

**DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE
FOR
REGIONAL WOODLAND AND FORESTRY FORUM TASK GROUP
Social Forestry**

Background

The West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework (RFF) was launched in October 2004 and set out the region's vision for woodland and forestry over the next 10-20 years. The first Delivery Plan to guide implementation of the RFF was launched in June 2005 and subsequent rolling three-year Plans have been developed. The Framework and Delivery Plan comprise 11 themes under which activity is promoted. One of these themes is ***Fostering Social Inclusion*** and the theme table is attached.

Under the auspices of the Woodland & Forestry Forum a number of specialist expert groups have been set up. These have proved very successful with ambitious "driven" programmes of activity for establishing the "first base", buy-in and co-operation from a wide range of stakeholders. They have considerably improved communication at all levels and had input and influence on regional and local agendas seeking and attracting significant alternative funding to support their work.

Social Forestry

Woodlands enhance peoples' lives, health and wellbeing in all sorts of ways – with birdsong, seasonal colour, giving dimension to the view in low-lying landscapes and providing opportunities for exercise and recreation. The new England Strategy for Trees, Woods and Forests, reinforcing the aspirations of the WMRFF, seeks to improve the local environment, the quality of people's lives and their appreciation of trees and woodlands through encouraging adult learning and rehabilitation programmes, conservation work and other volunteering – working closer with communities.

Improving access for the hard to reach is a primary driver for seeking to develop outreach and supported visits for groups unlikely/unable to visit and the running of group development projects. Activities programmes with associated promoting and marketing are likely to be aimed at the socially excluded, offenders, disaffected young people, black minority ethnic groups, the disabled (including people with physical, mental and emotional problems), the elderly, people on low incomes, and mothers and toddlers. Practical conservation skills, courses and workshops, educational materials and guided talks and walks can help provide high quality learning experiences and the development of closer links with key organisations such as school and community groups, primary health care trusts, day care centres, social services, the probation service and others is of particular importance.

Specialist Task Group

The proposal to form an expert working group to develop and promote social forestry in the region as part of the Woodland and Forestry Forum programme has gained momentum in recent months. The Forestry Framework's Annual Monitoring Reports have highlighted the fact that considerably more support and help was needed for wood-based community projects and work with disadvantaged groups. The sector has the potential to be a significant contributor to the Region's social and environmental well-being but needs additional help so that it can contribute more to the Region's economy as well.

Proposed terms of reference

- To give focused advice on the social forestry issues to the Forum articulating the needs of the sector
- To report on progress with implementing the Regional Forestry Framework Delivery Plan
- To gather and share information, maintaining engagement with key stakeholders
- To develop and promote examples to inspire people about the benefits of trees and woodlands (FSI 2)
- To identify and, if possible, secure funding incentives (FSI 3)

- To develop a programme of specific initiatives for hard-to-reach groups (FSI 4)
- To contribute to emerging strategies and policies – injecting some realism
- To assist the Forestry Commission and other partners in the design and delivery of incentives and support mechanisms

Modus operandi

- To operate as an email network for exchange of information and hold at least 2 meetings a year
- To be chaired by a Forum representative
- Secretariat to be provided by FC

The group is intended to comprise stakeholders from the woodland and forestry industries and wider community to meet and to take forward the aspirations of the RFF and advise the WFF on regional issues. There are a number of potential pieces of work that could be co-ordinated by the group:

1. Production of a Good Practice Guide, including case studies and baseline evidence for developing funding bids, particularly with regards to socio-economic outputs
2. Contribute to the Delivery Plan for England's Strategy for Trees, Woods and Forestry ensuring the social forestry perspective is understood and supported
3. Developing the Fostering Social Inclusion theme in the 2008-2011 WMRFF Delivery Plan

Composition

To be determined, but likely to include:

Small Woods Association/GWC	Judy Walker
FCE	Helen Townsend
Forestry Commission	Jason McLean
Natural England	Chris Hogarth
National Trust	Kate Warburton
National Forest	Clive Keble
Woodland Trust	Paul Bunton
Harper Adams University College	Jim Waterson
National Care Farms Initiative	John Dover
Walford & North Shropshire College	Phil Ridley: p.ridley@wnsc.ac.uk
Wye Wood and HSP	Kate Tudge kate.tudge@smallwoods.org.uk
Wildlife Trusts	Mike Kinghan
AONB	Phil Holden/Clare Fildes
PCTs	Frances Howie
West Mercia Probation	David Chandler
West Mercia Police	Sheena Griffiths sheena.griffiths@westmercia.pnn.police.uk 01952 461375 07968 483538
Grow with Wyre: "Branching Out"	Rosemary Winnall
The Bulmer Foundation	Susan Bell/ Rob Garner rob.garner@s-n.com
WMRFF	Sara Roberts
Ford Hall Farm	Charlotte Hollins: info@fordhallfarm.com

Please direct any queries to:

Sara Roberts – s.roberts@wmra.gov.uk
Tel: 0121 352 5278
Mobile: 07917 168844

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Theme 8: Fostering Social Inclusion – Encouraging Social Justice and Environmental Equity

Objectives	Actions
FSI 1 To set a regional target for percentage of tree/woodland cover as a quality of life indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek for inclusion of the target as a regional quality of life indicator in the Regional Sustainable Development Framework, linking to national Accessible Greenspace targets
FSI 2 To promote examples and inspire people about the benefits of trees and woodlands and to secure community involvement in establishing trees for local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness and encourage the engagement of communities with local trees and woods, and secure community involvement in decision-making about planning, planting, managing and using trees for leisure, health & wellbeing, ensuring engagement with disadvantaged and hard-to-reach groups • Target Registered Social Landlords, Housing Associations, Community Trusts, other community development organisations (including conservation volunteering bodies, tree wardens, etc.), parish councils, residents associations and other networks to include trees in open-space planning, such as local authority open/green space strategies
FSI 3 To identify and/or provide some funding incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and implement demonstration pilot projects
FSI 4 To develop a programme of specific initiatives for hard to reach groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop actions leading from national research on what would be needed to overcome barriers for groups who feel socially excluded from using trees, woodlands and forests (with groups to include girls aged 9-14; older women from black and multi-ethnic groups) • Identify and actively promote woodland and forests to hard-to-reach groups, using existing specialist community services • Help people use rural skills (such as working with wood products) to set up their own businesses
FSI 5 To encourage woodland owners to develop access initiatives for excluded groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find and promote model initiatives to owners, occupiers and land managers • Encourage owners to provide attractions for all abilities, particularly in terms of access, information and marketing