

ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: Thursday 21 June 2001
Time: 2.00 to 5.00 pm
Venue: Committee Room 3, National Assembly Building

THE PROPOSED CORPORATE PLAN OF THE COUNTRYSIDE**COUNCIL FOR WALES 2002 – 2005.**

(Note by the Countryside Council for Wales).

Background

1. This note has been written in the light of guidance as to format and content given by the Committee Clerk in a letter of 18 May.
2. The Council finalised its proposed Corporate Plan 2002 – 2005 in open Council Session on 6 June. There had previously been informal discussion about the Plan with some of the Council's key partners.
3. The full Corporate Plan has now been submitted for National Assembly approval. Copies can be made available upon request and the final approved plan will be published on CCW's website. CCW has also submitted to the National Assembly a full report of performance against the pre set targets for the year 2000/01.

Key Achievements 2000/01

4. The shape of our work programme for 2000/01 changed significantly during the course of the year to accommodate previously unanticipated work on the EU Habitats Directive and additional work on Tir Gofal. At the end of the year the programme was also affected by the Foot and Mouth outbreak.
5. The key achievements for the year were:

PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- Identifying, surveying and mapping 92 candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs) of which 89 were submitted to the Commission following public consultation, compliance with which requirement was being linked to EU structural funds.
- 817 farms visited with a view to concluding Tir Gofal agreements. 470 agreements covering 49,000 hectares (safeguarding many threatened habitats) signed before the end of the year with a further 145 agreements (covering 14,000 hectares) signed or close to signature.
- 33 SSSI notified or renotified involving 7 that underpin cSACs.
- Completed mapping 58% of our coastline by habitat type, which will facilitate management of Marine cSACs and enable CCW to give relevant advice on proposed developments.
- Progressed work on over 100 Habitat and Species Action Plans as our contribution to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Advised on over 4000 items of casework, including development proposals seeking to ensure that they were sustainable.
- Extended our partnership work on *LANDMAP* to 15 local authorities; the importance of which is recognised in the National Economic Development Strategy as "a mechanism to establish priorities between environment and economy".
- Working with the Environment and Welsh Development Agencies, produced and disseminated comprehensive guidance on the application of the environmental sustainability cross cutting theme of the Objective 1 programme.
- Secured approval for Glyndŵr's Way as Wales's 3rd National Walking Trail and working with Powys CC, WTB and the Mid Wales Regional Tourism Company developed proposals for maximising the economic potential of the Trail.
- Commenced planning for the introduction of the right of access to open country including setting up the first Local Access Forums.
- Funded Local Authority programmes to open, manage and publicise over 500 km's of Public Rights of Way (PROW) focusing on routes linked to public transport or close to where people live or visitors stay.

ACTION FOR HEALTHIER AND VIABLE COMMUNITIES

- Launched the "Walking the Way to Health" initiative with the British Heart Foundation.
- Secured HLF funding for the Balchder Bro Community Development Initiative with the WCVA.
- Developed the principles of an Environmental Development Fund for AONBs in partnership with the National Assembly and Local Authorities.
- Through management and agri-environment agreements with landowners and our other grant aid programmes, injected over £12 million into the rural economy helping to sustain rural communities.

CCW's Vision for the Future

1. CCW will be publishing shortly its Vision for the future. This has been the subject of a detailed consultation exercise and the final draft was discussed by the Council in public session on 6 June.
2. Within the next 10 years, CCW is determined to achieve a significant improvement in the Welsh natural environment and therefore in the quality of life of people in Wales and the quality of the experience of people who visit Wales. Our Vision for 2010 is:
 - A Wales that is more distinctive in landscape character and includes greater biodiversity by, for example, restoring Habitats and features that have been destroyed
 - That the land and sea supports more wildlife and their habitats
 - That economic development respects the natural environment, including its historical and cultural aspects.
 - A Wales in which there is greater access to all its people and its visitors to countryside and coast giving enjoyment and well being
1. We cannot do this alone. We will continue to work in partnership and help support individuals such as landowners and land users, businesses, voluntary sector organisations and other public bodies. In many cases, it will be the initiative and ability of our partners that will be crucial to our success. The speed and scale of our achievement will depend in part on the resources that can be made available.

Delivering the Vision – the Main Challenges for the Next Three Years

2. CCW's current work programme and that of many of its partners has been badly disrupted by the Foot and Mouth outbreak. Our programme to notify SSSIs to back up the notification of cSACs has been delayed by the best part of a year and the process of signing up Tir Gofal applicants has also been severely affected. Our immediate priority is the speedy restoration of access to the countryside within the terms of the National Assembly veterinary guidance, and to be in a position to resume our normal nature conservation/ Tir Gofal work as soon as possible.
3. Annex 1 sets out our key work targets for 2001 to 2005. This is in effect a summary of our Corporate Plan. The main challenges are to:

- Safeguard and enhance Welsh wildlife and landscape on which the £2.2 billion tourism industry depends.
 - Complete the SSSI notification programme and ensure they are properly managed together with suitable management of our candidate marine SACs
 - Commence work on additional Biodiversity Action Plans
 - Give effect to the right of access to open countryside in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act
 - Integrate the National Assembly's Scheme for Sustainable Development into the heart of our planning and operational processes
 - Develop the potential of our partners through technical and financial support
 - Improve the standard of environmental education and interpretation throughout Wales
 - Engage all the people of Wales, in rural and urban areas, in gaining their support to meeting the challenges we face
1. Annex 2 sets out how the achievement of each of our targets will contribute to the objectives of the Scheme for Sustainable Development. Some of our work programme will contribute to more than one objective.
 2. Annex 3 is a financial summary of our spending plans on the basis of current planned budgets. The additional resources sought reflects:
 - The impact of the Foot and Mouth outbreak in delaying the work programme - £1 million for 2002/03
 - The need to join with the Environment Agency and others in reviewing discharge consents - £0.6 million for each year
 - The need to increase our support to Local Authorities with responsibility for AONBs - £0.25 million for each year

The percentage increase on budget sought for next year is 4%.

Partnerships

1. We already have partnership programmes which involve advice and technical support as well as financial assistance with:
 - 22 Unitary Authorities – implementation of their countryside strategies
 - 3 National Park Authorities – advice on Corporate Plans
 - 5 AONBs – management plans and the Environmental Development Fund
 - 9,000 SSSI owners
 - 1,000 Tir Cymen agreement holders and 470 Tir Gofal agreement holders
 - The Wales LINK organisation and its constituent voluntary sector organisations
 - NFU, FUW and CLA
1. We have regular contact and joint initiatives with the National Assembly, WDA, FC/ FE, WTB, WEFO, WCVA, WEC, HLF, and NOF.
2. Some examples of joint initiatives in train are:
 - State of the Environment reports with EA and FC and a joint environmental education initiative
 - The Balchder Bro/ Local Distinctiveness initiative with WCVA and HLF
 - The Walking the Way to Health initiative with BHF and NOF
 - *LANDMAP* with local authorities
 - Management of National Nature Reserves by partners

New partnership initiatives proposed in the Corporate Plan include new grant aid schemes to:

- Support partners through a Species Challenge Fund to undertake work on safeguarding species which has not been put in hand to date because of resource limitations
- Enable the voluntary sector to access EU Structural Funds for countryside and coastal management projects
- Enable landowners to enhance wildlife, again with support from EU Structural Funds

It is also intended to contract out the management of more of our National Nature Reserves to partners.

1. By the end of 2004/05 on current budget planning figures it is expected that financial support we provide to partners will have increased from the level of £12 million in 2000/01 to over £25 million in 2004/05.

ANNEX 1

Key Targets 2000-01

***Please note that figures shown in brackets for 2001/02 represent targets revised as a result of Foot and Mouth Disease. These assume that we can commence fieldwork by 1 September, otherwise targets will need further adjustment.*

4.1 Better Quality of Life

Mechanism	2000-01 Outputs	2001-02 Targets	2002-03 Targets	2003-04 Targets	2004-05 Targets
<u>Protecting Wildlife Sites</u>		93(50)**	43	Notification work completed	
1. Notify land as SSSI underpinning SAC (subject to funding – see bids)	}33	10(5)**	50	100	
2. Notify additional SSSI					100
3. Prepare Site Management Statements, as required by the CROW Act	—	200	200	200	
4. Prepare Site Management Plans for SSSI	12	100	100	100	200
5. Secure management agreements on SSSI	—	10,000 ha (5,000ha)**	10,000ha	10,000ha	100
6. Sea, designed as SAC under Regulation 34.	—	194,000ha	3,170ha	1,000ha	10,000ha
7. In collaboration with EAW, we will complete stage 3 of the Review of	—		50%	75%	

Consents (subject to funding – see bids)					
8. Monitor terrestrial SACs to establish that they are managed in different ways that safeguard wildlife.			19,000ha		100%
<u>Implementing UK Biodiversity Action Plan</u>	—	19,000ha		19,000ha	
		(major impact on output)**			
9. Challenge Fund for Species Action Plans under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan					19,000ha
10. Support preparation and implementation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans	—	10(5)**	15		
				25	
11. Progress the implementation of the 221 habitat and species action plans relevant to Wales under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan	—	12	16		
				20	35
<u>Environmental Benefits through Farming</u>		140	155		
12. Bring land under management through Tir Gofal. This will allow us to protect, for example, the following habitats, identified under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.	130			165	24
<u>Protecting our Coastline</u>					175
13. Survey coastline to establish baseline data for inter-tidal habitats.					
<u>Protecting Landscapes</u>			35,000ha		
	49,000ha	50,000ha			

14. Support with grant aid additional local authorities to commence LANDMAP.				35,000ha	
15. Undertake audits of National Nature Reserves	58%	65.5%	78%	90%	Target depends on budget set by NAW
	15	20	25		100% (plus report)
	20	23(10)**	23	Completion of all local authorities	
				23	
					23

-
-
-

4.2. Better Health and Wellbeing

Mechanism	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
<i>Access Initiatives</i>					
16. Support PROW and other access work continuing shift towards networks linked to communities and public transport	a	a	a	a	a
17. Ensure additional PROW on Tir Gofal farms is maintained unobstructed					
<i>Health Initiatives</i>					
18. Promote schemes which promote health and walking including the British Heart Foundation Walking the Way to Health Initiative	344miles/ 554km	300miles/ 500km	231miles/ 350km	231miles/ 350km	Target depends on budget set by NAW 25
19. Support the maintenance and promotion of Wales' National Trails	—	15(10)**	15	20	
20. Implementation of CROW Act:					
Consultation/Appeals					a
Map Preparation	a		a	a	
Grant Aid infrastructure to support open access		a			
Manage Exclusion and Restriction Provisions			a		

		a	a		
		a	a		a
			a	a	a
		a		a	

4.3 Better Opportunities for Learning

Mechanism	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
21. Develop collaborative environmental education strategy for Wales, with the Environment Agency and Forestry Commission.	–	a	a	a	a
22. Press the case for every child in Wales to be able visit a national Nature Reserve whilst in full time education		a	a	a	a
23. Develop and upgrade interpretation and education facilities at our most visited National Nature Reserves, involving local communities in ‘selling the message’, and benefiting local tourism	–				
	2	5(4)**	5	5	5

4.4 Better, Stronger Economy

Mechanism	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
------------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------

<p><u>Sustainable Development</u></p> <p>24. Integrate Sustainable Development into CCW's Planning processes</p> <p>25. Develop advice to the Assembly on its strategy for the development of terrestrial and offshore renewable energy</p>	-	a	a	a	a
<p>26. Respond to casework to ensure development is sustainable</p> <p>27. Provide environmental expertise to ensure that the cross cutting sustainable development theme is applied in assessing projects seeking European structural funds.</p>	<p>Over 4,000 cases per year</p> <p>Continue to provide advice</p>				
<p><u>Economic Benefits of Conservation</u></p> <p>28. Promote development of Objective 1 projects integrating conservation with economic benefits (particularly tourism) and job creation</p>	<p>Seek to maximise use of CCW grant in aid to draw down EU funding</p>				

4.5 Better Simpler Government

Mechanism	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05

Developing People

29. Work towards Investors in People Standard

–

a

a

a

Green Issues

30. Review energy and water usage at offices

–

a

a

a

31. Work towards gaining ISO1401 standards at CCW offices

a

32. Green CCW fleet

–

a

a

a

a

Better use of Technology

33. Further develop IT infrastructure, ensuring compliance with Government's 2004 e-business target.

–

a

a

a

a

Efficiency

34. Develop and implement efficiency strategy

–

a

a

a

35. Develop and Implement a revised purchasing strategy, aiming to reduce running costs by £60K per annum thereafter.

a

a

a

a

a

a

a

a

ANNEX 2

CCW'S WORK AND THE ASSEMBLY'S

SCHEME FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Scheme for Sustainable Development objective	CCW Work	Targets
<p>The environment being cherished and protected,</p> <p>so that it remains healthy & biologically diverse, & can continue to support us all</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protecting wildlife and geological sites. 2. Implementing UK Biodiversity Action Plan in Wales 3. Administrating Tir Gofal agri-environment Scheme 4. Protecting landscapes including a partnership with national Parks and AONBs 	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6</p> <p>7, 8, 12, 13, 15</p> <p>9, 10, 11</p> <p>12</p> <p>14</p>
<p>A self-sustaining economy which responds to the environmental & social context of Wales, & responds to Sustainable Development opportunities</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Input to planning system to ensure developments are sustainable. 2. Promoting sustainable development within CCW and with our partners. 3. Greening the way we work 	<p>14, 26, 27</p> <p>16, 17, 20, 24, 25, 28</p> <p>30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35</p>
<p>Action to keep our communities strong & viable, and people healthier</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promoting access to the countryside. 2. Community Development Programme (eg Balchder Bro – Pride of Place initiative with WCVA, grant aid) 3. Transport Advisory Service 	<p>16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23</p>

<p>People being able to play a part in decisions that affect them</p>	<p>1. Development of Local biodiversity Action Plans</p> <p>2. Council meetings open to the public and peripatetic</p> <p>3. Promoting environmental understanding</p> <p>4. Investors in people</p>	<p>10</p> <p>21, 22, 23</p> <p>29</p>
<p>Recognising the needs of all parts of Wales</p>	<p>1. CCW delivering its services bilingually from a network of local offices across Wales.</p> <p>2. Access initiatives focusing on networks near population centres</p>	<p>16</p>
<p>Wales contributing to Sustainable Development at a global level as well as a local</p>	<p>1. Funding the work of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and its international conservation work.</p> <p>2. CCW staff providing expertise on conservation particularly to developing countries</p>	

ANNEX 3

Background Information (Summary of 2002/05 Corporate Plan)

				£'000s			
				2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Running Costs							
Baseline				15580	14185	14685	14685
Switch from programme baseline (1)					200	600	585
Total Running Costs				15580	14385	15285	15270

BUDGETS AND BIDS

Programme Costs					
B	Reserve Maintenance	1465	1665	1965	1980
C	Site Safeguard	2386	2836	3300	3720
C	Land agency			100	100
D	Interpretation	1017	1187	1350	1500
E	Scientific & Policy Support	1798	2098	2398	2498
E	SAC notification	142	300	0	0
E	Marine Monitoring		250	450	450
E	Terrestrial Monitoring		150	200	300
E	JNCC	642	658	659	682
J	Capital	1109	1560	1659	1509
K	Land purchase	400	400	600	800
FGH	Grants	3204	4224	4897	5024
R	Tir Gofal	8880	11880	14880	14880
T	Tir Cymen	4815	4440	3290	2320
	Total Programme Costs	25858	31648	35748	35763
	Total Baseline	41438	46033	51033	51033
Bids for Additional Resources					
Notification of European Wildlife Sites (SAC):					
Running Costs			1001		
Review of Consents:					
Running Costs		230	290	305	320
Programme Costs		185	285	285	285
Landscape Grants (AONB)			250	250	250
Total Bids		415	1826	840	855
Total Funding Sought:					
Running Costs		15810	15676	15590	15590
Programme Costs		26043	32183	36283	36298
Total		41853	47859	51873	51888

Review of Consents for 2001-02 not yet confirmed

Bids

Because of Foot and Mouth Disease, it has not been possible in 2001/02 to complete the notification of the European suite of protected wildlife sites, as this involved field work. A bid for •1million is made for 2002/03 to retain the fixed term staff and complete this exercise involving the notification of 43 Sites of Special Scientific Interest. A bid of circa •600k

each year is also made to consolidate into the baseline funding for the Review of Consents that will affect European sites, for which additional funding for 2001/02 has been sought from NAW by EA and CCW. This will involve CCW in a pivotal position, working in partnership with Environment Agency Wales (EAW) and other competent Authorities, providing advice and helping to review all consents (discharges, abstractions etc) on Natura 2000 sites to assess their impact on the features of these sites and recommending remedial action when necessary. Finally, a bid is made for •250K to strengthen our contribution to sustainable development in the landscape of Wales, including strengthening support to AONBs and Local Authorities engaged in *LANDMAP*. This will help us to achieve all Wales coverage of *LANDMAP* and integrate the component elements, helping to provide a unified national system. We will also seek to provide improved guidance for Local Authorities using *LANDMAP*. Our strengthened support of AONBs will help us to support them in protecting landscapes to the same standard as National Parks.