

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 23 OCTOBER 2001

EAST AYRSHIRE WOODLANDS

Report By The Director Of Development Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.2** The purpose of this report is to inform the committee of the progress of the East Ayrshire Woodlands project.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** East Ayrshire Woodlands was established in 1996 as a partnership project for the specific purpose of attracting funding from the Millennium Forest for Scotland Trust. The partners to the project are as follows;

East Ayrshire Council
Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire
Forestry Commission
Scottish Natural Heritage
Scottish Wildlife Trust
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group

The project has also contributed to a wide range of local partnerships including;

East Ayrshire Coalfield Social Inclusion Partnership
Local Regeneration Partnerships throughout East Ayrshire.

- 2.2** The project has five primary functions namely;

- (1) To expand and enhance native and community woodland within the project area.
- (2) To develop and deliver training and employment opportunities for the unemployed.
- (3) To engage local communities in the management of their environment.
- (4) To promote and deliver environmental education within the school curricula.
- (5) To support the development of business opportunities linked to forest products.

- 2.3** The project operates an Intermediate Labour Market project providing training and employment opportunities for 28 unemployed adults (18-65yrs). This offers employment, work experience and training on a 44 week contract in forestry. Skills developed are transferable to other land-based sector businesses.

2.4 Training places are provided through Training for Work and New Deal. Trainees are provided with a broad range of training and work experience. SVQ Level 2 Forestry (Establishment and Maintenance Option) provides participants with a range of skills relevant to many land-based sectors. This has been demonstrated by the diversity of previous employment outcomes (Forestry, Landscaping, Horticulture, Fencing and Grounds Maintenance). The ability of trainees to secure full time employment has been improved greatly by the attainment of additional skill competencies, particularly in Chainsaw Operation and Pesticide Application. Outputs including Site works and numbers of trainees into work from 1996/97 to 2000/2001 are indicated at Appendix 1.

2.5 The project provides a range of benefits to people in East Ayrshire. Local people participate in the planning and implementation of projects and environmental work has been undertaken within schools to foster a wider understanding and appreciation of environmental issues

3. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

3.1 East Ayrshire Woodlands exists as an 'arms length' unit within the Development Services Department of East Ayrshire Council. A Management Group drawn from the partner organisations oversees strategy and policy matters and monitors activity of the project whilst day to day management is rested within the Economic Development Division.

3.2 Currently there are 8 members of the Management Group, three from East Ayrshire Council and 1 each from the other partners. All have equal voting rights and any of whom can be appointed to the position of chair or vice chair by simple election of other members. Currently East Ayrshire Council holds the chair.

4. STAFF STRUCTURE

4.1 The project is currently located at Underwood Depot, Auchinleck Road, Cumnock and the current staffing complement is as follows;

Project Manager
Training Officer
Admin Assistant
Community Liaison Officer
Supervisors (3)

Financial supervision and monitoring is undertaken by East Ayrshire Council Finance Section.

5. FUNDING

5.1 Project funding is accessed through a number of organisations and the estimated funding package for 2002/2003 is as follows:

	£
East Ayrshire Council	20,000
Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire	30,000
Employment Service (New Deal)	85,000
East Ayrshire Social Inclusion Partnership	104,000
European Social Fund (ESF)	154,000
European Regional Development Fund ERDF)	294,000
Forestry Commission	44,000
Total	731,000

Expenditure for the period 1996/97 to 2000/01 is detailed at Appendix 2.

6. VALUE FOR MONEY

- 6.1** East Ayrshire Woodlands provides exceptional value for money in terms of the Council's value for money guidelines
- 6.2** The Council's contribution of £20,000 levers in funding to the project of approximately £700,000.
- 6.3** Officers of the Economic Development Division represent the Council on the project Management Group and are provided with regular monitoring reports on all aspects of the project.

7. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

- 7.1** The development of National and Local Biodiversity Action Plans is encouraging economic and tourism agencies to focus more on sustainable environmental development. This, added to the European Commission approval of a new European Structural Fund which reflects the increased importance of addressing sustainable developments has led to the need for the project to produce a plan for the next three year period.
- 7.2** A Strategy and Action Plan is being developed which will include a business plan focusing on potential future business opportunities, securing a sound financial position and widening its funding base. On completion the Strategy and Action Plan will be submitted to Development Services Committee for its consideration.

8. LEGAL/POLICY/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** Nil

9. RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1** The Committee is recommended to note the progress of the East Ayrshire Woodland project and to approve the assessment of Best Value contained in paragraph 6.

Stephen Chorley
Director of Development Services

TM/KM
9/8/01

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

For further information on the contents of this report contact Tom Merry, Senior Project Advisor. Telephone 01563 554611.

Implementation Officer: Tom Merry

APPENDIX 1

OUTPUT	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	TOTAL
Site works						
No. of projects	6	8	10	7	9*	40
Ha. of Woodland planted	20.8	24.6	38.7	15.9	34.5*	134.5
Ha. of woodland managed	1.5	2.6	38.8	16.7	73.9*	133.5
Km. of footpath created	2.15	1.90	2.78	2.90	4.30*	14.03
Km. of fencing erected						
ILM works						
No. of beneficiaries	13	27	23	19	27	96
No. of early leavers	2	3	2	5	4	14
SVQ level I achievement		24	21	13	4	62
SVQ level II achievement		14	20	12	20	66
PA1/PA6a achievement		18	14	5	6	43
CS30/31/36 achievement		9		1	8	18
Other qualifications		-				
No. into work		12	11	4	8	35

* The outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease and the restrictions on working in the countryside that were put in place prevented the full programme from being implemented. The outputs would have been significantly higher.

EAST AYRSHIRE WOODLANDS

TRADING HISTORY

EXPENDITURE 1996 - 2001												
Item	1996/97		1997/98		1998/99		1999/2000		2000/01		TOTAL	
	Projected	Actual	Projected	Actual	Projected	Actual	Projected	Actual	Projected	Estimated	Projected	Actual
Staff costs	59,500		150,000	116,201	148,750	137,006	142,300	133,900	137,907	138,348	638,457	525,455
Trainee costs	55,800	1,139	158,600	126,102	78,600	75,938	95,500	114,109	138,600	101,985	527,100	419,273
Training costs	18,000	12,499	29,000	15,194	18,700	32,089	15,750	22,105	21,250	32,205	102,700	114,092
Site costs	117,000		159,500	140,483	251,700	171,931	205,000	158,670	182,000	360,244	915,200	831,328
Running Costs	47,500		27,500	41,633	28,600	32,288	30,800	23,754	32,280	22,495	166,680	120,170
Transport Costs	79,000		18,200	32,308	32,400	54,874	26,200	56,747	29,868	36,436	185,668	180,365
General costs	18,400	27,765	13,200	14,772	1,200	1,829	1,500	1,777	1,830	2,743	36,130	48,886
Total	395,200	41,403	556,000	486,693	559,950	505,955	517,050	511,062	543,735	694,456	2,571,935	2,239,569

AGENDA