

CHAPTER 21 - Co-ordination and Implementation

21.1 The need for further partnerships has been identified in Chapter 18. The major question is how the co-ordination of a new partnership will be agreed, what form it will take and how it will implement the Plan, given that no organisation exists that is in a position to do so alone.

21.2 It is clear that there will need to be a co-ordinated approach to delivering the Community Forest if the targets are to be met and the scale and style of forest as set out in this Plan is to be achieved. A number of functions and tasks will need to be undertaken on a Forest-wide basis as well as on a strategy-area basis; principal amongst these functions will be:

- promotion and community involvement
- advice and training
- project initiation and co-ordination
- monitoring and review.

Promotion and community involvement

21.3 It is essential that the Forest of Avon has a clear and separate identity which people recognise and relate to. The establishment of the Charitable Company will assist with this. Much has been achieved and research is appropriate to test the level of awareness of the Forest within the local population. As this identity is firmly established in the eye of landowners, companies and communities, it will be much easier to encourage planting and related activities as part of the Forest, to attract sponsorship and other resources to the Forest, and to ensure participation by local communities in the management, development and use of the Forest.

21.4 This clear identity will need to be established through promotional and other activities, which need to be professionally planned as part of a marketing strategy and effectively implemented in conjunction with all complementary activities. Approaches to landowners will need to be carefully researched and presented. Across the whole Forest, there must be consistency of message, balance in advice and support and clear focus of effort as suggested elsewhere in the Plan.

Advice and training

21.5 Throughout this plan a need for a professional and co-ordinated approach to the main aspects of community forestry has been identified. This applies not only to the design and management of woodlands, vital though this is, but also to:

- archaeology
- arts
- communication
- information and interpretation
- landscape design and conservation
- nature conservation
- rights of way
- sport and recreation (including shooting)
- support for the farming community
- tourism
- town and country planning
- volunteer and community action.

21.6 Much expertise exists already in the Forest area but this will need to be focused and best practice, particularly in technical areas, must also be made available to private landowners, many of whom will need substantial support and guidance in the early years.

Project initiation and co-ordination

21.7 Some of the work in implementing the Forest Plan will be opportunistic in character. As sites become available, as developments take place or as grant structures change, so the opportunities created will need to be identified and grasped. This will frequently involve the initiation of cross-boundary, multifunctional projects, often linking with private-sector organisations to complement the resources of the public sector. Key projects in the Forest's business plan will need to be initiated and managed.

Monitoring and review

21.8 The plan will be reviewed on a regular basis, as agreed by national partners but probably after 10 years, to ensure that changing circumstances and policies are addressed. The targets given in Chapter 20 will be expanded in terms of resources required, time-scale and project management and organisations and individuals involved in the business plan. This will also address key milestones in achieving progress towards the development of the Forest and give a range of performance



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indicators against which the Forest's progress can be measured. The business plan will be designed to operate on a 3 year rolling programme.

Developing a coordinated approach

21.9 Having outlined a range of functions which will need to be carried out, it will be essential for the Forest partners to agree the practicalities of organising this work and ensuring that the appropriate levels of co-ordination are put in place. Many different partnerships will be involved. Some will relate to individual projects, others will require a central focus if the totality of the Forest of Avon vision is to be achieved.

21.10 The key to achieving a project of this magnitude will be twofold:

- ensuring that a central co-ordinating team is in place, and
- ensuring that effective team-working is encouraged throughout the Forest.

Both approaches are needed, in mutual support. Given the range of potential partners in the Forest, there is clearly the scope for developing this co-ordinated method. If effective team-working is developed, a central co-ordinating team can be small. It will, however, probably need to change in character and expertise as the Forest develops over time.

21.11 The co-ordinating team, in turn, will succeed best if it is seen by all the Forest partners as providing a focal point from which all Forest activities are integrated together. Vital to this will be a partner organisation acting as lead employer and host, with an operational base which can provide a visible focus for the Forest for the community in the area.

21.12 The team acts as honest brokers between partners who may have different aims as far as the Forest is concerned. They can ensure that the Forest infrastructure is developed in accordance with the vision set out in this Plan. They can also ensure that effective team-working is developed and help to support, influence, advise and train all those involved. Reviewing the approach necessary to deliver the Forest will be an on-going process, as will monitoring progress towards the targets which will be set out in the business plan.

21.13 The co-ordinated approach will only succeed, however, if the Forest partners continue to work together in a co-operative manner under the Community Forest banner. Local authorities and private/voluntary organisations all have key roles to play over the coming years and many of them have contributed already as partners in the preparation of this Plan. However, in the future it will not simply be a matter of individual organisations going away with their copy of the Forest Plan and deciding in isolation what they would like to do in their part or area of interest in the Forest. Working together, sharing skills and expertise will be essential to maximise opportunities and resources, both human and financial. Partners will need to work for the Forest, not simply in it.