

# **LONRIGG OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

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**Don Environmental and Acres**

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## Introduction

The following management options have been taken from those raised during the community consultation event held in December 2018 along with information gathered during a site survey of the forest.

The site survey report and consultation report should be referred to for more information.

The strengths, weaknesses and threats have been listed for each option.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS	THREATS	WEAKNESSES	STRENGTHS
<p><b>Commercial extraction and restocking</b></p> <p><i>Please refer to the site survey report for more details</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in grant support for forestry</li> <li>• Pests and disease</li> <li>• Windblow</li> <li>• Fire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial harvesting would be challenging. There are parts of the woodland with significant windblow, and areas of boggy ground</li> <li>• Access is currently difficult for extraction (unsuitability of the road, power lines etc.)</li> <li>• High % of windblow in pine – cost operation to manage</li> <li>• Soils – runoff/siltation from harvesting and extraction operations – potential impact on Sunart SSSI</li> <li>• Uniformity of crop – species and age class</li> <li>• Cost of restocking following any commercial harvesting</li> <li>• Cost of deer fencing prior to restocking</li> <li>• Impact of harvesting on other uses of the woodland</li> <li>• Current capacity of the community to produce a forest management plan and carry out management operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in grant support for forestry</li> <li>• There are some productive areas which could be harvested to generate income.</li> <li>• Potential to diversify species mix and age classes when restocking felled areas</li> <li>• Potential to produce timber for local use – rough sawn and woodfuel</li> </ul>

*The following options were explored with the community at the Community Consultation event. Please refer to the Consultation report for more information.*

<p><b>Education/skill development</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There appears to be little interest from the school in developing rural skills in the area.</li> <li>• Question raised - whether there are enough people in the area to justify this development and does the community need to own a forest to enable this to happen.</li> <li>• Using the forest for Forest Schools would require transport to the woodland and there are woodlands within walking distance to the village that could be used.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Popular with the community.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Woodlots and wood crofts</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pests and disease</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new access would need to be created to the forest to avoid the use of Longrigg road for extraction.</li> <li>• Access routes within the forest would need to be created.</li> <li>• Significant wind blow would need to be removed to make this a viable option.</li> <li>• We did not pick up any interest in the community for this option</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expertise available locally to develop woodlots and wood crofts</li> </ul>
<p><b>Keeping pigs, bees, cattle and sheep</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The keeping of stock would require significant extraction to create appropriate areas.</li> <li>• Stock facilities are already catered for with local crofts.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Forest farming and gardening</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forest farming and gardening – as above</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Wildlife/biodiversity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in grant support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In its current state the forest has low biodiversity value. Would require felling and replanting, a complete restructure, to increase biodiversity. The area already has more biodiverse woodlands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in grant support</li> <li>• Expertise available locally</li> <li>• A lot of local interest - improving biodiversity for wildlife</li> <li>• Potential to link with other local woodland creating habitat networks. Some new woodland creation has already taken place this could easily be linked</li> <li>• Longrigg is within the strategic fenced area within the North Sunart Woodland Group Management Plan. This means that the new owner of Longrigg could become a member.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community space</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current state – windblow</li> <li>• No access</li> <li>• Initial conflicts between commercial management and community access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main interest is having some form of outdoor space in a woodland setting. The provision of an indoor meeting training venue was also mentioned. A key constraint of developing a community space in the forest is the location – people would need to walk or take a car to access the space, and there are woodlands closer to the village that could be developed for this use.</li> <li>• The woodland would also need to be generating income to manage the facility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An opportunity to develop a community forest for future generations that meets many of the communities aspirations</li> </ul>

<p><b>Business opportunity 1</b></p> <p><b>Wood fuel</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Conflict with other current suppliers</li> <li>• Changes in legislation (increasing costs for production)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern over use of Longrigg road for getting logs out, and how accessible the wood is and cost effective to get the logs out.</li> <li>• Also, a question was raised as to whether there are the skills/interest in the area to manage a wood fuel business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consultation has shown that the majority do use wood as a form of heating. It was seen as a sustainable employment opportunity, and a main use of the forest, reducing transport costs.</li> <li>• The only local firewood supplier has recently retired.</li> <li>• An opportunity for long term local supply of firewood</li> <li>• An opportunity to develop other future schemes e.g. district heating, kiln drying for timber/firewood</li> <li>• An opportunity to encourage more of the local community to move from fossil fuels and open fires to a more sustainable resource.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Business opportunity 2</b></p> <p><b>Wood chip for cattle bedding</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of funding for capital cost of equipment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of animals requiring wood chip bedding locally would not sustain this</li> <li>• Commercial activity would bring more traffic to Longrigg Road</li> <li>• Not currently an accepted form of bedding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This could be part of a basket of products</li> <li>• Local contractors available to produce chip</li> </ul>
<p><b>Business opportunity 3</b></p> <p><b>Tree nursery</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of funding for capital cost for set up</li> <li>• Pests and diseases</li> <li>• Changes in plant health regulations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern was raised over cost of fencing to exclude deer and whether it would be sustainable.</li> <li>• The area required to set up a tree nursery is small, however it is questionable whether the ground in the forest is good enough to grow the variety of trees required.</li> <li>• It is also unclear, without further investigation, whether there would be sufficient local demand for trees to ensure financial viability of a tree nursery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This was seen as a good idea for growing trees with local provenance and creating jobs</li> </ul>

<b>Business opportunity 4</b> <b>A) Bothy/ camping pods</b>		<p>It was felt that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bothy/camping pods were not necessarily fitting with visitor demographic</li> <li>• There is a limited market</li> <li>• Difficulty in managing a remote facility</li> <li>• Already pods/bothies in the area. Potential conflict with established businesses.</li> </ul>	
<b>B) Dog walking/ mountain biking/ walking and cycling as part of a wider network</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dog walking is an activity that people like to do close to where they live. There is already a good walking resource close to the village. New walking and mountain biking routes would have to be created within the forest. These would have to be managed along with the current access resource. Insurance for mountain biking routes was raised.</li> </ul>	
<b>Business opportunity 5</b> <b>Timber milling</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were concerns raised over large lorries using Longrigg road.</li> <li>• The main timber in the forest that could be milled is spruce. Scottish spruce is not in demand as a building material. Market analysis would need to be carried out to assess the market for fencing materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This was seen as a source of employment locally</li> <li>• Limited number of existing local mills</li> </ul>
<b>Business opportunity 6</b> <b>Furniture making</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main timbers used for furniture making are not available in the forest. If there was interest in setting up a furniture making business it should perhaps be located in the village where services are already available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This was seen as a good opportunity for employment, particularly for young people</li> </ul>