

SOUTH WEST MULL AND IONA DEVELOPMENT

Timber assessment (August 2014)



WHAT

Community acquisition of Tiroran Forest for local benefit.

HOW HIE HELPED

Technical support fees: £14,000

- To commission a range of technical timber surveys and carry out a commercial tendering exercise.

Officer support:

- To make a strong application to the Scottish Land Fund.

OUTCOME

Group secured professional advice and information to make a commercial assessment of the asset and support to make applications for funding and to the National Forest Land Scheme.



BACKGROUND

South West Mull and Iona Development (SWMID) was established to carry out development planning for the local community. It formed in 2013 from a previous group to deliver priorities identified in the Community Plan. The acquisition of Tioran Forest represents an opportunity to manage an asset for community benefit and the group decided to investigate purchase from the Forestry Commission through the National Forest Land Scheme (NFLS).

PROJECT DETAILS

The forest is mostly a conifer plantation and SWMID were keen to establish a viable business model to support the purchase and to ensure the operation was sustainable in the long term.

The required studies included:

- Completion of an interim revised forest plan
- Detailed tariffing exercise (survey) of the forest
- Options appraisal of available haulage routes
- Revaluation of the asset reflecting the recent harvesting of timber and windblow losses

The original plan to tender the commercial harvesting opportunity pre-acquisition was subsequently ruled out as the completed studies highlighted that significantly more community benefit could be obtained if the operation was managed by the organisation.

HIE'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROJECT

We worked with the group to help identify the work required and part-funded (58.3%) these tasks through a £14,000 grant. We also brought in the services of a business adviser to support the tendering preparations. Our support ensured that the community group was prepared and had the appropriate skills and knowledge to manage the forest successfully. It also provided the appropriate information to support successful loan and funding applications.

OUTCOMES

HIE support helped to:

- Increase the knowledge and skills of SWMID in overseeing the timber assessments and preparation for securing a commercial timber harvesting partner.
- Development of a robust business case and strong funding applications to support the acquisition of Tioran Forest.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact

E community.assets@hient.co.uk

W www.hie.co.uk

Contact

SW Mull and Iona Development

Morven Gibson

Local Development Officer

E morven@swmid.co.uk