

## Developing Scottish Forestry's Corporate Plan

### Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide stimulus for the discussion at the Strategic Advisory Group on the model for the development of Scottish Forestry's first Corporate Plan.

### Background

2. Under the terms of our Framework Document, Scottish Forestry is required to produce a Corporate Plan every 3 years, supplemented by annual Business Plans (see Annex).

3. Our Corporate Plan has to be consulted on and approved by ministers, and a timetable to achieve a 1 April publication has been developed. This requires a draft plan to be issued for consultation in autumn 2019.

4. The format for the plan is not particularly restricted, provided the key elements of the Framework Document (see Annex) are addressed, including:

- the plan will be subject to public consultation;
- will normally cover a period of three years;
- will set out SF's outcomes and targets and its high-level performance indicators;
- will give an overview of how it will deliver these over the Plan period in line with the Purpose and National Outcomes set out in the National Performance Framework;
- will include SF's policy statements on resource management (including Efficient Government) and other corporate issues such as equality, health and safety and information management;
- will be approved by Scottish Ministers;
- constitutes the high level authority for the Chief Executive to conduct the operations of SF during the Corporate Plan period; and
- forms the basis against which SF's performance will be assessed during that period.

5. The development of the Corporate Plan will be led by the Head of Executive Office (Jonathan Taylor), supported by the Corporate Planning and Governance Manager (currently being recruited).

6. The context for our plan is particularly – but not exclusively – Scotland's Forestry Strategy. In addition to this it needs to address how our organisation is run.

7. The time period covered by the plan is likely to include further developments on the UK's exit from the EU, a further referendum on independence and Scottish Elections (2021). It remains unclear whether there will also be a 3 year Spending Review covering the period 2020 – 22. Given this political context, the plan

will need to be strategic and flexible, and explicit about planning assumptions behind commitments.

### **Issues**

8. The Strategic Advisory Group will be asked to discuss options for how we approach the corporate planning process, and in particular to agree advice on:

- The purpose(s) of the plan
- The best practice principles to follow
- How best to involve the SAG as the plan develops

#### **The purposes of the plan**

9. Corporate plans can be used for a range of reasons including:

- Explaining the organisation to others
- Gaining support / justifying funding
- Inspiring staff
- Meeting statutory / corporate requirements
- Focusing activity and driving efficiency
- Demonstrating performance (in conjunction with the Annual Report)

10. SAG members are asked to consider what other objectives there could be for the Corporate Plan, and to share these at the meeting. We will then select the top 3-5 to use as a means to shape our approach.

#### **Following best practice**

11. Corporate plans come in a range of styles and lengths, which should be determined by the purpose to which the plan is put. Given that we operate close in to government, with a clearly defined forestry strategy but a fluid political climate, what would the SAG recommend by way of an approach?

12. To help with this discussion, each **SAG member is asked to bring 2 examples of other plans to share**, which they believe demonstrate good practice or which don't get their message across as effectively.

13. From this discussion we will agree some principles to guide the development of the final document.

#### **Future engagement with the SAG**

14. We propose to come back to the SAG for views on the draft plan at the same time as the public consultation is underway in the autumn.

### **Recommendations**

15. The SAG is asked to consider the approach to Corporate Planning to be developed by Scottish Forestry and to discuss at the meeting.

16. SAG members are asked to consider and advise on what the primary purposes of the corporate planning exercise should be.

17. SAG members are asked to bring 2 examples of plans from other organisations which illustrate good practice or things to avoid.

**Jonathan Taylor**  
**Head of Executive Office**

**23/5/19**

## **Extract from Framework Document**

### **5. Corporate and Business Planning**

#### **5.1 Corporate Planning**

The Chief Executive will prepare and submit for approval to the Scottish Ministers a Corporate Plan. Approval of the Corporate Plan by Scottish Ministers constitutes the high level authority for the Chief Executive to conduct the operations of SF during the Corporate Plan period, while taking account of Scottish Ministers' priorities for the agency's work. It forms the basis against which SF's performance will be assessed during that period.

The Corporate Plan will be subject to public consultation and will normally cover a period of three years. The Corporate Plan will set out SF's outcomes and targets and its high-level performance indicators, and give an overview of how it will deliver these over the Plan period in line with the Purpose and National Outcomes set out in the National Performance Framework. It will also contain SF's policy statements on resource management (including Efficient Government) and other corporate issues such as equality, health and safety and information management.

#### **5.2 Business Planning**

By 1 April (normally) each year the Chief Executive will prepare and submit for approval to Scottish Ministers an annual Business Plan. It will set out:

- The year's business targets, milestones and performance indicators required for SF to deliver the objectives set out in the Corporate Plan;
- Any additional activity agreed by the Scottish Ministers which SF must deliver during the Business Plan period, subsequent to publication of the Corporate Plan; or other changes which influence SF's ability to deliver;
- Proposed current and operating expenditure requirements;
- Proposed capital investment programmes; and
- Any additional information which Scottish Ministers require.

Approval of the annual Business Plan by the Scottish Ministers constitutes the authority for the Chief Executive to conduct the operations of SF during that year. It forms the basis against which SF's performance will be assessed for the annual Business Plan period.

Exceptionally, if policy or circumstances change significantly in the course of the year, Scottish Ministers or the Chief Executive may propose revisions to the annual Business Plan, including changes to key targets and financial resources.