

# Cairngorms National Park Woodfuel Steering Group

## Minutes of Meeting

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2011, 2pm, CNPA Offices, Grantown on Spey

### Present:

Ian Ross (Chair), Chris Bremner (CNPA), Amanda Calvert (Highland Birchwoods), Ian Cowe (FCS), Penny Lawson (CNPA), Darren Robbins (Highland Birchwoods), Catriona Ross (Consultant), Jamie Williamson (ConFor), Will Boyd Wallis (CNPA).

### Apologies:

Neil Fraser (Scottish Enterprise), Jamie Farquhar (ConFor), Claire Glaister (Rural Development Initiatives), Roddy Matheson (Aberdeenshire Council), Malcolm Wield (FCS).

### 1. Welcome and apologies, introductions

New members of the group were welcomed.

Malcolm Wield (FCS) has indicated that he is happy for FCS to be represented by Ian Cowe for now.

### 2. Update on Implementation of Action Plan

#### Update on Forestry Commission Scotland Biomass Development – Ian Cowe

There are now less resources for biomass support within FCS, and Ian is the only remaining dedicated Biomass Development Officer in Scotland. CNPA are part-funding his post for this financial year, and in principle until March 2013 (tbc), so he will be focussing more of his work specifically on the CNP area in future as well as the rest of the Grampian Conservancy area. He deals with any FCS business which involves woodfuel, including facilitating related SRDP applications.

Key on-going work streams are;

- Woodfuel production/harvesting/processing demonstration events for small woodlands aimed at farmers and land managers, at least one event within CNP planned before Christmas.
- Identifying and pro-actively targeting business sectors who could benefit from woodfuel, with site visits to relevant installations within the sector. An event is planned for golf clubs in Deeside, and one will be organised for hoteliers in CNP with CNPA input.
- One to one support for businesses interested in woodfuel installations.

*Action: Availability of this service within CNP area now to be promoted by all partners.*

#### Update on Low Carbon Cairngorms website – Catriona Ross

The Low Carbon Cairngorms website was set up through the ClimATIC project and has had a reasonable amount of traffic over the last year, especially when the blog and podcasts were added. A review of the messages it puts across is now needed. Improvements could be made to the scope and functioning of the interactive directory/map, and we need to avoid duplication with HBW and FCS directories. It was agreed that the area covered by the directory should not be restricted to the CNP area. Suggestions included a practical guidance section on RHI and SRDP funding.

As Catriona's current contract ends in November we need to prioritise work on the site. Future plans will need to tie in with the new CNP website.

*Action: All to re-familiarise with LCC website and forward any suggestions for new material or reports of glitches to Catriona.*

*Action: CNPA to make arrangements for management of website beyond November*

### **Update from CNPA**

Penny is now co-ordinating delivery of the Action Plan and can offer support to partners whenever appropriate, as well as providing administration and a central contact point.

CNPA/Scottish Land and Estates are hosting a Land Management Forum meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> Sept with a woodland expansion theme. This is an opportunity to promote woodfuel and Ian will be there to promote his service to a large and wide-ranging audience.

A recent review of opportunities for renewable energy in the park commissioned from the Scottish Agricultural College to inform CNPA work on Supplementary Planning Guidance are strongly supportive of woodfuel and endorse many elements of the Action Plan.

CNPA will have direct supporting input into the actions planned in relation to events, promotion and training during the next 6 months.

CNPA is signposting woodfuel enquiries which are being received from businesses and individuals.

### **Update from Highland Birchwoods**

Successful Low Impact Extraction demonstration/training events were held recently.

Lots of enquiries have been received about RHI and training seminars have been set up with UHI.

Retailers might be a good sector to target to encourage uptake of RHI when the commercial phase is launched.

There have been reports of suppliers having problems sourcing wood.

These points should inform implementation of the Plan.

*Action: Amanda and Ian to ensure future training and demonstration events are co-ordinated and avoid duplication.*

### **Update from ConFor**

No specific points raised.

## **3. Re-prioritising of action plan and actions for next 6-12 months**

The Action Plan was reviewed focussing on actions in the 'high' priority category. Points covered are annotated on the attached table against each Output and Action.

*Action: Ian, Catriona and Penny to draft a statement with supporting evidence on the sustainability of woodfuel usage in CNP in relation to 2.10.1.2 of Action Plan.*

*Action: Catriona, Ian, Amanda and Penny to meet to agree priorities for updating of Low Carbon Cairngorms website during remainder of Catriona's contract.*

*Action: Amanda to update next meeting on Woodfuel Assn/ConFor schemes to develop woodfuel quality standards.*

*Action: Amanda, Ian and Catriona to gather and plan how to present (on LCC website?) best practice guidance on sustainable management of woodlands for woodfuel.*

*Action: Amanda/Catriona to publish article on LCC website about two local harvesting/processing contractors to highlight eggs of supply chain co-operation.*

*Action: Ian to produce recommendations on how to promote RHI opportunities through information and event(s), eg a 'surgery' event. Penny to co-ordinate delivery of these recommendations in CNP by FCS, HBW, CNPA and Energy Saving Trust*

## **4. General discussion**

### **RHI**

Date for launch of commercial phase is set for 30<sup>th</sup> Sept, but further delays are likely. However, this will be an important opportunity for promoting woodfuel and supporting businesses to benefit from RHI. It needs to be made clear in all information that RHI funding is not available to recipients of any other types of public funding.

### **Threat to woodfuel market from power companies using biomass**

This has been discussed widely within Highland Council. The general consensus was that the threat of large energy companies coming in to the north of Scotland had died down, partly due to the limited local supply of woodfuel in appropriate quantities and the realisation that the supply would not support developments of this scale. The biggest impact is the perceived potential threat to the local market, but the likelihood is that smaller scale local businesses will not be undermined. The priority is to reassure these businesses and restore confidence.

*Action: review opinion on perception changes in relation to market effects of energy companies at next meeting.*

### **Linking installers and suppliers**

We should encourage installers to form close links with suppliers. This would help both businesses and ensure security of supply at the installation stage for users, building confidence through the whole process. Security of supply is a key message to promote.

### **Update on Low Carbon Cairngorms website firewood users survey**

A summary of responses received to this online survey so far is attached. It was agreed that the survey should be continued and may receive more responses once the website has new material and attracts more traffic.

*Action: Penny to put summary of results so far on LCC website and monitor future responses.*

## **5. Operation of the Steering Group**

### **Remit of group**

It was agreed that now the Action Plan is in the implementation stage, the remit of the Steering Group should be to encourage sustained implementation of the Plan, monitor progress against targets and promote the outcomes.

*Action: CNPA to draft formal remit and present at next meeting.*

### **Frequency and location of meetings**

It was agreed that meetings should continue to be held every 6 months and that Grantown was an acceptable location, but that other locations would be considered if new members join the group.

### **Membership of the group**

Ian Ross will be stepping down as a Councillor next May, but is willing to continue his involvement with the Steering Group until then, and to suggest a suitable replacement representative from Highland Council.

*Action: All to consider possible candidates for a new Chairman at next meeting.*

Suggestions were made for representation from UHI, Perth and Kinross Council, and Scottish Land and Estates.

*Action: Chris to find contact at PKC, Amanda to invite Peter Dennis from UHI, CNPA to invite Andrew Nicol /Michael Bruce/Andrew Barbour to represent SLE.*

## **6. AOB**

None.

## **7. Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2012

## **Attachments**

Annotated summary Action Plan table

Firewood Users survey results summary