

Aberffraw to Abermenai SAC – Newborough Forest - process statement

Purpose

The purpose of this process is to help create a Forest Design Plan that is fully compliant with the Habitats Directive and Convention on Biological Diversity by December 2009 and to continue to update this plan after that date.

Involving the public

The Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) are fully committed to engaging with and informing the public. Ultimately it is FCW's responsibility to produce the Forest Design Plan, which is compliant with the relevant legislation, based in part on the advice of CCW. FCW will try as far as possible to ensure that the views of the Newborough Forest Partnership and wider public are reflected in the FDP.

All parties will ensure that their communications to the public are accurate and honest.

Management Plan

A working group consisting of FCW and CCW staff are working jointly to produce a Management Plan for Newborough and will meet throughout the autumn. The group will provide regular communication to the Newborough Liaison Partnership (NLP) and to wider stakeholders through meetings, newsletter and on the existing FCW web-site. The group will continue to work closely with local people in the development of this plan drawing on expertise where appropriate. For example the expertise of Dr Shuttleworth will provide important information on Red Squirrels, as these are an important factor in the management of the forest. We will also use the extensive reports and recommendations of the Newborough Liaison Partnership (NLP).

A final Management Plan will be presented to the partnership in accordance with the current timetable. Currently this is December 2009.

Reviewing the Designations at the site

CCW will review the various notifications that have taken place at Newborough since part of it was first designated as a SSSI. John Ratcliffe will carry out this work as soon as possible so that it can feed into the science review.

Reviewing the Science

It is clear that there are different interpretations of both the science and the Habitats Directive (articles 2 and 6) relating to this site. In order to set good foundations it has been agreed that a review of the science underpinning the site will be completed as agreed with Roger Thomas CCW Chief Executive. This review will take the form of a series of meetings between CCW experts and Martin Hollingham, Ian Miller, Craig Shuttleworth and Laurence Jones. The Forestry Commission will attend as observers. A note of the intended science review will be prepared by CCW and will be shared with the Newborough Liaison Partnership on the FCW Website. David Parker CCW's Director of Science will chair the initial meetings, with resort to a jointly agreed independent scientist if necessary. The output of the first meeting will inform the plan directly with the output of future meetings being used to up-date the plan.

The aim of the review will be to achieve agreement on the science between all parties. The agenda and process will be agreed between all parties before hand, including a process of arbitration the outcome of which will be binding on all parties.

Work on the Management Plan will only cover those aspects that can be handled without prejudice to the outcome of the scientific review.

We are currently seeking potential names for an independent scientist. Please let us know if you have any suggestions.

Hydrological issues

It has been agreed that the hydrological issues on the site need further investigation and this will feature as an action point within the Management Plan. A small working group consisting of John Ratcliffe and Peter Jones (CCW) and Martin Hollingham and Laurence Jones, from the Newborough Forest Partnership. This group would meet with an FCW representative at the site during the Autumn/Winter in order to agree objectives for this work. This group will also agree proposals for further modelling (if such modelling is deemed appropriate).

Ways of working

We have agreed that for all the actions in this process, those involved will adhere to the guidance set out in the Wales Biodiversity Partnership checklist for Project Officers, which can be found at:

http://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/legislation_guidance-20.aspx, (scroll down to Biodiversity Checklists and choose the one for project officers).

In addition we are explicitly committed to following the Habitats Directive requirements, in particular Article 2 which states that:

- 'The aim of this Directive shall be to contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora in the European territory of the Member States to which the Treaty applies.
- Measures taken pursuant to this Directive shall be designed to maintain or restore, at favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest.
- Measures taken pursuant to this Directive shall take account of economic, social and cultural requirements and regional and local characteristics.'

The Management Plan Working Group has produced a flow diagram to go with this process showing how and when decisions will be made. The draft flow diagram is available on the web at:

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/forestry.nsf/byunique/infid-7umeg8>

Beyond 2009

Long term meaningful participation of the public in management of the site is in everyone's interest and an implicit objective of the Directive. We are fully committed to genuine participation in future development that must include not only protection and management of the natural environment but economic, social, climate change and specifically local issues.

The long-term engagement with stakeholders was discussed at the Newborough Liaison Partnership (NLP) and it was agreed that a new group would be formed from the NLP and the established Environment Panel to support the ongoing management of the site. All participants are still fully committed to this approach.

WAG, FCW, CCW
9th September 2009