

2 February 2017

FCE CORPORATE PLAN 2017-18

Purpose

1. To update the Committee on progress with the FCE Corporate Plan for 2017-18 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 2017-18.
4. The Plan recognises Forest Enterprise as a delivery body for Forestry Commission England and the funding arrangements currently in place. This is without compromising the continuation of our move to create a more distinct management body for the Public Forest Estate.
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.
6. Defra have commissioned the production of business unit Action Plans to sit beneath, and support, the Single Departmental Plan (SDP). Along with the other Defra Group ALB's FCE is drafting a 2017-18 Action Plan to submit to Defra on 10th February. The Corporate Plan and Action Plan will be reviewed to ensure the documents complement one another.

Key features of the plan

7. The main focus of the Plan will be forward-looking to 2017-18 although there will be 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.
 - 7.1. 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.
 - 7.2. For Forest Enterprise the priorities outlined are nature and people, as detailed in its Payment for Ecosystem Services agreement with FCE.

8. Case studies have been submitted in draft form. A final case study for Forest Enterprise on the priority of 'people' is being drafted and will be added to the Plan ahead of its submission to Defra for comment.
9. The Finance and Indicator annexes will require updating before publication.

Next Steps

10. Subject to the views of the National Committee on this draft, the Corporate Plan will be shared with Defra officials next week 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, and the availability of audited financial data, but we would hope to publish before the end of June.

Risk Assessment

12. 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

13. 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

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

Steve Meeks and Jenny King
Director's Office
January 2017