

# GROWING OUR FUTURE

Briefing

West Midlands Woodland & Forestry Forum

July 2005 - Issue 1

## Delivery Plan Launch

The West Midlands Regional Forestry Forum met on Wednesday 29 June at The National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in Staffordshire, to launch the Delivery Plan for 'Growing Our Future', the West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework published last year.



Recognising the huge contribution trees make to the environment, the economy and to our quality of life, the Delivery Plan focuses the work of the forestry sector and its partners in the West Midlands during 2005/6. It prioritises detailed activities to help protect, maintain and improve the region's trees, forests and woodlands and maximises their contribution to quality of life.

"Here in the West Midlands more and more people are seeing just how much trees really do matter. For our towns and major conurbations, they bring much needed green landscape – green 'architecture' – into the hard edged urban scene," said David Ritchie, Chair of the West Midlands Woodland and Forestry Forum. He continued: "For our superb rural areas trees define the landscape and provide a vital economic resource."

The Delivery Plan is available in CD-ROM format or can be viewed and downloaded at [www.growingourfuture.org](http://www.growingourfuture.org)

## Modern Apprenticeships

The Forum's Workforce Development Group has been part of the Working Group driving a Lantra project forward to develop an Advanced Apprenticeship in Trees and Timber in England and Wales.

This will provide a progression route for young people completing the foundation level apprenticeship which was developed last year. An apprenticeship can help to provide a structured path for individuals wishing to develop a career in the industry, enabling them to learn practical skills on-the-job and achieve nationally recognised qualifications. Following consultation, the framework document will be submitted to the Apprenticeship Approvals Group in September.

Further details can be found on the Lantra website: [www.lantra.co.uk](http://www.lantra.co.uk)

## Regional VTS Bid Progress

Following on from the successful pilot in the west, a regional bid was submitted to Defra at the end March in time for the Regional Appraisal Panel meeting in June.

We eagerly await the outcome. The bid comprises over 1000 training days, 500 training placements and amounts to some £169,000 for a two year programme period. Training signposting/co-ordination/brokerage (a key part of the VTS pilot) is to be undertaken by Walford & North Shropshire College in the west of the region and the Forest of Mercia in the east.

## Forest Industries Study

Forum members, with others, expect to be fully engaged in the England Forest Industries mapping study. The English Forest Industries Partnership (EFIP) is a partnership of industry, national and regional government affiliated with the English Forestry Forum and embraces the forest and woodland sector from resource to processing and end-use. EFIP is mandated to provide action plans which will facilitate competitiveness plus the capacity of the forest and woodland businesses to contribute to the delivery of the England Forest Strategy and, by inference, to the Regional Forestry Frameworks too.

EFIP has commissioned Jaako Pöyry Consulting to create a 'foundation' map of the woodland and forest industries sector in England, to provide a launch platform for subsequent strategic initiatives and contribution to the delivery of the English Forestry Strategy, at the national and regional levels. The map implicitly needs to include the regional perspective (and cross regional variations and linkages), the routes to competitiveness and the basis for action plans. The desired map is more than an inventory and measurement of contribution. For the purposes of this study the scope of 'woodland and forest industries sector' is to be interpreted as covering:

1. The tree, timber and fibre resource – trees, woods, forests, waste & other recyclable timber and fibre.
2. The tree-based services sector - including forest nurseries; specialist forest management, support and consultancy; tree and forest operations; timber haulage; research; education and training.
3. Woodland-based recreation, tourism and sporting activities (existing and potential).
4. The primary timber-processing sector (including sawmilling, panel board, integrated pulp & paper, energy generation, other primary conversion activity including small-scale and 'craft' activities).
5. The secondary timber-processing sector (including non-integrated paper-making, joinery, woodworking and fabrication sectors).
6. The timber-trading sector including timber merchants and importers.

The work will focus on the Sector in England, but refer to other sector structures and performance in UK/Ireland. In addition, JPC would introduce relevant regional and global locations for benchmarking as appropriate.