

1 February 2018

FCE CORPORATE PLAN 2018-19

Purpose

1. To update the Committee on progress with the FCE Corporate Plan for 2018-19 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. The National Committee are being presented with the first draft of the Forestry Commission England Corporate Plan for 2018-19.
4. The Plan recognises Forest Enterprise as a delivery body for Forestry Commission England and the funding arrangements currently in place.
5. The Plan recognises that the devolution of forestry and Brexit will have an impact on the work of Forest Services, Forest Enterprise and cross border functions in the coming year.

Key features of the plan

6. The main focus of the Plan will be forward-looking to 2018-19 although there will be brief recognition of key achievements from 2017-18 in the form of case studies. The legacy impact of the case studies and how they tie into the work of 2018-19 have been recognised.
7. The Plan has been reorganised to better demonstrate the structure of the Forestry Commission in England when devolution is completed.
 - 7.1. For Forest Enterprise the priorities outlined are nature and people, as detailed in its Payment for Ecosystem Services agreement with FCE.
 - 7.2. 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, as well as the 25 Year Environment Plan.
 - 7.3. It is expected that the CFS cross border functions will continue to be financed by the Westminster group in 2018-19 and therefore remain in the Corporate Plan for 2018-19.

7.4. A FCE specific corporate programmes section is currently in draft to illustrate the anticipated transfer of CFS cross border functions to England, Scotland and Wales from April 2019 and the future Forestry Commission in England.

8. The Finance and indicator annexes will require updating before publication.

Next Steps

9. Subject to the views of the National Committee on this draft, the Corporate Plan will be shared with Defra officials next week before submission to Ministers.

10. The overall timescale for publishing will depend on Defra's approach to the publication of Corporate Plans by delivery bodies, and the availability of audited financial data, but we would hope to publish before the end of June.

Risk Assessment

11. 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. 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

12. 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

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

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