

**Deer Commission for Scotland Board Meeting
9th December 2003 in The Thistle Hotel, Inverness**

Agenda

Open Session – 10.30am

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|----|---|---------------|
| 1 | Apologies | |
| 2 | Minutes of Meeting held on 1 st October 2003 | Paper: 271/1 |
| 3 | Matters Arising | Paper: 271/2 |
| 4. | Legislative Review | Paper: 271/3 |
| 5 | Fencing Policy | Paper: 271/4 |
| 6 | Corporate Plan 2004 – 07 | Paper: 271/5 |
| 7 | Incentives & Regulations | Paper: 271/6 |
| 8 | Minutes of Meetings | |
| | a) Draft Minutes of Strategy Committee meeting
held on 12 th November 2003 | Paper: 271/7 |
| | b) Draft Minutes of Resources Committee meeting
held on 12 th November 2003 | Paper: 271/8 |
| 9 | DCS Board Meetings 2004 | Paper: 271/9 |
| 10 | Management Action Plan | Paper: 271/10 |
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Paper for Discussion by DCS Board on 9th December 2003

Dates for DCS Board Meetings – 2004

1 Introduction

At their meeting on 19th August 2003, the Board agreed the following dates for DCS Board meetings in 2004: -

- A 4th February 2004,
- B 24th March 2004,
- C 2nd June 2004 (+ field visit on 3rd June 2004),
- D 18th August 2004,
- E 20th October 2004 and
- F 1st December 2004.

The Board, at their meeting on 1st October 2003, discussed the number of Board meetings to be held each year and it was agreed that, during 2004, four meetings would be held. It was agreed that meetings be held as follows:

- a) March in Inverness
- b) June in Dumfries / Galloway (2 day event)
- c) September in Ullapool (2 day event) and
- d) December in Stirling.

However, following the earlier discussion by the Board, it has been suggested that the Board may wish to postpone the visit to Dumfries and Galloway in June 2004 until the following year and visit Perthshire.

As it was decided at the meeting of the Board in October to hold 4 meetings during 2004, it was decided that all Members again be contacted in order that suitable dates and venues may be considered at this meeting.

2 Dates and Venues for DCS Board Meetings during 2004

March Meeting

It is recommended that the date of the March meeting be brought forward and held in the first fortnight of March 2004. This is considered necessary to enable DCS to consider the final draft of both the Annual Plan and Corporate Plan prior to submission.

Dates currently available during the first fortnight in March when most Members are currently available are 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 8th.

This meeting is due to be held in Inverness.

June Meeting

It had originally been agreed that DCS visit Dumfries and Galloway in June. It was later suggested that south Perthshire might also be considered a suitable location for the meeting in June.

A visit to South Perthshire could include visiting:

- (a) deer management in low densities (native wood land birch providing sanctuary for a small nucleus;
- (b) trapping deer (a visit to a facility which would help inform the debate about live capture;
- (c) deer tourism (Highland Safaris visitor tours onto the hill) and
- (d) grouse, sheep and deer (tick and muirburn and possibly looking at electric fencing. Role of keepers as distinct from stalkers)

Sir Michael Strang Steel is extremely keen that DCS visit Dumfries and Galloway. He is of the view that DCS have not provided as much support for deer management in this area in recent times due to staff shortages. A visit to this area would provide DCS with an opportunity of hearing about the management of red deer in woodland. In addition, a new DMG is being established in this area and Sir Michael is of the opinion that they should be encouraged.

As this is a 2 date event, the dates on which all Members can attend are the 14th (Monday), 15th (Tuesday), 21st (Monday), 22nd (Tuesday) and 23rd (Wednesday).

September Meeting

As Members will be aware, the meeting in September is a 2 day event. The only dates currently available when a 2 day event can be arranged during September are Monday 27th, Tuesday 28th and Wednesday 29th. This meeting is due to be held in the Ullapool area.

December Meeting

Dates on which Members are currently available are 6th, 7th and 15th of December. This meeting is scheduled to be held in the Stirling area and is a 1 day event.

3 Recommendation

Members are requested to consider the various options and agree both dates and venues for the meetings of the DCS Board to be held during 2004.

CORPORATE PLAN 2004-2007

INTRODUCTION

This Corporate Plan succeeds the Corporate Plan dated April 2003. It lays out strategic objectives and key tasks for the Deer Commission for Scotland (DCS) for the financial years April 2004 – March 2005, April 2005 – March 2006, and April 2006 – March 2007.

The review of the Corporate Plan continues to be guided primarily by the Deer Commission for Scotland's Long Term Strategy, published on 5 November 2001, which in turn lays out the strategy for realising the Commission's Vision for Wild Deer in Scotland, published in October 2000. The Strategy establishes 6 Strategic Aims, and in addition describes 3 sets of initial commitments to be pursued as priorities in the Corporate Plan for 2002-2005.

This Corporate Plan provides an overview of how the Commission will implement the long term Strategy. The Plan reflects the 6 Strategic Aims and the initial commitments in the Strategy. Within this context, the Plan is designed:

- To give a clear plan of how the Commission will work towards achieving its stated strategic objectives;
- To demonstrate what the Commission aims to achieve within its allocated resources;
- To indicate broadly how resources will be allocated;
- To provide a framework against which the Commission's performance can be measured.

The Plan consists of 4 Sections:

- Section 1 explains the role of the Commission, its principal aims and objectives; outlines the hierarchy of plans to which it will be working; and describes the 3 Key Objectives agreed with the Scottish Executive, the 6 Strategic Aims and the Initial Commitments from the Strategy.
- Section 2 lists the key tasks during 2004 – 2007 for each Key Objective, Strategic Aim and Initial Commitment
- Section 3 outlines proposed budget allocations for the three years of the Plan.
- Section 4 reviews performance against the previous Corporate Plan

Note that the DCS Annual Plan will each year provide more detailed targets and measures against the tasks outlined in the Corporate Plan.

SECTION 1 : THE ROLE OF THE DCS

THE DEER COMMISSION FOR SCOTLAND

The Deer Commission for Scotland was constituted by the Deer (Scotland) Act 1996, as the successor to the Red Deer Commission. It is the Non Departmental Public Body charged with furthering the conservation, control and sustainable management of all species of wild deer in Scotland, and keeping under review all matters, including welfare, relating to wild deer.

The Commission consists, as at March 2004, of 9 appointed Members and a Chairman. It has 19 staff (Director, Technical Director, 8 technical, 6 administration and 3 field officers) based in offices in Inverness and Stirling.

The Commission undertakes a wide range of activities throughout Scotland. As well as advising Scottish Ministers on all deer matters in Scotland, the Commission exercises a range of regulatory functions (Deer Control Agreements, Authorisations, Statutory returns), it publishes guidelines, consults and advises widely on deer management issues including annual cull targets, promotes and actively co-operates with the operation of Deer Management Groups, undertakes and commissions research projects, assesses the impacts of deer, conducts and co-ordinates deer counts, disseminates best practice, assists in training, and works with other agencies on wider policy issues. In all its activities the Commission seeks a co-operative and consultative approach.

The Commission operates in accordance with a Management Statement and Financial Memorandum issued by its sponsor Department the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD). According to the Commission's Management Statement (revised December 1999), *the prime aim of the Commission, as set out at Section 1 (1)(a) of the Act is to further the conservation, control and sustainable management of deer in Scotland, and keep under review all matters, including their welfare, relating to deer.*

The following key objectives derive from the prime aim:

- *Public policy for deer in Scotland fully integrated into the wider policy context.*
- *Encourage and support co-ordinated and sustainable deer management at local level in Scotland, underpinned by well founded guidance, so as to promote a balance with the natural heritage, welfare of deer, other land uses and other interests.*
- *DCS resources fully aligned with strategic priorities, consistent with efficient, effective and economic use of taxpayers' monies.*

HIERARCHY OF PLANS

In October 2000, following a period of full public consultation, the Commission agreed a Vision for Wild Deer in Scotland. This sets out the Commission's Vision for the place of wild deer in 15 – 20 years. In November 2001, the Commission published its Long Term Strategy.

The Commission's Management Statement and Financial Memorandum states:

“... the Commission should, by 1 February each year, present to the Department a draft Corporate Plan for the 3 years ahead. The draft should indicate the key tasks for the 3 year period and what the Commission expects to achieve in terms of level of outputs from within the resources available.

Following the Corporate Plan, the Management Statement envisages *a more detailed Annual Plan for the coming year, setting out specific objectives and related performance indicators, targets and costs.*

This Plan constitutes the Corporate Plan for the next 3 years, based on the Long Term Strategy as well as the overall objectives set out in the Deer (Scotland) Act 1996, the Management Statement, and ongoing dialogue with the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department. The detailed annual implementation of the Corporate Plan, including detailed budgetary and staff time allocations, is described in the current Annual Plan.

The Commission’s Annual Report will be the formal and public mechanism for reporting on progress on the Long Term Strategy, the Corporate Plan and the relevant Annual Plan.

STRATEGIC AIMS AND KEY OBJECTIVES

Three strategic objectives are set out in the DCS formal Management Statement approved by Ministers. The three objectives are based on the duties established in Section 1 of the Deer (Scotland) Act 1996. The following are the strategic aims and key tasks for the Deer Commission for 2004 – 2007, which will be elaborated in the Annual Plans.

I. STRATEGIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT:

Strategic Objective

I. To have public policy and priorities for deer management, welfare and damage in Scotland integrated into the wider rural and policy context.

KEY TASKS

To explore, develop, implement and monitor, in conjunction with partners, the efficient use of regulation and incentives to achieve effective deer management.

To clarify, develop and implement DCS' duties, roles and responsibilities arising from the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 (assuming this is passed as proposed).

II. TECHNICAL:

Strategic Objective

Stimulate effective sustainable deer management at local level in Scotland, underpinned by well founded guidance and information, ensuring further serious damage or danger to public safety is minimised

KEY TASKS:

For each of the next 3 years, identify top 8 sites for priority action, agree with SNH, FC, SEERAD and others as appropriate, and prepare a written action plan for each area; continue to act on and monitor priority ongoing sites from previous years.

Complete the preparation, agree with key partners and publish, both in hard copy and electronically, a suite of 84 Best Practice Guidelines; review, revise and add to these as necessary; and actively promote their use throughout the deer sector, including by training agencies.

Provide relevant and effective support, guidance, advice and training for Deer Management Groups and other collaborative groupings.

Review and take appropriate measures to safeguard deer welfare.

Review and take appropriate measures to further public safety.

Advise Scottish Ministers on all deer matters.

III. GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES:

Strategic Objective

DCS skills, capacity and resources fully aligned with strategic priorities, consistent with efficient, effective and economic use of taxpayers money.

KEY TASKS

Spend within 2% below annual resource allocation.

To maintain the standards of public administration, accountability and openness appropriate for such an organisation.

Implement DCS Code of Conduct, Freedom of Information and Data Protection Regulations.

Ensure effective and efficient corporate governance

Seek adequate resources and prioritise and manage expenditure

Ensure effective staff recruitment, management, training and deployment

SECTION 2: KEY TASKS FOR 2004-05 TO 2006-07

STRATEGIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The role of the DCS is determined by the legislative and public policy context within which it operates. The DCS has developed good relations with a wide range of people and organisations to facilitate a more integrated approach. Further development of liaison groups, consultations and communications has been and will remain a priority for DCS.

Despite a sizeable increase in financial resources in 2002, DCS alone cannot do everything to solve deer damage issues across Scotland. Accordingly it must continue to prioritise work and lever assistance from other public and private bodies. Much of DCS' policy work is to achieve consensus through advice and influence. There is increasing recognition in all sectors that deer management cannot be considered in isolation.

KEY TASKS

To explore, develop, implement and monitor, in conjunction with partners, the efficient use of regulation and incentives to achieve effective deer management.

DCS will explore different incentive based mechanisms for facilitating change and towards the use of best practice, including a certification scheme and use of Section 12 of the Deer (Scotland) Act 1996 (which allows DCS to offer certain types of support to deer managers).

Review and take appropriate measures to safeguard deer welfare.

In 2004 –2005 DCS will conduct on behalf of Scottish Ministers a review of and consultation on the close seasons for all species. This in turn could lead to further reviews, for example of authorisations to shoot out of season or at night. DCS will take an active interest in the development of any new Animal Welfare legislation. Deer welfare will continue to be a key theme in the development of the Best Practice Guidance.

To clarify, develop and implement DCS' duties, roles and responsibilities arising from the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 (assuming this is passed as proposed).

It is proposed that there it will be “ the duty of every public body and office-holder, in exercising functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.” and that “in complying with (that) duty a body or office-holder must have regard to—

- (a) any strategy designated under (the Act) and
- (b) the United Nations Environmental Programme Convention on Biological Diversity of 5 June 1992 as amended from time to time (or any United Nations Convention replacing that Convention).”

DCS will need to consider how this new duty will affect its work and ensure that its working practices reflect this new explicit duty.

The new Act, if passed, will introduce other new measures which could impact on the work of DCS (Land Management Orders, requirements for notifications, etc.) DCS will need to undertake a comprehensive review of the terms of the final Act and make adjustments to its working methods as necessary.

TECHNICAL

Introduction

DCS' Strategy emphasises the importance of integrating deer management objectives at a local level, and envisages deer management being planned and delivered on the basis of cooperation between all relevant interests. In some areas a hierarchy of deer management plans will be appropriate, in order to reflect priorities at different geographical scales. For this to be realised the DCS must ensure that there is in place a local deer management system across the deer range that is capable of doing so, and this implies a number of specific actions.

DCS is committed to identify with relevant partners and act in priority areas. The DCS also recognises the importance of information and advice to foster a much broader awareness of deer issues both amongst those directly involved in deer management and the wider community. Prioritisation is allowing DCS resources to be concentrated on priority sites and guidance on best practice. DCS enjoys and will continue to build on constructive relations with Scottish Natural Heritage, the Forestry Commission Scotland, Deer Management Groups (DMGs) and other key partners. Good co-operation with other agencies and bodies is allowing constructive dialogue about integrated land use and planning, and forthcoming new legislation may provide new opportunities for influencing good deer management.

KEY TASKS

For each of the next 3 years, identify top 8 sites for priority action, agree with SNH, FC, SEERAD and others as appropriate, and prepare a written action plan for each area; continue to act on and monitor priority ongoing sites from previous years.

Sites for priority action may involve concerns about damage to agriculture, woodlands or natural heritage, or about risk to public safety. These sites will be identified, assessed and acted upon in accordance with the procedures agreed by DCS in conjunction with key partners. Existing prioritised sites will require continued action and monitoring.

Complete the preparation, agree with the Steering Group and publish, both in hard copy and electronically, a suite of 84 Best Practice Guidelines; review, revise and add to these as necessary; and actively promote their use throughout the deer sector, including by training agencies.

The first tranche of 23 guides was published in July 2003. The full suite should be completed by 2005; after which there will be a need to keep the guides under review, to update as necessary, and to prepare guides on additional topics as necessary.

Provide relevant and effective support, guidance, advice and training for Deer Management Groups and other collaborative groupings.

The details of this will need to be addressed each year in DCS' Annual Plan. It will include a key objective to help Deer Management Groups to develop the capacity to undertake reliable deer counts, encourage and support them in the preparation and implementation of Deer Management Plans, and continue to provide relevant advice.

Review and take appropriate measures to further public safety.

DCS; programme to identify, analyse and advise on the causes and possible mitigation of road accidents involving deer will continue, and may involve long-term research and monitoring.

Advise Scottish Ministers on all deer matters.

Apart from input to new legislation and the consultation on close seasons mentioned above, DCS will continue to offer advice on all deer matters as required.

Undertake, commission and collaborate in research on deer matters.

DCS will develop and implement a research programme for projects designed to underpin, inform or further its key tasks. This will include greater co-operation and co-ordination with other research sponsoring agencies.

GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES

Introduction

The implementation of the Long Term Strategy, the DCS' status as a public body, and its role as the lead adviser to Scottish Ministers on wild deer and their management, all require the DCS to have appropriate capacity and administrative arrangements.

DCS have committed staff who are its major asset. Considerable work has been undertaken in recent year to prioritise resources (including manpower) to better align these to strategy priorities. Much of the work of the DCS is undertaken collaboratively, resulting in good leverage. In particular, DCS is actively seeking opportunities for joint funding of research and demonstration projects, and working with other agencies to develop incentives schemes to promote effective deer management.

A substantial part of DCS funding is committed to expenditure such as pay and thus re-allocation in-year is difficult. The current heavy prioritisation of resources to meet the work programme means that significant new, unforeseen or additional expenditure may be difficult to cover.

Most of the tasks under this heading are ongoing and recurring, but they are nonetheless a key part of the Corporate Plan.

KEY TASKS

Spend within 2% below annual resource allocation

Efficient and accurate targeting and monitoring of expenditure and staff deployment, procurement & asset management, implement PFMR

To maintain the standards of public administration, accountability and openness appropriate for such an organisation.

Implement DCS Code of Conduct, Freedom of Information and Data Protection Regulations.

Ensure effective and efficient corporate governance

This includes publishing an Annual Report, preparing and implementing an Annual Plan, and efficient support for Commission meetings.

Seek adequate resources and prioritise and manage expenditure

Accurate association of cash budgets with agreed tasks, maintaining a time recording system to integrate with the Annual Plan, maintaining, servicing and periodically reviewing all DCS property.

Ensure effective staff recruitment, management, training and deployment

This includes keeping procedures manual up to date (including Health & Safety), full implementation of staff appraisals and personal development plans guidance, implementation of annual training plan, and maintaining Investor in People status.

DEER COMMISSION for SCOTLAND

SECTION 3: PROVISIONAL BUDGET ALLOCATIONS

Sub Head	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7
Total Staff Costs			
External Consultant Costs			
Accommodation Charges			
Office Supplies / Services			
Vehicles & Transport			
Total Field Equipment Costs			
Total Research & Best Practice Guides Costs			
TOTAL PROFILED EXPENDITURE			
ALLOCATION FROM SEERAD			
ESTIMATED INCOME 2003/04			
TOTAL ALLOCATION & ESTIMATED INCOME			

EXTERNAL MEETINGS ATTENDED BY CHAIRMAN / DIRECTOR / TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

5-Oct-03	Tech Director	S Ross DMG meeting	
6-Oct-03	V. Chairman	Revision of CAP meeting	Edinburgh
7-Oct-03	Tech Director	SNH Board seminar	Battleby
15-Oct-03	V. Chairman, Tech Director	Welfare workshop	Stirling
27-Oct-03	V. Chairman, Tech Director	S 7 Caenlochan	Glenshee
28-Oct-03	Tech Director	S 7 Inverpolly	Ullapool
29-Oct-03	Director	Participation / Consultation workshop MLURI	Aberdeen
30-Oct-03	Director, Tech Director	SNH Conference - Farming, Forestry & the Natural Heritage	
5-Nov-03	Tech Director	Affric & Kintail DMG	
10-Nov-03	V. Chairman, Director	SNH Board dinner	
11-Nov-03	V. Chairman	W Sutherland DMG	
12-Nov-03	Director	Scottish Parliament - ERA committee	Edinburgh
17-Nov-03	Director	Frank Strang - SEERAD Land Use & Rural Policy	Inverness
19-Nov-03	V. Chairman	ADMG	Inverarry
24-Nov-03	Tech Director	FCS Working Group	Stirling
2-Dec-03	V. Chairman, Tech Director	S 7 Caenlochan	Glenshee
4-Dec-03	V. Chairman, Tech Director	Deer Management Round Table	Stirling

EXTERNAL MEETINGS TO BE ATTENDED

11-Dec-03	Tech Director	DMG/DCS/FC/SNH Liaison meeting	Stirling
17-Dec-03	Tech Director	SNH Liaison meeting	Battleby
18-Dec-03	Tech Director	DMP/SFGSS	Dingwall
7-Jan-04	Director, Tech Director	Inverpolly site visit (SEERAD)	Inverpolly
8-Jan-04	V. Chairman, Director	ADMG liaison meeting	Stirling
9-Jan-04	V. Chairman, Director, Tech Director	Incentives & Regulations workshop	TBC
29-Jan-04	Director	Malvern programme	London
30-Jan-04			

**Paper for Discussion by the Board of the Deer Commission for Scotland at their
meeting on 9th December 2003**

FENCING POLICY

Introduction

The attached paper will be discussed at the meeting of the by the Deer Management Round Table to be held on 4th December 2003.

Members will be advised of the comments made by Members of the DMRT at the meeting.

INCENTIVES AND REGULATION: DRAFT PRINCIPLES

Purpose

To provide an update on progress with the development of staff guidance on incentives and regulation to the Commission.

Background

The Commission discussed the attached on the 2nd Oct and made a number of comments. Since then these comments and other minor from SNH and FCS have been incorporated into the draft.

The next step is a second workshop planned for Friday 9th Jan. The purpose of this second workshop is to develop staff guidance based on the principles and test these against specific examples.

The current draft of principles is attached. This will be edited and restructured in advance of the workshop to improve clarity.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW: SEERAD RESPONSE

Report by Director to Commission Meeting 9 December 2003

Introduction

1. After considerable deliberations, SEERAD have responded formally to DCS' submission on the legislative review.
2. Attached is a copy of the SEERAD reply, together with a copy of the DCS submission for reference. Both these documents may now be regarded as in the public domain, although DCS has not actively promoted their dissemination until after the Deer Management Round Table had seen them on 4 December.
3. The response was considered by the Strategy Committee on 12 November 2003, and its recommendations are contained in the draft minutes of that meeting (item 8 paper 271/7 of this Agenda); key recommendations are reproduced in this report.

Main Issues

4. The response from SEERAD is much as expected in content, although it is couched in more helpful terms than at one stage seemed likely.
5. As anticipated, there is no intent for an early change to or replacement for section 8, although the door does remain ajar: DCS will almost certainly have to travel a considerable way down the road of an actual section 8 control scheme before there is any real prospect of a change. That said, the letter explicitly states that a future updating of the legislation has not been ruled out.
6. More positively, the letter specifically tasks DCS with proceeding with a formal consultation on close seasons as provided in section 5(2) of the Act, as well as referring to our response to the present consultation on the Animal Welfare and Health Strategy.
7. On exotic species, the letter merely reflects ongoing action which DCS has been taking to establish whether the issue can be addressed through existing secondary legislative instruments.
8. Our argument in favour of giving DCS development / grant giving powers is addressed by encouraging us to make use of section 12, although not surprisingly there is no offer of additional resources. The letter also makes mention of the incentives and regulations work we are engaged in with other agencies.
9. On provision of information, the letter reflects the helpful meetings DCS has had with relevant officials in the Scottish Executive, which suggests in particular that we will be able to access sheep data at a reasonably useful level of detail.

10. The DCS submission and the SEERAD reply were included on the Agenda of the Deer Management Round Table on 4 December.

Next Steps

11. Several areas of work arise from the response: are shown in italics:

Close Seasons

12. Strategy Committee recommended that *a draft consultation plan and timetable be submitted to the next DCS Board meeting for consideration prior to further consultation with SEERAD. During discussion, it was also **agreed** that there was a need to gather data prior to going out to consultation. It was **agreed** that the Research Committee consider draft specifications for tenders on the information that required to be gathered at their meeting on 9th December 2003. Specifications would be prepared following consultations with staff. The draft specifications would be put on the Agenda of the Deer Management Committee at their meeting in January 2004. And be approved by the next meeting of this Committee in February. Tenders would be sent out so that the work could start at the beginning of the next financial year. This would allow the gathering of data to be completed in order that the consultation document could be approved at the DCS Board meeting in September 2004. The consultation would start in October 2004 and be completed by March 2005.*

13. The recommended draft timetable is therefore:

9 December 2003:	Board agrees draft timetable
January 2004:	Deer Management Committee agrees to recommend specifications for research
February 2004:	Strategy Committee agrees specifications
August 2004:	Research results received
September 2004:	Board agrees consultation papers / methods
October 2004:	Consultation begins
January 2005:	Consultation completed
March 2005:	DCS submits consultation results and advice to Ministers

14. The period from now until September 2004 can therefore be regarded as preparative. The formal Section 5 (2) process begins in October. Clearly SEERAD will need to be closely involved in discussions about the form,

content and scope of the consultation itself, since it is being undertaken on behalf of Scottish Ministers.

Control of Muntjac

15. Strategy Committee recommended that *work on using secondary legislation to put in place control systems for muntjac (and potentially other exotic species) should continue and the Deer Management Committee, in the first instance, be kept informed of developments.*

Section 12 Schemes

16. Strategy Committee recommended that *DCS should continue to actively look at 2 potential Section 12 schemes, and seek additional resources in the current financial year to undertake them. However, it was noted that initial projections of expenditure for 2004 – 05 suggested that there was unlikely to be adequate resources to do much under Section 12 unless additional funding was forthcoming or other key tasks were postponed.*

Additional Information

17. Strategy Committee recommended that *DCS should seek additional information (notably on sheep numbers) on a casework basis, and should monitor how well the data meets DCS needs. It was noted that DCS may need to return to this issue if practice reveals a continued deficit of information at a sufficient level.*

Recommendation

18. That the Commission agree the Strategy Committee recommendations as outlined in this report.

ATTACHMENTS:

SEERAD Response
DCS Letter and Submission

**Paper for Discussion at DCS Board Meeting to be held at
The Thistle Hotel, Inverness on Tuesday, 9th December 2003**

Management Action Plan – Report to Members

1 Introduction

The Management Action Plan advises Members of the current position with regard to various ongoing projects.

2 Points to Note

Members will wish to note the following amendments since the last report to Members on 1st October 2003.

A The deadlines for the following projects have been extended: -

- Appoint Branch Assistant (Inverness)
- Sika Hybridisation (Publish Report)
- Review of regulatory role, powers, duties and procedures

B The following projects have been deleted: -

- Appoint Deer Liaison Officers
- Appoint Deer Data Liaison Officer
- Appoint Best Practice Project Officer

3 Recommendation

Members are invited to comment on the contents of the paper.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF THE
DCS BOARD HELD ON 1st OCTOBER 2003**

The purpose of this paper is to update Members on matters outstanding following the Open Session of the Board meeting held on 1st October 2003.

Item 3 Matters Arising

HIPP Bid

- 3.2 Next meeting of public agencies to discuss is being planned for February 2004.
- 3.3 The current position has been discussed with all estates who expressed an interest.

Consultation Procedures

- 3.6 The meeting with the Permanent Secretary has been postponed: a new date has yet to be agreed.

Item 3 Count Programme 2003/04

- 4.9 Due to limited resources no funds are available at the present time for collaborative counting.
- 4.10 The DMGs interest in having a count done have been advised of the count position.

Item 6 DCS Board Meetings 2004

- 6.3 See Item 9 (Paper 271/9) on this Agenda.
- 6.4 Minutes will be circulated as agreed.

Item 8 Policy & Financial Management Review

- 8.3 A meeting was held with SEERAD and progress is being made.

Item 11 Any Other Business

'Impacts of Wild Deer in Scotland – How Fares the Public Interest' Report

- 11.4 Guidance was re-circulated.

SFGS Guidance

- 11.5 DCS/SFGS Guidance has been sent to all FCS conservators

Draft

Minute of Meeting of Resources Committee held on Wednesday, 12th November 2003

Attending: Mr. G Campbell (Convenor)
Prof. J Milne
Mr. J Duncan Millar
Prof. S Walker

Dr. D Balharry (Technical Director)
Mr. R Edwards (Head of Administration)
Mrs C McNeilly (Procurement Officer)

1 Opening Remarks

1.1 The Convenor welcomed Mrs McNeilly to the meeting. Apologies were received from Mr. A Raven, Mr. J Mackintosh and Mr. N Reiter.

2 Minutes of meeting held on 5th August 2003 Paper: R 30/2003

2.1 The Minutes were approved.

3 Matters Arising Paper: R 31/2003

3.1 The contents of Paper R31/2003 were noted.

4 Budget Review Paper: R 32/2003

- 4.1 A paper detailing the Commission's expenditure to 30th October 2003 was tabled.
- 4.2 The meeting noted that expenditure for the period was £669,560.16. It was also noted that if this trend were to continue, it would lead to an over spend of £53,788.16 by the end of the financial year. The paper before the meeting explained how the costs had been incurred. It was also noted that income to date amounted to £8,848.80.
- 4.3 Following discussion, it was agreed that the Committee note the position as they would be discussing the budget for the current financial year later in the Agenda.

5 Revised DCS Profiled Expenditure 2003 - 04 Paper: R 33/2003

- 5.1 The Committee considered a paper recommending revised expenditure against each subhead for the remainder of the financial year. It was noted that a bid for additional funding had been submitted to SEERAD but the outcome of this bid was not yet known.
- 5.2 Following discussion, the Committee agreed a draft revised profiled expenditure to enable DCS to meet its expenditure allocation for the current financial year and agreed to further review the position at their next meeting following notification of the outcome of the bid submitted to SEERAD for additional resources this year.

6 Capital Expenditure Programme 2003 – 2008 Paper: R 34/2003

- 6.1 The Committee considered a paper detailing likely capital expenditure to be incurred by DCS over the next 5 financial years.
- 6.2 During discussion, it was **agreed** that DCS consider the possibility of leasing both cars and photocopiers in future and that a paper be presented for discussion at the next meeting of the Committee.

Action: Head of Admin

- 6.3 It was also **agreed** that DCS allocate £40,000 per annum for IT capital.

Action: Head of Admin

- 6.4 The Committee also **agreed** that consideration be given to introducing video conferencing facilities if funds became available in the next financial year.

Action: Head of Admin

7 End of Year Funding Bid Paper: R 35/2003

- 7.1 The paper before the Committee contained the DCS bid to SEERAD for additional resources for the current financial year. It was **noted** that current projections indicated that DCS were heading for an overspend in the region of £50K but it was the view of staff that this could be managed by generating additional income and by savings.

- 7.2 It was **noted** that the bid comprised of:

a) Revenue (£69K)

for a replacement photocopier (£7K);
replacement of old laptops and peripherals / installation of GIS servers (£16K)
training programme (£3K) and
update / renewal / extension of software licenses (£12K).

b) Capital (£89K)

Disabled access and provision of office space at 'Knowsley' (£40 - £45K)
Replacement of wooden garage (£30K) and
Digital camera equipment (£14K).

c) Additional Spend on Revenue

Additional Count Programme (£50K)
Survey Work (£23K)
Section 12 Projects (£50K) and
Posters for Best Practice (£11K).

- 7.3 The meeting **noted** the contents of the bid and that it was hoped to receive a response from SEERAD by the end of the following week. It was **agreed** that the Director contact SEERAD in an attempt to persuade them of the need to obtain the extra resources for both capital and revenue in order that DCS can achieve its targets.

Action: Director

8 DCS Profiled Expenditure 2004 / 05 Paper: R 36/2003

8.1 The Committee considered DCS profiled expenditure for the next financial year. It was noted that DCS budget for 2004 / 05 amounted to £1,220,000. This comprised of an allocation of £1,210,000 from SEERAD and £10,000 income.

8.2 Following discussion, a draft profiled expenditure for next year was **agreed**. It was further **agreed** that the Committee further review the position at their next meeting following notification of the outcome of the bid submitted to SEERAD for additional resources for the financial year ending 31st April 2004.

9 Annual Plan Update Paper: R 37/2003

9.1 The Committee considered a paper providing an update on the Annual Plan.

9.2 The Committee **noted** progress to date.

9.3 During discussion, it was the view of the Committee that the Management Action Plan was no longer required as the work was covered in the Annual Plan. It was **agreed** that this be recommended to the DCS Board at their meeting to be held on 9th December 2003.

Action: Head of Admin

10 Annual Plan 2004 / 05 (1st Draft) Paper: R 38/2003

10.1 The Committee considered the paper containing the first draft of the DCS Annual Plan for 2004 / 05.

10.2 During discussion, it was **agreed** that the key measures required to be developed. A number of amendments were also **agreed**.

10.3 It was **agreed** that a revised draft of the document be tabled for discussion at the next meeting of the DCS Board to be held on 9th December 2003.

Action: Head of Admin

11 On Board – Guide for Board Members of Public Bodies in Scotland Paper: R 39/2003

11.1 The meeting was advised that a paper had not been prepared and **noted** that it would added to the work programme for the next meeting of the Committee.

12 Staffing Issues Paper: R39/2003

12.1 The meeting was advised that Management were considering a number of options regarding staffing and that a paper would be presented to the Committee for consideration at their next meeting.

Action: Director / Tech.
Director / Head of Admin

12.2 The meeting **noted** the contents of the paper.

13 Future Work Programme

Paper: R 40/2003

13.1 The Committee agreed the future work programme as outlined in the paper attached to these Minutes.

14 Any Other Business

14.1 There was no other business.

15 Date of next meeting

15.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be on 12th February 2004.

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

STANDING ITEMS

- Apologies
- Minutes of last meeting
- Matters Arising
- Budget Review
- Staffing Issues
- Annual Plan Update
- Future Work Programme

ITEM	DECISION REQUIRED	PAPER BY
	12 February 2004	
Freedom of Information & Data Protection - Implications on Staffing Procedures	Revised Paper / Staff Guidance	MD
On Board - A Guide for Board Members of Public Bodies in Scotland	Revised paper	NR
Staffing	Revised Structure	NR/DB/RE
Leasing of Vehicles / Photocopiers	Options Paper	RE
Video Conferencing	Paper on costs	RE
Annual Plan 2004/05	Revised Paper	RE

Minute of Meeting of Strategy Committee held on Wednesday, 12th November 2003

Attending: Prof. J Milne (Vice Chairman)
Mr. G Campbell
Mr. J Duncan Millar
Prof. S Walker

Dr. D Balharry (Technical Director)
Mr. R Edwards (Head of Administration)
Mr. M Davis (Deer Data Officer)
Ms S Dymond (Management Support Officer)

1 Opening Remarks

1.1 Mr Davis and Ms Dymond were welcomed to the meeting. Apologies were received from Mr. A Raven, Mr. J Mackintosh and Mr. N Reiter.

2 Minutes of last meeting held on 5th August 2003 Paper: S 48/2003

2.1 It was **agreed** that paragraph 11.2 of the Minutes be amended to 'It was noted that taking of wild deer was an issue in South Perthshire'.

Action: Head of Admin

2.2 Subject to the above amendment, the Minutes were **approved**.

3 Matters Arising Paper: S 49/2003

3.1 An oral update was provided on Damage Assessment Methodologies for Agriculture. It was **noted** that these methods had yet to be incorporated into DCS guidance on damage assessment. The Committee was advised that the essence of the proposed methodology would be that the presence of deer on agricultural land could be seen as 'likely to' cause damage and therefore there is no need to propose detailed assessment methodologies. To go down the route of detailed assessment would require a judgement as to significance of the damage which in turn would have to be related to the economic of the land holding i.e. 'means testing' for which the Act makes no provision.

3.2 The contents of Paper S49/2003 were **noted**.

4 Corporate Plan 2004 - 07 Paper: S 50/2003

4.1 The meeting considered a report by the Director.

4.2 It was **noted** that normally an early draft of the Corporate Plan for the next 3 years would be submitted to the Committee for consideration. However, the meeting **noted** that SEERAD had recently informed the Commission that the nature of Corporate Plans which the Scottish Executive would require from NDPBs was likely to change in that they would only be required to be produced every 3 years with no requirement for interim review or amendment. The plans would coincide with the Scottish Executive's 3-yearly Spending Reviews.

- 4.3 The meeting **noted** that the next Spending Review would begin in 2004 and DCS were now required to submit a revised Corporate Plan which would require to be slimmer, presented in a more integrated way and aimed specifically at informing the Spending Review.
- 4.4 Following discussion, it was **agreed** that the Corporate Plan be re-drafted in line with the new requirements from the Scottish Executive for circulation to Committee Members, by 21st November 2003, for comment in advance of submission to the DCS Board meeting on 9th December 2003.

Action: Director

5 Legislative Review

Paper: S 51/2003

- 5.1 The meeting considered a report by the Director containing SEERAD's formal response to the Commission's submission on the legislative review.
- 5.2 The meeting **noted** the response from SEERAD was much as expected in content.
- 5.3 It was **noted** that: -
- a) there is no intent for an early change to or replacement for Section 8 (although the door remained open);
 - b) the response specifically tasks DCS with proceeding with a formal consultation on close seasons as provided in Section 5(2) of the Act, as well as referring to our response to the present consultation on the Animal Welfare and Health Strategy;
 - c) with regard to exotic species, the response merely reflected ongoing action that DCS has been taking to establish whether the issue could be addressed through existing secondary legislative instruments;
 - d) the argument in favour of giving DCS development / grant giving powers was addressed by encouraging DCS to make use of Section 12, although there was no offer of additional resources. The letter also made mention of the incentives and regulations work DCS were engaged in with other organisations and
 - e) with regard to the provision of information, the letter reflected the helpful meetings DCS has had with relevant officials in the Scottish Executive that suggests, in particular, that DCS will be able to access sheep data at a reasonably useful level of detail.

- 5.4 Following discussion, the Committee **agreed** that:

a) **Close Seasons**

a draft consultation plan and timetable be submitted to the next DCS Board meeting for consideration prior to further consultation with SEERAD. During discussion, it was also **agreed** that that there was a need to gather data prior to going out to consultation. It was **agreed** that the Research Committee consider draft specifications for tenders on the information that required to be gathered at their meeting on 9th December 2003. Specifications would be prepared following

consultations with staff. The draft specifications would be put on the Agenda of the Deer Management Committee at their meeting in January 2004. And be approved by the next meeting of this Committee in February. Tenders would be sent out so that the work could start at the beginning of the next financial year. This would allow the gathering of data to be completed in order that the consultation document could be approved at the DCS Board meeting in September 2004. The consultation would start in October 2004 and be completed by March 2005.

b) Muntjac

work on using secondary legislation to put in place control systems for muntjac (and potentially other exotic species) should continue and the Deer Management Committee, in the first instance, be kept informed of developments.

c) Section 12 Schemes

DCS should continue to actively look at 2 potential Section 12 schemes, and seek additional resources in the current financial year to undertake them. However, it was noted that initial projections of expenditure for 2004 – 05 suggested that there was unlikely to be adequate resources to do much under Section 12 unless additional funding was forthcoming or other key tasks were postponed.

d) Additional Information

DCS should seek additional information (notably on sheep numbers) on a casework basis, and should monitor how well the data meets DCS needs. It was noted that DCS may need to return to this issue if practice reveals a continued deficit of information at a sufficient level.

Action: Director / Technical Director
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- 5.5 The meeting **noted** that the DCS submission and SEERAD reply would be included on the Agenda of the Deer Management Round Table meeting to be held on 4th December. It was **noted** that the purpose for including this item on the Agenda for this meeting was to members of the DMRT an opportunity to comment on developments.

6 Fencing Policy Update

Paper: S 52/2003

- 6.1 The paper before the meeting provided members with an update on the development of policy on deer fencing and the current version of the Strategy document..
- 6.2 It was **noted** that it was intended to present the policy to the Deer Management Round Table at their meeting on 4th December 2003.
- 6.3 The meeting also **noted** that comments had been received from John Muir Trust, RSPB, BASC, Rory Putman, BDS and SNH.

- 6.4 The paper also suggested items that could be included:
- (a) the pros and cons of strategic fencing,
 - (b) the pros and cons of permanent v temporary fencing and
 - (c) fencing specifications that satisfy the various requirements (safety, deer welfare, landscape visibility, etc), outlining the pros and cons of traditional HT wire net fences, plastic-coated netting or purely plastic HT netting.
- 6.5 During discussion, it was **agreed** that the document needed to be amended by revising the Background and Introduction sections and for the Strategy to include a simple categorisation of risk, a subsequent risk analysis and cost benefit analysis at a local level. It was also **agreed** that the document include a review process with a timetable for carrying out such reviews and suggestions made in the covering paper.
- 6.6 It was **agreed** that the Strategy must reflect the positions of all partners. A number of other amendments to the document were also **agreed**.
- 6.7 The Committee **agreed** that:
- a) a revised draft be issued to all Members for comment by 21st November 2003 prior to a further version being made for the matter to be discussed by the Deer Management Round Table on 4th December 2003;
 - b) the Technical Director discuss with SEERAD, SNH and FC the timetable for finalising the document;
 - c) a further version of the Strategy be prepared and issued to all Members for comment prior to discussion at the next meeting of the Strategy Committee and
 - d) a final version of the Strategy be prepared for discussion by the DCS Board at their meeting in March.

Action: Technical Director

7 Incentives & Regulations

Paper: S 53/2003

- 7.1 The Committee considered a paper, revised by the Technical Director, comprising the principles for applying generic guidance for staff of partnership organisations.
- 7.2 During discussion, it was **agreed** that there was still a need to improve clarity within the document and that a revised document should include more reference to FC and SEERAD. The Technical Director will agree a final version with Gerry Selkirk, SEERAD and Prof. Milne.
- 7.3 It was **noted** that a further workshop was to be held on 9th January 2004 when the implementing of the recommendations would also be considered.
- 7.4 The Committee **noted** progress to date and **agreed** that a progress report be submitted to the Strategy Committee for discussion at their meeting in February 2004 prior to discussion by the DCS Board in March 2004.

Action: Prof. Milne /
Tech Director

Action: Tech Director

8 Strategic Development of Partnerships

a) Meeting of DCS / SNH Liaison Group held on 11th September 2003 Paper: S 54/2003

8.1 The meeting considered the draft Note of the meeting.

8.2 It was **noted** that:

- a) SNH had not yet submitted a list of Sites for Assessment,
- b) FC had been asked to supply further information on the Sites for Assessment they had submitted
- c) RSPB had submitted a list and
- d) concerns had been submitted from a private individual.

8.3 The meeting **noted** the Minutes.

9 Research Update

a) Minutes of Research Working Group meeting held on 1st October 2003 Paper: S 55/2003

9.1 The meeting **noted** the Minutes.

9.2 The Committee also considered the Minutes of the Deer Research Co-ordination Committee held on 29th July 2003. During discussion, it was **agreed** that DCS members views be sought on future research priorities.

Action: Dr M Daniels

b) Projects Spreadsheet Paper: S 56/2003

9.3 The meeting **noted** the contents of the paper providing an update on research projects.

10 Responses / Draft Responses to External Consultations

a) List of External Communications received Paper: S 57/2003

12.1 The meeting **noted** the list of consultation documents received.

12.2 It was also **agreed** that future papers indicate:

- (a) the source of the document,
- (b) the title of the document,
- (c) the deadline date for response,
- (d) the level of response and who would approve the response,
- (e) officer responsible for preparing 1st draft,
- (f) date for internal approval and
- (g) date the response was issued.

Action: Management Support Officer

b) Draft Response to DEFRA Welfare Strategy

- 12.3 The Committee **agreed** the draft response subject to a minor amendment.

Action: Dr. M Daniels

11 Future Work Programme

Paper: S 59/2003

- 11.1 The Committee **agreed** the future work programme as outlined in the paper attached to these Minutes.

12 Any Other Business

- 12.1 There was no other business.

13 Date of Next Meeting

- 13.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 12th February 2004.

STRATEGY COMMITTEE
FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

STANDING ITEMS

- Apologies
- Minutes of last meeting
- Matters Arising
- Strategic Development of Partnerships
- Research Update
- Responses / Draft Responses to external consultations
- Future Work Programme

ITEM	DECISION REQUIRED	PAPER BY
Corporate Plan	2 nd Draft	NR
Incentives & Regulations	Progress Report	DB
Fencing	Progress Report	DB
Damage Assessment Methodologies	Progress Report	DB
Land Use Certification	Progress Report	DB