

Ayrshire & Arran Forestry & Woodland Strategy Steering Group
Note of Meeting Held 19th August 2011 at Dower House, Kilmarnock

Present

John Esslemont (Chair), AJPU; Alan Edgar, AJPU; Colin Kennedy, CONFOR; Zoe Clelland, RSPB; Anneke Freel, EAC; Keith Wishart, FCS; David Hammond, NAC; David Wilbraham, SEPA; Iain Hossack, NAC; Alison O’Kane, EAC; Dorothy Simpson, SNH; Bruce Davidson, EAW; Fiona Ross, SAC;

Apologies

John Dougan FCS; Neil Feggans, SAC; Marion Francis, Irvine Bay; Greggor Caldwell, SGRIPD, Louise Kirk, NAC

Also Attending

Nick James, LUC and Steven Orr, LUC

Meeting Purposes

The meeting constituted the inaugural meeting of the Ayrshire & Arran Forestry & Woodland Strategy Steering Group and the contract inception meeting for the consultancy project for preparation of a replacement pan-Ayrshire forestry and woodland strategy.

Main Points of Agreement In Relation To Steering Group

1. The Steering Groups’ initial purpose is to oversee the preparation of a replacement for the Ayrshire & Arran Woodland Strategy 2003.
2. The Steering Group membership should be expanded to include representatives of the downstream timber processors in Ayrshire, Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere and Scottish Wildlife Trust.

Main Points of Agreement In Relation To Consultants’ Project

3. The strategic context for the preparation of the new strategy is set by the National Planning Framework, Central Scotland Green Network, the Land Use Strategy, the Scottish Forestry Strategy , The Right Tree In The Right Place and Policy on Control of Woodland Removal.
4. In accordance with the brief, the scope of the replacement Strategy will mirror that of its predecessor. It will seek to promote appropriate woodland planting and management to achieve multiple benefits and will provide supplementary guidance for local development plans, regional priorities for SRDP and forest district strategic plans and forest design and management plans. The Strategy will distinguish between different types of woodland and make appropriate recommendations for each.
5. Initial work by Land Use Consultants will focus on reviewing the Ayrshire & Arran Woodland Strategy 2003. This will involve a comparison of woodland establishment trends against the

objectives contained in the AAWS 2003 and a survey of stakeholders' views on the strengths and weaknesses of the current policy document. Establishing the total extent of woodland cover now compared to 2003 and comparing trends in losses and gains will be a key output of this initial work.

6. This initial work will be followed by an Issues and Options report which will set the context for the first draft of the Strategy and an SEA Environmental Baseline Report.
7. The Strategic Environmental Assessment will test out the environmental implications of achieving different levels of woodland expansion.
8. Consultation on the Strategy will require to meet development plan and SEA guidelines and the level of stakeholder and general public engagement must be proportionate to the issues under consideration. Initial opinion is that engagement should concentrate on stakeholders and community councils. Further direction will be provided by the Steering Group to Land Use Consultants as the project progresses.
9. A round table discussion highlighted the following initial thoughts on issues which will influence the content of the new strategy.

Initial List of Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying opportunities to better manage the existing woodland resource • Identifying new markets for native woodland • Impact of losses of woodland from wind farm and minerals extraction on extent of woodland cover • Importance of local timber resources to existing and future Ayrshire processing businesses. Examine demand for locally sourced timber and compare with quantity and suitability of forecast supply • The significance of wet woodlands in relation to river catchment management • Setting realistic targets for woodland expansion having regard to competing demands for land for windfarm development, opencast coal extraction, action on priority habitats and agriculture • Examining the opportunities for restoration of peatlands through forest restructuring • Compensatory planting policy related in particular to windfarm development • Opportunities for woodland creation on agricultural land • Opportunities for woodland creation as means of reinstating mineral extraction sites • Opportunities for woodland expansion associated with biomass • Implications of Red and Grey Squirrel Control Areas and Roe deer control • Differentiation of different types of woodlands

Points for Further Action

Points for Action	By Whom
Identify and invite downstream timber processors to join the Steering Group	CONFOR
Invite Biosphere & SWT representatives onto Steering Group	AJPU

Obtain most up-to-date timber production forecast	FCS
Obtain statistics on new woodland planting since 2003	FCS
Obtain results of study examining extent of woodland removal	FCS
Obtain any preliminary results from national Farming and Forestry study	FCS
Obtain update on FDP for Arran and position in relation to biomass heat/power plant (contact Richard Henry, Development Promotion, North Ayrshire Council).	LUC/FCS
Agree refined project timetable with LUC	AJPU

Date of Next Meeting

To be determined but likely to be in September or October depending upon progress with consultancy project.

Ends.

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