

Forestry Commission Equality Impact Assessment Publishing Template

Step 10

Name of policy, function or service

South West Regional Woodland and Forestry Framework Implementation Plan 2009-2012

Purpose and aim(s) of the policy, function or service

Purpose: To help ensure that the aims and objectives of the RWFF and the recent ETWF are prioritised and continue to be delivered by a range of partners across the SW region.

Aims:

To provide, in South West England, a resource of trees, woods and forests in places where they can contribute most in terms of environmental, economic and social benefits now and for future generations.

To ensure that the region's existing and newly planted trees, woods and forests are resilient to the impacts of climate change and also contribute to the way in which biodiversity and natural resources adjust to a changing climate.

To protect and enhance the region's environmental resources of water, soil, air, biodiversity and landscapes (both woodland and non-woodland) and the cultural and amenity values of trees and woodland.

To increase the contribution that trees, woods and forests make to the quality of life for those living in, working in or visiting South West England.

To improve the competitiveness of woodland businesses and promote the development of new or improved markets for sustainable woodland products and ecosystem services where this will deliver identifiable public benefits, regionally or locally, including the reduction of carbon emissions.

Who will benefit mainly from this policy, function or service?

Society generally will benefit from the actions in the IP. Specific communities and groups will benefit from the local implementation of actions relating to trees, woods and forests.

Businesses will benefit from improved opportunities as a result of the actions in the IP.

Information and Data (evidence) used

Regionally mapped ONS data on BME, IMD.

The production of the RWFF itself included a public questionnaire (with over 400 responses) to help identify issues that local people felt were important. As a result, a range of Objectives and Actions were identified, e.g. sustainable transport, promotion of accessible woodland, outreach to disadvantaged communities. This Implementation Plan relates to the delivery of these Objectives and Actions.

The RWFF and this IP includes 'Quality of Life' Objectives and Actions that will directly address a range of community needs across the 6 strands of equality.

A study: "Equality and Inclusion of Social Diversity with respect to Woods and Forests in the UK: An Evidence Review" (in draft) takes a UK perspective on woods and forests, much of which is relevant to the Southwest region. "There is ample evidence to support the view that transport and the costs of accessing woodland is the major barrier to access for a significant proportion of diversity groups" – although detailed evidence for specific diversity groups is not available. "... the apparent lack of information about specific woodland and forest sites and services offered by the Forestry Commission and others...has been identified as a major issue for disabled people and other underrepresented groups." "woodland free from signs of abuse and litter/rubbish encourage use by women, the elderly and socially excluded groups."

Summary of Impact

The policy is expected to have a positive impact on all six strands of diversity and will help join up and target different partner initiatives focused on supporting specific SOA's or minority groups. It will also encourage sharing of best practice and understanding of the different community needs that can be met when opening up woods and forests.

Monitoring/Evaluation

Partner organisations carry out diversity and equalities monitoring of their local programme delivery. Reports on programme delivery relevant to the RWFF IP will be collated as part of regular IP monitoring and will be included as part of reporting to the RWFF Custodians Group (Executive Board).

The IP will be reviewed in 2012

Further Information

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