

3 February 2014

CORPORATE PLAN 2014-15

Purpose

1. To update the Board on progress with the FCE Corporate Plan for 2014-15 and to seek feedback on the outline draft.

Recommendations

2. That the Board notes the progress of development of the plan and gives comments on the outline draft (Annex A).

Background

3. This paper sets out the outline draft of the Forestry Commission England Corporate Plan for 2014-15. As last year, the plan is being drafted within a context of change and with regard to programmes such as the Woodland Policy Enabling Programme, Defra 'One Business' and the Plant Health and Biosecurity Taskforce.

Key features of the plan

4. The main focus of the plan will be forward-looking to 2014-15 but there will be brief recognition of key achievements from 2013-14 where we will be building on them.
 - 4.1. We will retain the same priorities of protect, improve and expand. These will be clearly linked to our Key Performance Indicators wherever possible. Some refinements and amendments to the KPIs will be included in the plan.
 - 4.2. We will strike a balance between the work of Forest Services and Forest Enterprise as well as demonstrating the strong working relationship and interdependence with Forest Research. While both FS and FE will be represented as showing how they meet the Commission priorities they will be shown as distinct. We will present programmes which showcase our expertise and deliver clear public benefits as well as our contribution to evidence based policy making and how science and evidence from Forest Research underpins FC activities.
 - 4.3. The plan maintains the heightened profile of tree health issues.
 - 4.4. Ministers have made decisions on EU Payments and concluded the Forestry Functions Review. These issues will need to be referenced including implications for re-casting FS in line with the review conclusions as an expert forestry body and impacts of EU payments arrangements on how FS is organised.
 - 4.5. Case studies have been commissioned and titles have been included in the outline draft. The format will aim to be simpler and more concise than the 2013-14 plan. The plan sets out FC priorities by section and will clearly demonstrate how we are

addressing each of our core priorities, key Ministerial priorities as well as wider Government contexts and drivers.

Timescales

5. The main stages and dates for the development of the plan are:

- January 2014 – EEB – Early Draft (inc. details of case-study commissions)
- February 2014 – ENC - Advanced draft to be cleared by correspondence.
- March 2014 – EEB – Advanced draft to clear for submission by correspondence.
- March 2014 – Near-final Corporate Plan Submission to Ministers.
- April 2014 – ENC – Final approval of plan

6. The FC Cross Border and Forest Research plans will be developed to a similar timescale.

Next Steps

7. Initial discussions are scheduled with the Design team to develop a design for the plan. The case studies and remaining text will now be worked into an advanced draft.

Resource implications

8. Development of the plan will be achieved through existing resources.

Risk Assessment

9. The Corporate Plan is the public facing document that sets out the priorities and resource allocation for the organisation as well as ensures alignment with wider government objectives and political support for ongoing programmes. It is therefore a key control in mitigating risks. The key elements of the plan have been shared with the Defra sponsorship team and close contact will be maintained throughout the process.

Equality Impact Assessment

10. An Equality Impact Assessment, if required, will be undertaken at an appropriate stage as the plan progresses.

Communications

11. A communications plan will be agreed prior to the launch of the Corporate Plan.

PK Khaira-Creswell
Head of Executive Office
January 2014

FCE Corporate Plan 2014-15

Contents page

Foreword

To follow

[insert photographs of Minister
and FC Chair]

The Way we Deliver

To follow.

[Insert 'Adopting New Media' case study]

Our priorities

Our priorities for the next year remain:

Protect

Woodlands and forests face unprecedented threats in the face of the dual challenges of climate change, which can weaken our existing trees thereby creating more suitable conditions for the expansion of pest populations, and an increase in international trade resulting in new pests and diseases arriving from overseas.

We will use methods such as regulation, planting for resilience and swift responses to tree disease outbreaks to protect England's trees, woodlands and forests from these increasing threats. This will result in both a resilient forestry sector and woodland resource.

Improve

Managing woodland is essential. It enables England's valuable woodland assets to continue to provide benefits such as jobs and economic activity, timber and woodfuel, clean water, biodiversity, and places for people to enjoy the outdoors.

We will continue to be at the heart of cross-sector partnership working. We will provide woodland owners and managers with the advice, incentives and market opportunities they need to work out what they want from their woods, plan how to make this happen and then put the plan into action.

Expand

Woodland creation can bring increased benefits such as jobs and economic activity, timber and woodfuel, clean water, biodiversity, and places for people to enjoy the outdoors.

We want to see a lot more woodland in England through an increase in the rate of woodland creation. We will work with others to encourage more trees to be planted where it suits local conditions.

Protect

We will:

Help the sector reduce the threat from diseases of forest trees

Our aim is that the negative impact of diseases of forest trees is no longer a significant threat to the value that our woods and forests provide to the economy, society and environment. We will ensure that our surveillance systems are functioning efficiently, and that we have the capacity and systems in place to respond quickly to those threats as well as assisting the sector in managing the threats effectively.

Key Indicators:

- Number of tree pests and diseases established in England in last ten years.

Key Actions:

- Survey, monitor and respond to key diseases, including Chalara dieback of ash; *Phytophthora ramorum*, Oak Processionary Moth; Dothistroma needle blight; Acute Oak Decline, sweet chestnut blight; and Plane Wilt.
- Reprioritisation of resources to respond to any new outbreaks such as Emerald ash borer.
- Participate in Defra network reform of governance arrangements for plant health.

Regulate to protect the woodland resource

Our aim is for there to be no net loss of woodland. We want to see an increasing area of woodland supported by management plans rather than felling licences, with no net loss of environmental value from existing or newly planted woodlands. Woodland should be converted to other land uses only in accordance with policy such as the National Planning Policy Framework and, where necessary, after consideration of an environmental statement.

Indicators:

- Percentage of known tree felling carried out with Forestry Commission approval
- Area of felling licences issued in the period (total and change over time)

Key Actions:

- Work with Department of Communities and Local Government on how the planning system operates for woodland so that economic growth is supported and woodlands protected.
- Implement any changes required by the red tape challenge.
- Work with Department of Energy and Climate Change to ensure that **timber and woodfuel procurement standards enable growth in domestic industries while protecting woodland.**

[Insert 'Rigorous Protection of Ancient Woodland' case study]

Work with the sector to manage the impacts of deer, grey squirrels and invasive species

Our aim is for deer, grey squirrel and invasive species populations and/or their impacts to be moving towards levels that do not significantly reduce England's woodlands' economic, social and environmental value.

We want to see landowners collaborating to manage deer, grey squirrels and invasive species populations and impacts.

Key Indicators:

- Percentage of woodland Sites of Special Scientific Interest (by land area) in target condition.

Key Actions:

- Further develop the effectiveness of our approach to enabling the sector to manage sustainable populations of deer.
- Implement refreshed grey squirrels policy.
- Raise staff and sector awareness and training on new wildlife and invasive non-native species regulations.

[Insert Deer Initiative case study]

Work with the sector to increase the ecological resilience of woodlands and forests

Our aim is for there to be greater biological and structural diversity in England's woodlands, with better connections between wooded and other habitats. We want to see professional advice, regulation, grants, and management plans promoting this diversity.

We want trees as a component in green infrastructure to play an increasing role in urban adaptation and ecological resilience. We want to see contingency plans in place for, and forest infrastructure better able to cope with, extreme weather and other emergency events.

Key Indicators:

- Measure of woodland resilience to climate change based on the size and spatial configuration of woodland patches within the landscape.

Key Actions:

- Communication with the sector to develop knowledge and understanding of the need for a wider range of species, restructuring and ecological adaptation.
- Work with the sector to start a planting stock assurance scheme.
- Review of Forestry Commission Adaptation Reporting Power.
- Bed in our approach to contingency planning for extreme events.
- Enable the sector to use woodland for urban adaptation and green infrastructure.

[Insert 'Planting for Resilience' case study]

Public Forest Estate

The Public Forest Estate already makes a significant contribution to the environmental benefits derived from England's woods and forests, and our aim is to increase these. In doing this we will protect and enhance the overall biodiversity and heritage value of the Estate at both the landscape and local level.

We will:

- Improve the resilience of the natural environment of the Estate under our stewardship.
- Realise the potential of the Public Forest Estate for nature and wildlife.
- Maintain and improve the cultural and heritage value of the Estate.

Key Indicators:

- Maintain UKWAS Certification on the Public Forest Estate

FE Key Actions: to be added

[Insert 'Rewriting the Forest Design Plans for Lake District to manage the effects of Phytophthora Ramorum case study]

[Insert PFE Volunteering case study]

Improve

We will:

Work with the sector to increase the proportion of woodlands and forests that are sustainably managed

Our aim is for there to be increased economic development, biodiversity and access from bringing more English woodland into sustainable management. We want to see adoption of management plans and implementation of the UK Forestry Standard to promote economic growth, protect the environment and deliver Biodiversity 2020 and Water Framework Directive activities.

Key Indicators:

- Percentage of woodland in active management (including the Public Forest Estate).
- Volume of timber brought to market per annum from the Public Forest Estate and other English sources.

Key Actions:

- Woodland into Management programme.
- Biodiversity 2020: SSSI condition, new approaches to defining condition status.
- Access: encouraging public access to woodland.
- Water Framework Directive: application of grants and regulations.

[Insert Skills & Apprenticeships case study]

[Insert Grown in Britain case study]

Public Forest Estate

We will aim to make a significant contribution to economic activity, rural employment and green growth across England using the assets and advantages of the Public Forest Estate.

We will:

- Maintain the land within our stewardship under UKWAS certification.
- Improve the economic resilience of our woods and forests.
- Encourage and support business activity on and around the Estate.

Indicators:

- Number of private sector businesses operating on the Public Forest Estate.
- Volume of timber brought to market per annum from the Public Forest Estate and other English sources.

[Insert Timber Harvesting in Kielder case study]

[Insert Forest Holidays Cropton site case study]

We will extend access across the Estate and expand opportunities for communities to become involved and take part in activities that improve quality of life, health and learning.

We will:

- Encourage communities to become involved in the Estate, its management and direction.
- Provide high quality woodland-based recreational opportunities for people and business.
- Enable everyone, everywhere to connect with the nation's trees and forests so that they understand their importance and act positively to safeguard forests for the future.

Indicators:

- Number of agreements for locally led events and activities on the Public Forest Estate.

[Insert Croft Woods Forest Design Plan case study]

[Insert Northumberland International Dark Sky Park case study]

[Insert Lumberjills case study]

FE Key Actions: to be added

Expand

We will:

Work with the sector to create more woodland

We want to see the rate of woodland creation increasing. This can bring economic and environmental benefits including enhanced biodiversity, clean-water safeguarding, flood risk management, access provision, and enhanced landscapes through woodland creation.

We will work with landowners so that they are better able to choose woodland creation where it suits them and society, supported by new and innovative funding models.

Key Indicator:

- Area of woodland (total and change over time).

Key Actions:

- Environmental Impact Assessment pilot results published and actions arising in progress.
- Woodland Carbon Task Force.
- Landscape scale woodland creation initiative.
- Biodiversity 2020 habitat expansion.
- Woodland Carbon Code advocacy and development.
- 'Goods from Woods' piloting/development.

Research and Evidence

Our work on research and evidence will operate within the Science and Innovation Strategy for Forestry in Great Britain, published in February 2014. This will:

- Provide the evidence base for the delivery of healthy and resilient forest and wider ecosystems to provide benefits for society.
- Provide the knowledge to deliver woodland management and expansion, as a component of sustainable land-use change.
- Provide the evidence base to allow the forestry sector to deliver a wide range of benefits from trees and woodlands to support sustainable economic growth in Britain.
- Result in changes to policy and practice through implementation by informed and engaged stakeholders, provide access to a high quality skill base of forest researchers, and be effectively leveraged to provide additional resources to increase the evidence base.

Our approach to research and evidence will be underpinned by the following principles:

- Collaborative working with colleagues and others, across government and the wider sector, to ensure that trees, woods and forests meet the needs of people in each part of Britain.
- A bold and ambitious professional approach to achieve high standards of quality, efficiency and sustainability and continual learning.
- Relationships and collaboration with colleagues and other stakeholders will be built on trust and openness to facilitate effective knowledge exchange.

Corporate Programmes

Woodland Policy Enabling Programme

Defra One Business

Business Sustainability

[Insert Forest Industry Safety Accord case study]

Annex A: Sources and Uses of Funds

Data to follow.

Annex B: Impact Indicators

Priority	Indicator	Trend*
Protection	Hectares of woodland covered by plant-health notices (includes notices issued on the Public Forest Estate)	
Protection	Percentage of known tree felling that is carried out with Forestry Commission approval (i.e.: the % of felling that is licensable by the Forestry Commission that is not illegal felling. This excludes felling with development approval)	
Protection	Maintain UKWAS Certification on the Public Forest Estate	
Improvement	Percentage of woodland in active management (including the Public Forest Estate)	
Improvement	Hectares of restoration of plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) and open habitat	
Improvement	Hectares of woodland brought into management by woodfuel Woodland Improvement Grant	
Expansion	Hectares of woodland created (gross)	
Expansion	Projected carbon capture to 2050 on Woodland Carbon Code woodland creation projects	
Customer Service	Percentage of priority people close to accessible woodland	
Customer Service	Customer satisfaction rating for visits to the Public Forest Estate from the interactive "rate my visit" facility	
Customer Service	Number of agreements for locally led events and activities on the Public Forest Estate	
Customer Service	Number of households in the Discovery Pass scheme for the Public Forest Estate	
Customer Service	Number of private sector businesses operating on the Public Forest Estate	
Customer Service	Number of felling licences issued	
Customer Service	Percentage of grant and felling licence transactions completed on time or early	
Restructuring our Business	Number of employees (FTEs)	
Developing our Staff	Number of training days completed per employee (FTE)	
Developing our	Number of significant work-related accidents per 100	

Staff	employees	
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* Data to come. Trends will be reported in one of four categories: improving, little or no progress, deteriorating, insufficient or no comparable data

Annex C: Input Indicators

Priority	Indicator	Trend*
Protection	Cost of providing tree health service including surveys and staff time (£'000s)	
Improvement	Value of Woodland Improvement Grant and Woodland Regeneration Grant (£m)	
Improvement	Value of Woodfuel Woodland Improvement Grants	
Expansion	Grant paid for woodland creation (total and GBP per hectare)	
Customer Service	Cash spent on partnerships and engagement by Forest Services.	
Restructuring our Business	Cost of managing the Public Forest Estate (per hectare)	

* Data to come. Trends will be reported in one of four categories: improving, little or no progress, deteriorating, insufficient or no comparable data

Annex D: Woodland Indicators

Priority	Indicator	Trend*
Protection	Number of tree diseases in England that are considered 'high risk' by the FC Biosecurity Board	
Protection	Measure of how well woodlands are set up to cope with changes such as climate change based on size and how well species can move between them	
Protection	Percentage of woodland SSSIs in target condition	
Improvement	Measure of what is happening to the number and variety of species that live in woodland; using Woodland Birds' data	
Improvement	Area of woodland in England that is certified as sustainably managed	
Improvement	Rate of annual increment in England's forests	
Improvement	Measure of the conservation condition of woodlands using information from the National Forest Inventory	
Improvement	Percentage of people actively engaged in woodland	
Improvement	Number of visits to woodland from Natural England Monitoring of Engagement with the Natural Environment survey (MENE)	
Improvement	Number apprentices and university students entering forestry (from Lantra)	
Improvement	Volume of timber brought to market per annum from the Public Forest Estate and other English sources	
Improvement	Percentage of the total amount of wood that grows in English woods that is harvested	
Improvement	Installed capacity of medium sized wood-fuelled boilers (REA data in MW thermal)	
Expansion	Area of woodland (total and change over time)	
Expansion	Projected amount of carbon captured by England's woodlands	
Expansion	Gross Value Added from domestic forestry	

* Data to come. Trends will be reported in one of four categories: improving, little or no progress, deteriorating, insufficient or no comparable data.