

Agenda Item 8

20 November 2009

WNC 29.09

WOODLAND STRATEGY ADVISORY PANEL

Report of Meeting held on 20th and 21st October 2009

1. The first day of the meeting was devoted to topics and visits linked to the 'Woodlands for People' theme of the woodland strategy.
2. Barbara Anglezarke explained FCW programmes for stimulating community involvement in management of its woodlands. In particular she focussed on the Pathfinder projects which are part of the 2009/12 FCW corporate plan commitments. These projects will explore issues surrounding the transfer of management responsibility for Assembly woodlands to community groups through leases or management agreements. Matters raised by Panel members during discussion included:
 - the importance of sustaining the interest and commitment of community groups to the long term management of their woodlands;
 - the desirability of involving local authorities, particularly Community Councils, in the management of community woodlands;
 - ways of managing risks to FCW resulting from the transfer of management of Assembly woodlands, including reputational risks;
 - means of monitoring and controlling the activities of the community groups and provisions for withdrawing a management agreement or lease if circumstances required this;
 - the advantages and disadvantages of leases versus management agreements.
3. The Panel then visited the Caerdroia Community Woodland which operates in Gwydyr Forest Park. The project is managed by Golwgfa Gwydyr, a local community group, and the visit was led by Roger Davies who also chairs Llys y Goedwig. He explained that the community woodland has been used for storytelling events, theatrical events and workshops. It is also used to run a project aimed at developing skills for socially excluded people in conjunction with an organisation called Making Tracks. The group has plans and ideas for future development of the site including restoring an orchard and constructing a new building.
4. The Panel also had a presentation from Dr Jenny Wong who described the objectives and activities of Coetir Mynydd, a community group who manage two

woodlands bought from the Penrhyn Estate in 2004. The woodlands are managed for conservation, education and recreation and the Group has plans for installing a mini-hydro electricity generating plant.

5. The Panel had further discussions on the activities of the Caerdroia and Coetir Mynydd woodlands following the visits.
6. The second day of the meeting was devoted to consideration of a draft action plan for the woodland strategy based on suggestions made by the Panel at the June meeting. Working groups made recommendations for combining and clarifying actions and in some cases for assigning priorities to actions within themes. One working group recommended simplifying the format to make a clearer link between the strategy's outcomes and the actions. The FC team will modify the draft in line with the Panel's suggestions and send the revised version to members for comment.
7. The Chairman invited members to suggest topics for the field visit planned for the June meeting.

R J Cooper
Chairman
12 November 2009