

RWFF IP event 12th March 2009, Exeter

Notes from Business and Markets workshop groups

*Chris Roberts, Facilitator
Roger Ford, Scribe*

Morning participants

Paul Hawkins, FC; Graham Smith, Crown Estate; Sarah Vaughan, Woodland Renaissance; Jim White, South West Forest; John Rainger, Norbord, James Glover, RDA; Alistair Wright, Wright Sawmills; John Weir, FC

Afternoon participants

Roger Griffin, NE; Andy Osborne, Poole BC; Tom Langdon-Davies, Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust; Tom Munro, Dorset AONB; John Wilding, Clinton Devon Estates; Kirsty Tooke, Devon Assoc for Renewable Energy; Rupert Lane, Dartmoor NP; Ian Bright, Somerset CC; Kat Deeney, NE

Main Priorities

1. Stop erosion of the current commercial resource and increase the amount of productive woodland creation

Actions

- FC to monitor amount of productive woodland lost (including PAWS restoration)
- FC to look at 'like for like' replacement with conditional felling licences
- Expand or re-locate the SWF planting supplement
- Rationalisation of the land based subsidies to encourage land owners to consider planting
- WCG needs to reflect the current agricultural situation – liaison with organisations like CLA and NFU is crucial to ensure correct levels are achieved
- Expand the current inventory of 'accessible commercial woodlands/timber in the SW to cover the unmanaged/inaccessible woodlands so a complete picture is formed and used to promote investment.

2. Ensure Production of high quality of timber through 'proper silviculture'

Actions

- FC to consider increased management grants for a full range of operations.
- Lose puritan attitude of 'local provenance' when looking at PAWS restoration and accept climate change implications by investigating/ planting better quality European provenance plants of native species.

- Recognise that woodfuel is an important market but is/will be a by-product of a higher value product harvesting operation.
- Need to ensure a strong processing industry, including stress grading and kiln drying facilities.
- Utilise the requirement on local authorities to use locally produced timber wherever possible, through education of procurement officers and increasing the range and quantity of timber available.
- Subsidise low value operations (early thinnings) in order to create a long term gain in quality.
- Increased promotion of low value products (firewood, fencing material etc) to enable SW to become self sufficient in these areas.

3. Need to tap into the unmanaged woodland resource

Actions

- Support / encouragement for small woodland owners to join together for management purposes to provide the economies of scale.
- Educate owners in the advantages \ benefits of woodland management
- Improve access into un-managed woodlands (poss 100% currently available throu RDPE – Jez Ralph – if so need to advertise and promote
- Development of urban woodlands, which could be available to Local Authorities, for example, that could be used as exemplars of management, access possibilities, educational and recreational facilities.

4. Development of relevant training facilities in SW

Actions

- creation of apprenticeships (funding required)
- Incentive required for machinery owners to trade in/scrap old environmentally damaging equipment for newer more productive machines

5. Development of other profit making facilities within woodlands for recreation, education and health.

Actions

- Help owners to exploit other revenue streams from woodlands by supporting/ exploring alternative woodland use

6. Continued development of the supply chain and improved communication across the whole industry

Actions

- Improve the PR of the whole wood using industry
- Greater emphasis on the benefits of locally sourced timber to all markets