

12 April 2017

FCE CORPORATE PLAN 2017-18

Purpose

1. To update the Committee on progress with the FCE Corporate Plan for 2017-18.

Background

2. The National Committee are being presented with the final draft of the Forestry Commission England Corporate Plan for 2017-18. The Plan was submitted to the minister for approval on 30 March 2017.
3. The structure of the Plan has not changed from the draft submitted to the England National Committee on 2 February 2017.
4. 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.
5. Defra have commissioned the production of ALB Action Plans to sit beneath, and support, the Single Departmental Plan. The Action Plan is an internal facing document but does draw upon and complement the outward facing Corporate Plan.

Key features of the plan

6. The main focus of the Plan is forward-looking to 2017-18 although there is brief recognition of key achievements from 2016-17 in the form of case studies. The legacy impact of the case studies and how they tie into the work of 2017-18 have been recognised.
 - 6.1. 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, as well as the Defra strategy.
 - 6.2. For Forest Enterprise the priorities outlined are nature and people, as detailed in its Payment for Ecosystem Services agreement with FCE.
 - 6.3. The key work areas for the cross-border functions are outlined in Corporate Forestry Support (CFS). For 2017-18 CFS will continue to provide specialist functions of biosecurity, climate change, standards and international, evidence, corporate governance. The direction of travel for FCE towards the devolution of forestry is outlined in Corporate Programmes section.

6.4. The Finance and Indicator annexes will require updating before publication. Annex A has been updated to reflect People, Nature, Economy (rather than Protect, Improve, Expand) following feedback from the National Committee in February 2017.

Next Steps

7. FCE will make any amendments to the text of the Corporate Plan as necessary, pending response from the minister.
8. A designed draft of the Corporate Plan is due to be ready for FCE proofing and review on 13 April 2017.
9. 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

10. 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 to motivate any renewed interest in how Government will deliver the manifesto commitment: 'keep our forests in trust for the nation'.

Communications

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

Recommendations

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

Steve Meeks and Jenny King
Director's Office
April 2017