

26 JANUARY 2021**FC CARBON TARGETS****Issue**

1. Should there be an FC-wide carbon reduction target?

Recommendations

2. Yes. The FC should agree an FC-wide carbon reduction target.
3. This target be as ambitious as we realistically can be in what we can contribute to Government's overall net zero by 2050 target and building on Forestry England's to be carbon free by 2033.
4. Forestry England, Forest Research, Forest Services and the Commissioners Office should remain free to set their own targets, as long as together they at least equal any FC-wide target agreed.
5. A cross FC-working group should now be established to recommend a target and how it could be achieved, for Executive Board agreement.

Background

6. The FC Executive Board approved the 2018 [Energy and Infrastructure Strategy](#) which applies across all of the properties and travel activities of core FC. While it is primarily focused on Forestry England, it is applicable to the wider FC, including Forest Services. The Strategy seeks to reduce carbon emissions, increase energy efficiency and move away from fossil fuels. The environmental impacts of the FC's forest management support activities on the built estate are managed through our Environmental Management System (EMS) which is designed to deliver our environmental policy, with performance improvement targets for reducing fossil fuel-based energy and reducing waste and our use of water. Our EMS is designed to conform to BS EN ISO 14001 2015 as we strive for certification under the new standard.
7. Forestry England is working to be more sustainable as a business and carbon free by 2033 by creating less waste and increasing the amount we reuse and recycle, using less energy and reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, traveling less and using more sustainable modes when we do, taking a whole life-cycle approach to developing new opportunities and purchases, and using less water. Forestry England are considering whether to update this, including to incorporate a commitment to reduce carbon by 50% within the next 5 years.

8. Forest Research continually seeks to reduce its consumption of water, energy and fuel whilst increasing the proportion derived from renewable and alternative sources; and reduce the amount of waste Forest Research produces and increase the proportion recycled. For Forest Research's built estate, we have a formal Environmental Management System (EMS), which is certified to ISO 14001:2015.
9. Neither Forest Services nor the Commissioners Office have targets or policies of their own but have critical dependencies on Forestry England, who provide them with most of their accommodation (with other sites provide by Defra and EA) and corporate services. For example, Forest Services' business planning for use of fleet vehicles is integrated with that led by Forestry England in respect of its agreed share of targets to introduce and increase use of ultra low emission vehicles in line with the OLEV/DoT's direction to all government departments. That said, carbon sequestration is a major driver for much of the FC's work, most notably to increase woodland creation ourselves and by incentivising others to do so.
10. New opportunities are arising to accelerate progress. For example, the 'Changing the Way we Work' project is looking at what we can learn from the changes to our working practices during coronavirus focusing on four areas of potential improvement: blended office, site and home working; travel; meetings; technology and connectivity. These could provide new opportunities to help reduce carbon emissions from home to office and business travel (though home to office emissions may not be eligible to be counted as FC carbon savings).
11. Other similar organisations' carbon reduction targets include the Environment Agency and National Trust which have both pledged to become net zero organisations by 2030, while Natural England have committed to developing a target for net zero by Q4 2020/21.

Consideration

12. All parts of the FC are committed to reducing carbon emissions. Forestry England has a clear target in 'carbon free by 2033' but other parts of the FC do not, nor does the FC as a whole. This is perhaps surprising given the high profile and importance of reducing carbon emissions and the growing number of similar organisations with such targets. It is therefore recommended that a FC wide carbon reduction target is set.
13. One approach would be for those parts of the FC which don't yet have a carbon reduction target each to set their own and the FC wide target to be the aggregate of these. Another would be to agree a FC wide target, for each of the parts of the organisation then to contribute towards. Given some significant differences in each part of the FC's businesses and yet at the same time interdependencies, a hybrid approach is recommended with complementary FC wide and individual organisation targets and strategies. This Executive Board would then oversee the FC wide target and strategy, focusing on those things best done together, while

the leader of each organisation would be accountable for their own organisation's target and strategy.

14. The FC wide target would, as a minimum need to at a level deemed adequate to contribute to the Government's overall net zero by 2050 target. But given Forestry England's already higher ambitions, and those of other similar organisations, we may want to go further and faster. It is recommended that we should be as ambitious as we realistically can be.
15. Initial discussions across FS, FR and Forestry England have already highlighted the imperative to establish a robust baseline against which to measure ourselves, which may be challenging and require material improvements to relevant data systems; then to establish realistic targets, taking account of the specific opportunities and challenges that present themselves across the FC.
16. It is recommended that a cross FC-working group should now be established to recommend a FC-wide target and how it could be achieved, for the Executive Board to agree.

Next Steps

17. If the Board agrees this overall approach then members are invited to nominate members of this working group by the end of January, and commission that group to make its initial recommendations to the FC Executive Board at its March meeting.

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