

SEEING THE WOOD FOR THE TREES

2 years on!



Introduction

Seeing the Wood for the Trees - the Forestry and Woodlands Framework for South East England was launched in late 2004. Two years on we are taking this opportunity to highlight the key role it has played in ensuring regional consensus on securing the future of our important woodlands. The Forestry and Woodlands Partnership oversee delivery of the Framework, whose membership includes the key regional bodies, the Forestry Commission and the private sector. The delivery of the Framework has progressed in three ways - through advocacy, information and support to key projects. We initially focused delivery on Priority Topics under each Theme, as demonstrated overleaf. The work is not completed. We continue to seek your support and encourage you to play your part to help secure the woodlands of the South East.

Valerie Carter

Rural Director, South East England Development Agency.

Advocacy

- **Regional Economic Strategy** - We responded to this promoting the role of the woodlands and forestry sector in the region, particularly highlighting woodfuel and green infrastructure
- **Regional Rural Delivery Framework** - This reflects the priorities of the Regional Forestry and Woodlands Framework
- **Rural Development Plan for England - Regional Implementation Plan** - This is being developed as regional guide to use of European funds and reflects our priorities
- **South East Plan** - The draft Plan has a Woodlands policy NRM5, which came out of the RFF process
- **English Forestry Strategy** - We responded to this to ensure the regional focus in forestry is recognised.
- **Local Development Frameworks** - Partners respond to these promoting our priorities
- **Planners Guidance** - We have produced guidance to help Planners implement the South East Plan policy NRM5 see www.seeingthewoodforthetrees.org.uk

Information

- **RFF Information Notes** - These summarise key issues for Forestry and Woodlands in the South East and can be downloaded from our website. Our most recent highlights the economic contribution of forestry to the South East.
- **E News** - Produced quarterly, this summarises the information you need to know to make positive change happen in the South East forestry and woodland sector - news, policy changes, publications, resources and funding.
- **www.seeingthewoodforthetrees.org.uk** - Our website highlights case studies that deliver the Framework, as well as all our publications.
- **The RFF Conference** - In February 2006 we invited partners from around the region to join hear speakers on our priority topics, to discuss our priorities and guide delivery.



Better Places for people to Live

Priority Topic:
Sustainable Communities

The Region is facing unprecedented growth. Partners are working to ensure there is appropriate provision for access to woodlands, particularly promoting green infrastructure in the Growth Areas. This has many benefits including spaces for recreation and health, and corridors for biodiversity. An example is the development of Jeskyns Farm, by the Forestry Commission, as a major site of green infrastructure in the Thames Gateway Growth Area.

An application of the Accessible Natural Greenspaces Standard (ANGST) across the region (supported by Forestry Commission, Natural England and the SE AONB Woodlands Programme) examined how areas can be targeted to enhance access opportunities. It showed that two-thirds of accessible natural greenspace is provided through woodlands in the region.

We are also examining new ways to help people enjoy and understand woodlands through audio interpretation.

Enhanced Environment and Biodiversity

Priority Topic:
Ancient Woodland

The Region has 40% of England's Ancient Woodlands, our irreplaceable woodland heritage. The revision of the Ancient Woodland Inventory is being undertaken by the High Weald AONB Unit and partners, starting in Wealden and Mid Sussex Districts, but now moving across to other districts.

It has identified a further 1956 ha of ancient woodland in Wealden district, not previously recorded as it was under 2ha. It has helped Planners to deal effectively with cases involving ancient woodland.

The Wealden survey has been recognised in 'Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: A Good Practice Guide', from the Department of Communities and Local Government, which accompanies PPS9.

A stronger contribution to the economy

Priority Topic:
Renewable Energy

Across the region over the past two years people are waking up to the role that woodfuel can play in the development of renewable energy. Nationally the Biomass Task Force has ensured better recognition of the role of woodfuel in heat provision.

SEEDA is the lead Regional Development Agency on renewable energy, and has supported key demonstration installations across the region. They are now focusing support on developing the supply chain, with partnerships such as South East Woodfuels and TV Energy. The Region also has a woodfuel champion to raise awareness of the potential of woodfuel.

To ensure that there is a wide range of markets, the Forestry and Woodlands Partnership and ConFor ran an event to highlight how South East wood products can supply into the Olympics and Growth Areas.

A secure future for our woodland resources

Priority Topic: *Regional Spatial Planning*

Whilst woodland management usually falls outside of the planning system, decisions are made daily within the planning system which affect woodlands. The South East Plan, which will be adopted as the Regional Spatial Strategy in early 2008, includes a draft Woodland policy (NRM5) which supports delivery of the Regional Forestry and Woodlands Framework.

We have produced guidance for Planners to help them implement the policy in their Local Development Frameworks and Development Control Policies - it can be downloaded from www.seeingthewoodforthetrees.org.uk

We have also led seminars for planners on trees and woodland issues.

If you wish to subscribe to the E News, contact Jane Hull, Framework Development Officer.

This update is inserted inside a summary of the Framework. If you wish to have further copies to use in your work, contact Jane Hull, Framework Development Officer,

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www.seeingthewoodforthetrees.org.uk