

3 February 2016

CORPORATE PLAN 2016-17

Purpose

1. To update the Committee on progress with the FCE Corporate Plan for 2016-17 and to seek approval of the approach taken and key themes in the plan.

Recommendations

2. That the Committee notes the progress, approves the approach and content of the working draft Plan provided at Annex 1.

Background

3. We are at a less advanced stage in preparing the Corporate Plan than at this time last year, which means that the National Committee is being presented with a working draft of the Forestry Commission England Corporate Plan for 2016-17 with items to be completed.
4. The Plan moves on from the structure introduced last year, and recognises Forest Enterprise as a delivery body for Forestry Commission England and the funding arrangements. This is without compromising the continuation of our move to create a more distinct management body for the Public Forest Estate.

Key features of the plan

5. The main focus of the plan will be forward-looking to 2016-17 but there will be brief recognition of key achievements from 2015-16 where we will be building around these.
 - 5.1. For Forest Services, we retain the same priorities as previous years in line with the Government Forestry and Woodland Policy Statement: protect, improve, expand. These are linked to our Key Performance Indicators wherever possible.
 - 5.2. For Forest Enterprise the priorities outlined are people, economy, and nature which align with the ongoing work on 'Releasing Our Potential', the forward look for Forest Enterprise.
6. Case studies have to be completed.
7. Research and Evidence section will require further additions to key actions for 2016/17.
8. We are working up a section on Forest Resilience as a basis of taking forward the issues considered by the National Committee in November 2015.

9. The Finance and Indicator sections will require updating before publication.

Next Steps

10. Subject to the views of the National Committee on this draft a more developed version of the plan will be shared with Defra officials within the next two weeks before being cleared by the England Executive Board for submission to Ministers.

11. The overall timescale for publishing will depend on Defra's approach to the publication of Corporate Plans by delivery bodies, but we would hope to publish before the end of April.

12. The Forest Research Plan is being developed to a similar timescale.

Risk Assessment

13. The Corporate Plan is considered to be a low risk document. Whilst it is a public facing document which sets out the priorities and resource allocation for the organisation it shows continuity with previous years and is aligned with wider government objectives and the political support for ongoing programmes. The separation of the actions of Forest Services from Forest Enterprise is an approach that is aligned with other actions that are being taken. It is not expected on its own to motivate any renewed interest in how Government will deliver the manifesto commitment: 'keep our forests in trust for the nation'.

Equality Impact Assessment

14. The Plan itself has not been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. However, an equality Impact Assessment, if required, will be undertaken at an appropriate stage when any new actions proposed in the plan are implemented.

Communications

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

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