

INTEGRATION WORKING GROUP – PROGRESS REPORT

Purpose of Paper

1. This paper is the first draft report of the Integration Working Group to the October meeting of England Forestry Forum. Comments are invited from members of the Forum, some sections of the paper are only brief and contributions are most welcome. Assuming that the assessment of the situation is considered broadly correct Forum members' comments are most needed on:

- action needed to help woodland integration into other land use policy; and
- where forestry can contribute to rural development.

The last section of the paper on identifying blocks to integration and suggesting solutions will be prepared in the next draft to be considered at the next Forum meeting.

General Comments

2. The Integration Working Group (“the group”) comprised Rachel Thomas, Russell Rowley, Humphrey Temperley, John Vaughan, David Stewart, Hilary Allison, Keith Kirby, Roger Turner, Ian Brodie, and Alistair Rutherford. Andrew Perrins from DEFRA also contributed.

3. The terms of reference for the Working Group are to:

- identify where woodland issues could and should be integrated with other land use activities;
- propose what action is needed to help woodland integration into other land use policy;
- identify where forestry can contribute to Rural Development;
- identify organisational (statutory and NGO) expectations and roles in achieving integrated woodland land-use policy;
- identify and list where integration is happening or is planned to happen (best practice);
- identify the blocks to integration and suggest solutions.

4. The group met once in workshop style, and corresponded by E-mail. The group's work included carrying out a strengths and weaknesses analysis of forestry activity in England. The group considered national, regional and local level issues and took a broad view of land use including land-management and maintenance. The terms 'forestry' and 'woodland' are used interchangeably in this paper.



5. The group confined itself to England forestry issues but recognised the interaction and inter-dependence with UK and EU policy and practice. The English regions are assumed to include London. The group started with the assumption that the England Forestry Strategy is the current operating framework used by all those involved in the industry.

To identify where woodland issues could and should be integrated with other land use activities

6. The shortcomings of the current situation can be summarised as follows:
 - Land use is mainly separated into food production and all other land-uses; these other land-uses are cover a very wide ranging, and sometimes conflicting, activities.
 - At policy or strategy level there is increasing emphasis on multiple objective land use but there is a shortage of practical examples of how to achieve this.
 - Food production, recreation and other land uses are separated at land holding or land management level as well as at policy level; furthermore the food and forestry sectors are organised separately.
 - The economic returns from forestry are generally markedly less than those from other land-uses; wood product markets are generally underdeveloped.
 - Specialist woodland issues such as energy and energy crops are not yet seen as main stream products of the food or forestry industries; generally productive forestry is not a popular land use in England.
 - Woodland is often perceived as a secondary land-use consideration; for example forestry is an after use for land restoration, or is used as a screen in building development.
 - In strategic or casework project planning the impact (plus or minus) of woodland is a last minute or tailpiece consideration, for example the impact of forestry on water management, waste management or carbon sequestration.
 - The marketing advantage offered by links between other sectors and forestry are largely unrecognised, for example food and forestry, or tourism and forestry.
 - Forestry has become marginalized in further and higher education and in the continuing professional development of the land based professional.
 - Regional strategies (economic, sustainability etc) differ significantly in their approach to forestry, most do not address forestry at all.



7. The main opportunities for integration of woodland with other land use strategies are:

- Where farming or other rural land-use is addressed in national, regional and local strategic documents forestry should be specifically referred to alongside farming and other land-use.
- In the urban situation forestry should be always be included in strategic land-use related documents, for example in bids for land and community regeneration.
- The opportunities of forestry to improve the quality of life offered in rural and urban situations are extensive, the case for forestry land-use will be helped if forestry is promoted as a recreational option in regional strategies of related bodies such as those involved in community development, leisure and health.
- Regional forestry strategies should be prepared for all regions with government offices developing a mechanism to “forestry proof” regional strategy and activity.
- Professionals in and those representing farming and forestry sectors should consider how to combine their sectors and through this route help ensure integration of woodland in strategies and include woodland issues in further and higher education and in continuing professional development.
- The financial incentive schemes for forestry should be reviewed with the aim of seeking parity with other land-uses.
- The FC (and DEFRA) should be resourced to promote and champion forestry at national and regional level. At local level this should be done by all local authorities who should include forestry alongside other work targets.
- How forestry can help achieve sustainable (long term) land management should be a subject of a specific study, this should include an assessment of the contribution of the innovative role of forestry, for example investigating meeting the demand for sustainable use of materials and minimum footprint techniques in new housing.

Proposals for Action to Help Woodland Integration into Other Land Use Policy

8. By Government:

- Review grants.
- Establish a forestry test for policy.
- Resource FC to carry out role more effectively.
- Increase resource to FC for promotion.
- Investigate mechanisms to equate land prices for forestry with those for farming.



9. By Regional and Local Government:

- Government Offices for the Regions to develop forestry champions at director level.
- Government Offices to develop a mechanism to forestry proof regional policy and strategy.
- Local Authorities to include forestry in all strategies.

10. By Non Governmental Organisations

- Wildlife & Countryside Link and member NGOs to address forestry alongside agriculture.
- Lantra to adopt forestry alongside other land-use.
- National Farmers Union include forestry in title and objectives.

To Identify Where Forestry Can Contribute to Rural Development

11. Forestry can make a significant contribution to rural development in a wide range of ways, including:

- Through the England Rural Development Programme.
- By Recovery of contaminated land (e.g. in the South Yorkshire Community Forest).
- As a component of recreation projects, (e.g. the National and Community Forests).
- By bringing back woods into production (e.g. Chilterns hazel coppice).
- As a setting for development (e.g. various modern development landscaping projects).
- As a supplement for farm income (e.g. South West Forest).
- To demonstrate sustainable land-use (e.g. Hereford Sustain project).
- As an education facility (e.g. Wilderness Woods).
- As a primary source of timber, employment and income (e.g. Kielder).
- As a nature conservation resource, (e.g. New Forest).
- As a means to engage the public (e.g. Woods on Your Doorstep).



- As an opportunity to develop new products and technology (e.g. The Woodland Enterprise Centre).
- For growing of wood fuel (e.g. project Arbre).
- Small producers entering the market via seller to buyer projects (e.g. Norwoods).

Organisational (Statutory and NGO) Expectations and Roles in Achieving Integrated Woodland Land-use Policy

12. Generally statutory and NGO organisations have high expectations of woodland policy and woodland organisations and of what these polices and forestry bodies can achieve. Pivotal to the forestry sector is the Forestry Commission who are seen by the majority as responsible for all forestry issues. The human and financial resources available to the FC are limited; this severely constrains that organisation's ability to meet public expectation.
13. The small size of the forestry sector makes communication between stakeholders straightforward. However this size is also a limiting factor in the ability of the sector to get its message across.
14. Many NGOs have only a partial interest in forestry issues. The engagement of these for the purposes of sharing knowledge and developing working links has been facilitated by the activities of Wildlife and Countryside Link. Not all NGOs are represented by this organisation; consequently to be inclusive a mechanism is needed to enable all players to come to the table.
15. As forestry becomes more relevant to the public and the England Forestry Strategy achieves its aim there is an increasing need to help these stakeholders participate. Tools such as Strategic Community Plans can be used to help deliver the Strategy's messages. However resources are needed to help local authorities and NGOs engage in the process.
16. Competition for influence and resources is inherent in the culture of NGOs, and to a lesser extent in that of statutory bodies. This cultural issue works against woodland integration where collaboration and mutual support are critical to success. In the forestry sector with its limited resources organisational co-operation is key to the future.
17. Over the years Forest Enterprise has become the benchmark for relations between NGOs and the productive forestry sector. The relationship between the private forestry sector and NGOs is notably poor.



Best Practice Examples of Actual or Planned Integration

Partnership	Kielder tourism partnership
Innovation	Land-use other than farming Tourism and recreation – Grizedale or New Forest Somerset County Council Agriculture and Rural Policy Round Table Forestry Commission as a model champion DEFRA Key Tasks Countryside Agency sustainable land use objectives Woodlots Upland woodland challenge funds South West Forest pilot for rural development Great North Forest Land Management Initiative Hereford Sustain High Weald Design Common Ground Orchards Cumbria Broadleaves
Integration	England Forestry Strategy as a framework for change Tir Gofal integrating forestry and farming Mainstreaming of woodland initiatives e.g. Marches and Greater Exmoor England Rural Development Programme Deforesting National Parks

Blocks to Integration and Proposed Solutions

[Note: to be drafted following Forum meeting.]

David Stewart
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