

**RECORD OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE NEW SCOTTISH FORESTRY FORUM  
HELD IN THE BEST WESTERN EDINBURGH CAPITAL HOTEL ON FRIDAY 9  
FEBRUARY 2007**

**Present**

Bob McIntosh (Acting Chair, Director FC Scotland)  
Simon Hodge (FC Scotland)  
Ian Ross (Chair, Highland Regional Forum)  
Paul Ignatieff (Chair, South Scotland Regional Forum)  
Simon Rennie (Chair, Central Scotland Regional Forum)  
George McRobbie (Chair, Perth & Argyll Regional Forum)  
Priscilla Gordon-Duff (Chair, Grampian Regional Forum)  
Bob Stubbs (Highland Regional Forum)  
Bill Ritchie (Highland Regional Forum)  
John Kissock (Grampian Regional Forum)  
Sheila Clark (Perth & Argyll Regional Forum)  
Tim Hall (Central Scotland Regional Forum)  
Christopher Badenoch (South Scotland Regional Forum)  
Martin Craig (South Scotland Regional Forum)  
Iain Matheson (SEERAD)  
Cedric Wilkins (Scottish Forest Industries Cluster)  
Jon Hollingdale (Community Woodland Trust)  
Gordon Gray Stephens (Scottish Environment Link)  
Jamie Farquhar (ConFor)  
Bob McNeill (SEERAD)  
Peter Beattie (SNH on behalf of Alan Hampson)

**Also in Attendance**

Keith Wishart (FC Scotland, Conservator, Central Conservancy)  
Bob Dunsmore (FC Scotland, Conservator, Highland Conservancy)  
Syd House (FC Scotland, Conservator, Perth & Argyll Conservancy)  
John Dougan (FC Scotland, Conservator, South Scotland Conservancy)  
John Risby (FC Scotland, Conservator, Grampian Conservancy)  
James Ogilvie (FC Scotland)  
James Simpson (FC Scotland)  
James Pendlebury (FC Scotland)  
Gordon Patterson (FC Scotland)  
Hugh Clayden (FC Scotland)  
Dominic Driver (FC Scotland)  
Nicholas Shepherd (FC Scotland)  
Derek Nelson (FC Scotland)  
Brent Meakin (FC Scotland)  
Bruce Inglis (FC Scotland)  
John Cummings (FC Scotland)  
Liz Kirk (FC Scotland)

## **Apologies**

Calum MacDonald (Chair, FC Commissioner)  
Hugh Insley (Chief Executive, FE Scotland)  
Guy Wedderburn (Central Scotland Regional Forum)  
George Lawrie (NFU Scotland)  
Alan Hampson (Scottish Natural Heritage)  
Mike Wood (RSPB)  
Lucy Sumsion (Perth & Argyll Regional Forum)  
Ian McCall (Ramblers' Association Scotland)  
Ian Francis (Grampian Regional Forum)  
Alistair Speedie (The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities)  
James Hepburn-Scott (Forestry Timber Association)  
David Crichton (Confor)  
Sally Thomas (SEERAD)  
David Stewart (Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations)

### **1. Introduction**

Bob McIntosh, acting Chair in Calum MacDonald's absence, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He outlined the format and main purpose of the day's meeting, which was to discuss the implementation plan for the Scottish Forestry Strategy

### **2. Update on other issues**

Bob McIntosh introduced his paper and asked James Simpson to provide an update on the progress of Scotland's Rural Development Plan (SRDP) and Land Management Contracts. James informed the Forum that the new SRDP covering the period 2007-2013 would be submitted to the European Commission before the Scottish Parliament goes into recess for the pre-election period. A Statutory Instrument won't be laid in Parliament before September and it will be nearer the end of the year before payments can be made. It was pointed out that the UK was the only member state that wants voluntary modulation and that negotiations with the EU were at a delicate stage. Progress being made on the new grant arrangements would be regularly posted on the FCS website.

Forum Members commented on several issues. They felt that the timber market was being affected by a reduced number of felling licences currently coming forward, particularly in the Grampian area, and that this was becoming a serious issue. They were especially concerned about the situation regarding those Felling Licence applicants who had been unable to put forward their restocking requirements through the SFGS before it closed. Would they be left "high and dry"? Also discussed was the importance of climate change and flood prevention. Simon Hodge informed the Forum that FCS are working with the sector on a Climate Change Action Plan for forestry. Hugh Clayden was working on a paper on adaptation and sequestration issues and the role that forestry can play. Members were particularly concerned about water movement and flood prevention. Hugh pointed out that he was also working closely

with the Scottish Executive on this issue who were hoping to report by the end of March. It was also confirmed that soil erosion and land slip would feature in the Climate Change Action Plan.

Bob also highlighted the 'On the Ground' Project, which had been introduced with the aim of achieving a more integrated and co-ordinated approach within the ERAD family.

### **3. Scottish Forestry Strategy Implementation Plan**

Simon Hodge introduced the draft Scottish Forestry Strategy Implementation Plan 2007-08. He explained that the Plan would be for one year only, followed by a three-year Plan linked to the next Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). The one-year Plan would be an intermediate process with a view to establishing on the ground actions for the following three-year Plan. Simon thanked those Forum members who had assisted in drafting the Plan so far – it had been a complex process. He then outlined the 7 key themes in the Strategy and the regional perspectives.

Simon explained that the aim of the Forum's morning session was to look at the implementation of the Scottish Forestry Strategy as a whole. He was keen to hear views on the current draft and also ideas to take forward for the 3-year process.

### **4. Regional Break-out Groups (Morning session)**

The Forum split into the five Regional Break-out groups to discuss the following issues:

- The Implementation Plan process;
- The structure pitch and content of the plan;
- Looking ahead to the next 3-year plan.

#### **Plenary morning session**

#### **Group A - South Scotland - Timber and Environment Quality**

John Dougan presented the following comments from the discussions held by Group A.

#### **Process**

- Timescale too compressed.
- Sifting of existing actions – rather than development of new.
- How will we engage wider sector/public time not available to carry out consultation.

#### **Content/Structure**

- Danger in seeking to present a "balance" between themes.

- What needs to be done - some “Actions” don’t have a clear vector for change which links through to indicator.

### Looking Ahead

- Development of 3 year plan needs to be different.
- Resource implications (delivery mechanisms) need to be considered at an earlier stage.
- Early engagement with stakeholders essential in this (Permanent Structure?).
- Manage expectations.
- Monitoring/Audit process needs to be clearly understood.
- How will this plan interact with others.

### **Group B - Central - Climate Change and Community Development**

Keith Wishart presented the following comments from the discussions held by Group B.

### Implementation Plan Process

#### Strengths

- Closely linked to SFS – logical process ‘what needs to be done’.
- Process for 3 years must start now. (need time for full stakeholder engagement).
- One year = good opportunity to pilot, before developing the 3 year [capacity building in stakeholders].
- Stakeholder Reference Groups:
  - short term, some virtual (could be weakness);
  - need to ensure group comprises individuals that can commit to actions;
  - some lacked depth in representatives in specific areas – must push to get key representatives – NHS, SEN, Community Scotland etc;
  - need to identify the significant others.

#### Weaknesses

- Development is too rapid, as a result.
- Not as full stakeholder engagement as expediency (as result of SFS delays).
- Need to avoid ‘reviewing’ the SFS during this process.
- Need to broaden the Stakeholder Base (in Stakeholder Group).
- Difficult to get other stakeholders to commit to actions.

### Structure

- Pre-shaped by form of SFS.
- Logical – good.
- Queried ‘who are the audience for Implementation Plans’? Stakeholders involved in delivery – agreed that not for public consumption.

- Progress Indicators: should include the longer-term targets (vision?) against the 1 year to better see the direction of travel.
- Targets were removed from SFS:
  - Need to see “stretch” in actions;
  - Must be scope to include within Implementation Plan;
  - Present the aspiration alongside the three-year target.

### Pitch

- Foreword from First Minister? – get broader buy in, access SE.

### Content

- Majority of actions are FCS – too FCS-centric – risk then that SFS perceived as FC strategy rather than industry.
- Difficult to get stakeholders to commit to actions (“what’s in it for them”).

### Looking Ahead

- How to stimulate new actions, with new stakeholder groups:
  - develop the stakeholder groups further;
  - review representatives and organisations;
  - could play a key future role;
  - debate about whether formal v informal?
- Difficult for NGOs to engage in all themes / stakeholder reference groups.
- Important to maintain bi-laterals with key NGOs and other stakeholders.

### **Group C - Perth & Argyll - Business Development and Biodiversity**

Syd House presented the following comments from the discussions held by Group C.

### Process

- 1 year exercise too short (inevitably).
- Consultation: ok but;
  - enhance tools such as e-forums for future;
  - draw more stakeholders in earlier;
- Would welcome greater explanation and alignment of earlier RFF input to developing plan.
- Outcome acceptable but greater engagement preferred.

### Structure, Pitch and Content and Looking Ahead

- Edit existing introduction. Broadly well-targeted but needs Scottish policy level link and summary.
- Need to enter specific action points rather than generic actions (eg P&A woodfuel).
- Support the priorities setting context for annual actions.
- Suggest drawing up a more detailed Regional actions for regional audiences;
- Progress Indicators: not optimum for a 1year plan. There is a need to produce pro-tem indicators as periodic milestones of progress towards the bigger outcome. These could be introduced earlier in the process.
- Needs to be aligned for 3 year plan.
  - How do these action points relate to Progress Indicators?
- One additional aspect still needs to be addressed: how is feedback on achievement to be done?

### **Group D – Grampian - Access and Health, and Biodiversity**

John Risby presented the following comments from the discussions held by Group D.

#### Process

- Forum involved in SFS consultation and preparing action plan → implementation plan well thought through not too ambitious.
- Good only for 1 year benchmark given uncertainty of funding.
- How to involve more stakeholders – challenge.
- No complaints on involvement given large consultation on SFS.
- Keep tight but wider stakeholders communicated with annual report → spread widely.
- Policy group links to key stakeholders and into wider networks.

#### 3 Year

- Annual Report and revise if necessary so need tight consultation.
- Need to measure against baseline.
- Need measures/indicators we are sure we can measure in 3 years not too many aspirational things.

#### Structure

- Good - neat and concise.
- Well thought through.
- Will make annual reporting straightforward.
- Some indicators still need work, only include ones we can measure, eg business development how broadly are we talking about forestry sector for staff turn over, those enrolling on courses. Be positive in communication. Back to policy heads.
- Broadly Happy.

## Group E - Highland - Climate Change and Timber

Bob Dunsmore presented the following comments from the discussions held by Group E.

### Plan

- Good first draft re structure, content and pitch of the text.
- Link delivery to the indicators. (Prioritise ie key and subsidiary priorities).
- National priorities have varying significance at regional level - emphasise this.
- The plan is not aspirational ie needs to be deliverable or preparatory towards the 3 year delivery plan.
- One year Plan should indicate likely direction of priorities in the 3 year plan. Indicators will endure although not without review and additions into 3 years' plan.
- Further work needed now to develop the 1 year into the 3 year plan.
- Who is the audience: we need to define it.

Wide audience –

- providing quality information for interested people to support widening engagement in decision making.
  - also needs to act as an industry implementation plan.
- Forestry now has a much wider audience than 5 years ago: particularly re social and environmental issues.
  - Concern that it is too much of a tick box for state forest service to demonstrate what its doing.
  - Commitment is focused on FCS leadership, it needs to be widened and needs to read so.

### Leadership Key Issues

- Using FCS all the time loses clarity. Could specify where there is a clear FES target.
- Needs to be more than FC document. Feeling that it is not industry inclusive.
- To make the template accessible would be useful for the context to reference back to the SFS (use hierarchy diagram) but recognise that the plan is an operational document.
- Time period for indicators can be confusing – 1 year, 5 year etc, explain links etc causing this.
- Accountability – mechanism for monitoring and feedback.
- Encourage ambitious targets but accept not all will be delivered.
- Better prioritisation of targets would help urgency of delivery.
- The different emphasis in the context and targets sections between the regions was well received. We should build on regional distinctiveness.

- One year plan allowing us to test the process was well received.
- emphasise natural roll over into 3 year plan.
- Reflect long term nature of forestry ie Implementation must reflect forestry timescales.

## **12.25 Lunch break**

### **5. Regional Break-out Groups (Afternoon session)**

The Forum split into the five Regional Break-out groups to discuss:

- Key issues for the Regions;
- Two key themes per group.

#### **Plenary afternoon session**

##### **Group A - South Scotland - Timber and Environment Quality**

John Dougan presented the following comments from the discussions held by Group A.

###### Regional

- Two tier approach.
- A more comprehensive wide ranging Regional Implementation Plan to run in parallel with National plan. (Linkage, web link etc).

###### Environmental Quality

- Introduce and promote measures to support Historic and Design and Landscapes (LMC).

###### Timber

- Timber supply / Supply Chain - no action on bringing together private sector in an effective way which will support new investments in capacity.
- Capacity building needs to be undertaken so that SMEs are fully aware of opportunities within Axis 1 / SRDP (possible BD Theme?).

##### **Group B - Central - Climate Change and Community Development**

Keith Wishart presented the following comments from the discussions held by Group B.

###### Climate Change

- Actions focus on development of the baseline and plan formation.

- Probably the right approach – base future actions on sound research/baseline data.
- Clarify action on FHN/Climate Change ie influence of FHN on climate change rather than other way around.
- Pleased to see one social based action – ie Communications Strategy.
- This is a very important so as to present facts/baseline.
- Overall - support first stage actions provided the next 3 year moves forward to real actions/targets.
- Indicator for road transport, but no action.

### Regional Priorities

- Very powerful to have the regional actions.
- Easier to pull in broader stakeholders at the regional level (i.e trojan horse to get other organisations on board eg NHS – Community Health Partnerships etc).
- Frustration in having 1 year window only – don't see the rest that's going on, links to future work ie where action is first step on a direction.
- Actions listed appear sound – good links to national priorities.
- The action to publish Communications Strategy for region should be led by the RFF rather than (FCS/CSFT).

### Community Development

- Recognition that rural development plays out in the urban or 'significant' settlements.
- Support role of other explicit FCS programmes in theme eg WIAT – in itself huge range of actions, NFLS.

### Actions

#### PBDSS

- If Scottish Enterprise is to re-engage in “place”, need to involve them in this action too.
- Need to broaden out, not just LAs, but to LECs, Community Scotland, etc.

### Lifelong Learning/Education

- Scope for Scottish Executive Education Department to take lead on Actions?
- Demo Project on forestry's role in sustainable development (queried who is the audience?)
- For some actions: left asking why? However need to x-refer back to the SFS document.

### Indicators

Where are the qualitative indicators?

## **Group C - Perth & Argyll - Business Development and Biodiversity**

Syd House presented the following comments from the discussions held by Group C.

### Biodiversity - Content

- Very ambitious for 1 year
- Smarter targets: measurable.
- Sets the course for the future next 3 years – but the programme needs to be more action-orientated.
- Beware of over-commitment on topics generated by others without adequate resources eg Natura 2000 compliance on designated sites.
- How is the overlap with other topics eg eco-tourism to be dealt with? Some form of cross-reference would be useful.

### Perth & Argyll Implementation Plan

- Need to SMARTen up tourism priority.
- SMARTen up 1<sup>st</sup> action in woodfuel.
- Previous proposed action on growing quality hardwoods should be re-instated given the high importance placed on it by the RFF.
- General point: are we missing promoting additional regional actions (eg significant timber transport projects) by limiting the number of actions?
- Role for RFF? This could be in helping draw up and agree additional actions to be promoted locally.

### Business Development (Cross reference Themes 1 and 2)

- 1<sup>st</sup> para wording needs changing to include cross reference to the Timber Development Programme and should also change wording to emphasise 'passing baton' to others rather than the cluster being 'lost'.
- Should be specific reference to encouraging local value added via SMEs.
- Note: a number of programmes cut across themes of which various elements could be separately identified and re-distributed across other themes as appropriate.

## **Group D – Grampian - Access and Health, and Biodiversity**

John Risby presented the following comments from the discussions held by Group D.

### Access and Health

- Lot of other forms of recreation in rural areas but focus on urban.
- Making connections with NHS takes time but results very positive as we are already doing a lot towards their objectives.

- Role of Forest Districts to deliver → time and resources to deliver build partnership/culture change takes time.
- Move to FCS support role with others delivering for next 3 years.

### Biodiversity

- Report on opportunities to increase awareness key as people find it hard to engage bio-bureaucracy. Who is it aimed at? Practitioners ? This links into health and access and SNH work. Gap analysis.
- More emphasis on the biodiversity in existing forests and plantations something for 3 year plan via new forest plus use of FHN.
- Quite ambitious, depends a lot on SNH, eg: 3,000 ha into management.

### Grampian

- Be clear on why not reflecting all national themes. Needs introduction to regional section.

## **Group E - Highland - Climate Change and Timber**

Bob Dunsmore presented the following comments from the discussions held by Group E.

### Climate Change

- Additional clarity of terms used eg more explicit on planting targets.
- Adapting /silviculture - are we trialing new species, or reviewing old data.

### Transport

- contribution of road miles;
- Indicator but no action.
- Supply chain confidence re climate change – especially biomass availability to support/give confidence on investment decisions.
- Two subjects which could go ahead this year:
  - refine carbon sequestration modelling;
  - mechanism for carbon trading.
- What about monitoring of adaptation success?
- Flooding should be better linked to potential forestry benefits rather than purely forestry as a negative effect. Influence flooding issues through Advisory Committee. Avoid forestry being seen as villain.
- Link indicators to sections (linkage in presentation).
- Classification of impact of sequestration;
  - get our facts right;
  - impact on timber supply;
- Extreme climatic events – various agencies including national forest estate need to assess their environmental footprint – how are/will they reduce it and better promote it where it is happening.

- Review installation of wood energy plants annually.

### Communication

- Needs to go to a wide audience.
- Public have more knowledge than before.
- Promote forestry.

### Timber

- References to timber quality are too limited in the main text.
- Flow through to jobs ie quality timber is likely to attract higher quality jobs.
- Address higher value markets and innovation to conserve resource – linked to better use of poorer quality timber.
- Silviculture → good measure would be hectares thinned – how do we collect information.
- Improve and expand current measures of quality (red log/green logs).
- Classification of supply chain data to secure confidence and encourage market – collection and publishing of data.
- Innovative, non-traditional uses of timber to be supported.
- Identify circumstance where timber is critical - cross reference with other themes.
- Timber transport – extension of TT funds and broaden its remit. Strong case to be made re political argument.

### Highland

- Happy with edits.
- Include relative importance of national priorities.

### **End of plenary session**

## **6. Summary**

Bob McIntosh provided a brief summary of the issues raised from the morning and afternoon plenary sessions. He particularly mentioned:

- The general contentment with the process, and the 1 year plan to 3 year plan transition;
- The level of stakeholder involvement;
- The number and quality of indicators
- Reporting on progress – annually, and review
- Linkage between Plan and Strategy
- Buy-in from other bodies

It was agreed that all Forum members, and Regional Forum members, should have the opportunity to see the current draft Plan before the finalised version was published at the end of March.

## **7. Any other business**

Most members felt that it had been a very useful meeting – the group workshop system had worked well in generating constructive participation, and it had been very helpful to have the Strategy theme leaders present – but more time could have been allocated over the day. It was also agreed that the Hotel venue was a better location for the meeting than using the main boardroom at Silvan House.

Bob McIntosh thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 2.35pm. It was agreed that the next meeting should be held in the autumn when the Spending Review situation and the 3-year Plan process would be much clearer.