

SH ref	District	Site	Issue category	FSC ref	Positive / Negative	Issue summary	Woodmark response
Consultation from S3 2014							
4	BAU 6	Kilcooley Abbey, Co. Tipperary	Sales of Coillte assets & stakeholder consultation	Policy of Excision, 4.4, 4.5	Negative	<p>Complaint with regard to the recent sale of the Coillte lease on 950 acres of forest lands at Kilcooley Abbey, Thurles, County Tipperary, Ireland. Of particular concern to the local community is the likely loss of the forestry land as an amenity to the local community. The community of the Slieveardagh region was actively engaged with Coillte's local contacts and recreation staff on developing walking/ cycling trails in the forest at the time of the sale. This sale without community consultation would be disgraceful at any time- but is even more egregious at a time when the community had made contact with Coillte on the prospect of it taking a part in a proposal to secure the entire Kilcooley Abbey estate lands for forestry and public use. Despite the community's approach- Coillte had not even the courtesy to respond to the contacts (although it was known they received them)- rather the company apparently hastened the sale of the forestry, thereby both dishonoured the spirit and clearly breaking the letter of the FSC protocols by not consulting with</p>	<p>An initial meeting was held with the Coillte staff responsible for land sales and with Coillte's Consultation Liaison Manager on the 10th June in Newtown Mount Kennedy to review the sales file for Kilcooley abbey and Coillte consultation policy and procedures and to interview the staff. The 'Coillte Consultation Policy' outlines how Coillte engages with stakeholders and disseminates information to the wider public, and makes reference to Coillte's practice of selling, leasing and developing a limited portion of it's land for purposes other than forestry, and also refers to it's Excision Policy in relation to removing land for the scope of certification. Another document; 'Coillte Property Sales/Leases and Development Consultation Policy' provides details of procedures to be used for consultation in a variety of scenarios including "large areas (non Coillte development)", which gives a two stage process and states that "when conclusive negotiations are entered into, the Region Property officer will contact the principal committee members of the local interest groups to notify them of the possibility of a sale, inform them a full consultation process will take place; and provide contact details for</p>

					<p>the community.</p> <p>As one of the parties consulted by Coillte's in March 2010 when a sale of the lands had been discussed previously- I do not accept that this single very brief meeting of that time meet the condition of the FSC scheme in terms of the sale in late 2013- three and a half years later. In any case that process was in itself a sham of so-called consultation. At that meeting the Coillte representatives did politely inform us of the intention of the Company to sell- but please note there was no consultation involved. It was a cordial meeting with information being provided to us. We were not being asked for our view- although we offered our disagreement, and we were told the deal was effectively done! This I regard, in itself, as a contravention of the FSC code. That its essence was repeated in 2013 is proof of the lack of commitment to the FSC protocol.</p>	<p>appropriate people in Coillte and in the purchasing company. In Stage 2, a consultation process appropriate to the planned development will be agreed between the purchaser and Coillte. Coillte's preference is for public information days, in addition to consultation with adjoining landowners on an individual basis". A new (draft) 'Coillte Forest and Coillte Enterprise Consultation Protocol' combines all the pre-existing and revised policies into a single document, and outlines the strategies and consultation processes for two operating divisions of Coillte, including Coillte Forest and Coillte Enterprise (CE identifies new business opportunities and extracts value from the Coillte groups' broad asset base, and is comprised of land and sales development, telecommunications infrastructure and renewable energy). The new draft document outlines the policy and consultation and public engagement framework for forest management planning, forest operations, social & environmental panels, land sales and development. Table 2: 'Consultation for Property Sales Categories' classifies the various sales options according to criteria including the size of the sale. Kilcooley Abbey would be classified as "Large property Land Sale" and would therefore be required to have standard consultation plus, open day or evening may be held, 2 national newspaper advertisements and local paper</p>
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								advertisements. Table 1 outlines the consultation process in steps from 1 to 5.
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						<p>A summary of the consultation with the complainant was provided by Coillte. This began with a forest management plan consultation meeting on 8th June 2009 and a number of meetings on site and correspondence by email. Coillte highlighted the potential transfer of land in Kilcooley on the 27th November 2009. Coillte commenced local consultation with a public notice dated 7th March 2011 showing Coillte's intention to relinquish its lease over lands at Kilcooley to the freeholder, with an advert in the local newspaper on the 9th March. The Stakeholder Consultation record shows the consultation commenced on the 07/03/11 and was completed by 28/03/11 and included one-to-one consultation with a number (15) of individuals and groups, including the complainant, and states where posters were posted (4 locations) at forest entrances. A list of the sequence of events (from 29/11/13 to 18/02/14) relating to the complaint was provided by Coillte's Consultation Liaison Manager, with associated evidence (copies of emails), as well as a copy of the Coillte complaints procedure. This included a formal complaint from the complainant dated the 4th March 2014 reiterating a request that Coillte provide details of the name of the purchaser (and associated company directors if relevant), the price received, the date and costs of the Kilcooley wall repair study, the value of the standing timber.</p>
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A meeting was held between the Soil Association Woodmark lead auditor and the complainant at Kilkenny on the 12th June 2014, where the complainant maintained that Coillte had not followed their consultation procedure, and that the initial sale had fallen through and had therefore not reinitiated their consultation procedure with the new prospective purchaser. Mr Rice provided an emailed copy of a chronology of event (and details of Kilcooley Estate Contacts) which included a claim that the property was subsequently sold to a second purchaser in late 2013. A second meeting was requested with Coillte's sales team, which was held on the 12th June to re-examine the evidence. Following examination of Coillte's policies and practices, Coillte's current and draft policies were found to be compliant with the requirements of Criterion 4.4 and Indicators 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 and had followed their procedures and policies in relation to the sale of Kilcooley Abbey. There was no evidence that Coillte had sold to a second purchaser and in all the evidence showed that the sale, although protracted has been to the original purchaser.