

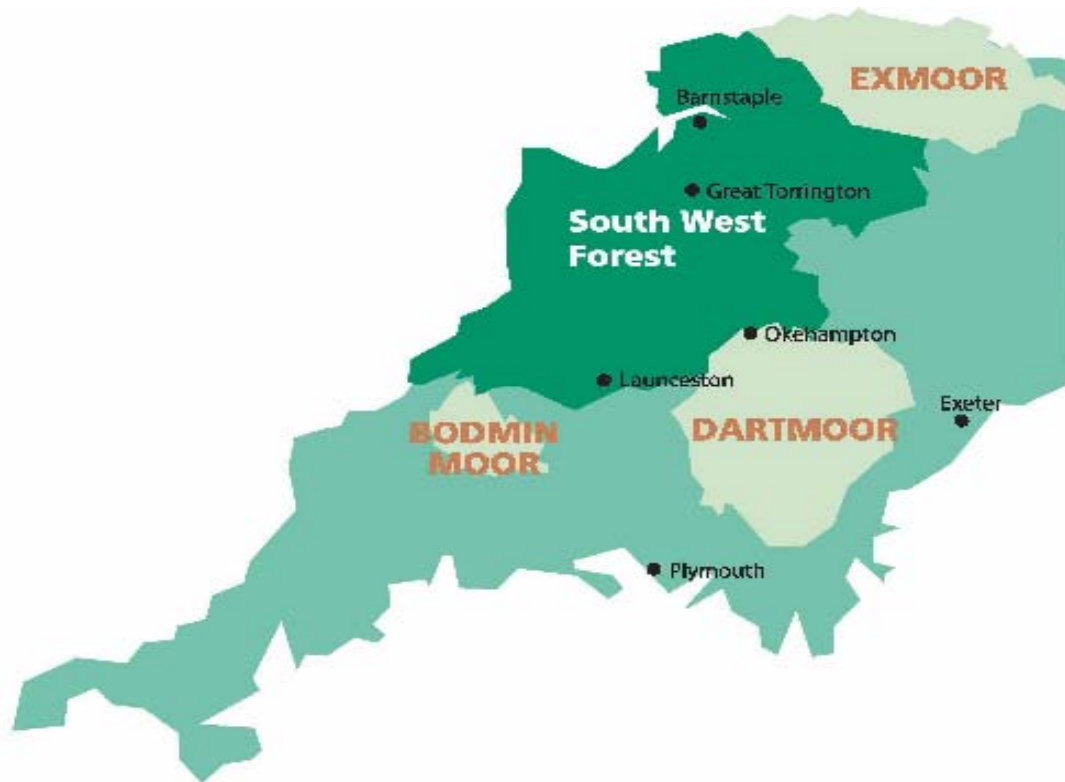
# ***SOUTH WEST FOREST PARTNERSHIP***

**INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO MANAGING CHANGE IN THE  
COUNTRYSIDE**

## **DELIVERY PLAN – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This document identifies delivery proposals for the next phase of the South West Forest. It sets out the initiative's background, rationale, aim, objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities, resources and administration. It is the intention that Partner organisations find the document useful when considering funding and collaboration.

**(July 2005 – June 2008)**



Jim Skelton  
South West Forest



## South West Forest - Delivery Plan 2005 - 2008

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### **Foreword**

I joined this project in April 2002 when I succeeded Rachel Thomas to become its second Chairman. It had seemed to me that Rachel had almost single-handedly crafted the South West Forest from the yellow clay of the underlying Culm and it was a responsibility I did not take lightly. I was attracted to the job by the vision Rachel had developed for the forest:

*“to demonstrate how integrated rural development forestry can be used to help to revitalise the rural economy and environment of an area for the benefit of local people, by focusing on rural land-based policies and activities. New woodland planting, woodland management and woodland product utilisation will act as a catalyst for the regeneration in the rural land-based sectors and communities to secure sustainable integrated social, economic and environmental benefits”*

It is interesting to observe the dynamic from the early stages of the project from its formation in 1997 to what it has become today. The broadly based Steering Group, which directed the progress of the forest, metamorphosed into a Partnership which owned and helped to fund its actions. The Steering Group had overseen the wide consultation process that led to the production of the South West Forest Development Plan 2001. The Partnership's Board, comprising the chief funding partners and private sector representation continues that steering.

A substantial number of the aims and targets articulated in that 2001 Plan are being met, but there are more targets left to hit. Furthermore, the effective working structures that are now in place leave the South West Forest well placed to deliver a wide range of national, regional and local strategies. Working down the scale it is clear to me that we can deliver parts of Defra's Rural Strategy 2004, elements of a whole host of regional strategies and the Countryside Agency's very focused Land Management Strategy for the Culm born out of the Land Management Initiative process.

I am pleased with progress since Jim Skelton became the Director, also in 2002 and the Board has welcomed the widening of the project's outputs to include delivery of additional social benefits such as Woodland Walking for Health and development of a Forest Schools programme. I am very much looking forward to seeing this exciting new plan put into practice.

*Ian Mercer, Chairman*

## South West Forest Delivery Plan 2005 - 2008

### **Context**

1. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has now released *Rural Strategy 2004*. This sets out how the Government plans to reform delivery to give a better deal for customers, the environment and the taxpayer. In responding to Lord Haskin's report on rural delivery, it picks up most of his recommendations. In her Foreword, Margaret Becket recognises that whilst some rural areas are economically thriving, others are lagging behind. The South West Forest was created because its area falls firmly into the latter category with most of it falling into the Culm Joint Character area. The impermeable nature of the underlying clays known as the "Culm Measures" gives rise to heavy, seasonally waterlogged soils over much of the area; an additional challenge is the smaller than average scale of farms in the area and the high average age of those farming the land. The South West Forest can continue to have an important role in helping to deliver the Government's agenda.
2. The Mid-Term Review of the Common Agricultural Policy has created new support arrangements for agriculture which will drive rural change at an even greater rate. This is overlaid by the capital ingress from the south east of the country which is seeing many farms in the south west sold to non-farmers. The land liquidity created by these factors means exciting opportunities to align land, capital and skills in a way that can deliver a more effective rural economy.
3. As a result there will be an increased number of farmers and landowners who need independent advice and good access to training to allow them to make informed decisions about change. The South West Forest's role in providing free advice and subsidised training for those choosing woodland creation or more active management of their woodlands will become more important. New woodland planting, woodland management and woodland product utilisation will act as a catalyst for regeneration in the rural land-based sectors and communities to secure sustainable and integrated, social, economic and environmental benefits.

### **South West Forest Achievements**

4. The South West Forest is an integrated rural development project operating in an area of 300,000 hectares of North Devon and North Cornwall. It was created in 1997 in response to the Rural White Paper challenge that a significant expansion of woodland would bring a range of economic and other benefits in addition to those traditionally associated with forestry, as well as the underlying needs of the South West Forest area as evidenced by the marginality of agricultural activity on the Culm during the early 1990's. Main outputs:-
  - Creation of nearly 3000 hectares of new woodland (6.5 million trees)
  - Advice on management of over 1000 ha of woodland
  - Levering in of around £5m in grants from the FC and Defra
  - Over 900 advisory visits (around 13% of agricultural holdings)
  - Over 300 monitoring visits

## South West Forest Delivery Plan 2005 - 2008

- Four annual Woodfairs and exhibits at more than 60 Agricultural shows
- More than 300 training courses and over 1000 beneficiaries
- Over 3000 school children involved in educational programme
- Over 50 schools engaged in forest education activities
- Creation of South West Forest Collaboration Group

### **South West Forest – Future Development**

5. From the outset, green tourism and recreation have been key ingredients of the South West Forest's vision of how it can have a positive impact on the rural economy. The South West Forest has been pleased to have had a significant role in the production of the *South West England and Forestry Strategic Economic Study*. This study was challenged to put values on the whole range of woodland products and services. It concludes that the annual value of all of these is around £600m per annum with the biggest proportion coming from informal woodland recreation and tourism. The South West Forest is keen to support ongoing tourism developments in line with SW Tourism's *Towards 2015* strategy document. This strategy majors on "experience" as the key word as we drive up the quality rather than number of visitors to the south west. The South West Forest plans to work with partners to develop eco-cabins that will offer tourists a "wilderness experience" which will fit well with several of the brand clusters identified in *Towards 2015*.
6. To continue its exciting work, the South West Forest Partnership must secure new funding for the period beyond June 2005. The challenge to find ongoing funding is modified by the re-alignment of the rural delivery organisations and processes announced in *Rural Strategy 2004*. The South West Forest is keen to work with others on its rural development ideas and aspires to flexible partnership working. In July 2004, the South West Forest Board concluded that the development model should change to allow a variety of programmes to operate under the South West Forest Partnership banner with discrete funding profiles and timelines. A number of benefits accrue from this more flexible approach. Firstly, it is easier for potential funders to identify work that is of direct interest to them. Secondly, it enables the South West Forest to join with others in partnership approaches to selected projects. Finally, it enables work on particular projects to be carried out on discrete timescales which fit with the timing of funding availability.
7. Eight programmes of work have been identified and four of these are new; most are supported by positive references in the Government's recently published *Rural Strategy 2004* document. The programmes are briefly described in the table below together with annual cost and potential funders. Each of these programmes has a discrete budget and funding profile which can be seen in Appendix 1 of the full Delivery Plan. A summary table showing the funding being sought from our partners and other organisations appears at the end of this Executive Summary (Table 1 – Summary of funding being sought to support annual Programmes 2005 – 2008). The identification of potential funders and funding sources has been carried out in many cases without reference to the organisations involved. This has been done to facilitate a dialogue with appropriate bodies and inclusion does not indicate that any commitment has been made.

## South West Forest Delivery Plan 2005 - 2008

<b>Existing Programmes</b>		
<b>Programme</b>	<b>Funders</b>	<b>Cost / year</b>
<i>Programme 1 - Managing Change</i> – free advisory and monitoring programme for farmers and landowners	FC, Obj 1 & RES	£60K
<i>Programme 2 - Capacity Development for Rural Enterprise</i> - subsidised training, best practice and networking events	Obj 1, VTS	£90K
<i>Programme 3 - Community and Education Programme</i> - a wide range of social programmes including Community Woodlands, Walking for health and Education	FC, Obj 1, SWRDA, HLF, BLF, FEI, Landfill Tax, Local Authorities	£90K
<i>Programme 4 - Annual Woodfair and Local Networking</i> - Formalised networking showcasing and promotion with the challenge of extending these benefits through the year	FC, Obj 1, Co Ag, SWRDA, HLF, Local Authorities	£95K
<b>New Programmes</b>		
<i>Programme 5 - Tourism Development using Eco-cabins for a "Wilderness Experience"</i> – based on experience and interpretation of the Natural World	Landfill Tax, Obj 1, DCC, SWRDA, Obj 2	£50K
<i>Programme 6 - Enhancing the Environment</i> – using biodiversity values to generate economic benefit and seeking re-investment in environment	Obj 1, CoAg, FC, RDS, EN, EA, HLF, Private Trusts	£35K
<i>Programme 7 - Managing the Wild Deer Resource</i> - mitigation of crop damage and RTA's and enhancing tourism, sporting and food values	Obj 1, RES, SWRDA	£45K
<i>Programme 8 - Climate Change and Carbon Offset</i> – promoting the role of woodlands as a carbon offset and exploring potential amelioration of negative climate effects	FC, EA, EN, CoAg, BLF	£55K

8. The relationship between the existing programmes, the new programmes and our work to secure outcomes across a wider area by working in partnership are represented in a diagram attached at Appendix I.

### ***The Regional View***

9. In addition to the eight programmes identified above for the South West Forest area, it is recognised that some programmes should be delivered regionally. The South West Forest is working with regional partners to improve the context in which the woodland industry operates. Project Director, Jim Skelton, had a key role in the production of the South West England Woodland and Forestry Strategic Economic Study published last year. He is also a member of the Steering Group of the South West Woodland Renaissance Partnership which was formed to deliver some of the actions recommended in that study across the whole of the region. The South West Woodland Renaissance Partnership has attracted funding from SWRDA

## **South West Forest Delivery Plan 2005 - 2008**

to prepare a detailed delivery plan of projects to be supported by their Rural Renaissance Programme. At present it seems likely that these will include:-

- A project to deliver more sustainable construction and increase the quantity of timber grown in the south west that is used locally in construction as a consequence.
- A project that will bring enhanced technology and added value to some of the region's timber processing facilities
- A training and apprenticeship programme led by Forest Enterprise that will offer a regional dimension to modern apprenticeships and bring new properly trained recruits to the industry.
- A wood energy project that will help with the slow but steady emergence of a wood heat market in the south west.

The South West Forest will offer its support to all of these projects, either as a member of the active partnership, or from its role on the SWWR Steering Group. It does not plan to duplicate these projects with similar work offering a local focus unless the logic for this is determined by the regional project.

### ***Strategic Alignment***

10. The work programmes proposed in this document have been measured against regional strategies and action plans. Linkages and references are identified with each programme in a spreadsheet at the end of this summary. (Table 2 – South West Forest Delivery Plan – Strategic Alignment). This shows a good fit with many of the regional strategies for several of the programmes and ensures the project continues to have regional significance.

### ***Project Cost***

11. Total project expenditure for all eight programmes comes out at around £520K per year which is defrayed by £80K per annum of private sector income including, we hope, an ongoing grant from Landfill Tax via SWEET (UK). This would represent a real increase in the net cost of the project of around £160K per annum on the current project programme though it should still be seen as good value at a cost of around £1.50/hectare across the South West Forest area. The modular approach allowing programmes to operate with discrete budgets and timelines is aimed at ensuring funders can more easily get value from their support.

### ***Future Funding***

12. This Delivery Plan will be circulated to potential funders as a mechanism for establishing where financial support will be given for delivery. This will help to determine priorities for future action and the viability of each of the proposed programmes. Once this interaction has taken place, a revised Delivery Plan and budget will be drawn up. It is hoped that funding can be attracted from the following:-
  - The Forestry Commission
  - South West of England Regional Development Agency
  - Defra
  - Countryside Agency (Integrated Agency)
  - English Nature (Integrated Agency)

## South West Forest Delivery Plan 2005 - 2008

- RDS (Integrated Agency)
- Environment Agency
- Objective 1
- Objective 2
- Vocational Training Scheme
- Rural Enterprise Scheme
- Relevant Local Authorities
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Big Lottery Fund
- Private Charitable Trusts
- Landfill Tax (via SWEET (UK))
- The Forest Education Initiative

A summary of the funding being sought from these organisations for individual programmes appears at the end of this Executive Summary (Table 1 – Summary of funding being sought to support Programmes in year 1)

### ***Environmental benefits***

13. It is expected that the environmental benefits from the South West Forest will be overwhelmingly positive, leading to an increase in, and greater diversity of, woodland-cover, increased woodland management and a greater diversity of woodland habitat. Land taken out of agriculture will lead to a reduction in fertiliser and pesticide use and local sourcing of products is an implicit aim of the project. We were closely involved with the Countryside Agency's preparation of a Land Management Strategy for the Culm area and support the use of its biodiversity to help boost the economy by selling the natural world to tourists.
14. Climate change is a key environmental challenge and new woodlands in the South West Forest will bring significant benefits through carbon sequestration. In addition to the mitigation of climate change via carbon storage, there are potential benefits from amelioration of flood events by targeted tree planting. This can include Wet Woodlands in vulnerable Environment Agency catchments and as part of sustainable drainage systems.

### ***Social benefits***

15. Social impacts are also expected to be extremely positive with enhanced community involvement in the development of community woodlands, an expanded training programme and local employment opportunities. Work in support of the South West Forest Collaboration Group will continue and this is making a real impact on local networking. The project has an important role to play in retaining a skilled workforce in land-based communities. Woodland creation allows new public access for local people and walking in woodland promotes mental and physical well-being.

### ***Economic benefits***

16. The economic effects of the range of programmes over the next three years are:-
  - to create and secure 8 jobs directly related to the project staff

## **South West Forest Delivery Plan 2005 - 2008**

- sub-contracts worth an average of £80K per annum
- leverage into the community of approximately £3 million as a result of Forestry Commission and DEFRA grants
- There are also the employment and output impacts on the forestry sector as a whole, from tree establishment and maintenance to harvesting and processing. Earlier research suggested that this could be as high as the creation/security of 350 jobs.

Expansion of tourist and recreational activities involving woodland will also have a direct and positive impact on farm and other rural businesses. The biggest potential impact is from the development of eco-cabins providing a “wilderness experience” for tourists which could create a wide range of new jobs in construction, maintenance, marketing and servicing.

### ***Management structure***

17. South West Forest is an independent partnership that has a two-tier management model that ensures the working ethos of the partnership is fulfilled in its governance. The financial and personnel administration of South West Forest is hosted by Devon County Council.

### ***Rural Delivery***

18. The South West Forest is well placed to continue to pilot new ideas and approaches as the government’s national pilot for rural development forestry . The need for more effective monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes from the project is recognised by all. The Forestry Commission is working with the Countryside Agency to put in place an effective evaluation template that can be used as a standard to measure the work of a wide range of woodland and other rural development initiatives.
19. The South West Forest and Forest Futures in Cumbria are working with the Forestry Commission’s consultants to help to develop the process and will be the first to be measured against it. The outcome of this evaluation is not expected until the new delivery plan is underway, but potential funders will take comfort from the knowledge that the South West Forest is at the vanguard of developing more effective benchmarking of rural delivery.
20. There is no shortage of excellent ideas for improving the rural scene in a wide range of new strategies. Defra has asked Government Offices to lead work in the regions to develop Rural Delivery Frameworks, involving a wide range of partners from delivery bodies and local authorities. This is about more than producing a document; the ability of this process to crystallise positive actions out of all the rhetoric makes it very exciting. The South West Forest is in the delivery business and in a modest but important way, we can do something about turning the fine words into better lives for our customers.

**South West Forest Delivery Plan 2005 - 2008**

**Table 1 - Summary of funding being sought to support annual Programmes 2005-2008**

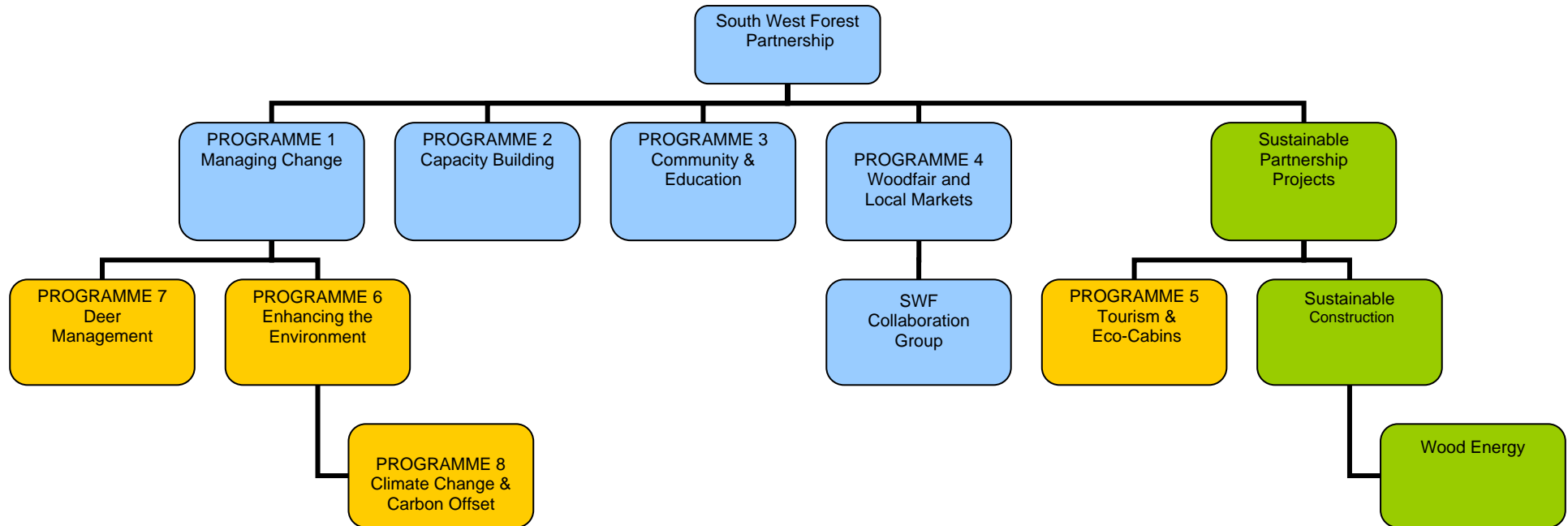
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Prog 1</b>	<b>Prog 2</b>	<b>Prog 3</b>	<b>Prog 4</b>	<b>Prog 5</b>	<b>Prog 6</b>	<b>Prog 7</b>	<b>Prog 8</b>
Objective 1 Grant	<b>61300</b>	12000	14000	10000	10000	3000	3300	9000	0
Vocational Training Scheme Grant	<b>48000</b>	0	48000	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rural Enterprise Scheme Grant	<b>20000</b>	2000	0	0	0	0	0	18000	0
Forestry Commission Grant	<b>72500</b>	40000	0	10000	7500	0	5000	0	10000
RDS (Integrated Agency)	<b>5000</b>	0	0	0	0	0	5000	0	0
Countryside Agency (Integrated Agency)	<b>15000</b>	0	0	0	5000	0	5000	0	5000
English Nature (Integrated Agency)	<b>10000</b>	0	0	0	0	0	5000	0	5000
Environment Agency Grant	<b>15000</b>	0	0	0	0	0	5000	0	10000
Devon County Council Grant	<b>25000</b>	2500	0	5000	5000	5000	0	2500	5000
Cornwall County Council Grant	<b>9000</b>	2250	0	2250	4500	0	0	0	0
North Devon District Council Grant	<b>4000</b>	1000	0	1000	2000	0	0	0	0
Torridge District Council Grant	<b>4000</b>	1000	0	1000	2000	0	0	0	0
West Devon Borough Council Grant	<b>2000</b>	1000	0	1000	0	0	0	0	0
SWRDA	<b>60000</b>	0	0	5000	20000	25000	0	10000	0
Heritage Lottery Fund	<b>27500</b>	0	0	20000	5000	0	2500	0	0
Big Lottery Fund	<b>20000</b>	0	0	15000	0	0	0	0	5000
Forest Education Initiative	<b>5000</b>	0	0	5000	0	0	0	0	0
Objective 2	<b>22000</b>	0	0	0	0	20000	0	2000	0
<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>425300</b>	<b>61750</b>	<b>62000</b>	<b>75250</b>	<b>61000</b>	<b>53000</b>	<b>30800</b>	<b>41500</b>	<b>40000</b>
<b>Private Sector Income</b>	<b>98000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>18,500</b>	<b>7,000</b>	<b>34,500</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>6,500</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>18,500</b>
<b>Private Sector Income %</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>46%</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>523300</b>	<b>62750</b>	<b>80500</b>	<b>82250</b>	<b>95500</b>	<b>61000</b>	<b>37300</b>	<b>45500</b>	<b>58500</b>

**South West Forest Delivery Plan 2005 - 2008**

**Table 2 South West Forest Delivery Plan - Strategic Alignment**

Strategy / Action Plan		Reference	SWF Programme							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Rural Strategy 2004 - Defra	paras 39, 69, 78, 82, 87 & 88	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
2	The Delivery Plan for Sustainable Farming and Food in the South West	para 4.1.2/4.3.1/4.4.1/4.4.3	X	X			X	X	X	
3	The Regional Strategy for the South West Environment 2004-2014	Implementation Plan p.8&9	X				X	X		X
4	SW Tourism's "Towards 2015"	Good fit with 5 of 10 brand clusters					X	X		
5	England Forestry Strategy	p.10-12, p.18-20 and p.22-26	X	X		X	X	X		
6	Forestry Commission's Regional Forestry Framework	2.4.1/2.4.2/2.4.5/2.5.1/2.5.3/2.6.1/2.6.3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
7	Culm Land Management Strategy - Countryside Agency	A.3/C.2/C.4/D.4/D.6/D.7/D.8/E.9/F.1/F.4	X	X	X	X	X	X		
8	"2020 Vision": Strategy for Sustainable Econ Regeneration in NW Devon	p.42 Sect 2 - Eco-lodges					X			
9	South West England Woodland and Forestry Strategic Economic Study	Recs: 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 & 23	X		X	X	X	X	X	
10	South West Biodiversity Implementation Plan	p18&19 Objs 1&3 / p30-32 Objs 1-4	X	X	X			X	X	
11	Devon Rural Strategy 2003 - Devon Strategic Partnership	Objectives: 1.3, 2.2, 3.1, 4.2 & 5.2	X	X				X		
12	The Energy Strategy for Cornwall	Land use/Training/Promotion/Climate	X	X						X
13	Integrated Regional Strategy for the South West	Cross cutting throughout	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
14	DCC Renewable Energy Strategy	Land use/Training/Promotion/Climate	X	X		X				X
15	Sustainable Timber Procurement Study for Devon - Ekos Consulting	pages 44-50 via SWWR Partnership				X				
16	The North Devon AONB Management Plan - Action Plan 2004-2010	LM1.1,1.3&1.5 / SU1.1 / IE1.1,1.2&1.11	X	X	X			X		
17	Keeping Woodland Alive - Woodland Trust Action Plan	Creation of NNW's and recreation	X		X			X	X	
18	Devon Biodiversity Action Plan	Actions to improve key habitats						X		
19	Cornwall Biodiversity Action Plan	Actions to improve key habitats						X		

# Appendix I – Overview of Programmes



- New programmes in gold
- Partnership working in green