

# RWFF Implementation Plan event, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2009, Exeter

## QUALITY OF LIFE theme

Facilitator: Dave Dixon, South West Protected Landscapes Forum  
Scribe: Dick Preston, Forestry Commission

**Attendees:** Justin Milward, WT; Kat Deeney, NE; Andy Osborne, Poole BC; Gavin Bloomfield, RSPB; Tom Munro, Dorset AONB; Alistair Gordon, EA; John Weir, FC; Richard Ennion, Bristol CC; Simon Lee, NE; Sally Glass, WT; Ben Bunting, EA; Colin Hawke Cornwall CC; Graham Smith, Crown Estate; James Glover, SWRDA; Sarah Vaughan, Woodland Renaissance; Michelle Osbourn, Somerset WT

There appeared to be **3 principal Priority Actions** to come out of the 2 groups, these being:-

- 1. The need for a strong business case to be made for woodlands.** The opportunities for funding in today's political and economic climate appear to be wide ranging but sound business sense is essential for the involvement of partner organisations.

Points that were raised included:-

- The need to understand what investment in woodland and greenspace can provide.
- A clear stance about what the woodland in a specific area is aiming to deliver. This would then indicate the type, position and composition of woodlands.
- The need for the Business case to be articulated and to ensure the evidence for the case is communicated.
- Take advantage of the implications for Health (with its large budgetary implication) AND future flood management issues when proposing woodland opportunities.
- The need to publicise Key Messages regarding woodland, its use and position within the rural or urban setting.
- The Business case needs not only to look at the investment opportunities but also what benefits are returned to the woodland owners in both the short and long term.
- In the current financial climate woodland access by most people is viewed as a "free day out". Whilst this can be seen as beneficial, the industry may also be missing opportunities for advertising and also in some instances income.

- 2. Where Access is the target reason for woodland, there needs to be a higher focus on *Quality of access*.**

Points raised included:-

- There are issues to be addressed in relation to "Perceived Access" as against "Actual Access." This was particularly relevant in the Urban environment and relates particularly to the fact while space may be provided, can people actually get there?
- Woodlands are regarded as Family Friendly and FREE.
- The need to build stronger relations with PCT's.
- Produce better links TO woodlands not just IN woodlands.
- The need to ensure that the "woodland experience" is high quality.

### 3. To address the opportunities presented by “Green Infrastructure” (GI).

This needs to be carried out on two levels:-

- a. With and through Policy makers
- b. With and for the end users, “the public”.

Points raised included:-

- To be very clear what is meant when using terms such as “Integrated Approach”
- To create a GI link to and parity with, Grey Infrastructure. The example cited was the excellent woodland/open space recreation area separated from the residential area by a 3 lane road with no bridge or underpass.
- To be clear how we expect to persuade others of the benefits of GI.
- We need to provide good quality evidence for supporting GI, plans for positioning and delivery of GI
- There is a need for education on the subject and Forest Schools could deliver but this requires investment.

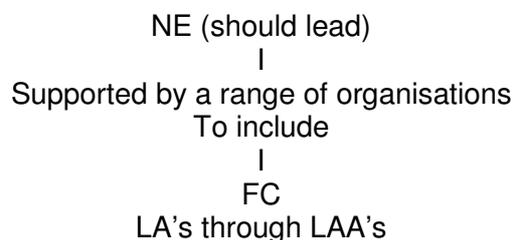
### 4. Other discussions took place around subjects such as :-

- a. The need for a geographical focus particularly when considering the creation of new woods or the expansion of existing facilities. Is it in the right place?
- b. The balance between Urban and Rural targeting of woodland.

In most instances the points captured in 1-3 above cover these other discussions.

The bulk of this information came from the morning session. It was added to in the afternoon but we were able to progress on to other areas with the second group.

### A discussion was had about who should be responsible for the Maintenance of GI and how should it be carried out. Indications were that :-



Mechanisms for funding could include current grant schemes and targeted local initiatives.

5. One area was touched on in the morning and raised again in the afternoon. It was not clearly or completely discussed and was left somewhat open.

#### • Who is responsible for individual trees?

The FC has cover of woods and forests and although LAs protect Urban trees no one organisation guides policy on individual trees in general. The FC has suggested in its current policy document using the title England's Trees, Woods and Forests, that it bears this responsibility, however this is a Defra/government policy document which is shared by FC and NE..