
REPORT TO:	Overview and Scrutiny	AGENDA ITEM: 7
DATE OF MEETING:	17th September 2008	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	Director of Community Services	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	S Batchelor Ext. 5820	DOC:
SUBJECT: WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Rosliston Forestry Centre All	REF: TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 Members note the presentation on the Rosliston Forestry Centre partnership and Business Plan.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To provide members with an introduction to the Rosliston Forestry Centre, the partnership approach and the Business Plan that has been behind the Centres development over the past 10 years.

3.0 Detail

Background

- 3.1 The Rosliston Forestry Centre (RFC) is a successful partnership providing visitors with a wide range of rural experiences and activities. The partners (South Derbyshire District Council, Forestry Commission and The National Forest Company) acquired the site in 1993 and have supported development of the site since that time. A wide range of features and activities has now been established and the site is well used by regular and occasional visitors. The presence of Aurora Country Developments on-site, in recent years, has ensured that the site operates smoothly and consistently and has enabled the successful introduction of a number of significant new features and attractions.
- 3.2 In 1998 the Council authorised the establishment of the Rosliston Forestry Centre Executive to consider the options available for the future management of the Forestry Centre site. The Executive consisted of the Chair of the Leisure Services Committee, now vice Chair of Housing and Community Services Committee, the Regional Manager of the Forestry Commission and the Chief Executive of The National Forest Company.
- 3.2 The Executive considered the options available for the future of the site and concluded that seeking a private sector partner to operate the facility and bring investment on to the site would be the most appropriate option. Expressions of

interest were sought and from a shortlist of five companies/individuals Aurora Country Developments Ltd were asked to submit a formal business plan.

- 3.2 At the Leisure Services Committee of 24 June 1999 Aurora Country Developments Ltd were awarded an initial contract to manage Rosliston Forestry Centre. The basis of the contract was to develop the visitor base of the Centre and develop its long-term sustainability. Following the successful development of the Centre under the management of Aurora Country Development the Executive agreed to award Aurora a long term contract in line with a Business Plan which would be financially supported by the District Council and Forestry Commission.

Developments

- 3.3 Over the past ten years the Centre has been subject to significant development. Prior to 1998 the Centre was primarily used by walkers, many of which were exercising dogs and was struggling to meet the aspirations of the National Forests first visitor centre. Since then the Centre has been developed as the Forest Physical activity centre with annual attendances increasing from 20,000 to 190,000 (2007/8). The Centre in 1998 had no site management and a number of failing businesses. It now has established site managers and currently 3 businesses are firmly established. Further information on this development will be presented at committee.

Vision and Strategy

- 3.4 In March 2005 a 5 year Vision and Strategy was adopted by the partners. This Vision/Strategic Plan has been achieved already and a new Vision is currently being developed.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Business Plan for the Centre will be provided as part of the presentation at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 The Rosliston Forestry Centre makes a significant contribution to the Councils Corporate Plan, particularly in the areas of Safe and Healthier, You at the Centre, Prosperity for All and Rural South Derbyshire. It has also received significant funding from Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership and East Midlands Development Agency which has ensured a regional profile for the District.

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 The Forestry Centre has developed into one of the districts biggest busiest and most well used community/leisure/visitor facility. Significant numbers of local people and tourists use the Centre on a regular basis as a venue for exercise, play and holiday.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 A full review of the Centre will be provided at the Committee meeting.

8.0 Background Papers

- 8.1 None.