



COMMUNITY FACILITATION PROJECT

Board Meeting – 12 August 2004

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present to the Board for consideration a proposal received for funding from East Ayrshire Woodlands (EAW) in respect of a community facilitation project to support activity in Stewarton, with the possibility of extended provision to a further four communities within the North Social Inclusion Initiative area.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 EAW was founded in 1997 as a Millennium Forest for Scotland project with, as one of its key roles, the management of a training programme in forestry skills for the long term unemployed. It is an unincorporated organisation remitted to support economic development and environmental regeneration within Ayrshire.

- 2.2 The overall aim of EAW is “to develop sustainably managed and expanded native and community woodlands that will make a valued contribution to the economic and environmental prosperity of communities within Ayrshire”.

- 2.3 The organisation’s strategic objectives are to:

- secure and expand the extent of native and community woodlands within Ayrshire;
- develop and deliver training and employment opportunities for unemployed people;
- engage and support local communities in the management of their environment;
- promote, develop and deliver environmental education linked to woodlands; and
- support the development of business opportunities linked to forest products.

3. PILOT COMMUNITY FACILITATION PROJECT

- 3.1 Community-based and led woodlands groups have developed over the past 10 years, particularly in the Highlands and in the Borders of Scotland. At least 80 groups now exist where an initial focus on woodlands has been the catalyst for a wide range of local benefits, including meeting local employment, training, health, affordable housing or educational needs.

- 3.2 However, community-based and led woodlands group activity and development has been limited in Ayrshire, which can be mainly attributed to a lack of knowledge within the community in respect of accessing available resources.

3.3 In January 2004, EAW in partnership with Reforesting Scotland developed a six month pilot community facilitation project focusing on the 3 local authority areas of Ayrshire, divided into 3 zones with a part-time community facilitator contractor assigned to each zone. The role of the community facilitator contractor is to provide one-to-one support, to identify and develop contacts with potential and emerging community woodlands groups and provide information, advice and support, as appropriate.

3.4 Within the East Ayrshire North Area, a pilot project has been operating in Stewarton. In particular, the project's facilitator has assisted the Stewarton Woodland Action Trust to engage with local individuals and the wider community, as well as public agencies and private organisations.

4. EAST AYRSHIRE NORTH COMMUNITY FACILITATION PROJECT PROPOSAL

4.1 Financial support from the North Social Inclusion Initiative would sustain the pilot project in Stewarton and provide opportunities to expand the initiative to communities across the north of the authority.

4.2 It is envisaged that the financial support from the North Social Inclusion Initiative, if approved, will allow the project to continue operating from August /September 2004 until March 2005. Additional, substantial funding applications to support a community facilitation project from March 2005 are currently being developed.

5. FUNDING PROPOSAL

5.1 The North Board is requested to consider the following options in relation to funding provision for the continuation of a community-based and led project within the north of East Ayrshire:

Option A: Provide support to the Stewarton group and 1 additional community	
174hrs @ £12.50/hr time	£2,175
7mths x travel expenses	£ 150
7mths x community training/support costs	£ 675
Total	£3,000
Option B: Provide support to the Stewarton group and other communities in the North Social Inclusion Initiative area (minimum 4 communities)	
232hrs @ £12.50/hr time	£2,900
7mths x travel expenses	£ 200
7mths x community training/support costs	£ 900
Total	£4,000

5.2 Match funding will be sourced by EAW to provide resources for line management and project support for the community facilitator.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 It is recommended that the North Social Inclusion Initiative Board:

- i) notes the establishment of the pilot facilitation project operating in the Stewarton area;
- ii) considers the funding options presented at 5.1 in respect of the project proposals and agrees to support the initiative, as appropriate;
- iii) agrees, should the proposals be approved by the Board, to receive quarterly progress reports in respect of project activity and achievement; and
- iv) otherwise, notes the content of the report.

Gwen Barker
Community Planning and Partnership Manager
4 August 2004