creating agreed balances. Those balances need to be explicit.

The geographical density of the sample was in the areas of the Statutory Forest and the parishes contiguous to it. 191 respondents were based in parishes where the outline of the Statutory Forest forms the major part. As the geographic outlines of parishes and the Statutory Forest are not the same, some of these respondents may not actually be in the Statutory Forest, but could be offset by those who are, but live in a parish deemed outside the Statutory Forest. Variations in responses based on geography are limited.

4.3 Demographics



Rather than asking dates of birth the survey asked age ranges based upon presumed generational types:

- Generation Alpha 2012- date
- Generation Z 1997-2012
- Millennials 1981-1996
- Generation X 1965-1980
- Boomers 1946-1964
- Silent Generation 1928-1945
- GI Generation 1901-1927

These generational groupings are skewed to the younger generations where the ranges are smaller which can distort straight comparisons. They also provide a problem with the latest available population data from the ONS where an individual could have swapped category in the interim.

Age Group	ONS Proportion (2020 data)	Sample Proportion
Generation Z 1997-2012	20.7%	1.8%
Millennials 1981-1996	19.3%	16.1%
Generation X 1965-1980	26.6%	33.6%
Boomers 1946-1964	31.9%	44.8%
Silent Generation 1928-1945	1.5%	3.7%

There were no respondents in the GI generation. Data was used from the ONS to compute the percentages attributable to each grouping for the 100% allocation. The total population estimate for the District was 87,107 of whom 15,400 are aged under 10 in Generation Alpha.

Generation Z has 9 respondents. There were very few respondents aged under 25 and aged over 10. Care should be taken with any conclusions drawn about this group from the survey. Not least as grouping the views of an 11 year-old with a 24 year-old does not sit easily with this analyst. On a wider note, there is emerging evidence that care should also be taken with the views expressed by Generation Z and Millennials on surveys. There appears to be significant discrepancies emerging between stated opinions and their behaviours/actual action taken.¹ That said the remainder of the sample is skewed to the older age groups with Boomers accounting for 45% of the sample and Generation X for a third, rather than a third and quarter respectively.

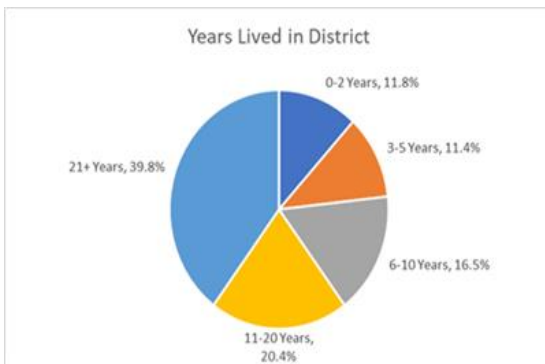
Some concerns were raised in the comments that older people would not respond to a technology-based survey. The results suggest that it's the younger people who failed to respond perhaps because the wrong

¹ For example <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/generational-divide-over-climate-action-a-myth-study-finds>

forms of social media were used for them or the promotion to them was wrong. Alternatively, it could be the ‘why bother responding, because nothing will change’ kicked in.

Future Action 4: Engage with under 25’s to determine their views and their role in making change happen as part of the overall views of all age groups.

Overall, the sample does represent a good cross-sample of ages in the District, if we assume that the ONS population proportions apply equally across the whole area. The skew is to older people.



Respondents were asked how long they had lived in the District. The aim here was to ensure that the views of the longer term/historical residents were covered.

There is much anecdotal discussion of how long does it take to become recognised as a Forester. Arbitrarily the figure was chosen of 20 years plus. Interestingly a number of the younger respondents ticked the 20-year plus on the basis we assume, that their families have lived here for at least that time and they wished to reflect this.

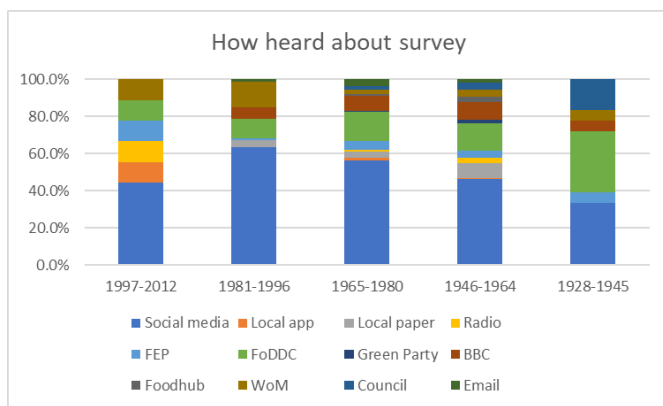
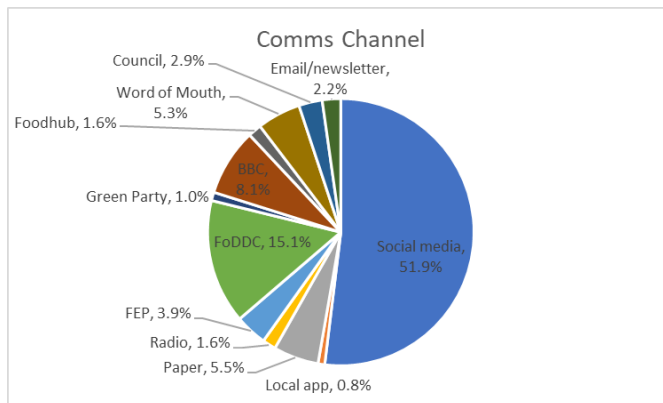
Almost 40% of the sample under the above definition would be termed Foresters. Responses can be taken to represent Foresters’ views. This goes against those comments that suggest the survey would be overly biased to incomers or not represent the views of Foresters. (In some cases, ironically, those claiming Foresters don’t want this, have lived in the Forest less than 20 years, but are from Generation X and older)

A fifth of the sample have been here for between 11 and 20 years which suggests they are well established and aware of some of the issues facing the District more widely. Less than a quarter of the sample had lived in the District for less than 5 years.

The survey does represent the various groups of inhabitants whether Foresters or incomers in the geographical area identified above.

Future Action 5: Promote that 40% of initial survey has lived in the District for more than 20 years

4.4 Communication Channels



Respondents were asked how did they find out about the survey. Only 52% of the sample of 491 said social media. What is pleasing to see is the range of channels employed to reach out to the inhabitants to secure the broadest view possible.

15% said they'd heard about it from FoDDC compared to 3.9% from FEP. The survey was set up with automatic specific url identifiers for the channels to see whether there was any overlap in channel eg claim that heard about it from Council but responds on a FEP identifier. Unfortunately, the Council comms team used the FEP identifiers on their communications so we can only take the individual's perception. The knock-on effect of this is we cannot by exclusion adjust for what might be the likely starting point of knowledge about BR in the general population.

The Points West news item was highlighted by 40 people (8.1% of the sample) as the motivation and lead for considering to complete the survey. This is a significant proportion and highlights the need to continue to use multiple channels.

The chart above and the table below splits communication channels by age group. Care must be taken with the youngest and oldest groups due to sample size. It appears that social media for these is least engaging. For one it's not social media per se just the media used which are less favoured by the young and more favoured by those who consider themselves still young ie Millennials.

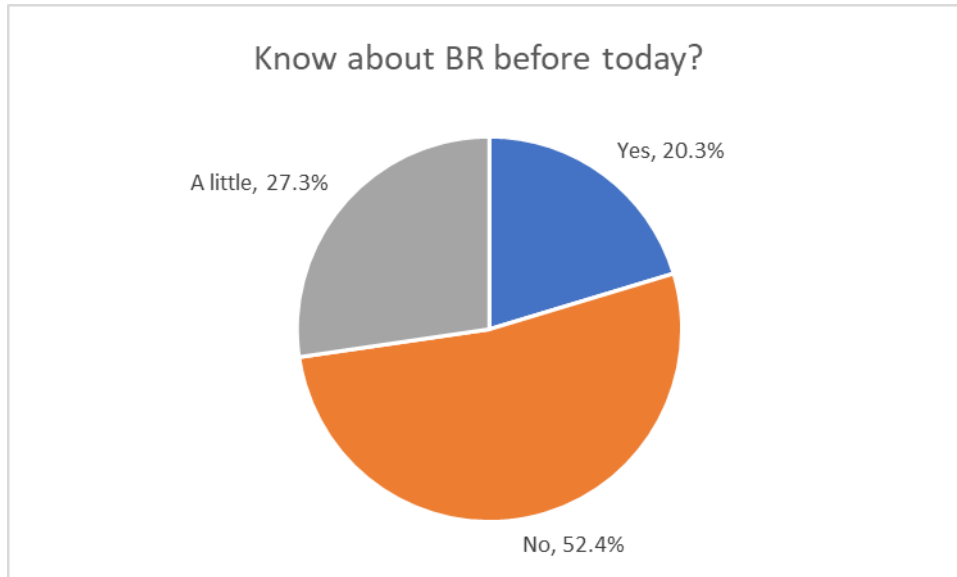
The results do confirm some stereotypes with more local paper readership with age, older Green Party membership and more voluntary and non-district council communication (eg Parish). We can't distinguish between personal emails and ones sent out for example on a FEP newsletter.

Age Group	Social media	Local app	Local paper	Radio	FEP	FoDDC	Green Party	BBC	Foodhub	WoM	Council	Email
1997-2012	44.4%	11.1%	0.0%	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
1981-1996	63.3%	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%	1.3%	10.1%	0.0%	6.3%	0.0%	13.9%	0.0%	1.3%
1965-1980	56.4%	1.2%	3.6%	0.6%	4.8%	15.8%	0.6%	7.9%	1.2%	2.4%	1.8%	3.6%
1946-1964	46.4%	0.5%	8.2%	2.7%	3.6%	15.0%	1.8%	9.5%	2.7%	4.1%	3.6%	1.8%
1928-1945	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.6%	33.3%	0.0%	5.6%	0.0%	5.6%	16.7%	0.0%

The breakdown of communication channels shows significant diversity which undermines any presumption that specific ages were excluded because it was on-line.

Future Action 6 For a light touch baseline survey, the digital approach worked supplemented with mainstream broadcast media. For more detailed consultation type work this should be augmented by face to face and/or hard copy routes to prevent an accusation of exclusion.

4.5 Existing Knowledge of BR



An accusation that could be levelled against the FWW is that of bias. This chart would prove to be a prime exhibit. It is extremely unlikely that half of the general population knew something about BR before completing the survey. Some of those answering yes or a little will do so as they wish to appear knowledgeable; others would answer yes because they'd seen the artefacts and not allowed for the fact that the viewing was the first contact with BR.

Had the collectors worked as intended with separate ones for FoDDC and FEP, those for FEP could have been screened out as having been likely to encounter BR on FEP's website, in the stakeholder meetings or monthly updates. This was not possible.

There is also no way of knowing what the perceived difference is between a little and yes. Some person's little could be vastly more than another's yes I've heard of it. Attempts could be made to screen out individuals who are not representative of the general population or whose responses don't appear to reflect an understanding of BR, but there would be little value in the data.

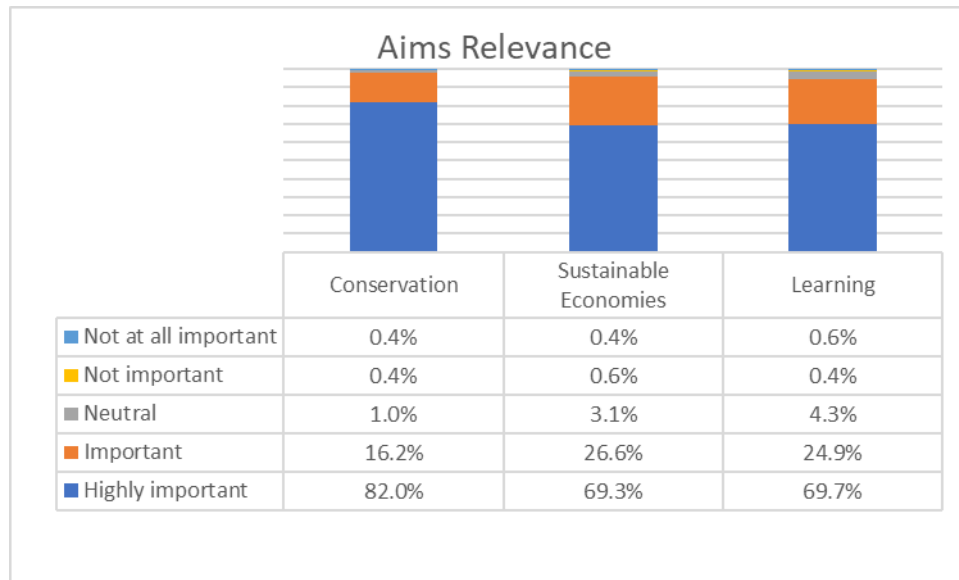
The positive from this is that at least half the population below the A40 are not familiar with BR, but are accessible through channels that can be used to provide information.

5. The Forest We Want Results

Respondents self-selected to answer this survey. What follows is based on the sample of 491 who provided home addresses in the District of the Forest of Dean. The statistics and proportions are therefore different from those provided in the Forest We Want report which provided data from all respondents.

That change on proportions does not affect the thrust of the conclusions made from the raw data but refines them to inhabitants of the District who responded not all respondents to the survey.

5.1 Importance of Overall Biosphere Reserve Aims to Respondents



Respondents were provided with a snapshot of information about the broad aims of a BR which were summarised as conservation, sustainable economy and learning and education.

Those rating each of these not at all important or not important was relatively consistent around 1% or 5 people surveyed. There was some consistency in the negativity as at least one just hated the idea full stop!

More interesting are the neutral scores where learning and education is the worst. The definition related to the use of the district for promotion of conservation and sustainable development and for research and monitoring. Some of the later comments might suggest that this is about perceived restrictions on individuals losing the freedoms they currently enjoy (rightly or wrongly). This might reflect things like the Worgreens enclosure. It may also reflect the perception that the balance should be for those in the District not as a means of external promotion.

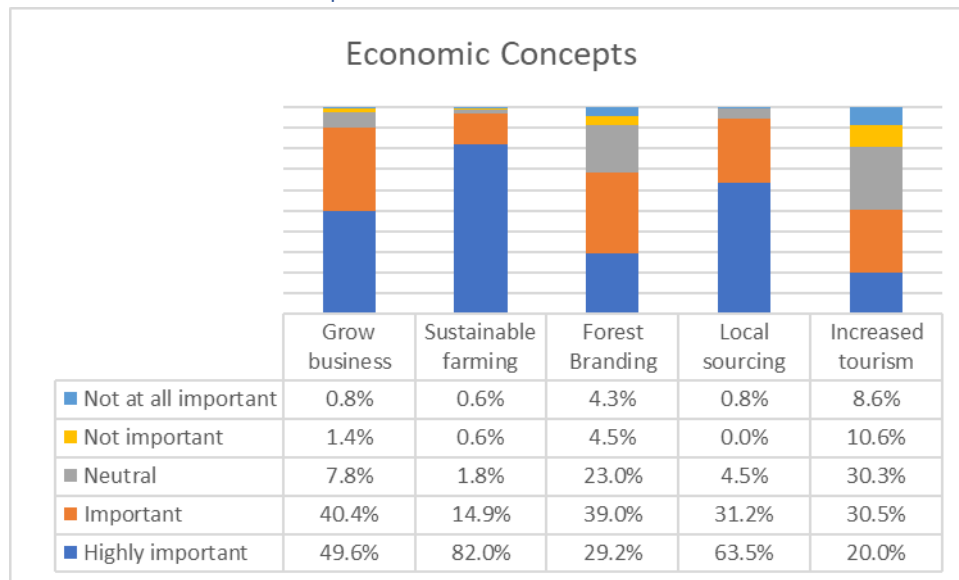
Each of the three aims attracted 70% agreement as being highly important. Conservation scored highest as an individual aim. Most people will agree to it in isolation as asked here. What was not asked explicitly was for respondents to put the aims in order so that their relative importance could be gauged. Extreme care should be taken with a presumption that conservation is the most important between the three.

An analysis was undertaken to exclude respondents who could be categorised as 'singing to the choir' to determine if there was bias for example members of the Green Party assumed to be highly in favour of BR or members of FEP or lived in particular parishes eg statutory forest. These were respondents who always answered very important to everything. There was no discernible bias across the sample. The only conclusion is that some respondents, perhaps, do not understand the need for there to be agreement on balances between concepts, which might mean hard choices being made.

Future Action 7: High agreement levels on concepts rated in isolation will not transfer to the defined BR. The next stage of research must rank or trade off the underlying aims to inform the future design.

Future Action 8: High agreement levels on conservation does not mean that this would convert more to the cause of BR by focusing any campaign on this issue.

5.2 Importance of Economic Concepts



Respondents were asked to rate the importance of the following in isolation:

- Growing Forest based businesses
- Encouraging sustainable farming and forestry practices
- Forest of Dean Biosphere Reserve branding on locally produced products
- Local sourcing for products, food and materials
- Increased Tourism spend and travel to the Area

These are mix of broad and very specific concepts. Again, care must be taken with comparing one concept to another as there was no request to rank between them. It should also be recognised that there is no discernment between individuals answering as inhabitants and as businesses.

Sustainable farming and forestry is very strongly supported by the respondents in the District. This recognises that this is essential to maintain the balance of land use. It might also be seen as an instruction to Forestry England where clear cutting may be misunderstood by the non-forestry observer. It will also reflect that the vast majority of respondents probably do not make their living from this sector.

Two thirds say they want to increase local sourcing, ranking it highly important. Again, there may be a distinction between the intent of doing something and the action of doing so. It may be the case therefore that the link between this and Forest branding, which certifies local production, is misunderstood with only 29% saying it's highly important.

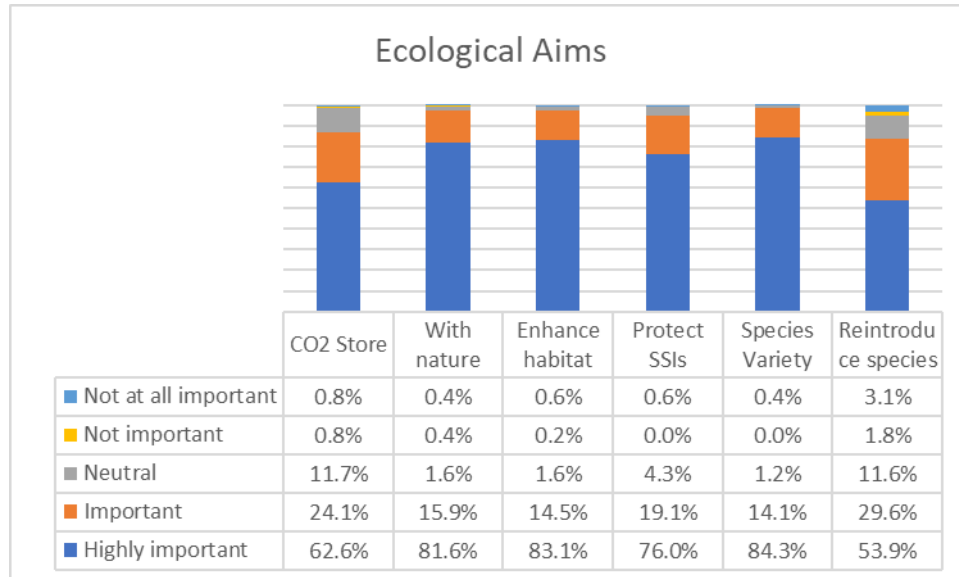
With half of respondents not agreeing that growing forest-based businesses is highly important, there is a clear need to explain the significance of this and the economic impact. The sustainable economic development in a BR is perhaps the most mis-recognised advantage of securing that status.

The big negative for respondents is increased tourism per se with a third neutral and a fifth against. The economic concept of tourism might not be fully understood. The concept expressed here is about those outside of an area coming in to visit, in this case probably outside of the District. Tourism also includes travel within areas. There should be a distinction between number of visitors and their spend per capita.

Future Action 9: Each of the economic concepts needs to be fully developed and explained to both the inhabitant and the business audiences to understand the positives and the negatives. Ranking in importance might also be useful.

Future Action 10: The tourism balance is going to be the most difficult to maintain. Promoting adoption of a BR on the basis of tourism is the most likely way for the concept not to be agreed. Tourism in particular needs careful handling to explain the potential increased value through spend for a similar number of visitors.

5.3 Importance of the Encouragement of Ecological Aims



Respondents were asked to rate the following ecological benefits:

- Storage of atmospheric carbon dioxide
- Encouraging a better understanding of how we work with nature, not against it
- Protecting and enhancing unique habitats
- Protecting areas of scientific importance
- Protecting the variety of species
- Reintroducing native species.

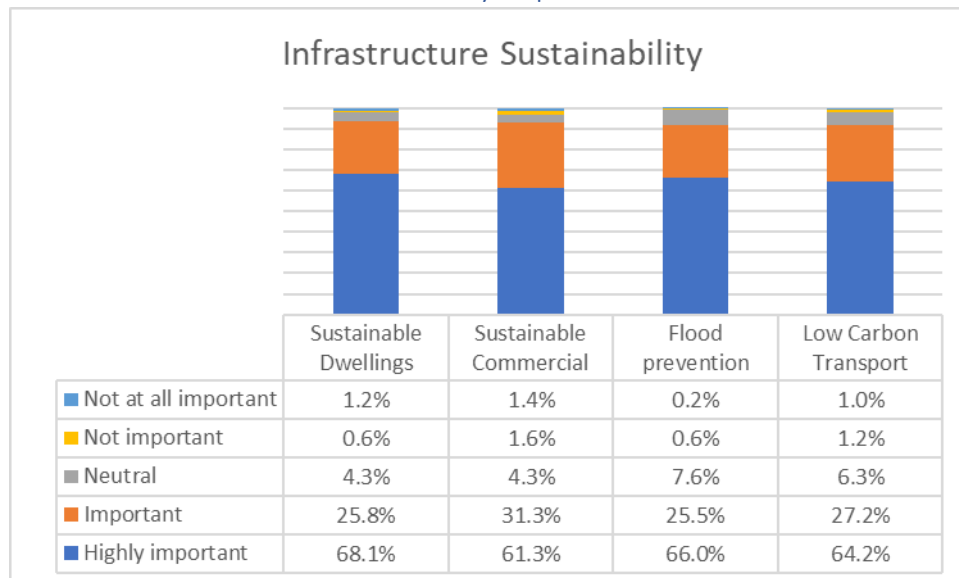
With nature, habitats and variety all had highly important agreement ratings in excess of 80% with few neutral or against them. To a degree each is a relatively well understood concept and only a very brave few would argue against them publicly. The drop back on scientific importance with three quarters rating highly important and a fifth important suggests some clarification work is required to confirm what is meant. I made an assumption in the chart that was SSIs, but the concept as expressed is wider than that with many sites of scientific interest not being SSIs. The need for internationally important sites of scientific interest to gain BR status is significant and not covered here. It is noted that over 95% still believe it to be important.

Storage of atmospheric carbon needs further development. The implicit assumption is 'increasing' storage. The lack of detail may explain the 12% neutrality and only 63% highly important.

Just over half thought re-introducing native species was highly important. Given this is already in train with beavers (and boar?), it's not seen as an automatic plus.

Future Action 11: Increase clarity of what is meant by some of the ecological benefits. What is a carbon store and how this could be increased in the district? What is the benefit of native species re-introduction to the wider community against the potential loss of access to an area? etc

5.4 Importance of Environmental Sustainability Aspects



Four sustainability practices were outlined as being potentially part of a BR:

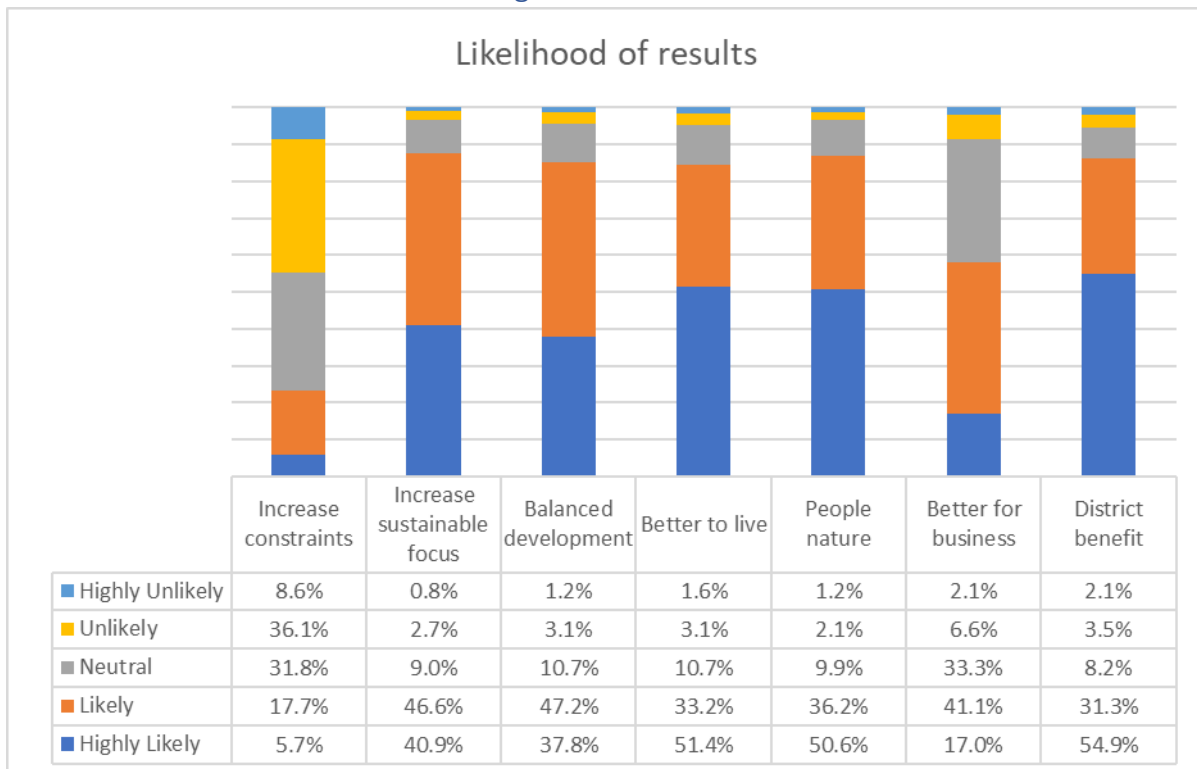
- Improving the sustainability of dwellings (eg through green roofs, better energy efficiency, rainwater and greywater recycling)
- Improving sustainability of commercial developments (business use)
- Flood prevention
- Improving low carbon transport.

It is immediately clear that the first lays out some examples, while the third is two words without a verb but a presumed assumption of 'improving'. Differences like this underline why it is dangerous to make direct comparisons between concept scores.

Essentially two thirds of respondents believed all four were highly important. 3% believed commercial developments were not important as ecological benefits. While 7.6% were neutral on flood prevention. (Not surprisingly there was some correlation with answer and personal flooding risk by area, but this shouldn't be overemphasised). 6% were neutral on improving low carbon transport. This of course begs the question what is the current low carbon transport offering for the District and how would BR improve this really?

Future Action 12: Sustainability is not a well-understood concept and is not helped by greenwashing. For BR the specifics need to be developed which have clear benefits and downsides for inhabitants. A useful point to start would be what are the current baselines in simple terms of each concept.

5.5 Overall likelihood of Events Occurring



Respondents were asked to rate the following, as written in the questionnaire, as being more or less likely as a result of being a BR:

- A Biosphere Reserve will put unnecessary constraints on residents and business
- A Biosphere Reserve will increase emphasise to sustainability and provide the means to communicate this
- A Biosphere Reserve will encourage an integrated and sustainable future focusing on balanced development
- A Biosphere Reserve will be a better place to live
- A Biosphere Reserve will protecting and enhancing the relation between people and nature
- A Biosphere Reserve will be a better place for businesses to thrive in
- As a whole the Forest of Dean District would benefit from becoming a Biosphere Reserve

The precise statements are reproduced here, as above, in order to minimise distortions of meaning. For example, taking the last one, believing that the District would benefit is not the same as being in favour of the District becoming a BR and agreeing to the necessary actions to do so. By analogy, many people can be logically persuaded of the benefit of their need to lose weight, but still fail to take the actions to do so. At this early stage the full implications are unknown such as the restrictions. This question was intended to enable further work to be done to enable all to take informed decisions not a poll on the favourability by a self-selecting group of residents. To claim this is to invite trouble.

As a whole, 54.9% believe it is highly likely that the District would benefit from becoming a BR. This is the highest percentage agreeing it is highly likely, but is still only 54.9%. The aim must be to increase this proportion so that it is nowhere adjacent to the 52% of a Brexit type decision. What are the doubts of the 39.5% who are neutral or believe it is likely to be beneficial? That 86% believe that benefits are likely to accrue is a strong justification for doing further work in order to create the model which in 2/3 surveys time might be a consultation approving or tweaking the design of a BR to be submitted to UNESCO.

Half of those surveyed believed it was highly likely that being a BR would make the area a better place to live and improve the relationship between people and nature. A further third thought both would be likely. It is good practice in this type of research to turn the results around. Just under half of those responding did not view these as being highly likely results. It does not make the place automatically a better place to live; that case must still be won. As is the case of connecting people and nature.

Sustainable focus and balanced development sit somewhere also in that middle ground. Fewer rated these as highly likely results opting instead for likely. Again, consideration needs to be given as to what information and action is required to move those who can visualise some sort of potential result into a position of certainty that the outcome will happen.

It is disappointing that fewer than a fifth believed it would be highly likely to make it an area where businesses thrive. A further third is neutral. Too often the needs of business are positioned as being an obstruction to the environment or somehow in conflict with it. Conveying that they can and have worked in harmony in the area will be a big challenge for BR. A simple example might be the zonings of the BR. By identifying core and buffer zones, there is clarity of where the transition zones lie and what might be developed within each zone for businesses of all types. A specific example is of course the impact that freemining has had in creating the landscape that the District enjoys today or the Anglo-Saxon hunting forest in preventing habitat destruction to enhance the prey of choice!

23.4% of respondents believe it is likely to result in additional constraints. In many ways this appears a more rational approach than the 44.7% who believe that 'unnecessary constraints' are unlikely; unless they are following the precise wording with an emphasis on 'unnecessary'. In other words, respondents may not be saying there will be no constraints, but rather if the constraints are necessary then they're acceptable.

5.6 Further Analysis

The responses given were segmented by various different attributes including :

- Age (given in Appendix D)
- Location statutory forest: non-statutory forest
- Source of invitation to complete survey
- Claimed level of knowledge of BR
- Inability to answer anything, but the top ranker or the converse
- Viewing the artefacts

What was striking was that each segmentation revealed little that was statistically significant from the overall norm. Having exhausted the obvious differentiators the only remaining conclusion is that the levels of consistency are true.

6. Freeform answers on Questions and Concerns

The survey provided two open box questions that asked respondents:

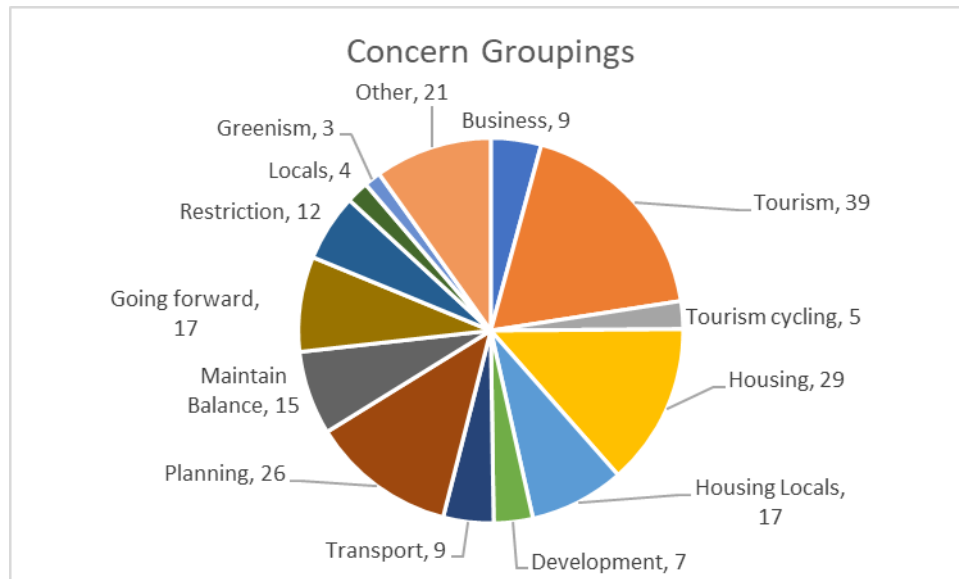
- Whether they had any concerns about a range of activities in the district
- Whether they had any specific questions to raise on the concept.

Separate Appendices E and F provide the detailed responses. These have been grouped where possible roughly by the implied type of the response. Please note such grouping is not a strict science as it relies on interpretation and context across a significant number of possible topic headings!

An anonymous data set was created which shows the parish, statutory forest, time lived in area, age of respondent, their view of the likelihood of overall benefit and their claimed knowledge of BR. These provide

additional context to comments to aid the Analyst's interpretation and context. That data set is not publicly available to preserve the anonymity.

6.1 Concern Groupings



After ranking the 3 aims and economic, ecological and environmental benefits importance, respondents were provided with some information on zoning and the need to achieve a balance. Q14 then asked if they had any concerns about these activities in the Forest of Dean District and provided a free form box. The above comments show the numbers of each comment in each grouping. A synopsis of each is:

- **Business.** Threads here about employment to be in nature-based employment versus the need for jobs for locals per se and the perceived contradiction between business and the environment. One respondent wished to encourage coal-mining with justified use as a heritage activity for freeminers. With mining's inclusion in the artefacts, it should be clear that traditional businesses are justifiable in BR.
- **Tourism** is summed up simply as over-tourism for most of the 39 respondents. There needs to be a clear articulation of what tourism means in a potential BR and the checks and balances it might impose to enable enjoyment of the area whether as an inhabitant/worker/student or as a visitor.
- **Tourism Cycling** is particular venting about too much mountain-biking by outsiders driving to the Forest but is an interesting insight into a tourism niche and acceptance of a balance.
- **Housing.** Here the core is the affordability of housing now and going forward alongside some who are concerned by the volume of current (and future) house-building programmes. Typically, short phrases or one-line comments. Housing is a major issue with 46 comments in this and the next group. It also relates to development and planning. A future theme might be around how BR enables greater agreed certainty of what might be permissible where.
- **Housing Locals.** This is a specific subset of Housing with fuller comments on issues affecting locals such as wage to cost affordability, impact on young local people staying in the area and how it could be socially sustainable.
- **Development.** Simply put the 7 comments want no or very restricted future building development.
- **Transport** links tourism increases to traffic and the ability of the transport network to cope. There is some allusion to the impact on jobs/business.
- **Planning.** The 26 comments on planning tend to be useful comments about developments and infrastructure needs with an overall emphasis on greenery. Some articulate the what's in it for me that would be of benefit. Only one passed judgement on a current planning department.
- **Maintaining Balance.** The various views here concerned ranged from leave it as it is through to creating a new balance, which might mean constraints on housing and tourism. Perhaps best summed up "I would also be concerned about over tourism and that affecting the natural habitat. Contrary to this

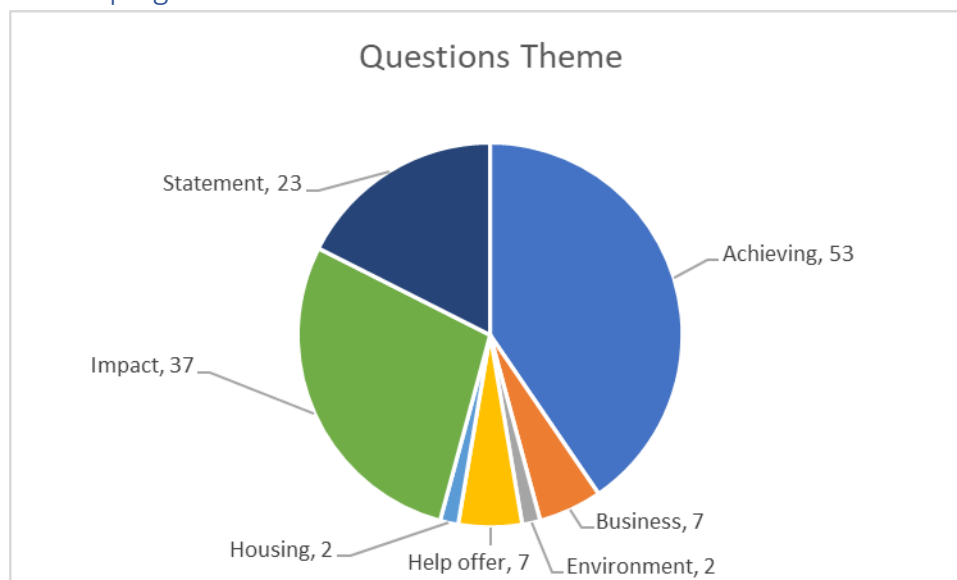
tourism will provide for a better economy, which the Forest needs”. The biggest challenge is to enable the discussions around balance to form an agreed view. That challenge has been successfully met by FEP on economic issues in its first two years so is not insurmountable.

- **Going Forward** is a combination of delivery 13 comments and overall sum-ups 4 comments. Delivery has specific comments on how and what might need to be addressed or concerns that it might not happen.
- **Restrictions** focus on a perceived freedom to roam within the wooded Forest by locals and the potential impact of core areas on that freedom. Future work will increase clarity of the area under discussion in a BR which is likely to be wider than simply the legislative district of the Forest of Dean. This will give context to the freedoms that exist and the locations where they can be exercised.
- **Locals** is about maintaining heritage and somehow creating local rights/benefits not available to outsiders
- **Greenism** The 3 comments voice the accusation that this was not their political choice and might be underhand in achieving ‘Green Party goals’. This is an issue of democracy and being heard as well as ensuring all aspects are considered for example in the same way that economic aspects persuaded FEP not environmental ones per se on the benefits of BR.
- **Other.** Some of these comments bridge a number of issues and would appear in multiple groupings; others are single words eg deforestation which give a context but little guidance on what is actually meant. Others still are opinions that don’t fit easily.

Future Action 13: Next stages should articulate the need for an agreed balance with discussion before the event to reduce and simplify the potential conflicting demands. That discussion is part of the process.

Future Action 14: Regular dripfeed of communication of responses to concerns by theme publishable on FEP website. That feed includes yes, no, possible and frankly we have no idea at this time and for all let’s continue the conversation for solutions to be found.

6.2 Questions Groupings



45% of those surveyed answered no to the last question. The final questions can be allocated broadly into 7 headings. Of these the three biggest by numbers of comments are summed up by:

- **Achieving.** These are issues, challenges and questions that relate to achieving BR status
- **Impact.** These are the perceived areas of impact which again can be broken down into sub groups
- **Statement.** Many valuable ideas and views are contained with this sub-group which require individual reading. They tend to be more lengthy than other responses and are not question oriented.



The second chart below breaks out the particular sub-groups of questions. All responses are given in the Appendix and provide a trove of questions that need addressing and need to be covered in future iterations of the process.

Some are ill-founded but we must assume is a genuine question requiring information or a response. For example, concerns are raised that this survey would not reach older generations because 'it's social media based' or views of true Foresters would not be heard. The sample proves this is not the case. Questions about who and governance reflect concerns on process answered by details of what the next 2 years would entail and the key milestones that form the basis of the project plan. Impact questions might give specific scenarios and needs; some could be an easy yes or no while others can only be answered currently with 'that's a great question in a year's time we might have an answer and these could be the steps we need to take to answer it'

Future Action 15: Provide clarity of process including the roadmap through the comms channels. Emphasise the evolving nature of the approach with use of version numbers on documents (point 1 etc on minor changes and first digit change on major changes upgrades eg bid development funding secured)

Future Action 16: Continuously confirm that this is an ongoing discussion to form agreed views on which a formal consultation will be made once there is consensus as to what a BR might mean in the District. Comms to avoid superlative statements and provide objectivity.

Future Action 17: An outcome can be that no application is made for BR because it does not fit/provide the benefits that the whole District wants. The evidence and ideas uncovered have significant value for the District regardless and will act as enablers.

7. Arts Council Results

The Arts Council questions produced some of the more confusing data in the survey. Previously outlined is the problem of a question which states score out of 5 and the respondent being presented with a sliding scale of 100. To complicate matters further, some respondents did not answer the question whether they had seen, but then scored the engagement and information questions. While others did the reverse of answering they had seen, but then not answering the engagement and information question.

A further potential complication is the Arts Council would not be interested in whether the individual was a district inhabitant. The concept of constraining art-viewing by geography would spawn countless doctoral theses as to its validity and comparative values!

Category	All respondents' raw data	Sample answering yes or scored and substantial questionnaire completion	Sample answering yes and scored and live in District
N=	534	508	205
Not seen	306	262	-
Seen	228	246	205
Average engaged score	50	58	57
Average understanding impact score	52	58	58

The above table attempts to simplify the data. From all the responses 534 respondents answered at least one of the three questions. 57% of these had not seen or recalled seeing any artefact before responding to the survey. 228 or 43% responded yes to the question had they seen. From all the scores given provided on the sliding scale the overall average score was 50 for engagement and 52 for the impact on understanding about BR. It is important to note that the scoring uses a reverse scale. In other words, if the perceived increase was significant then they should score low; if the increase was minimal then they should score high. This is counter-intuitive for many people so care needs to be taken with the data.

The second column of responses excludes those respondents who did not fill in the majority of the questionnaire. The sample is used for many of the following graphs. Analysis was undertaken to see whether segmenting by these responses affected the later responses. There are no strong conclusions here although there was a slight tendency for viewers of the artefacts to be slightly more negative on some of the later questions (ranking important rather than very important). It is impossible to work cause and effect- did viewing make them slightly more objective or are they naturally more objective, because they view art?

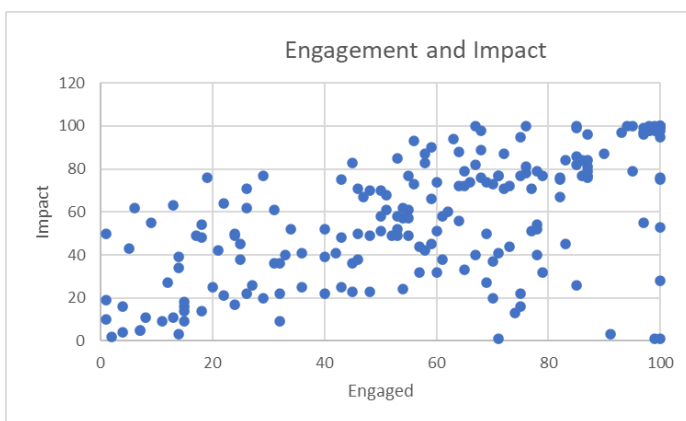
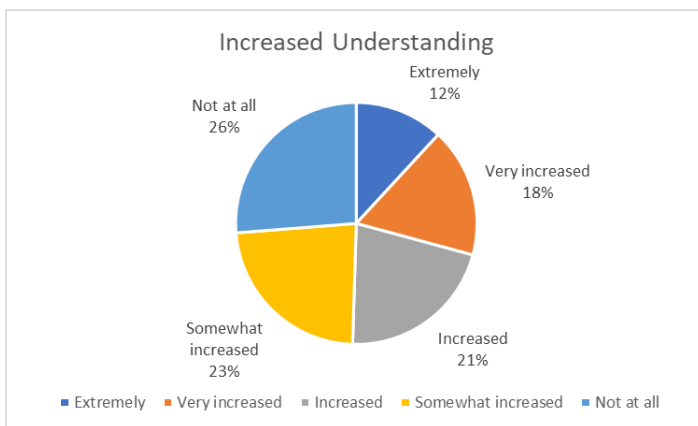
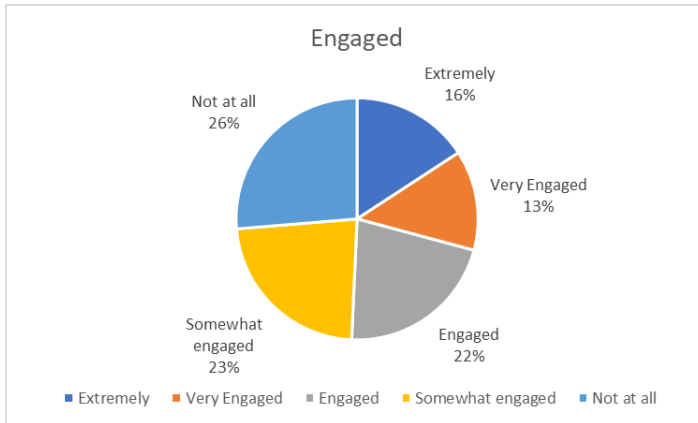
48% of those in the second column responded yes to viewing or provided a score to engagement or information. The arithmetic increase in scores results from the removal of zero scores where the respondent had answered no to viewing the artefacts, but provided a zero score. The software registers a score if the respondent touches the slider which is preset at 0. It's important to remember that a higher score here is a less positive outcome as 100 means they are completely not engaged or informed.

The final column is those who answered yes to seeing the artefacts and also provided at least one of the two scores required. We can say that over 200 people believe they saw an artefact about BR and were prepared to rate its impact on engagement and understanding. What we cannot say is which of the artefacts they saw and whether it was the Arts Council funded artefacts or those produced by the Council. This should temper any conclusions drawn.

[Future Action 18: Ensure that best-intentioned partner actions do not impact on conclusions that might be drawn from project data](#)

Of the sample of 508 and 246 potential respondents where a score was given on the 100-point scale, this score has been converted back to a 5-point scale and then to divisions expressed by words in the question posed. There is a big caveat with this data that should always be borne in mind. On FEP media platforms there were over 16,000 views of FEP/Arts Council funded artefacts. It is fair to conclude that these could have been consumed by at least 4,300 members of the District population, but less than 5% of that population felt sufficiently engaged/motivated to complete the survey. And of those completing the survey half did not feel engaged by the artefacts.

[Future Action 19: Ensure there are simple opinion counters as well as more complex surveys so the value of the communication approach can be evaluated.](#)



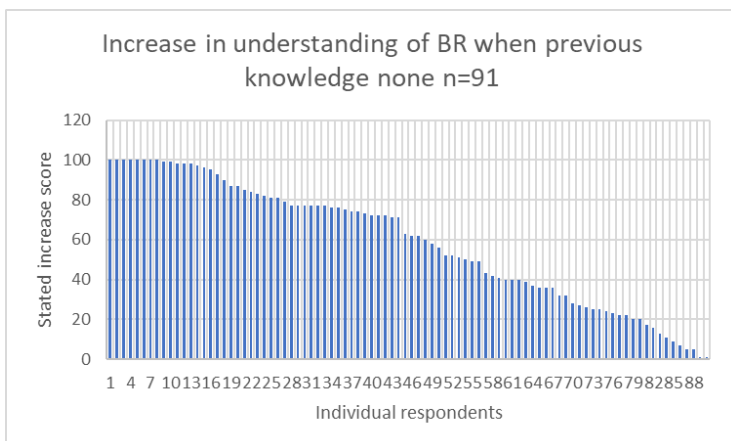
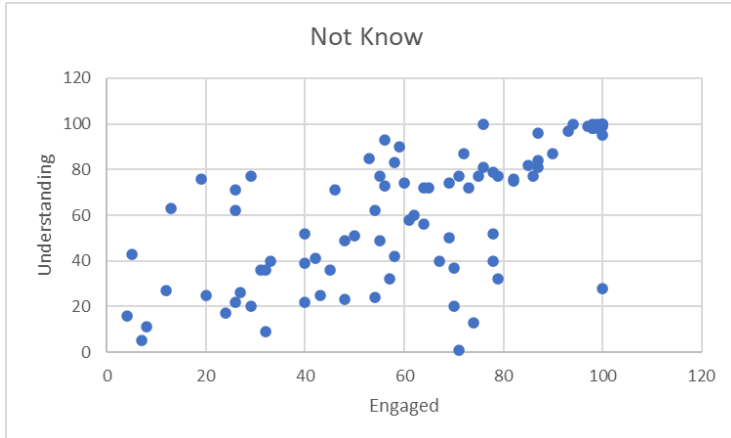
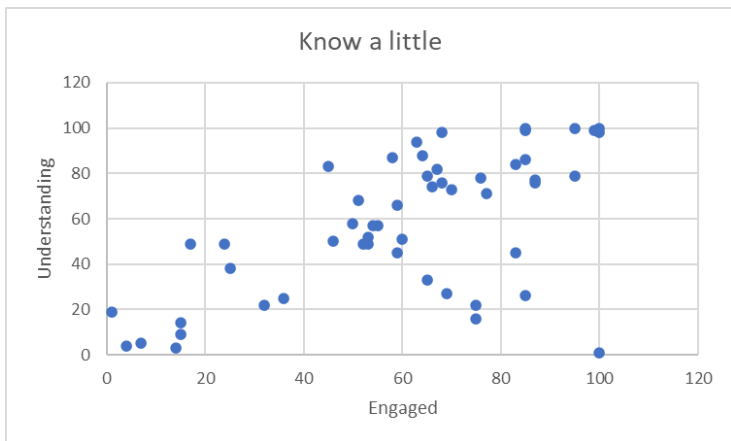
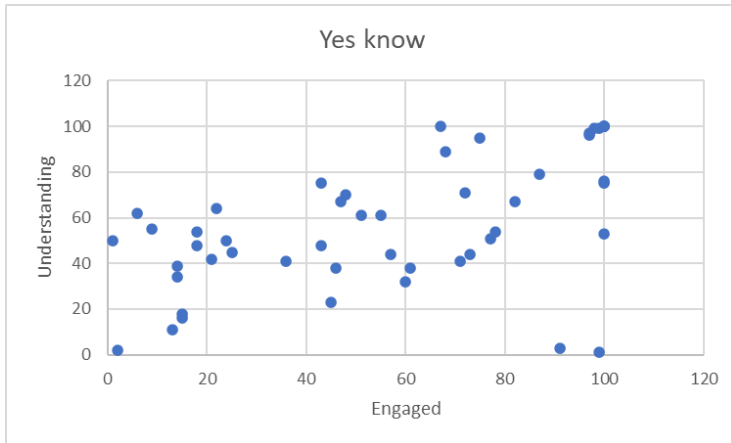
Overall, a quarter of those responding were not at all engaged by the artefacts seen, whichever they were. A further quarter were somewhat engaged. Which means half of those answering were engaged at reasonable levels and three quarters engaged at some level. This is a very positive outcome from the artists' perspective.

The second chart looks very similar to the first. This one relates to the increase in understanding about BR. The key here is that at individual respondent level, the scores can be completely different. This is masked by the overall aggregation. It would also depend on their starting point. It is probably safe to claim that at least half of those viewing increased their BR understanding whatever their starting point.

The third chart plots the impact and engagement scores where both are given so that each dot is likely to represent a single respondent. The cluster of dots top right reflect individuals where the artefacts provided neither engagement or information. It does not cross-reference this with stated prior knowledge. Theoretically these could be individuals with high prior knowledge where the artefacts taught them nothing new and just didn't engage them.

The two dots bottom right reflect that the artefacts did not provide information on BR but were highly engaging. Perhaps a case of art for art's sake? If we take the vertical 20 score equivalent to extremely engaged; the cluster in the box of horizontal 20 were both extremely engaged and highly increased in their understanding. Those above gained less information from the artefacts, but were extremely engaged.

Future Action 20: responses indicate that using arts-based artefacts leads generally to engagement with the artefact and convey information to individuals at a variety of levels. While it does not work for everyone, it's a useful tool going forward to convey information and start the conversation.



The first three charts breakdown the scoring of understanding and engagement into the 3 categories of prior knowledge about BR.

The first confirms that one of those who was not engaged by the artefacts but had a significant increase in understanding, was previously knowledgeable about BR. This might highlight the difficulty of the scale. Most fall into the 80:80 box with a small minority very engaged and informed. This is a little surprising.

The bulk of those claiming to know a little about BR tend to be in the box of 40 and above on engagement and in information gained. The group in the 60:60 box top right were less than somewhat engaged and somewhat informed. Overall, then this is more negative than positive.

The chart for those claiming to know nothing about BR is the most scattered. Broadly the higher the level of engagement; the more likely that knowledge is gained. The interesting group is those in the middle on engagement who as a result felt they'd gained little information (cf box 40:60 engaged but 80:100 on understanding). The 5 dots above 60 understanding but 20 engaged, loved the art but took little away.

The last chart just looks at the increased understanding scores for those who stated no prior knowledge of BR. This is shown as per the scoring scale so the more to the score of 100 left the better. For 13% of these there was no real difference in understanding of BR; conversely for 26% the difference was great. Indeed overall 87% were positive and most over the 60 score. If the artefacts being viewed were the Arts Council funded ones; they broke the ice.

Appendix A Limitations of Survey

We recognised the following potential limitations of the survey:

- This survey was conducted as a very early stage of research to test the temperature on various concepts associated with Biosphere Reserves, to see whether there was community interest and possible support to invest effort in the next stage of discovery. It has fully achieved this aim.
- This survey is primarily qualitative rather than quantitative per se. It takes the approach of here is an outline of an idea, which you might have picked up if you viewed an artefact; is this the sort of thing you think is important to consider when taking the District forward. Some of those ideas might be termed motherhoods and apple pie. This Americanism covers any core belief that any American would be expected to agree was right. It is always good to sense-check whether a belief is still true as a starting point. Later a clear understanding can be developed of how that manifests itself in a circumstance. For example, greenwash fails as it only applies lip-service to the motherhood that real change is needed.
- It is not intended to provide final answers nor can it be termed a consultation as it does not provide a concrete model of what a Biosphere Reserve centred on the Forest of Dean would look like. Care must be taken with how any findings are communicated. This is not a pedantic researcher's plea.
- Through Arts Council funding it provided information through arts-based artefacts in order to start conversations and the process of providing information about Biosphere Reserves in ways that all could potentially engage. It achieved this aim. The data shows that while some were not engaged by the artefact seen, they still typically gained information about BR. By its nature no work of art is universally liked; often success is measured by generating a response in the viewer. This methodology worked well.
- The survey was intended to set some baselines and to find out what questions and concerns need to be answered. As a light touch survey, it did not nor could it have provided volumes of information about each of the aims/concepts/benefits/drawbacks. If the aim is to measure the existing apparent understanding of the general population; providing lots of information makes the sample unrepresentative of the population being surveyed. It revealed an *initial* tranche of questions and concerns that can inform the next stages to find out more and to consider how to resolve them.
- Making decisions based on presumptions and groupthink is dangerous. This survey starts the process of wider engagement and discussion so that the District as a whole can come to conclusions as to whether it wishes to support the application submission. This is likely to be a 2-year process requiring investment to do the necessary work. While it is hoped that a BR application would be made at the end of that process; it is not a given. The knowledge acquired will enable better balances and understanding of needs in the area to inform local plans and strategies.
- Attributes were scored in isolation. No attempt was made to rank attributes in preference orders or to gauge whether ecological was more important than say economic in respondent's minds. A benefit of BR is the equal importance of economic, ecological and environmental sustainability in the model and the freedoms created through planned development of areas. (NB development in this sense is all-encompassing and includes the enhancement of the core zones for the needs of the non-human species). Ranking can only take place at later stages when some idea of the balances being created are available with both up and downsides known.
- One respondent rightly commented on the spelling and grammar used in the survey and for a feel of cut and paste for which we apologise. It is no mitigation that respondents also provided mis-spellings and grammatical errors in their replies. Both affect the sense and understanding which can lead to mis-interpretation. We share the respondent's concern that our errors could be seen to create issues if "not written for and to convey information to the average Forester".

Appendix B A Bit About FEP And Author

The Forest Economic Partnership (FEP) was launched in 2018 by the FoDDC. Its mission is to deliver a thriving economy in the Forest of Dean District by connecting business, councils, people, ideas and resources. Over 250 organisations/individuals voluntarily participate in its quarterly steering group or three sub-group meetings. The three voluntary sub-groups focus on areas of particular challenge to the District and are shown with their individual missions below:

- **Education & Skills.** Within a lifelong learning context, how do we get the workforce we need for the District now and in the future to power and sustain economic growth by removing barriers and raising aspirations.
- **Transport & Infrastructure, Bridges & Borders.** The District Plan guides future development that gives us the space to work, live and play. Once those uses are known we can consider the transport routes in the District to enable them become fit for purpose. What is the practical new vision that defines the Forest we want to be and the balance between the use of space? The Severn and Wye have preserved the Forest. The best future protection is connection with all those around us to ensure a mutual understanding of economic needs. Looking outwards, what do we need and want to trade for bridges; participation in the South Wales-West of England economic powerhouse; and neighbours' plans.
- **Digital Connectivity.** We are told we live in a digital world. What practical steps can we take to get the speed, reliability and connectivity to support the ways we increasingly work, live, study and play now and in the future.

Work is ongoing to shape a new economic plan so that in 2050 the District is an attractive, vibrant and dynamic destination to live, work and do business. FEP has actively contributed to a number of consultations such as the House of Lords investigation of the Rural Economy where FEP's submission was cited.

Other work around rural transport has been referenced in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s 2021 report Innovations for Better Rural Mobility and National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise (NICRE) State of the Art Report. OECD is a unique forum where the governments of 37 democracies with market-based economies collaborate to develop policy standards to promote sustainable economic growth. NICRE is a research partnership between the Centre for Rural Economy and Newcastle Business School, the Countryside and Community Research Institute at Gloucestershire and Royal Agriculture Universities and the Enterprise Research Centre at Warwick University.

The Forest We Want research was undertaken by the Biosphere Reserve Action Group which reports to the Transport & Infrastructure, Bridges & Borders Sub-Group of FEP.

The Seeing the Wood for the Trees report is an additional report to the FWW drawing conclusions from the 491 respondents living in the District of the Forest of Dean who gave significantly complete responses to the survey.

Its main analyst and author is Andrew Callard who runs Aimed Business, a management and marketing consultancy. Following his MBA at Warwick in 1985 he joined a Japanese market research consultancy using then new qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse the telecoms, office automation and consumer electronics markets in the main European countries. While there he undertook significant projects in fax machines, mobile telephony networks and karaoke. Subsequently he spent a decade working in Higher and Further Education increasing the volume and quality of applied and blue-sky research and vocational training through business engagement. He has been a board member of the Institute for Research in Applicable Computing and Research Institute for Media, Art and Design at the University of Bedfordshire and land-based research while as Business Development Director, then Deputy Principal at Hartpury. Since 2007 he has worked extensively in the rural economy and assisting business survival, innovation and growth. He is the current lead of FEP's TIBB sub-group, a Director of the CIC and was FEP's founding Chair.

Appendix C Example Variation of Scoring on Economic Concepts

Average scores	1997-2012	1981-1996	1965-1980	1946-1964	1928-1945
Grow business	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.3	4.4
Sustainable farming	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.8
Forest Branding	4.3	3.6	3.8	3.9	4.1
Local sourcing	4.8	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.6
Increased tourism	3.0	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.6

The above table is provided as an example of the variations between age groups.

Overall, they show a high level of conformity with little real variation between the ages in their opinions on economic factors. The most significant might appear to be the youngest are least favourable to increased tourism spend and travel to the area while the oldest appear most in favour. But this would be a dangerous conclusion given the size of the samples in each of these categories. The youngest has 9 respondents and the eldest 18. Neither would be seen as being statistically valid given the self-selection for response.

The data therefore provides the opportunity for future proving or disproving of hypotheses that at this stage can be seen to be quirks not conclusions.

Appendix D Importance Broken Down by Age Groups

The following tables show the percentage of each age group sample giving each score. One of the issues with average scores is that they can hide the extremes. If half the sample hates something (score 1) and half the sample loves something (score 5); the average is the same as everyone being neutral (3). Given the nature of this early-stage research there is a strong skew towards loving with a few hating because there is no concrete model to evaluate. The next stage should give a more concrete model that trades off between the concepts in order to find the best balance. Its results will enable sticking points to be identified and potentially typified so that they can be addressed.

Generation Z responses (born 1997-2012)

Care needs to be taken with relying too much on this data given the total sample size is only 9 individuals. Gen Z accounts for 9 to 24 year olds. This clearly splits into 2 groups for ongoing research:

1. School students up to GCSE or roughly 16
2. Post GCSE. This in turn might split between those doing A levels, going to College/University, on traditional apprenticeships and those in work

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Conservation	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sustainable Economies	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Learning	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Grow business	55.6%	33.3%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%
Sustainable farming	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Forest Branding	55.6%	22.2%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Local sourcing	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Increased tourism	0.0%	44.4%	22.2%	22.2%	11.1%

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
CO2 store	55.6%	11.1%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%
With nature	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Enhance habitat	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Protect SSIs	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Species Variety	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Reintroduce Species	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	Hily important	Important	Neutral	Not import	Not at all imp
Improving the sustainability of dwellings	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Improving sustainability of commercial developments	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Flood prevention	66.7%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Improving low carbon transport	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Unnecessary constraints	11.1%	22.2%	33.3%	11.1%	33.3%
Increase emphasis on sustainability	55.6%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	77.8%
Balanced development	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%
Better place to live	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	88.9%
People and nature	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	55.6%
Businesses to thrive	33.3%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	77.8%
As a whole District benefits from becoming BR	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Millennials Responses (born 1981-1996)

This covers those between 24 and 40 years old with 79 responses

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Conservation	74.7%	22.8%	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%
Sustainable Economies	70.9%	26.6%	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Learning	71.8%	25.6%	1.3%	1.3%	0.0%

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Grow business	49.4%	41.8%	5.1%	3.8%	0.0%
Sustainable farming	79.7%	13.9%	5.1%	0.0%	1.3%
Forest Branding	29.1%	25.3%	32.9%	5.1%	7.6%
Local sourcing	64.6%	27.8%	5.1%	0.0%	2.5%
Increased tourism	20.3%	31.6%	26.6%	12.7%	8.9%

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
CO2 store	50.6%	26.6%	20.3%	0.0%	2.5%
With nature	74.7%	22.8%	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%
Enhance habitat	75.9%	19.0%	2.5%	1.3%	1.3%
Protect SSIs	64.6%	27.8%	6.3%	0.0%	1.3%
Species Variety	78.5%	16.5%	5.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Reintroduce Species	55.7%	29.1%	11.4%	0.0%	3.8%

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Improving the sustainability of dwellings	68.4%	24.1%	6.3%	0.0%	1.3%
Improving sustainability of commercial developments	60.8%	31.6%	5.1%	1.3%	1.3%
Flood prevention	69.6%	22.8%	7.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Improving low carbon transport	68.4%	21.5%	8.9%	0.0%	1.3%

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Unnecessary constraints	13.9%	30.4%	40.5%	10.1%	39.2%
Increase emphasis on sustainability	46.8%	7.6%	5.1%	1.3%	29.1%
Balanced development	53.2%	8.9%	6.3%	2.5%	41.8%
Better place to live	39.2%	11.4%	3.8%	3.8%	44.9%
People and nature	41.0%	9.0%	2.6%	2.6%	19.0%
Businesses to thrive	44.3%	22.8%	10.1%	3.8%	45.6%
As a whole FoD District benefits from becoming BR	45.6%	36.7%	8.9%	5.1%	3.8%

Generation X born 1965-1980

There were 165 41-56 year olds in the responses.

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Conservation	83.0%	15.8%	0.6%	0.6%	0.0%
Sustainable Economies	71.8%	24.5%	2.5%	0.6%	0.6%
Learning	69.7%	24.8%	4.2%	0.6%	0.6%

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Grow business	54.5%	37.0%	7.9%	0.6%	0.0%
Sustainable farming	77.6%	20.0%	1.8%	0.6%	0.0%
Forest Branding	27.9%	36.4%	26.1%	6.7%	3.0%
Local sourcing	65.5%	29.7%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Increased tourism	21.3%	30.5%	27.4%	12.8%	7.9%

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
CO2 store	62.4%	25.5%	10.9%	1.2%	0.0%
With nature	80.0%	18.8%	0.6%	0.6%	0.0%
Enhance habitat	84.2%	13.3%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Protect SSIs	75.0%	20.1%	4.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Species Variety	84.2%	15.2%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Reintroduce Species	53.9%	30.3%	11.5%	1.8%	2.4%

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Improving the sustainability of dwellings	70.9%	23.6%	3.6%	0.6%	1.2%
Improving sustainability of commercial developments	64.8%	29.1%	1.8%	2.4%	1.8%
Flood prevention	62.6%	27.0%	8.6%	1.8%	0.0%
Improving low carbon transport	63.6%	29.1%	5.5%	1.2%	0.6%

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Unnecessary constraints	19.4%	27.9%	38.2%	9.7%	46.1%
Increase emphasis on sustainability	45.5%	7.3%	1.2%	0.0%	37.6%
Balanced development	49.1%	10.3%	3.0%	0.0%	50.9%
Better place to live	33.3%	10.9%	4.2%	0.6%	51.5%
People and nature	38.2%	8.5%	1.8%	0.0%	17.6%
Businesses to thrive	42.4%	33.9%	4.8%	1.2%	58.2%
As a whole FoD District benefits from becoming BR	58.2%	29.1%	7.3%	3.6%	1.8%

Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964)

220 57 to 75 year old respondents to the survey and the biggest group by far at 44.8% of the sample.

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Conservation	83.9%	13.8%	1.4%	0.5%	0.5%
Sustainable Economies	66.7%	28.3%	3.7%	0.9%	0.5%
Learning	68.5%	24.7%	5.9%	0.0%	0.9%

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Grow business	45.2%	43.3%	8.8%	0.9%	1.8%
Sustainable farming	85.4%	12.3%	0.5%	0.9%	0.9%
Forest Branding	27.8%	48.1%	16.2%	3.2%	4.6%
Local sourcing	60.9%	34.5%	3.6%	0.0%	0.9%
Increased tourism	19.2%	29.7%	33.8%	8.7%	8.7%

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
CO2 store	66.5%	23.9%	8.3%	0.5%	0.9%
With nature	84.5%	11.9%	2.7%	0.5%	0.5%
Enhance habitat	84.5%	13.7%	0.9%	0.0%	0.9%
Protect SSIs	80.7%	15.6%	2.8%	0.0%	0.9%
Species Variety	86.8%	11.8%	0.5%	0.0%	0.9%
Reintroduce Species	52.1%	31.1%	11.0%	2.3%	3.7%

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Improving the sustainability of dwellings	65.6%	28.0%	4.6%	0.5%	1.4%
Improving sustainability of commercial developments	58.9%	33.3%	5.9%	0.5%	1.4%
Flood prevention	67.0%	25.2%	7.3%	0.0%	0.5%
Improving low carbon transport	62.4%	28.4%	6.4%	1.4%	1.4%

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Unnecessary constraints	18.0%	34.6%	34.1%	7.4%	39.6%
Increase emphasis on sustainability	45.6%	10.1%	3.2%	1.4%	41.0%
Balanced development	43.3%	11.5%	2.3%	1.8%	55.5%
Better place to live	30.3%	10.1%	2.3%	1.8%	51.6%
People and nature	32.3%	12.0%	2.3%	1.8%	14.3%
Businesses to thrive	38.2%	38.2%	6.9%	2.3%	56.0%
As a whole FoD District benefits from becoming BR	56.0%	30.6%	8.3%	3.2%	1.9%

The Silent Generation (born 1928-45)

Silent Generation is a bit of a misnomer for this sample. 18 respondents fell into this category.

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Conservation	72.2%	27.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sustainable Economies	66.7%	27.8%	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Learning	72.2%	27.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Grow business	55.6%	33.3%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Sustainable farming	88.9%	5.6%	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Forest Branding	44.4%	22.2%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Local sourcing	66.7%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Increased tourism	27.8%	27.8%	33.3%	0.0%	11.1%

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
CO2 store	72.2%	11.1%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%
With nature	83.3%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Enhance habitat	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Protect SSIs	72.2%	16.7%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Species Variety	72.2%	27.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Reintroduce Species	44.4%	22.2%	27.8%	5.6%	0.0%

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Improving the sustainability of dwellings	61.1%	33.3%	0.0%	5.6%	0.0%
Improving sustainability of commercial developments	47.1%	35.3%	5.9%	11.8%	0.0%
Flood prevention	70.6%	29.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Improving low carbon transport	66.7%	22.2%	5.6%	5.6%	0.0%

	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Unnecessary constraints	17.6%	47.1%	23.5%	5.9%	17.6%
Increase emphasis on sustainability	64.7%	17.6%	0.0%	0.0%	17.6%
Balanced development	64.7%	17.6%	0.0%	0.0%	41.2%
Better place to live	41.2%	17.6%	0.0%	0.0%	35.3%
People and nature	58.8%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	17.6%
Businesses to thrive	52.9%	29.4%	0.0%	0.0%	41.2%
As a whole FoD District benefits from becoming BR	41.2%	41.2%	17.6%	0.0%	0.0%

Appendix E Concerns

Comments reproduced without editing. Grouped into rough themes. Each box is a separate respondent. The concerns are grouped around the themes they may represent to make analysis easier. These should be taken as general groupings as for example the difference between affordable housing and affordable housing for locals might be minor or major.

BALANCE
Government new housing figure is impossible to build without losing what makes the Forest of Dean special
Yes, affordability of housing, tourism that impacts on the environment but doesn't contribute to local economy/jobs
Building and tourism should be constrained there is too much having a negative impact already
I think these 'constraints' could be viewed as opportunities. I do not believe it has to be one way or the other. It's possible to achieve these goals without a detrimental effect on business and tourism as long as this is mitigated for in any future planning and development
No, I think there is always a balance to be made and at the moment wildlife, their habitats and our changing climate needs us to do more.
Yes. The Forest has long been a working landscape. It should not be transformed into a museum.
I think the Forest should be left as it is
Need to balance change with development and not constrain everything
Affordable Housing / loss of Local Business
I want the beauty and nature to be preserved and to not build extra houses
I am concerned about any activity that has any negative impact on the balance of nature, however small
Increase in buildings and traffic
Generally no, having lived in a National Park, I understand the constraints and welcome them; however, affordable housing is key to the success of any community.
No, we need to protect where we live for us now & the future
Affordable housing is a concern for local young people. I would also be concerned about over tourism and that affecting the natural habitat. Contrary to this tourism will provide for a better economy, which the Forest needs
BUSINESS
Yes, limiting businesses which care important to the area as employers.
The economic benefits should bring in better jobs for local people not more seasonal work
Very concerned to protect local biodiversity from development impact so new employment should be about employment in nature related activities.
Some local business with high pollutant output may be forced to close, meaning loss of jobs for people.
Very concerned to protect local biodiversity from development impact so new employment should be about employment in nature related activities. There needs to be a professional audit of the species and populations here as the starting point for any further implementation of a biosphere.
Forest economy needs to be integrated with the bioregional resource much more closely
Must provide jobs for locals. Need smart spa hotel to attract more affluent visitors.
Business expansion needs to be done as much in benefit with our environment as it does for human financial benefits
Encouraging the continued use of coal mining and coal usage as a ' heritage ' activity
DELIVERY
Only that we might not be able to things quickly enough

No if good and sufficient research confirms the need for action and effective monitoring is implemented.
Areas of importance seem to focus on the obvious areas and not other areas such as our estuary mud flats and salt water marshes
One concern is whether the council would be willing to take likely unpopular measures (unpopular with central government and wealthy residents) in order to stem the impacts that this designation would have. Would they be willing to prioritise the rights of animals over private property, for example accepting that flooding caused by the reintroduction of beavers to the biosphere as a whole and not relocating them if they cause damage to private/personal property.
Some but would need to know more detail about potential impacts.
I do feel that Dean Forest needs a positive forward-thinking approach for its future which is inclusive for everyone.
The historic environment is not well enough protected and the FoD needs a full-time permanent Building Conservation Officer in post.
Yes, that the players and interested parties are usually those that are born and bred in the Forest and there will always be resistance to change. They will need to be on board and educated into joining the ride.
That it won't happen
No, building on what we are
I would welcome an intelligent response to balancing the income tourism brings us with the protection of biodiversity
There isn't enough detail in this questionnaire, perhaps if you have watched the promo you would have. We don't know how large the Site of Special Scientific Interest would be so it's difficult to comment on. Tourism is a positive and a negative, this isn't clear on what negative constraints could impact tourism.
The extent to which the biosphere influences increased economic activity and quality of life and communities throughout the district
DEVELOPMENT
Too many housing developments
Too much development will destroy the character of the forest
No- it would be good to prevent large expansion of towns within the forest and protect the forest
No. Development needs constraining
Yes I do. I am very concerned about the level of pollution, and building too many houses on farm land.
No further housing development
I have very big concerns over the amount of new properties that are being built in the forest.
GREENISM
Providing affordable housing, employment, improved roads and public transport, access to health care and improving the lifestyles of the people living in the area has to come first. If you want to help improve the environment, go and save a rain forest.
If people want a green government, they would vote for it but they don't want one
Over active green influence and dogma
HOUSING
Increasing house prices excluding local people.
House prices increasing
I worry about the affordability of housing. It is in certain areas already very expensive to buy a house.
Worried about how much new housing is being built
Availability of affordable housing.
Increased housing costs could stop young local people being able to afford their own home.
Housing affordability for young people
Affordability of housing
Affordability of houses, over tourism

Mainly the price of housing
Affordable housing/growth of sustainable 'green' jobs
Housing is already a major concern. I would like to see something to limit the numbers of second homes and holiday homes and to promote full residential use.
Affordability of housing
Yes, affordable housing is crucial to keep the unique nature of the forest
Yes. Too much new housing would concern me
Yes. The amount of seemingly indiscriminate housebuilding. All about making more money for the already-rich greedies, with no consideration for the green belt / infrastructure (or lack of it) / residents' peace and quiet .
High House prices
Rising house prices
Affordability of housing
Affordability of housing for young people
Increased house cost could price out locals, can there be pockets of local connection properties which are below market price
Affordability of housing for children's generation
Housing affordability. Over tourism
Housing costs; but really there needs to be more sustainable national solution to this too.
Affordability of housing
Affordability of housing - but that is a bigger issue and should not attempt to be solved by building more houses.
Affordable housing
Affordability of housing
Affordable housing
HOUSING LOCALS
I have concerns about affordability of housing relative to local wages
Housing: should be focussed on needs of local people, not a cheap dumping ground for people rehoused from cities that are nowhere near, and have nothing to do with, The Forest
Over tourism. Availability of housing to local people
I am concerned about housing costs increasing so local people can't afford to live here
Affordable housing is important in the Forest.
Affordability of housing given high rates of poverty among local residents
It would undermine the sustainability angle if local people were no longer able to afford housing in the area
Increase in house prices for local younger people trying to get onto ladder.
House prices for local trying to get onto the ladder is a real concern and enabling locals to be able to stay local should be a priority
Very concerned about constraints on low-cost housing and increased tourism. Neither of which would be beneficial to the local community.
Negative impact of tourism to the area, overcrowding, current lack of transport links, gridlocking the area, driving up local prices & pricing future Forester generations out of the market
Yes. We need to ensure local people are not priced out of the area
Affordable homes essential in small villages
How it may affect the price of housing for locals
Affordability of housing. Don't want it to push people out.

I'm concerned that driving up house prices will affect the lowest paid in society and prevent them from obtaining affordable, secure housing.
Affordable housing or rather a lack of it, is a concern for young people in the forest
Restraints on housing development should be a huge plus. These areas should have limited development to protect the things that matter: growing more trees, more diversity in environmental locations such as restoration of heathland and importantly no ridiculous ideas of a new town of 4000 houses. People want to visit here to see nature, greenery and openness, not houses. More of that and tourism will flourish. More houses and they won't.
Yes, particularly over tourism and increased housing costs. As a land worker who practices sustainable agriculture it is only just affordable to live in the area. one of the things that makes the place what it is is the lack of footfall, tourism is already increasing in the area due to Staycations which makes the area more attractive to Airbnb investors which removes housing from an increasingly expensive housing market.
LOCALS
More respect is required to respect the mining heritage of the area. People moving into the area tend to overpower and change local traditions.
Keeping some low-cost housing and charging for tourist facilities (car parking etc) but allowing locals free access
Residents must retain the right to walk in the woods.
I would like to see concessions for local people if tourists are attracted to the area. Parking should be free, or much cheaper if you are local and want to visit the forest. Green area should be protected from development as there are plenty of brown sites with building potential.
OTHER
The FoDD is already over-developed and becoming a future `Garden City'!! Road traffic - A48 Chepstow to Gloucester and beyond is at/overcapacity! Act now may have some hope but until greedy corporate industry and developers are controlled, nothing will change. Technology moves on but human beings, greed will never change.
Why are we cutting down established oak and beech trees that surely support biodiversity.
Tourism, business will increase transport and rubbish
There should be limits on growth, as resources are finite
No, not at all, this is something that needs to happen for the wider good
No, these are all sensible ideas
Yes. Their housing policy on Green fields
I do, the Forest of Dean should be protected as a national park would be from over development and further, should be designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty. Otherwise it is at risk of over-development or damage to the forest area and forest quality.
Deforestation
No concerns as long as the freemining tradition continues
Not really.
The massive increase in house building in the Forest which is a poorly connected area is already massively affecting residents. Roads are backed up for miles at peak times. Chepstow (although outside the district) has some of the worst pollution in the country now. Growth needs to be properly managed and rural areas protected not developed on without constraint or proper consideration. The whole beauty of this area is its rural, wild, peaceful nature.
Creative solutions using youngsters. There is a core of older dominant men who can limit creativity
No not really as long as common sense is exercised
I don't understand them
The Forestry Commission needs to clean up areas post-logging much better.
Foul rivers, pollution, rapidly becoming the dirty old man of Europe again. Non existent M.P

I'd love to reverse the decision to expand the quarry that is going to damage the Slade Brook SSSI
Everything I clicked highly important is highly important. We need locally grown food in all towns and villages and more sustainability and community as high priority. It's sad to see the ways things are going. Cinderford needs desperately to be green spaced with more local produce. I could go on on lol.
No concerns, the positives outweigh the negatives
No - the advantages of a Biosphere greatly outweigh the disadvantages. We face a climate and biodiversity emergency. Carrying on as before would be a disaster. If you were in a car running away down a hill towards a precipice, you would not wish just to put one the brakes - rather you would want to stop and reverse back up the hill. For too long we have followed the outmoded model of growth which has led to our present danger - we should be moving to new industries, not trying to continue with the old ones.
OVERALL
No - The Forest has very little protection at present so anything which will help to enhance it's biodiversity, ecology and wildlife is something to be supported
I think the benefits outweigh the negatives and there appears to be a focus on improving education and encouraging sustainable business development which should mitigate.
Housing development putting pressure on habitat, impact on flooding and runoff, overloading sewerage infrastructure, increased pollution. Forestry operations wrecking the land. Non-native species encroachment. Overuse for leisure activities - mountain biking, increased littering.
No, happy to work/live within them
PLANNING
No, if the zoning is done correctly then the negative effects should be minimal
Constraints on development and increase of tourism
Yes, over development of land and forestry
Hearing of forest being removed for housing developments
We do worry that there will be large developments and areas of deforestation
Would like to see less forest clearing for housing etc. Lots of brown field sites available
I think it will help up with the development of our property as we want to make it more economically friendly but are told we can't do certain things with our pre application as it "will look out of place" with the street. I feel like some rules are very outdated and this might help. I am concerned about the increase in tourism as the forest of dean is already a popular location and local people do struggle to enjoy the high tourism areas at times.
Over development of some areas is a concern and the lack of infrastructure to support new devilments (sic)
artificial constraints on agriculture
Concerned about designation of land for building, e.g. new hospital on a green play site that could have been situated in a more appropriate location for nature, the community and best serving the population. Concerned about protections for forest being eroded or legislation passed by government that could lead to sell off/more building etc
I think constraining unsustainable developments would be a very good thing. Housing is already completely unaffordable - we need to limit the numbers of second homes to manage that.
There is currently an issue with over development in the FOD, and poorly designed developments that belong in urban locations. There is a failure to assess the Uluru of the development in an area where there is insufficient infrastructure to support it
That concepts like sustainable development are not understood and harmful developments continue to take place.
Yes, in an area such as the Forest of Dean there needs to be a limit on building, on covering our soil in concrete and tarmac. This is a very special place
Yes. It should not be seen as a way to stop houses being built. Section 79 planning and encouraging individuals to build eco-friendly homes partnered with their land/gardens should be strongly encouraged.

Too many houses!
Yes - development of green space for housing
I think the natural resources of the Forest of Dean are currently under threat from requirement to meet housing targets, people need places to live but the targets don't currently encourage sustainable building.
The impact on areas designated transition
Yes, concern about overdevelopment and it's negative impact on the environment
Concerns we are losing green areas. We need to prioritise forest preservation over human convenience
Excess Building on green land sites and large factory style agricultural units eg poultry units.
Forest planning department are useless
I would be concerned if a proposed development was in conflict with wildlife habitat/Site of Special Scientific Interest
Concern about building outside village development envelopes
some, I hope that the value of nature can be viewed as more important than profit
RESTRICTION
Yes, potential for restricted development
Loss of freedom to explore the forest
No, it needs protecting
Restrictions in place could limit the growth of businesses and good jobs in the area
Some, I objected to National Park status for the FoD as it would be undermining the needs of local people and businesses.
no, I would be interested if it will constrain further SSSIs being designated?
I love the forest and enjoy the unrestricted access to it if these activities will mean that large areas will become no go areas for the public then I will not be interested in these activities
The Forest is used widely for recreation (cycling, walking, riding) which is a big attraction. If areas are cordoned off for conservation this could impact the way locals and visitors use the Forest.
I have concerns about the core areas - where these will be and what that means to people's ability to access the forest and roam freely as we can do now
my freedom to walk/cycle the forest
The Forest is used widely for recreation (cycling, walking, riding) which is a big attraction. If areas are cordoned off for conservation this could impact the way locals and visitors use the Forest.
Concern that district May be less accessible. Being able to freely enjoy the nature & surroundings of this wonderful and unique forest is one of the joys of living here. I would be concerned if access for those living in the forest became restricted.
TOURISM
Yes! You're going to sell us out to tourists! Foresters don't want this!
I would be concerned that there might be too much tourism. Also that the prices of housing would go up too much
I don't see increased tourism as a positive
Over tourism could negate any positive impacts made
Overtourism
Would be very concerned if we became a tourist hot spot. The Forest of Dean I was born into has changed to much with regards to tourism
Increased tourism and the negative effects that brings. Lack of economic responsibility, i.e. increased house prices. Lack of local investment.
Concerned about increased tourism
Over tourism is a concern
Over Tourism is a real concern. Please don't let us become like the bottlenecked New Forest

Over tourism and increasing house prices
Over tourism
Over tourism
over tourism; affordability of housing and the District being seen as a regional park.
Expansion of tourism could be problematic
Too much Tourism.
Too much self and commercial interest when comes to tourism. Reduce holiday lets / double-triple rateable values. Remove Go Ape and other unnatural tourist attractions.
Not many places for school visits parking accommodation
Any increase in tourism should be directly linked to local benefits - pimping the Forest without ensuring that local people directly benefit financially and socially would be a very bad idea.
Overtourism in the Forest of a real issue and public area can be over crowded in the summer month and with tourism comes added pollutions.
Concern about too much tourism affecting the natural habitat.
No concerns other than, it is not just all about tourism.
I make part of my living through tourism. But whatever action is require to support the Biosphere to preserve what we already have.
The Forest of Dean is a living working landscape. Tourism can be a part of that but they need to come and see what is here not a chocolate box version
I am concerned about excessive tourism. I do not want the F of Dean to become any more of a visitor attraction than it is already.
less tourism as they bring rubbish and don't always appreciative the quite beauty
Over tourism
Too much tourism might damage the forest
Over tourism would have negative effects on the Forest
I wouldn't want to have too many tourists as this would put a strain on the forest.
Over tourism must be managed; social housing should be at the core of this.
Increased tourism
Only in respect of over tourism as much as we need and encourage tourism we do not want to ruin this beautiful area for the locals who have lived and cherished this place for a long time
Using the designation to control residents and encourage it as a tourist destination
Increase in tourism/ traffic/ increased house prices/
Too many recreation day visitors especially now due to lockdown.
Tourism needs to be carefully managed.
Over tourism is a concern - balancing Reserve focus with increased footfall, for example.
Overdeveloped tourism
Overtourism and my home being seen as a regional park
TOURISM CYCLING
The level of bicycle-based tourist activity is now having a detrimental effect on the green path network in the forest
Cycling
Mess being left by cycling biker tourists and the animal tracks being used by same now pushing away natural animal movements.
We won't less people on mountain bikes in the forest that brings in more air pollution
Too much emphasis on cycle tracks.

TRANSPORT
Already think it's too built up too much traffic
Happy to see constraints on developments and business expansion. With increased tourism we need better transport links, with park and ride facilities to minimise the use of cars.
Increased tourism destroying the land under foot and increase in traffic, carbon monoxide, more accommodation builds and building for bigger and bigger roads
I wouldn't like to see an increase in tourism because I don't think the Forest of Dean has a good enough transport infrastructure to support this
Infrastructure, in particular roads and public transport will need to improve in order to accommodate increased tourism and jobs.
Excessive tourism may bring more pollution to the area via too many cars and poor roads
HGV's using quarries, factories & animal food mills on rural broads
Increasing Tourism...Increasing car journeys
Increase in tourism to the area, carbon increase of cars etc.

Appendix F Questions Raised

Comments reproduced without editing. Grouped into rough themes. Each box is a separate respondent.

Achieving - Communication
It would be good to get the message out wider to the communities, and older generations who maybe don't use social media etc, and also get their take on it
No but I would welcome more information as it becomes available, I fully support the move
Still not sure what it is
How do you communicate that what look like restrictions in the short term will have huge benefits in the long term?
There needs to be measures in place to ensure equality so that current and new residents can thrive. There needs to be a long-term vision which is clearly communicated and active engagement with residents.
The quality of English in this document is such that it brings doubt on the belief that can be placed on this project. Sections look like they have been cut and pasted from elsewhere and not written for and to convey information to the average Forester.
I don't know much about this or what it would mean in practice. The opening page said it would improve the economic status of the area but then went on to say that it would make housing more expensive which sounds contradictory
No, but will seek to continue to learn.
Not at the moment. Would like to investigate topics further
Is consideration being given to designating the Forest an AONB or a national park?
Why wasn't this brought in decades ago?
Achieving - Engagement
How will businesses and households be engaged to encourage sustainability?
What type of community engagement is being done around this (apart from survey) would be interested in being involved in this
How many people who don't have access to IT who have lived here all their lives will be consulted.
The key is getting people on board with the initiative, and making sure any concerns are appropriately addressed. If implemented well it could be a tremendous benefit, but poor management would lead to negative impacts.
The most important factor is taking people with you. There is a high possibility that those filling this survey out are already the converted; an unfortunate bi-product of survey response. Education is paramount to changing the pre-established beliefs/lack of interest/fear of a change in the level of quality living to those who are unsure of supporting any conservation project because of this.
How do residents voice a comment? How will this be communicated to all residents in the Forest of Dean area?
How would local people be affected/brought 'onside'?
Achieving - Funding
How will it be funded?
How much is this costing and could the money be put to a better use?
How would projects be funded
Achieving - Governance
Would this add another layer of local bureaucracy to housing or planning or will it replace the existing procedures?
Any 'biosphere' needs to be managed well and not a short-term political stunt, nor a token gesture that will be forgotten about in the near future.

I'd like to get a better understanding of the tangible benefits for both the people and nature of the Forest of Dean District of becoming a designated Biosphere Region, and also potential risks/negative impacts. Also, if FoD did go down this route how would the transition be managed and planned, what governance structure would be put in place, how and when impact of biosphere zoning would be assessed and reviewed, how any lessons learned would be shared and used to inform improvements. Also, how would you ensure that voices of life long residents / communities of the area are heard and considered equally alongside those of the advocates for change?
Achieving - Influence
The recent case of planning permission for a large-scale housing development on green land at Berry Hill, the opinions against the development by local people and local councils were overridden by Government. Would this Biosphere status truly give the local community the ability to protect the area against such destruction of very limited farming land within the Biosphere? Would the 'governing body' of a biosphere have the same level of draconian powers to stop and delay small-scale private & business development/expansion in the same way as a National Park Authority has?
How does the FODDC feel about it?
What is the process/criteria for becoming a Biosphere and who decides?
Achieving - Planning
What is the next step?
The FoDean is a relatively small area compared to the I of Wight/Isle of Man, and it is hard to see how the Core areas and Buffer zones could be clearly drawn. The towns and villages are so close together....and merge into the farmland and forest areas.
Will there be a new bridge over the Severn to reduce A48 traffic jams? Will public access to woodland be maintained? Will bridle paths be protected? Will farmers be compensated to farm more sustainably? Will there be a train station @ Westbury on Severn?
how do we deal with setbacks? it seems a bit too optimistic to say it will benefit everything (just development around SSSI have been flagged up as a possible negative). A lot will depend on having the right people / team to problem solve
If it is thought that tourism will increase, is this considered to be sustainable and would the inevitable increase in litter and cars be taken into account when the Council is planning its services?
How are you going to stop all the traffic associated with mountain biking that is piloting the sire in the forest and environment when you can do that you may stand a chance
Achieving - Time
Not at this point as there have been many projects like this that have just faded like a sun set.
How long does take to achieve, years or decades?
How long will it be until this becomes a wonderful reality for us?
How soon might this come about?
Achieving - Where
It is extremely important that the Dean Ridges and Leadon Vale are incorporated in the Biosphere. To limit its extension would jeopardise the wider region's crucial part in the wider Severn Treescapes/Wentwood to Wyre natural corridor.
I'm not clear if "Forest of Dean" encompasses the council area or only the forest areas.
Where would the zones be
Where would the core areas be?
Is the intended boundary of the biosphere coterminous with the district council area or smaller?
Achieving - Who
Who would be in charge of the project? Who are the stakeholders? What are their roles? How are they influenced by time and financial constraints?

How will the different councils work together? Would it be a Unitarian style council, or does it operate as a committee or board? Is it non-political?
How is the discontinuity between the Forestry's national drivers (profit at all costs) and the biosphere intentions to be managed? FE is still planting monocultures and allowing the use of huge machinery...
Who is going to manage it? The Forestry Commission is the wrong fit.
How will it affect the most deprived and poorest?
Just adding another layer of bureaucracy and control by the back door.
Who will monitor this ?
Who would manage it? My experience of FOD council is very poor, especially of the planning department and committee. Would there be competent professional support in place to deliver it?
Will the proposal include full time staff and where will these be sourced.
Was any professional advice sought in constructing this questionnaire? I welcome the use of the ONS for the economic analysis. What other expertise is being recruited. Is the appointment of suitably qualified staff or consultants now a priority - since the FODDC has declared a climate emergency?
How do all the different political parties/voices view the Biosphere concept?
Business
Would farmers and landowners be advised how to successfully integrate with the concept
How to ensure we encourage local businesses to maximise branding, market opportunities and encourage sustainable tourism and business practices.
Is the objective, primary or otherwise, to develop forestry-based business (such as glulam) and/or will this involve private enterprise taking more ownership of woodland? In other words, is this just selling off the Forest for commercial gain disguised by green headlines? Can assurances be given that planning decisions for residents will be unaffected? Will businesses be restricted by new rules depending on the zones they find themselves in?
I would like to understand more specifically what this designation would mean for local businesses and their planning applications.
Why should business be based only on growth and money? This is the very reason we're in big trouble. Is my business truly serving the surrounding community in an ethical manner?
Plans for economic sustainability. I.e. how the money raised from increased tourism, will be spent.
Benefits will be to the few who own business not the employees. Majority forest residents probably work outside so biosphere will be limiting
Environment
Can I be sure that environmental concerns will always trump economic ones? It's the Environment stupid should be our watchword.
The conservation objective should be treated as the most important of the three. Much development has gone ahead with damaging effect on nature. The biodiversity emergency declared by FoDDC should be the founding block of all future programmes.
Help Offers
When can we start?
As a teacher at a local primary school, I think this is an exciting prospect to be a part of (especially given the recent commitment shown by the new education secretary). Would there be any funding and/or information distributed to local primary schools to enable them to adopt this concept in the curriculum right from the early stages. Our current 5 year olds could be very well equipped to support this in the future, if teachers can embedded the principles now.
Would there be any volunteering opportunities involved in this?

Go for it!!
How can I get involved in the initiative
How can I help be involved?
I would like to learn more and if possible help.
Housing
How to tackle the affordable housing issue and make the Forest an enjoyable place to live for all residents, irrespective of their income.
Affordable housing is a huge concern, especially if we want young people to remain or come to the area to live and work.
Impact - Access
This sounds like you will be taking away people's rights to roam freely in the Fod which would be a problem for many people especially local people
will it affect local peoples abilities to roam/cycle in the forest
Would the forest still be accessible for cycling and walking
How would access to the forest be affected to its resident and tourist users on foot, hoof and wheel?
Impact - Business
I'd be concerned about how much "over tourism" there would be, surely that would have a detrimental effect on nature?
Could Biosphere Reserve status prevent expansion of factory farming in the FoD?
Have you thought that conceding a few Biosphere Reserves could give the industrial farmers the excuse to carry on as normal in the entire country?
How will this affect affordable housing for families already living in the area given that it would increase the demand for houses to meet the increase in tourism? With increased demand comes higher prices. Many businesses would want to move here to make the most of the branding. What impact will that have on local businesses?
It's great introducing this. I want to see outputs where planning applications match this. Roadworks are done by economics people not single issue road engineers & tourism is encouraged as economic delivery vehicle for prosperity over heavy industry that creates numerous HGV movements. The latter can be moved to the periphery of our council area if companies really want to stay here.
What would it actually mean for farms, particularly the intense arable farms? And what about the quarries?
Impact - Cost
As residents and businesses will need to adapt, will there be support (financial and otherwise) for this? I hope so, as many may find it difficult.
will it affect local taxes?
Is there any money associated with this idea or is it just a label? Does it give any more legal protection than currently?
Impact – Environment
I'm already concerned about how much forest is being removed to create heathland projects - would biosphere status accelerate the removal of woodland areas?
What will be the impact on control of populations of wildlife: e.g. the Wild Boar population needs to be managed / culled to be acceptable to the local population.
How far would the reintroduction of species go? Would the aim (correctly) be to reintroduce all animals or their modern or nearest relatives that once called the forest home, including predators and larger mammals? Would large taxes or even bans on second or more homes, as well as rent controls in the biosphere be considered to prevent locals being priced out of the area?

Impact - Governance
Would becoming a biosphere reserve limit or impinge on any present or previous designations? Such as AONBs and SSSRIs? How will it impact local traditional ways of life, like sheep badgering?
Any kind of development of the region needs to be balanced between the needs of different groups. Often it appears that the group with the most money wins out. I'd be interested to know how being a biosphere reserve would prevent this happening.
Only that, as with a lot of these things - there will be a lot of labelling and paperwork without much meaningful change 'on the ground'
Recognition and understanding of local cultural history must be part of this. I am concerned that 'ancient monuments' is too narrow. There is built heritage remaining on the area that should be preserved, adapted and reused rather than demolished.
Impact - Housing
If you proceed to treat the forest as a tourism hub you will outstrip your children when it comes to housing market later, this will only bring people in from other places to buy their second homes here ! Like Cornwall and The Cotswolds, we don't need this for our forest !
Can there be something put in place to make sure not all homes are made into holiday homes. Can this involve getting a Buildings Conservation Officer in post so the heritage is better protected aswell.
I would like to know more about how it will affect housing affordability and quality of life for people on low incomes
Would the designation attract funding for sustainable development, such as green roofs, heat pumps, solar panels, and would these be strongly encouraged along with section 79 sustainable homes
Yes, I am worried about the impact of housing developments and tourism on the forest.
How hard would it be to get planning permission for the green sustainable homes
Impact - Restrictions
What restrictions would be imposed on residents and motorists
What would be the impact on the production of fossil fuels in the forest and would domestic wood-burning be restricted/stopped?
I like some of the ideas but I am concerned that this might restrict our access to the forest and our ability to roam freely
Impact - Tourism
How would tourism be controlled. The area doesn't need more polluting, road damaging, environment damaging tourists
Tourism has already increased since the pandemic, it needs to remain at a sensible level. Overtourism is not welcomed. We have already stayed at home during weekends and holidays to avoid crowded spots which are right on our doorstep. Any new scheme of Any Kind needs to put locals first.
Impact - Transport
If tourism is increased then transport infrastructure needs to match this
Will there be any changes or impacts on the roads in the FOD - improvements, bypasses, restrictions
Main area of concern is the current transport infrastructure would not cope with an increase to tourism to the area and potential in future to make the Forest an unaffordable place to live for current inhabitants
Impact - Who
Will a government be able to override the objectives and force councils to allow more building by commercial companies.

Who will this plan benefit the most, locals or outsiders, wildlife, also why do people like to interfere with things that already work
I would have serious concerns over new inflexible rules and restrictions being imposed upon us by outsiders who know little of the forest and its ways.
Statements
I think the danger here is following a global agenda regarding the United Nations on sustainable development that will only suit the elite and others who are in the pockets of the elite. Also if we follow a net zero policy on carbon how are plants and animals meant to survive as the ecosystem is based around the aspiration and respiration of carbon dioxide and oxygen?
It won't benefit the forest at all, you will just close off areas to the public, cause house prices to rise.
Each concept has to have protection at its very heart, if that is not the case then how can it ever be of benefit
I have a lot of concerns there appears to be very little actually information easily found. There doesn't seem to be much joined-up thinking and a lot of contradictions. The council claim to be onboard to protect nature and the special areas yet give permission for development in areas clearly not suitable and continually ignore pleas from local residents. Money clearly talks more than protecting the environment which would make me question what monetary benefit does this Biosphere concept really bring, who actually benefits and will any of the ecological benefits really happen?
When we are told that "for every £1.00 of costs the Biosphere Reserve option yields £3.89", why aren't we told that this is a return over a 30-year period?
No, on the information received so far, Unesco status appears to be valuable asset, improving protecting and future proofing the Forest against local and global threats.
Biosphere Reserve and the emphasis of it needs to be taught and discussed to a larger public audience starting from school age where a definite captive audience is available. The wider FOD community will take some notice but tourists will take very little notice if they live out of the area. Changing to Biosphere will take a couple of decades.
It could be a better place for the wildlife stop and he fly tipping
No, however my dream for Dean and has been since I have lived here would be to have a similar set up to the Eden project in Cornwall to also include water pools for leisure and a designated high quality space for learning the arts. It would be fab to put the Forest well and truly on the map. Of course all of this would have to be achieved in a sustainable way and could be used as a way to inform as well as enjoy. Thanks for listening.
Should include housing policies esp the building of large estates against controlled infill. These developments on green fields destroys habitats and create unnecessary pressure on the local environment
The Forest of Dean is a unique region, from environment, wildlife, and especially culturally. The area should have at least had National Park status long ago, with significant funding to protect and extend woodland cover, extending the Forest North South and West. I have had discussions with Tony Juniper at Natural England suggesting ideas to achieve the ambitious target of planting 1.5 billion trees in England over the next few years, which will need an army of volunteers and environmental professionals to achieve this. Proposals of creating an Environment Cadets service have been discussed. He will need a lot more pushing on this from me as they are vague about the plans. On this point, I would like a clear blueprint on how local people, especially people in the ages 12-25 age group have a clear opportunity of participating in this. Reason I say this is because some of the local Foresters Forest projects are not easy to engage with, communication is at best patchy and has switched many participants off from getting involved. Could do a LOT better. The local people, especially the kids are at the heart of this, do not forget this.
Disruption during works and car exhaust pollution

first stop new builds taking the forest and preserve
I live in a conservation area and find the whole concept outdated and problematic - with a focus being on aesthetic rather than environmental concerns. I would like this to change
Is the Javelin project working?
Less soft wood logging and more long term deciduous planting for tourism and locals to enjoy the forest is needed.
We must stop building houses on the green belt of the Dean. Knock down Cinderford and start again.
Yes I do. This is a plea for all cyclists in the area. Along every road should be a cycle path that is able to take two side by side. This is now the 21st century and all life is precious. Let's get this into any plans for the forest area. I am not a cyclist myself as I feel it is too dangerous on all forest roads. After all surely ameliorating the effects of global warming is to ensure the survival of the human race. The Earth will recover in a few thousand years without us.
All motherhood and apple pie statements
Biodiversity in people's gardens and public spaces. Basically more trees and plants in urban areas, green walls. Use unused churches, school buildings etc for community classes in day and eve. Using the towns more for community get togethers, local fairs. Getting the message out to every age bracket to get involved! School projects to educate the kids more. Etc
I have been looking after our rare flora on our smallholding for over twenty years and see this as a wonderful opportunity for other spaces to become as beautiful and diverse as ours.
Litter and fly-tipping - how do we prevent this? Recycling schemes.
Local sustainable, regenerative agriculture producing food needs to be developed and encouraged