

# **A service standard for Management Plans across England**

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- Can we agree that Quality Management Plans underpin sustainable woodland management; especially if you are bringing a woodland into management for the first time?
- What do we mean by Service Standard?

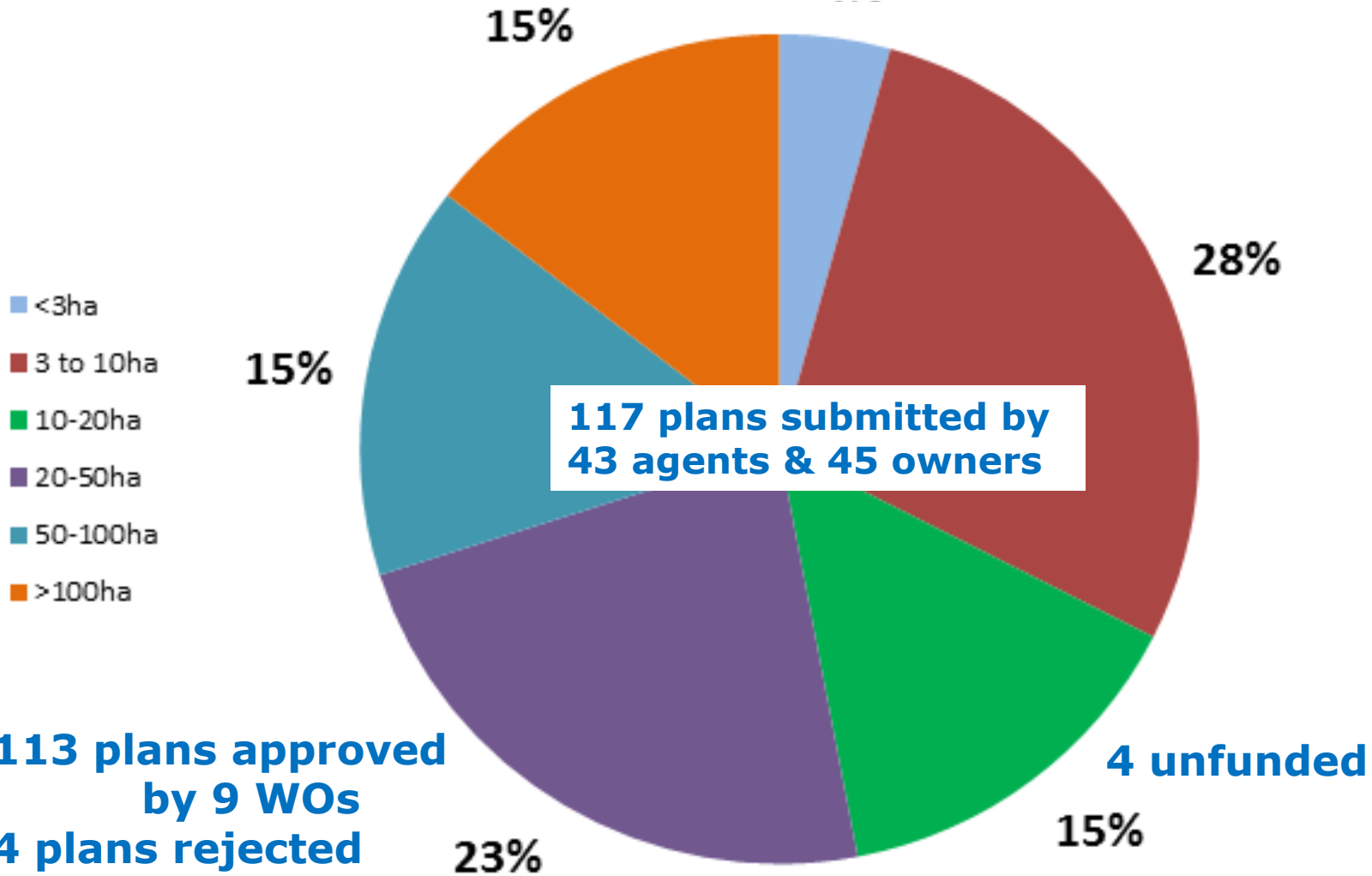
# The South East Service Standard Pilot

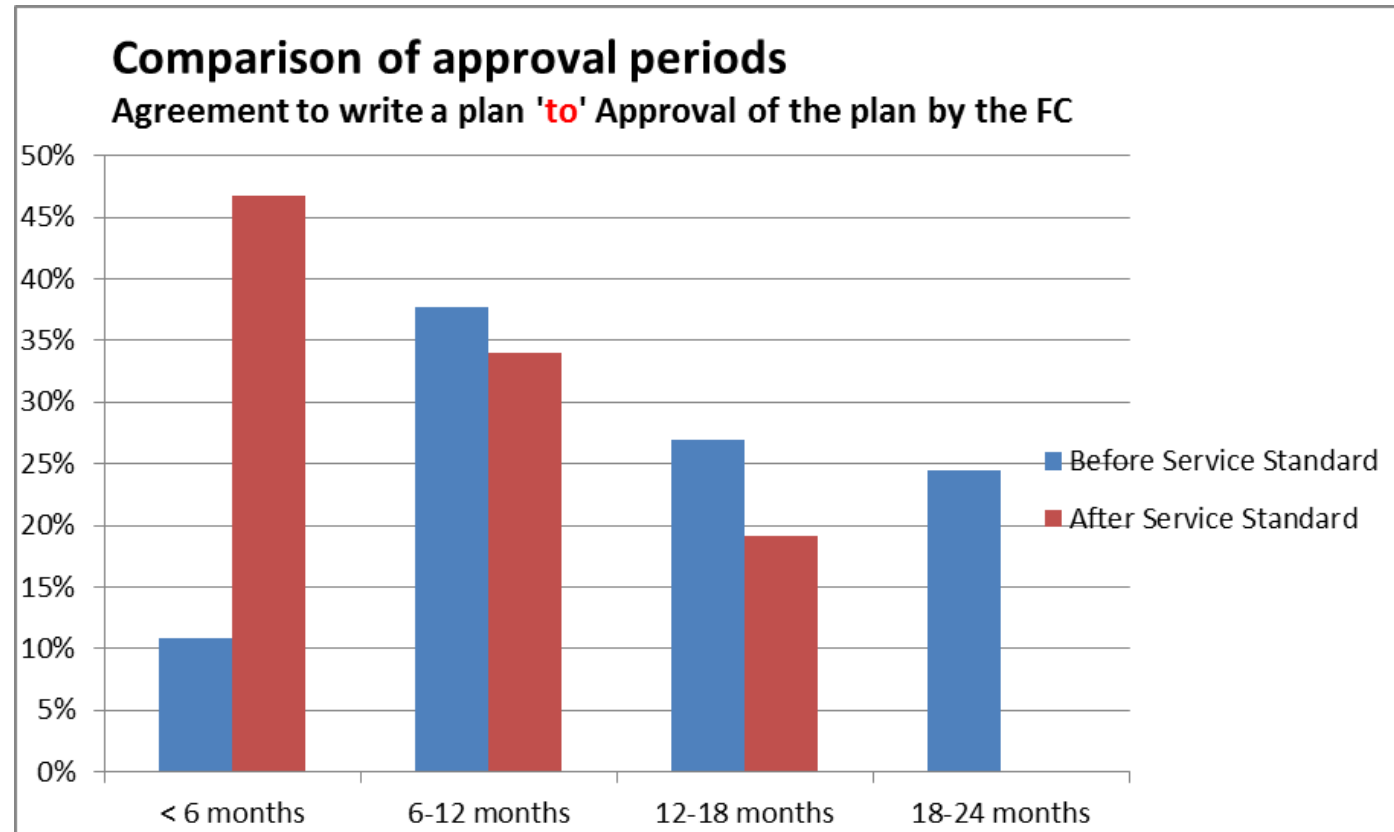
- A 12 month Pilot in the South East following the “**Better Plans Faster Approval**” events in 2015
- Built on an earlier South West project
- **AIMS of Service Standard pilot were to:**
  1. Improve quality of first draft of plans.
  2. Shorten approval period for Management Plans.
  3. Facilitate earlier approval of associated Felling Licences
  4. Monitor work and work loads to identify and reduce blockages
  5. Achieve greater consistency across FC staff and Applicants

- Launched at meeting with agents in June 2016
- Track progress & outcomes via a spreadsheet
- Considered whether:
  - a. A 1<sup>st</sup> draft – could be responded to within 28 days
  - b. A maximum of two drafts could be achieved
  - c. The option to submit a 3<sup>rd</sup> draft plan would make a significant difference
  - d. A pre-draft WO site visit would improve the quality of the plan
  - e. Other workloads had a significant impact

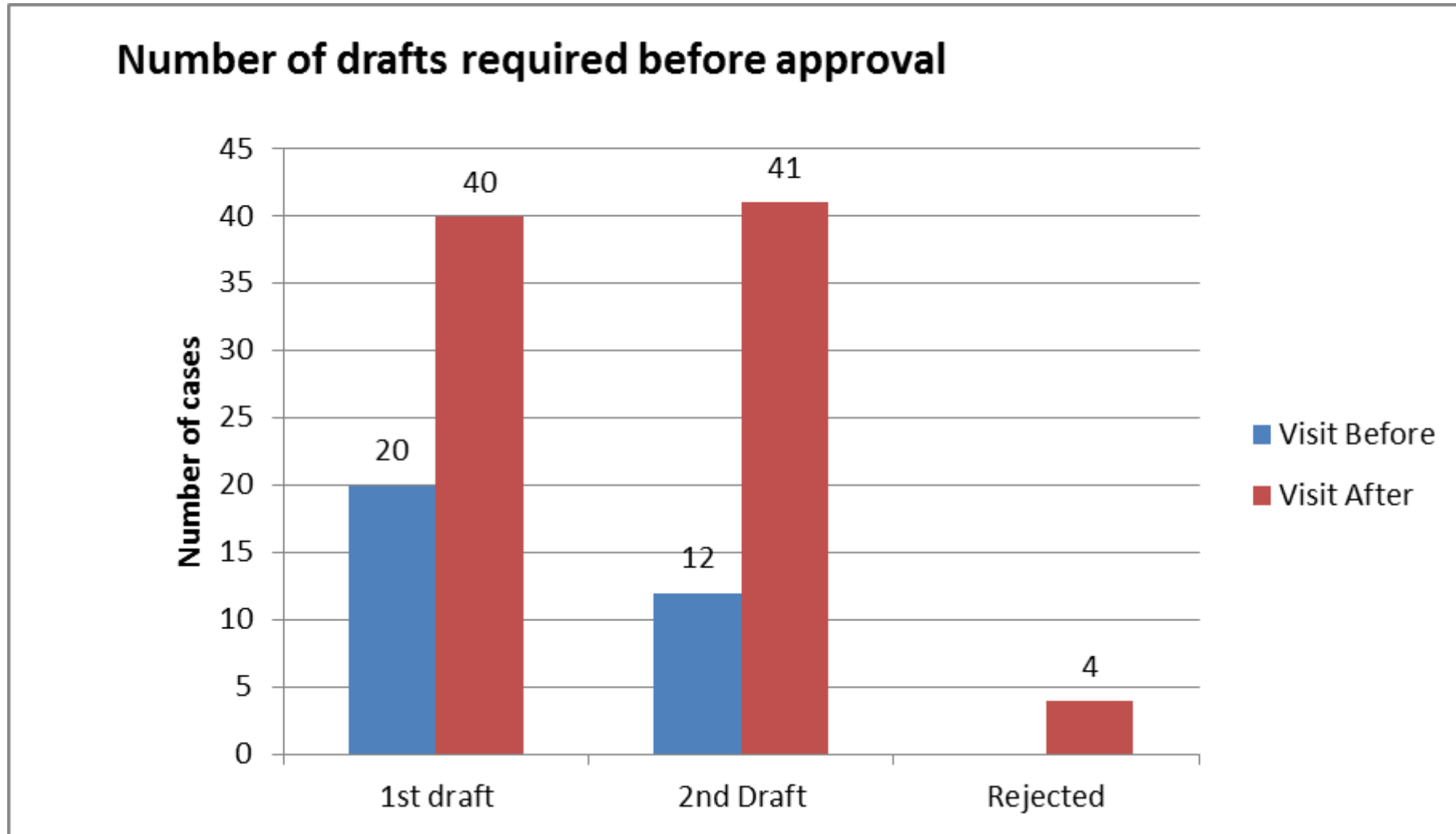
## Plans approved by size category

June 2016 to June 2017





- Average days from agreement to approved plan
  - Before pilot 121 days
  - After pilot 81 days
- It was clear that 28 days was not enough time





- **Plan of Ops**
  - Not completed
  - Failed to consider species under threat from diseases
  - Poor surveying
  - Adjacency issues for felling.
  
- **Forest context and important features for management**
  - Ignored data collected on the ground and on maps
  - Highlight issues and then failed to address in strategy
  - Failed to gather important species information easily available – and then adjust plan
  - No consultation with NE ahead of 1<sup>st</sup> Draft

## **Recommendations from the Pilot: The FC should -**

1. Read and approve (or return with comments) first draft plan within 7 weeks for 80% of cases.
2. Limit plan iterations to 2 drafts only.

### PLUS:

- Strongly encourage applicants to engage with a Woodland Officer **before** preparing their first draft plan.
- Trial peer review plan appraisal for consistency within and between Area Teams
- Look at placing felling proposals on the public register in parallel with plan appraisal where the agent and wood are known and trusted.
- Accept it is difficult to prioritise Management Plan applications at all times due to other workloads, e.g. processing Countryside Stewardship and un-licensed felling investigations – hence working to 80% of cases.

<b>January 2017 to date</b>	
<b>Plans approved</b> (including FL)	<b>157 plans</b>
<b>Plans in various stages of approval</b>	<b>105 plans</b> (20 unfunded) 48 awaiting felling permission
<b>Potential plan submissions</b>	
<b>Processed by NE Tech Services</b>	<b>87 CS Grant applications</b>
<b>Previous in-date WPGs</b> (FY 17/18)	<b>40 potential plans</b>