

David Russell

From: Meakin, Brent [brent.meakin@forestry.gsi.gov.uk]
Sent: 19 May 2008 16:45
To: David Russell; Meakin, Brent
Cc: John Brinkins; Robert Hunter; Mike Batley; Allan Fail; Brian Cairns; Tarwinska, Rena; Thompson, Jeremy
Subject: RE:

David I have your e-mail. There are a number of points you wanted me to address and to be sure to give a consistent message I have arranged some meetings this week to pick up on these points and in particular get updates on the toilets that have proved to be a quite complex job, with the focus of effort going on the completion certificate.

I have been asked to provide briefing through our communications team for the Minister to produce a reply to Cathie Craigie MSP in response to the meeting we all attended in April. It would be common practice for me to wait until I have been copied in to the Ministers reply before I comment on some of the issues you have raised below as they are common with those I have been asked for briefing on. I will address those that I can following meetings this week.

Brent

Brent Meakin,
 Forest District Manager,
 Scottish Lowland Forest District,
 Forestry Commission Scotland,
 Braidwood House,
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 Carluke
 ML8 5NE
 Telephone: 01555 660190
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From: David Russell [mailto:nicolai.uk@██████████]
Sent: 18 May 2008 19:06
To: 'Meakin, Brent'
Cc: 'John Brinkins'; 'Robert Hunter'; 'Mike Batley'; 'Allan Fail'; 'Brian Cairns'
Subject: RE:

Hi Brent,

Did you get the email I sent you below?

I look forward to hearing from you,

Regards,

David Russell
 Chairman
 Carron Valley Development Group
 Tel: ██████████

-----Original Message-----

From: David Russell [mailto:nicolai.uk@██████████]
Sent: 11 May 2008 21:42
To: 'Meakin, Brent'
Cc: 'John Brinkins'; 'Robert Hunter'; 'Mike Batley'; 'Allan Fail'; 'Brian Cairns'

Subject:

Brent,

Following last weeks CVP meeting Jamie and Richard gave CVDG an overview on the current state of play regarding various outstanding issues and in particular, the latest news on the Development Plan. Several people highlighted their deep concerns at the lack of information and updates and when we do hear something from FCS the signals are contradictory and confusing. Because of this people feel like the process is taking far more time than is necessary. I don't want to rake over old issues but I've been asked to write to you for clarification so I'm hoping you will quickly be able to help me allay the following concerns:

Development Plan

The message CVDG took from the meeting was that the document Rena is currently writing would comprise a summary of (potential?) Partnership objectives limited to perhaps 4 or 5 pages? I think the term used was: "a broad brush approach..." Firstly, this sounds fine however, the previous PID submitted some 12 months ago contained explicit objectives and yet (and I paraphrase FESMB position at the time) the PID submission was considered to be inadequate. We therefore assumed your Development Plan would require more and not less information than the Partnerships existing Project Plan? Secondly, the PID system, and approvals, had been held out as a pre requisite to any projects continued progress. So, are the CVP sitting completely outside this system now? Lastly, if this the case, why is it that after two years of delays is such a simple document taking so long to draft, be circulated for discussion and approved?

You had undertaken to provide regular updates on the contents of the plan so for the avoidance of any doubt can you please clarify for the Partnership exactly what you are working on at the moment and what the output will be at the end of May. Can you also confirm if FESMB give broad approval to the type of "broad brush plan" you have suggested and what process or processes will be required thereafter to deliver detailed projects.

Business Models

You mentioned these but nobody is really clear on what was meant by this in relation to the Development Plan and the development of any constituent packages. Can you expand on your thinking here please?

Toilets

Hugh Insley gave an assurance 8 months ago that this long running saga would come to a close by Easter. To be frank, we didn't think he'd have the remotest intention of allowing the work to take even that long - on the contrary... This is a small project and despite FCS employing the additional services of Bell Ingram we are now 2 months past Hugh's self imposed deadline; Jeremy appears to be off the scene; there are a number of critical site and design issues outstanding and neither yourself nor Rena could provide a schedule for completion. This is now damaging the credibility of everyone connected with Carron Valley and we get asked about the situation endlessly so we've put a holding statement on the website.

The sentiment I have been instructed to impart is that this was not our problem to resolve, that we sacrificed £20k of cash which should have been going into trail development and that CVDG and the wider Partnership has been shortchanged by the outcome in terms of speed of delivery and the quality of the end result. Setting these issues aside, Summer is now all but upon us and I'm sure you will agree there is a pressing imperative to see this finished within the next few weeks.

The ramp area remains a real concern for us - particularly with regard to the type of construction and the interface between the ramp and the bike wash (i.e. pedestrians / disabled users and riders) Even if there is no statutory obligation to resolve what is currently in place we feel that bikes should be completely segregated from the ramp area / toilets and there shouldn't be a soft embankment which by its very nature will be abused and eroded by people walking / riding and shortcutting on and off it. One option would be to instruct the builders to fabricate a timber ramp with a balustrade and return the balustrade thro 90 degrees at the West end of the building. The bike wash would then be separate and would require a separate ramp. Could we meet on site with Bell Ingram and someone from the planning Dept and get this sorted? If we fail to act on this now it will become a source of friction amongst forest users in future.

Associated works

Again, there are several issues such as felling and brashing, ponds, entrance area landscaping, deer larder area landscaping and the roads which were all part of the same project / package of improvements. There is also some localised wind blow which is fairly minor in the overall scheme of things but is making the place look even more dilapidated. These have all been left incomplete for over 3 months and the entire entrance area has a half built look about it. Again, we feel this is reflecting badly not only on FCS but on all the partners and that had the shoe been on the other foot then FCS would quite rightly have expected a high standard and timely completion of all works by CVDG. I don't think it is asking much of FCS to throw a bit of concentrated resource at this and sort it all quickly and it would go a long way to building bridges if you did. If you don't feel this is achievable then can you at least share the problems with the CVP and let us work together to sort it all out?

Catering

Once a bidder is selected and on site there will be an opportunity to reclaim rent from the tenant, probably on a sliding scale over time. CVDG would like you to confirm that this income stream will be ring fenced specifically for the maintenance of future trails / facilities that are developed as a result of projects that are

agreed by CVP.

Finally, can you share your thoughts on how you propose we manage the future liability at Carron Valley? Clearly FCS will maintain and therefore be liable for all existing facilities, but how do you see the process working for MTB trail constructed by the CVP?

I look forward to your thoughts on these matters

David Russell

Chairman
Carron Valley Development Group
Tel: [REDACTED]

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