

Deer Commission for Scotland
294th Open Board Meeting on Monday 28th September 2009
Craignure Village Hall, Mull

Agenda

OPEN SESSION – 14:00

- | | | |
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| 1 | Apologies | |
| 2 | Draft Minutes of Meeting of held 9 th June 2009 | Paper: 294/1 |
| 3 | Matters Arising from Meeting held on 9 th June 2009 | Paper: 294/2 |

FOR DECISION

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------|--------------|
| 4 | Carbon Footprint Target | Paper: 294/3 |
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FOR DISCUSSION

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| 5 | Deer Around Scotland's Cities and Towns | Paper: 294/4 |
| 6 | Scotland's Wild Deer – A National Approach: Action Plan Update | Paper: 294/5 |

FOR NOTING

- | | | |
|----|--|---------------|
| 7 | Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill: Update on Consultation | Paper: 294/6 |
| 8 | DCS/SNH Proposed Merger: Update on Progress | Paper: 294/7 |
| 9 | Minutes of Meetings | |
| | a) Deer Management Committee
Draft Minutes of Meeting held 25 th August 2009 | Paper: 294/8 |
| | b) Strategy Committee
Draft Minutes of Meeting held 26 th August 2009 | Paper: 294/9 |
| | c) Resources & Audit Committee
Draft Minutes of Meeting held 26 th August 2009 | Paper: 294/10 |
| 10 | External Meetings Attended/to be Attended by
Chairman and Chief Executive | Paper: 294/11 |
| 11 | Any Other Business | |
| 12 | Date of Next Meeting (2 nd December 2009 – Inverness) | |

**Deer Commission for Scotland
293rd Open Board Meeting on Tuesday 9th June 2009
Craigendarroch Hotel, Ballater**

OPEN SESSION

Present: Prof J Milne (Chairman)
Dr A Barbour
Dr C Shedden
Dr P Mayhew
Mr A Hamilton
Mr S Pepper (Items 4 – 13 only)
Mr N Rowantree
Earl of Dalhousie
Dr S Walker
Sir Michael Strang Steel

Mr N Halfhide (Chief Executive)
Mr A MacGugan (Director of Stakeholder Relations)
Mr R Edwards (Head of Administration)
Mr R Kernahan (Director of Deer Management)
Ms K McNeil (Director of Policy, Projects and Research)

Mr R Burton (Scottish Natural Heritage)
Sir Patrick Hunter Blair (Scottish Natural Heritage)
Ms E Huddleston (Scottish Government)
Mr R Dunsmore (Forestry Commission Scotland)
Mr W Boyd Wallis (Cairngorms National Park Authority)

1. OPENING REMARKS

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed all present, in particular, Ms Erika Huddleston who was attending her first meeting of the Board. He also advised the meeting that Mr Dunsmore was attending his final meeting of the Board prior to retiring.
- 1.2 There were apologies from Prof. J Pemberton and Ms J O'Hara (Scottish Government).
- 1.3 There was one member of the public present.

2. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2ND MARCH 2009

Paper: 293/1

- 2.1 Members **approved** the minutes.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON 2ND MARCH 2009

Paper: 293/2

- 3.1 Members discussed progress in relation to the biodiversity targets. Nick Halfhide reported that the Steering Group, chaired by Mr Peter Russell, had met once and its role was to take an overview of progress towards the target and to consider future targets.
- 3.2 Members **noted** the contents of Paper: 293/2.

4 DRAFT ABSTRACT OF ACCOUNTS FOR 2008-2009 AND OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS Paper: 293/3

- 4.1 Nick Halfhide introduced the paper, providing Members with an overview of how well DCS performed in 2008/2009 against the targets agreed in the Annual Business Plan and sought their approval for the draft Abstract of Income and Expenditure for the financial year ending 31st March 2009.
- 4.2 The Resources and Audit Committee had discussed DCS' progress and achievements in 2008/2009 on 13th May 2009, and had recommended the draft Abstract to the Board for its approval.
- 4.3 Members discussed the summary of performance and congratulated the staff for their achievements.
- 4.4 Members **noted** that expenditure for 2008/09 amounted to £1,753,279 against a budget of £1,767,000, producing an underspend of £13,721. At 0.8%, this was well within DCS' target of spending within 2% of budget.
- 4.5 Members **approved** the draft Abstract of Accounts for submission to the Scottish Government for their approval and inclusion in the Annual Report for 2008/09.

Action: Raymond Edwards

5 CORPORATE PLAN 2008-2011: OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS AND SUGGESTED ADDITIONS Paper: 293/4

- 5.1 Nick Halfhide introduced the paper providing an overview of progress to date in achieving DCS' Corporate Plan for 2008-2011 and sought Members approval for suggested additions.
- 5.2 Members **noted** that significant progress had already been made in meeting the nine targets in the Plan, two of which had already been delivered through the advice to Government following the review of deer legislation, five were on track, and two (features on designated sites and reducing DCS' carbon footprint) had made considerable progress though they were unlikely to fully achieve their targets within the agreed timescale.
- 5.3 Members discussed the recommendations of the Strategy Committee and **agreed** the following additional target to the Corporate Plan:
- DCS should develop a new target for the Corporate Plan focusing on facilitating the development of local sustainable deer management. This could be delivered through a range of activities such as the development of the Code of Deer Management, improving measures within the SRDP, and providing more support to DMGs.
- 5.4 Members further **agreed** that three of the additional areas of work should be redrafted as follows (changes struck through or underlined):
- Promote the processing and consumption of Scottish venison in ~~Scotland~~ as a low-fat, local and healthy meat

- Increase the active management of roe and other deer species in and around Scotland's towns and cities, and where Deer Management Groups do not exist
- Increase awareness among the general public of the role and value of Scotland's wild deer in conjunction with other organisations

Action: Nick Halfhide

- 5.5 Members **agreed** that Andrew Barbour would lead a small group of Members and staff to scope the Code of Deer Management and report to the Board at their next meeting.

Action: Andrew Barbour

- 5.6 Members also discussed how best DCS could work with the deer sector to explore additional steps that DCS could undertake to stimulate economic activity. They agreed that in the first instance staff should explore further opportunities with existing groups, particularly the Scottish Country Sports Tourism Group and Wild Scotland.

Action: Katy McNeil

6 SCOTLAND'S WILD DEER: A NATIONAL APPROACH – ACTION PLAN AND MONITORING

Paper: 293/5

- 6.1 Katy McNeil introduced the paper drawing Members' attention to the finalised Action Plan and monitoring framework, and requesting their approval for the emerging indicators.
- 6.2 During discussion, Members offered the following comments on the indicators:
- S1: this indicator needs to distinguish between developing and implementing plans, and judge whether both are effective. The deer management changes proposed in the Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill may help to define this;
 - S4 and S16: these indicators still needs to be developed;
 - S17: is it possible to cross reference this indicator to speeding offences?
 - S18: this indicator requires further work to define what the exact measure should be; and
 - N3: this needs to be redrafted from a target to an indicator.
- 6.3 Subject to the consideration of the comments outlined above, Members **agreed** the indicators as set out in the paper.

Action: Katy McNeil

7 NATIONAL OVERVIEW OF WORK ON DESIGNATED SITES

- 7.1 Robbie Kernahan provided the meeting with a national overview of work on designated sites in the current joint working programme.

7.2 He reported that there were 63 joint working sites in the programme for 2009/10 and it was estimated that 93% of features would be in favourable condition by 2010. Members were advised that, although work on priority sites had begun some 6 – 7 years ago, it was only in the last 2 – 3 years that significant progress had been across a wide range of sites. This involved considerable time input from DCS, FCS, SNH and RPID.

7.3 During discussion, Members and staff made the following comments:

- All Deer Management Groups are affected to some degree by designated sites;
- It is still proving difficult to find accurate information about domestic stock on some sites;
- The cycle of Site Condition Monitoring is likely to highlight some features moving in and out of favourable condition status over time.
- It is a medium term aspiration to train estate staff to carry out more of their own monitoring work;
- Estates are increasingly seeing Section 7 Control Agreements as a positive tool to support collaborative deer management; and
- Work to bring features on designated sites affected by grazing has been a major focus for DCS' resources in recent years and is likely to continue as such beyond 2010.

7.4 Members thanked staff for their hard work in this area.

8 PROPOSED WILDLIFE AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BILL Paper: 293/6

8.1 Katy McNeil introduced the paper, providing Members with a progress report on the proposed Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill and seeking their views on the role of DCS during the forthcoming consultation.

8.2 She reported that the consultation was due to be launched in the week beginning 15th June 2009. As well as including all of the DCS proposals for reform of the deer legislation, the consultation would also seek views on reform of the game laws, invasive non-native species (including muntjac and refugia islands), species licensing, muirburn, and other issues including snaring.

8.3 The consultation would run until 4th September 2009 following which the Government would make decisions in the autumn about the legislative programme for the next Parliamentary session, and at this stage it would decide whether or not to proceed with the Bill, and which elements would be included. If Cabinet agreed that the Bill should be taken forward, the intention would be to introduce it in April 2010, to enable its full Parliamentary progress before the 2011 election. .

8.4 Members discussed the advice from Scottish Government on the role of DCS during the consultation. Members **agreed** that:

- Board Members and staff would ensure that they were aware of the contents of the consultation paper once it has been launched;

- In response to questions from stakeholders in the field/at events/meetings etc Board members and staff would discuss the proposals, explain the rationale, objectives, and options for implementation, and why DCS had made the recommendations that it had;
- They would explain that these proposals were being consulted on by Scottish Government, and that Ministers would take a view post consultation on which proposals would be included in a prospective Bill; and
- They would encourage as wide a response as possible.

8.5 The Chairman encouraged Members to attend as many Deer Management Group meetings as possible. Members **agreed** that the Chairman would confirm with Members the dates of forthcoming Deer Management Group meetings relevant to them and send these dates to Sir Patrick Hunter Blair (SNH).

Action: Robbie Kernahan

8.6 Members **agreed** that staff should prepare a briefing paper on the Bill for Members and that this should be circulated to SNH and FCS.

Action: Katy McNeil

8.7 Members **noted** the contents of the paper.

9 PUBLIC SERVICES REFORM (SCOTLAND) BILL

Paper: 293/7

9.1 Katy McNeil introducing the paper, informing Members of the introduction of the Public Service Reform (Scotland) Bill together with the likely timetable of its consideration by the Scottish Parliament.

9.2 Members **noted** that the Bill was introduced to Parliament on 28th May 2009 and provided for the transfer of the provisions of the Deer (Scotland) Act 1996 to SNH in their entirety, with the exception of those relating to the Board of the Deer Commission (which it abolishes), the annual report and accounts of DCS (as SNH will continue to produce a single Annual Report and Accounts) and funding (this will continue under the Natural Heritage (Scotland) Act 1991).

9.3 Members **noted** the contents of the letter received from the Minister for Environment in which she thanked the staff, Chairman and Board of DCS, both past and present, for the work they had been doing over the last thirteen years, and for the effort which the staff, Chairs and Boards of both DCS and SNH, were putting into making the merger of the two bodies a success.

10 MINUTES OF MEETINGS

a) Deer Management Committee Draft Minutes of Meeting held 12th May 2009

Paper: 293/8

10.1 Members **noted** the draft Minutes of the Deer Management Committee meeting held on 12th May 2009.

10.2 The Chairman drew Members' attention to the development of Section 7 Agreement at Scibberscross, and that FCS staff had carried out 60% of Authorisation site inspections during the previous year. Members expressed their appreciation to FCS staff for their assistance.

10.3 Colin Shedden noted that the number of firearms held on the firearms licences had increased by 4% between 2007 and 2008.

**b) Strategy Committee
Draft Minutes of Meeting held 13th May 2009 Paper: 293/9**

10.4 Members **noted** the draft Minutes of the Strategy Committee meeting held on 13th May 2009.

**c) Resources & Audit Committee
Draft Minutes of Meeting held 13th May 2009 Paper: 293/10**

10.5 Members **noted** the draft Minutes of the Resources and Audit Committee meeting held on 13th May 2009.

10.6 The Convenor of the Committee drew Members' attention to further work that staff were undertaking to help DCS meet its target of reducing its carbon footprint by 10% by 2011.

**11 EXTERNAL MEETINGS ATTENDED / TO BE ATTENDED BY
CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE Paper: 293/11**

11.1 Members **noted** the contents of the paper detailing external meetings attended, and to be attended, by the Chairman and Chief Executive.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 Members **agreed** that staff should circulate the report from the 'Climate Change Workshop' held on 30th March 2009 to Members as soon as it is ready, and they be advised when future reports are added to the DCS web site.

Action: Katy McNeil

12.2 The Chairman thanked Bob Dunsmore for his service to, and support for, DCS over many years.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13.1 The next meeting of the Board will be held on 28th September 2009 on Mull.

Matters Arising from Open Meeting of the Board of the Deer Commission for Scotland held on Tuesday, 9th June 2009

Prepared by: Nick Halfhide, Robbie Kernahan, Katy McNeil & Raymond Edwards

1. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to update members on matters arising from the meeting of the Board held on Tuesday, 9th June 2009.

2. Action

To note the following actions.

3. Matters Arising

4 Draft Abstract of Accounts for 2008-2009 and Overview of Achievements

4.5 The draft Abstract of Accounts was submitted and approved by Scottish Government subject to a minor amendment to the wording.

5 Corporate Plan 2008-2011: Overview of Progress and Suggested Additions

5.4 The Chairman and Chief Executive discussed the proposed changes to the Corporate Plan with the Scottish Government Sponsorship Team on 3rd August. Staff are currently considering a measurable target for local sustainable deer management with the Sponsorship Team to propose to Ministers.

5.5 The working group to scope the Code of Deer Management met on 17th August 2009. The Board will consider a paper in the Closed session.

5.6 Staff have discussed opportunities with Wild Scotland and the Country Sports Tourism Group on how DCS could work more closely with the deer sector to stimulate economic activity. A paper on these issues was discussed at the Strategy Committee meeting in August.

6 Scotland's Wild Deer: A National Approach– Action Plan and Monitoring

6.3 The comments raised by Board were considered, and WDNA indicators have now been published on the DCS website.

8 Proposed Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill

8.5 Members have been provided with dates for the forthcoming DMG Meetings.

- 8.6 An extensive briefing paper on the Bill was prepared for Members and sent out on 22nd June. It was also shared with SHN and FCS and placed on the DCS website.

12 Any Other Business

- 12.1 The report of the Climate Change Workshop was circulated to Members on 9th September and has been placed on the DCS website.

Carbon Footprint Target

Prepared by: Jessica Findlay, (Policy Officer)

1 Purpose

To seek the Board's approval to proposals to reduce DCS' carbon footprint further in 2009/2010.

2 Action

- To agree proposals to reduce DCS' carbon footprint further in 2009/10; and
- To note the on-going discussions to provide longer-term low carbon solutions to deliver DCS' functions;

3 Background

In 2008 DCS agreed a target in its Corporate Plan to reduce its carbon footprint by 10% by 2011 based on a 2007/2008 baseline.

This target was set against a backdrop of existing efforts to reduce carbon production. Building on an existing ethos of good environmental practice DCS began collating environmental data in 2004/2005. At the same time DCS adopted a more proactive approach to environmental management e.g., increased use of train, decrease in vehicle use, and water coolers removed from offices. This culminated in the evolution of a DCS Environmental Policy in 2006 which was revised in March 2009.

The Resources and Audit Committee considered progress in meeting the 2011 target and concluded that on current performance DCS was not on course to achieve this target. In response, the Committee set up a working group to consider further measures that could be adopted in the short term to reduce the three biggest carbon producing activities (GGH, cars, and helicopters), and to identify how to balance the carbon footprint target with the delivery of other Corporate Plan targets during 2010/2011 and beyond. The working group comprised John Milne (Chair), Andrew Hamilton, Simon Pepper, Nick Halfhide, Katy McNeil, Jessica Findlay and Donald Fraser.

4. Current Situation

To achieve the corporate carbon target DCS will have to reduce its annual carbon footprint from 165,000 kg CO₂ in 2008/2009 to 144,000 kg CO₂ by March 2011, a reduction of 21,000 kg CO₂. As an illustration this would equate to a reduction of approximately 55,000 vehicle miles over two years.

A breakdown of DCS' carbon footprint for 2008/2009 is at Annex 1. The the figures have recently been revised to take into account a more accurate method for calculating CO₂ produced by helicopters.

5. Short Term Solutions: Proposals for 2009/2010

The working group met on 14th September and agreed three proposals which would deliver further carbon reductions in the short term:

- GREAT GLEN HOUSE

Background - SNH calculates the DCS proportion of the carbon footprint of Great Glen House through the numbers of desks DCS occupies. Currently this stands at 24.

Proposal - The proposal is that DCS reduces the number of desks occupied from 24 to 20 from the end of September 2009. This would remove 3 hot desks and the Chief Executive's desk. Staff consider that occupancy of remaining desks will allow for most hot desking requirements, including that of the Chief Executive.

Potential Carbon Saving - This proposal is likely to represent a carbon saving of approximately 2,000kg CO₂ for 2009/10 and 4,000kg annually thereafter.

- TRAVEL

Background - Travel is one of the major sources of DCS' CO₂ emissions and whilst DCS has increased the proportion of journeys taken by train, there is potential to make further reductions in car travel to contribute to this target.

Proposal - DCS Board Members and staff who use a car as a part of DCS business should take responsibility for identifying public transport and travel sharing options, both with other members of the Board/staff and with other agency staff.

Potential Carbon Saving - This proposal is likely to reduce CO₂ by 500 - 1,000kg in 2009/2010 and 1,000-2,000kg annually thereafter.

- HELICOPTER COUNTS

Background - There are currently 13 helicopter counts in the 2009/10 count programme. 12 of these are on Joint Working sites and one is part of the Refugia Island Genetic Study.

Proposal - The proposal is to remove 3 counts from the 2009/10 Count Programme: Inverpolly, Ardvar, and Scarba and Garvellachs. This proposal is subject to discussions with the Section 7 Steering Groups for Inverpolly and Ardvar; and a consideration of the practicalities of carrying out a ground count on Scarba and the Garvellachs.

Potential Carbon Saving - This proposal could deliver up to a one-off saving of 8,500kg CO₂.

Taken together, these proposals have the potential to reduce DCS' footprint in 2009/2010 by up to an additional 11,500kg CO₂. This would put DCS on a more favourable course to meet the overall Corporate Plan target by March 2011.

6. Longer Term Proposals

In addition to these short term proposals, the working group has begun to consider other proposals to achieve the Corporate Plan target for 2011, and how deliver a low carbon deer function within the merged DCS/SNH organisation in the longer term.

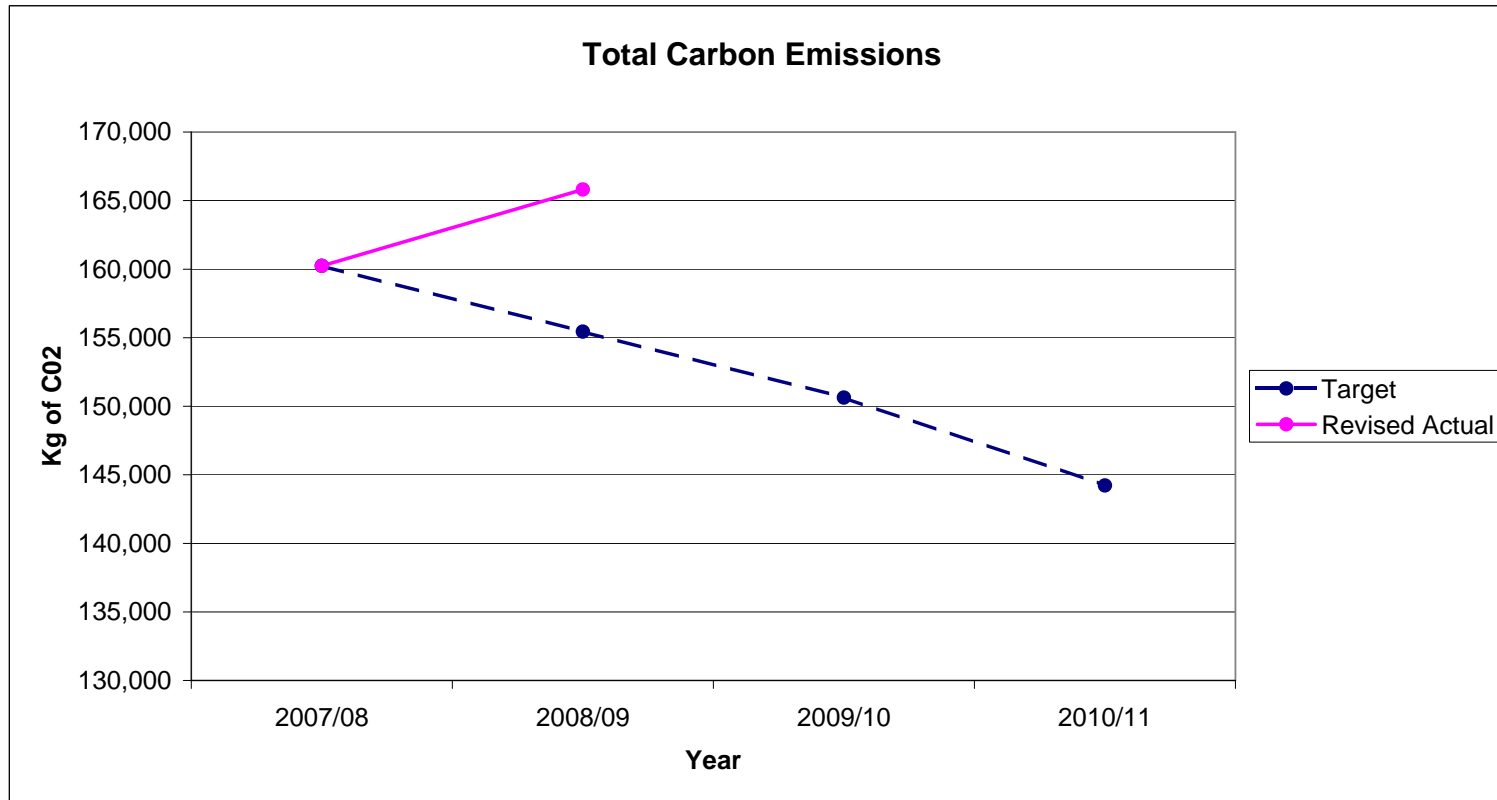
DCS is already facing difficult decisions as a result of the need to reduce its carbon footprint. These difficult decisions will only increase in 2010/11 and beyond. The working group proposal to develop a set of criteria to help the Board to balance the delivery of different Corporate Plan targets. This will be facilitated by including carbon assessments and budgeting in the Annual Business Plan for 2010/2011.

A key aspect of this work will focus on the count programme associated with the Joint Working sites. As the number of sites is set to increase, a more robust methodology will be needed to balance the requirements meeting biodiversity targets with the production of CO₂.

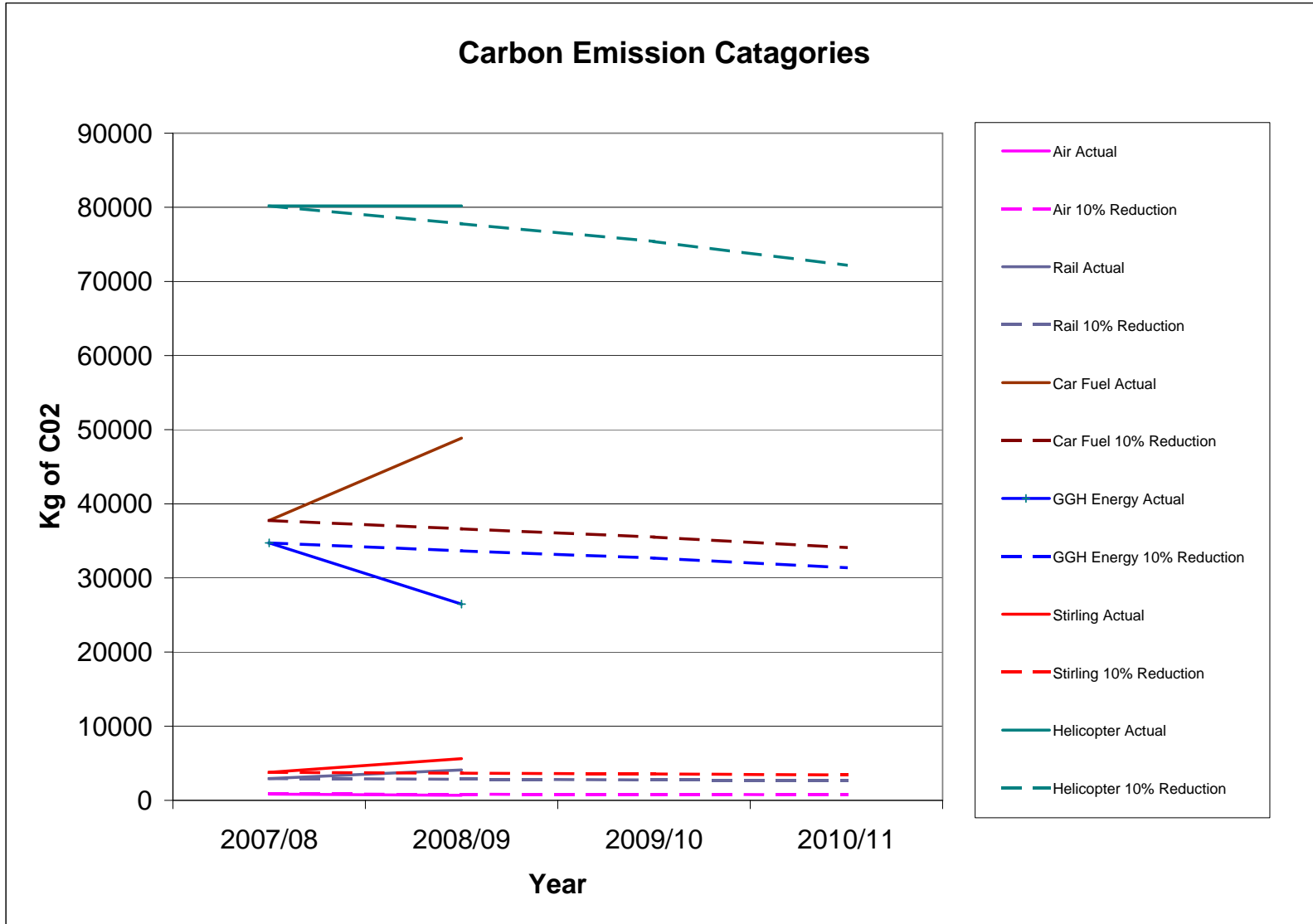
7. Next Steps

Subject to the views of the Board, staff will implement the proposals outlined under 5) above and the working group will bring further proposals to the Board in December.

	Target	Revised Actual	Original Actual	
2007/08	160,245	160,245	127,581	80,191
2008/09	155,438	165,812	133,148	47,527
2009/10	150,630			32,664
2010/11	144,221			



	Air Actual	Air 10% Reduction	Rail Actual	Rail 10% Reduction	Car Fuel Actual	Car Fuel 10% Reduction	GGH Energy Actual	GGH Energy 10% Reduction	Stirling Actual	Stirling 10% Reduction	Helicopter Actual	Helicopter 10% Reduction
2007/08	844	844	2,940	2,940	37,752	37,752	34,737	34,737	3,781	3,781	80,191	80,191
2008/09	682	819	4,096	2,852	48,858	36,620	26,477	33,659	5,624	3,667	80,191	77,785
2009/10			794			35,521		32,684		3,558		75,379
2010/11			762			34,100		31,376		3,415		72,172



Deer Around Scotland's Cities and Towns

Paper prepared by: Jamie Hammond (Deer Officer South)

1. Purpose

To generate discussion on the progress of work relating to deer in and around towns.

2. Action

- To note progress against the objectives outlined in the project plan as agreed by the Deer Management Committee in February 2009.

3. Background

Populations of deer in and around Scotland's towns and cities have been growing over a number of years, creating a range of issues in different areas. The issues raised are complex, and there has been a lack of effective management, primarily because of a lack of clarity over who should take responsibility. The increasing profile of these issues led to DCS organising the first urban deer seminar in January 2008.

Increasing deer populations in and around towns can have a positive impact on communities, increasing enjoyment of the outdoors, and may be seen as an indication of success in greenspace/woodland initiatives. However, there are also negative impacts, raising issues of public safety and deer welfare, both of which DCS has a duty to keep under review.

DCS' Corporate Plan for 2008-2011 contains a target to engage with all local authorities with significant peri-urban roe deer populations to encourage active planning for deer management by 2011; and in 2008, the DCS Board decided that a project should be developed to understand and tackle the issues.

Scotland's Wild Deer: A National Approach (WDNA) identifies managing the impacts of deer in and around communities as a key objective (5.3.c.). Local authorities and land managers do not currently have the tools required to tackle the issues, leading to potential conflicts and public safety issues.

The project will deliver the following actions in the WDNA Action Plan 2009/2010:

- Develop guidance on how to integrate deer into landscape planning in and around towns
- Review the impact of facilitated roe management on two sites in and around towns and identify any additional training needs

- Develop strategic planning to deal with the impacts of wild deer in and around communities

Through a number of different routes DCS is now engaging with Local Authorities and other decision-makers in the development of best practice, and the information gathered will increase the understanding of how we interact with deer in this environment.

Ultimately the project will help local managers and planners to develop appropriate methods of management by the provision of guidance on planning and design. This will ensure that deer management is fed into the strategic planning process for urban development and new woodlands in the relevant areas, and the positive impacts of such deer populations are maximised and the negative impacts minimised.

4. Progress

Progress to date is summarised below under the 4 deliverables identified in the project plan:

4.1 An assessment of the scale and productivity of deer populations in and around towns; and densities of these populations.

In order to allow accurate assessments to be made, in March 2009 DCS technical team carried out a number of different trials of equipment to ascertain which would be most fit for purpose for carrying out census work in this new environment. Night vision (NVG), thermal imaging (TI), and high resolution cameras were all tested both from land and helicopter-based units. The pros and cons and cost effectiveness of the different techniques were assessed over five nights.

Counting using existing DCS equipment in the form of NVGs remains the lowest cost option and gave a good baseline for establishing where deer are present and approximate numbers. Its use is still limited by topography and inability to see into woodland/vegetation and is relatively labour intensive.

Airborne counting was very effective at spotting deer particularly using a combination of TI and high resolution colour cameras and nearly all deer can be spotted providing there is an adequate heat signature. It also allows flying at lower altitude and thus increasing camera resolution. However the cost of this method in both money and carbon, and the need to comply with airspace regulations when flying over built up areas, makes this a less attractive option overall than ground-based counting.

A ground based TI camera had the ability to spot deer easily regardless of their location in cover or in the open and offers a big advantage over NVGs. The use of a DCS vehicle allows ease of mobility into most areas and flexibility on timing.

For this reason thermal Imaging (TI) was deemed the most appropriate method for data capture and further trials were carried out in August to test which specification offered features most suited for this type of survey work. DCS are now in the process of scoping the purchase of a TI camera to facilitate the progress of this work.

Part of the trial coincided with the requirement for Transport Scotland to assess the level of deer populations in the vicinity of the current M80 trunk road upgrade from Stepps to Haggs, and the subsequent risk that could be associated with Deer Vehicle Collisions (DVCs). Anecdotally the NE side of Glasgow is an area associated with increasing roe deer numbers - highlighted through reports from the public, evidence of DVCs and reports of wildlife crime and poaching. The TI camera in particular, when used both from a helicopter and vehicle, confirmed higher than anticipated numbers of roe deer in some areas. In conjunction with a GPS mapping system, maps were produced to identify localised hot spots and this information was used to inform both Transport Scotland and the contractors directly. In addition the maps have proved valuable evidence for capturing the attention of local authorities and recreational stalkers in the area.

DCS is currently exploring the usefulness of Distance Sampling as a technique for estimating deer densities. While this is recognised and used as the preferred method for assessing deer populations in typical commercial woodlands south of the border, questions remain as to its efficacy for census work in the type of the environment encountered in the Scottish lowlands. The numbers of roe observed in small areas within Glasgow city's limits imply density estimates <50 / 100Ha. It would subsequently be difficult to make management decisions based purely on this figure which, while high when compared to the traditional habitat context, could be acceptable for the urban fringe given the land use objectives. From a subjective point of view these deer did not appear stressed and had adapted well to living in small 1- 5 ha plots. A census to obtain a minimum count rather than a density count through distance sampling, as preferred by the Deer Initiative, may prove a more realistic and holistic way of estimating deer populations.

As well as building an accurate picture of roe deer distributions and densities in the lowland setting, a TI camera will be a useful tool to facilitate stakeholder engagement. It is hoped this will allow local authority staff to accompany DCS staff during census work. By exposing this new audience first hand to both the benefits and problems that deer bring, it will create a solid base of understanding to ensure that proactive measures are adopted in future. As a low ground count programme is developed it will be used in conjunction with the latest data from the DVC project. This will allow links to be made in the assessment of those deer populations in and around towns that could present a risk to public safety.

4.2 An understanding of the practical constraints of implementing management in and around towns and ensure deer management is carried out to the highest standards taking into account deer welfare and public safety.

DCS continues to be actively involved in advising on the deer management in the Mugdock Country Park (MCP) area. The winter of 2008/2009 saw a more

collaborative approach taken involving FE and land owned by the Scottish Wildlife Trust. In addition, several privately-owned properties were included within the Mugdock Country Park control area. East Dumbartonshire and Stirlingshire council have been involved in this process from the start and the success of this work was largely due to the close working relationship between the controller and MCP staff. Experiences from this management have allowed DSC to evaluate whether extra skills are required to undertake deer control in this setting. Specifically, key to the process are restricting deer control to times with lower public presence, and ensuring controllers are well verse in explaining and justifying deer control when challenged by the members of the public. After two years of active management in MCP, the number of DVCs has fallen and after a recent impact assessment, tree regeneration within the oak woodland is starting to show signs of recovery.

The Deer Officer south is working with three groups of stalkers in both North and South Lanarkshire and the Cumbernauld/NE Glasgow area, and to a lesser extent Fife. Through regular liaison, an improving picture of deer and deer management in the central belt area is being created. Information from individuals in the Cumbernauld area has pinpointed potential areas of concern for DVCs and issues relating to deer welfare. Fife has highlighted how difficult this collaboration can be where on overriding sporting interest - the pursuit of high quality medal heads - is creating a blockage.

In light of possible changes to deer legislation, and regular contact with DCS staff, local practitioners are looking to create deer management groups. This is occurring in areas not typically associated with a collaborative approach to deer management. In order to disseminate knowledge on best practice and the more specialist knowledge that may be required to manage deer in potentially challenging situations, a tailor made one-day best practice event is being scoped for the central belt stalkers. In conjunction with FCS and FE this will look to promote BPG in a geographical area new to DCS. It will also allow DCS to start its audit of the skills set present and identify additional training needs if required.

In July 2009 the Deer Officer south was approached by Central Scotland Police to help resolve issues emerging from legitimate deer management conflicting with public access and local residents in Candie woods on the outskirts of Falkirk. Deer management within the 100 ha privately-owned commercial woodland, with actively encouraged public access, had led to many formal complaints being made, and a petition led by the community council and horse riders association. Following a site visit, and meetings with owners, police and complainers, a solution was found to enable deer management to continue in such a way as to allow public access to continue and reduce perceived risks to public safety. This included increasing lines of communication between involved parties, controlled use of high seats, use of sound moderators and signage. The key to success in these types of scenarios is reasoned explanation and the demonstrable skills of the operators. Honest and open discussion with owners ensures they are aware of their responsibilities and this can enable deer management to take place in what are perceived to be difficult situations. The complainers at this site only needed reassurance that the controllers were competent, knew what they were doing and "would not shoot them".

4.3 Raised awareness with key decision makers and stakeholders to enable a better understand the impacts of wild deer in and around towns by 2011.

The Deer Officer south has had dealings with 10 local authorities in areas where roe deer in particular have been flagged up for a particular reason. The following gives a flavour of the type of issues addressed.

- May 2009: DCS organised a meeting between West Lothian Council and East Dumbartonshire/Stirlingshire Councils. Internal staff changes within West Lothian Council identified the need for a review of deer and deer management for its country parks - in particular for Beecraigs and Ravenscraig country parks. Advice and lessons learned from deer management at Mugdock Country Park has allowed West Lothian to start developing its own deer management plan which at this stage will review how management is approached at Beecraigs with scope for more at Ravenscraig country park. In particular West Lothian were interested as to how to broach the subject internally amongst councillors but also to inform the public and deal with media attention if it arises.

- July 2009: DCS met with Ian Gibson, the senior ecologist in the sustainable development unit for Glasgow City Council (GCC). This began to explore significant differences in attitudes towards deer and deer management, particularly lethal control. The council confirmed they would be keen to participate and facilitate future census work on local authority owned land in the Glasgow area but that the control of deer was contradictory to their objectives for country parks.

- August 2009: East Lothian Council came under pressure from local residents over the negative impacts of roe deer on private gardens and a perceived DVC risk. DCS facilitated Council liaison with Archerfield Estate, Gullane. It emerged that due to increased property development in the area, the estate recognised that deer displacement was becoming an issue. Consequently a deer management plan was devised and an increased cull carried out. This information has been shared with the Council and this has reassured them that steps were being taken to mitigate the negative deer impacts. However while East Lothian Council were content that deer management was a necessity, and happy for it occur on neighbouring private land, they remain nervous about instigating lethal control on their own property.

- DCS staff continue to work closely with SSPCA and regional wildlife crime teams to monitor incidences of wildlife crime, particular those associated in and around urban areas. Press coverage of such events can act as a catalyst for the engagement with some local authorities.

The final draft of the peri-urban deer project was completed by Forest Research in July 2009. Its findings provide a useful starting point in how to approach the subject of deer and deer management in what is essentially a new and developing environment. Some of its conclusions are as follows:

Deer-people interactions in this environment are varied, complex and widely distributed. Seeing deer and sharing the environment with deer are clearly highly valued by community members in and around towns in Scotland. Other values, particularly economic and ecological ones, are considered less important and relevant to these communities. The research suggests that there is a significant need to pro-actively manage deer-people interactions so as to capture more value, thus broadening the traditional concept of deer management considerably.

The communities in and around towns of the central belt register very little negative impact upon themselves from wild deer. The negative impacts upon the welfare of deer living in this environment are considered of far greater significance. Of particular concern is the vulnerability of deer to deliberate acts of cruelty, and there exists a strong demand for management action to address this. The occurrence of road-traffic accidents involving deer is considered serious and management responses would be required. This is work that will be addressed through the public safety project plan.

In simple terms deer are very much seen as a benefit to people and if particular situations do arise whereby people are having negative impact on deer or vice versa, then action is to be encouraged. As laid out in the project plan this very much follows the train of thought that communication and education are key to this process. There is now scope to expand on the ideas first developed in the peri-urban project. The decision making framework could establish what criteria are necessary to instigate appropriate action.

4.4 Guidance for Local Authorities and other urban deer managers on landscape planning, design and prescriptive deer management by 2011.

Ongoing discussion with local authorities and planners is helping to identify where knowledge is weak and what information is required by decision makers. Depending on the situation this could consist of simple information on deer ecology and behaviour, to more prescriptive advice on habitat or road design. At this stage there is a preference for advice that takes this format. However in the longer term there will be a requirement for specific guidance for lethal control in urban situations. This guidance will build on the lessons learned from MCP and the challenges that were faced. Other agencies including FCS, SNH and Transport Scotland will help develop this guidance.

As discussed previously, DCS has already played an active role in advising on the development of the 17 km stretch of the M80 corridor from Stepps to Hags on the NE side of Glasgow. Prescriptive advice has been given on road, fence and habitat design, including fence specifications and placement, palatability of tree and grass species and vegetation management and verge spacing. This advice will help mitigate the risk of DVCs on this major trunk route.

Further guidance has been given to both Falkirk Council and North Lanarkshire Council on DVC mitigation for roads within their jurisdiction.

5. Looking forward

The current DCS work programme in the south, and proposed changes to deer legislation, has spurred practitioners in some areas to reconsider deer management and think about how they may join forces to promote longer term sustainable deer management. The main drivers of this have been to protect their own sporting interests and look to being first in line to embrace the new opportunities that could arise. Several groups of individuals are looking for recognition and exploring ideas as to how best to meet the new challenges.

They are looking to DCS to provide guidance. The development of the Code of Practice for Deer Management needs to take account of the different issues raised in this type of landscape. This project will inform what will need to be contained in the Code, and what should be covered in guidance.

If local authorities are expected to deliver a duty of managing deer responsibly, then the continued communication between DCS and decision makers will remain crucial. DCS continues to identify the issues but now some solutions need to be proposed. Those blockages that have been identified, often through a fundamental difference in opinion, will need to be tackled. It is evident that clear lines of communication are needed if the need for deer management is to be understood.

First and foremost local authorities need to be aware of their responsibilities as owners of land where deer reside. This is an area that the Code of Practice has a key role in defining. The objectives for that land must be identified and measured against any impacts that deer could be having. Much of the research has shown that deer are seen as an overriding positive and therefore if action by lethal control is proposed all other options must be considered before local authorities are satisfied. The resolution of particular problems at particular times with particular solutions will require careful thought and planning if they are to succeed. Unless deer are identified as a specific problem, it is envisaged that the bulk of the work will be the continued promotion of the positive interactions between deer and people.

6. Discussion

Members are invited to consider the following the issues:

- 1) The usefulness of counting in the low ground setting as a way to obtain accurate data on deer populations and its role as a PR and policy making tool.
- 2) Ideas on how to encourage accountability and collaboration for smaller land holdings in the central belt.
- 3) How to engage with local authorities through single outcome agreements.

Scotland's Wild Deer: A National Approach - Action Plan Update

Prepared by: Jessica Findlay, (Policy Officer)

1. Purpose

To note progress in Quarter 1 on 'Scotland's Wild Deer: A National Approach' (WDNA) Action Plan and to discuss the way ahead for refreshing the Action Plan to cover the period 2010-2013.

2. Action

- To note Quarter 1 progress on delivering the WDNA Action Plan; and
- To discuss the proposals for developing a set of detailed actions for 2010/2011 and outline actions for 2011/2013.

3. Background

The WDNA Action Plan 2009-2011 went live on the DCS website at the beginning of April 2009. The actions identified in this plan are being delivered through a collective effort from agencies and stakeholders. A progress report on Quarter 1 is set out in Annex 1. In brief this progress report shows that 11% of actions have been achieved, 84% of actions are on track, and 5% are not on track.

4. WDNA Action Group

'Scotland's Wild Deer: A National Approach' was developed through a Steering Group of agency representatives with input from a stakeholder Advisory Group. In recognition of the transition from strategic development to implementation it was decided to form a WDNA Action Group, representing those organisations responsible for the delivery of practical actions on the ground. The Terms of Reference are set out in Annex 2.

Process for Identifying New Actions

An inaugural meeting of the WDNA Action Group is scheduled for 23rd October 2009. Invitations have been circulated to FCS, SNH, SG, ADMG, BASC, CNPA, LLTNPA, CSTG, BDS and Lantra.

The purpose of the first meeting of the Action Group will be to scope and identify detailed actions for 2010/2011 and outline actions for 2011/2013. The meeting will focus on the 7 themes¹ within the Action Plan and will draw on the outline actions in the 2009/2011 Action Plan and on the actions and objectives in the WDNA. The objectives are contained in Annex 3 for ease of reference.

The actions for 2010/2011 will be confirmed and refined during agency annual planning processes and through other stakeholder approval mechanisms. A second meeting of the WDNA Action Group will take place towards the end of Quarter 4 2009/2010. The purpose of this meeting will be to produce an annual

¹ These are effective mechanisms for delivering sustainable deer management, wild deer welfare, sustainable economic development, environmental quality and biodiversity, climate change and research, social well-being, and raising awareness.

progress report on the 2009/2010 actions together with a 'refreshment' of the Action Plan covering the period 2010-2013 which will set out the context of the agreed detailed and outline actions.

Mechanisms for Collaboration - 'Collaborative Portal'

In recognition of the need to encourage and facilitate a collaborative approach to reporting on and refreshing actions we have developed a web based collaborative 'portal' (Sharepoint). This allows key agency and stakeholder contacts to input details on progress on a quarterly basis and will also enable a collaborative approach to developing the refreshed plan. The site will also act as an effective communication tool between meetings.

5. Discussion

Many of the actions for 2010-2013 are likely to continue and develop existing work. These projects, along with new initiatives, are likely to be influenced by the following key drivers:

- The Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill
- Implementation of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act including the development of a Land Use Strategy
- Reduced public sector resources
- Development and implementation of the new Wildlife Management Programme with SNH

Members are invited to discuss their priorities for the implementation plan in 2010-2013.

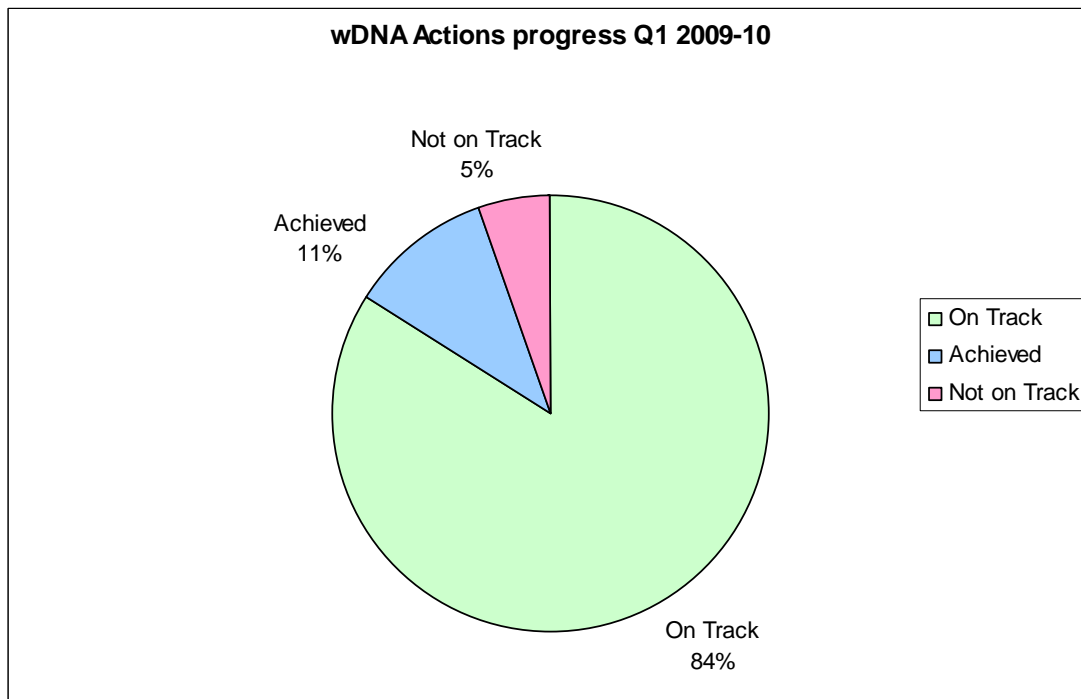
6. Next Steps

Quarterly progress reports will be produced and a link to them on the Sharepoint site will be circulated to the Strategy Committee Members. This will take the form of a highlight report which will focus on exceptional reporting i.e. will highlight any risks (actions not on track) and set out how we intend to address these.

Staff will present a draft Action Plan for 2010-2013 for the Board's consideration early in 2010.



Progress Report on wDNA Actions – Q1 2009-10

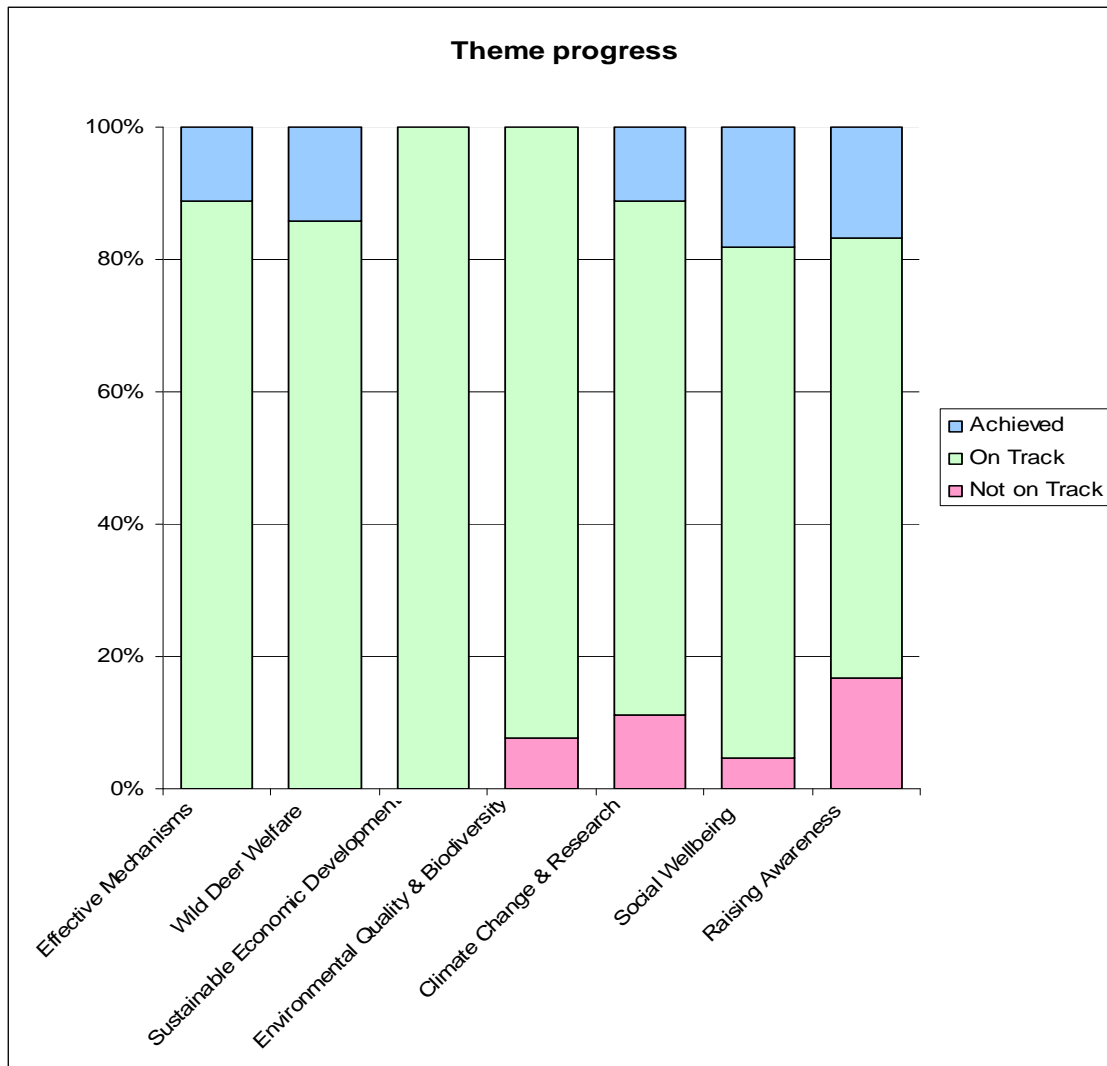


Actions Achieved

1 - Effective Mechanisms	6.4.1.1.1	Set up a 4th Case Study	Fourth Case Study set up in South Perthshire DMG, interviews have been completed and a summary report is being compiled
2 - Wild Deer Welfare	6.4.2.4.1	Publish a Responsibility Framework for Peri-urban deer	The terminology has been changed from "Responsibility Framework" to "Decision Support Framework". This work stream has been captured within a broader project titled: 'The management of roe deer in peri-urban Scotland'. The final report has now been approved
5 - Climate Change and Research	6.1.3.1.1	Climate Change Seminar	
6 - Social Well-being	6.3.1.2.2	Website on country sports	www.countrysportscotland.com went live 4/7/09. The next phase will look at further ongoing development, marketing and funding for sustainability of the site.
6 - Social Well-being	6.3.2.2.4	Road awareness campaign	Campaign using VMS signs targeted in areas associated with juvenile roe deer dispersal ran successfully in April / May 09. a second campaign aimed at upland deer is scheduled for October 09
6 - Social Well-being	6.4.4.2.2	Royal Highland Show	Material produced for display boards that promoted the benefits that deer can bring to the outdoor experience and general wellbeing.
6 - Social Well-being	6.4.4.3.2	Roe management on 2 sites	Mugdock Country Park area Candie woods Falkirk Specific advice given on deer management in high public access areas.
7 - Raising Awareness	6.4.4.1.1	Publish social research into perceptions of peri-urban deer	This work stream has been captured within a broader project titled: 'The management of roe deer in peri-urban Scotland'. The final report has now been approved



Progress Report on wDNA Actions – Q1 2009-10



Actions not on track

4 - Environmental Quality & Biodiversity	6.1.1.1.2	Ensure deer interests are represented at local biodiversity groups	Deer Interests are represented on the National Ecosystem groups for both uplands and woodlands - but involvement of deer interests on the local biodiversity groups is less clear.
5 - Climate Change and Research	6.4.3.3.1	Disseminate current / published deer research	As published research posted onto web. Slight delay in other agency postings as recruit new research officer.
6 - Social Well-being	6.3.1.2.1	Eco schools and community chests	No work as of yet planned. Awaits the appointment of Information and Events Officer.
7 - Raising Awareness	6.4.4a	Seminar for SEARs staff on wDNA links with SRDP	Not yet planned



WILD DEER NATIONAL APPROACH (WDNA) ACTION GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1 Purpose

The purpose of the WDNA Action Group will be to develop practical actions to deliver the WDNA and oversee annual reporting of these actions.

2 Scope

2.1 The WDNA Action Group will consider all issues/opportunities relating to the practical implementation of the WDNA and any issues/opportunities arising from implementation of these actions.

3 Remit

3.1 The WDNA Action Group will provide the following:

- 3.1.1 Expertise to develop practical actions to deliver the WDNA objectives and vision
- 3.1.2 A central point of reference for national deer activities related to the delivery of the WDNA
- 3.1.3 Opportunities for stakeholder liaison and stakeholder leadership
- 3.1.4 Contributions to annual progress reports on WDNA actions
- 3.1.5 Input to annual WDNA Action Plans

3.2 Final approval for finalising the WDNA Action Plans will be the responsibility of DCS.

4 Membership

4.1 Membership is likely to include representatives from the following:

- 4.1.1 Agencies including FCS, SNH, DCS and SG
- 4.1.2 Deer sector
- 4.1.3 NGOs
- 4.1.4 Community/Membership groups

4.2 Membership will be flexible to reflect annual priorities.

4.3 The WDNA Action Group will be chaired by DCS.

5 Process

5.1 The WDNA Action Group will meet bi-annually. In instances where sudden pressing changes in circumstances (i.e. a sudden change in government priorities) result in the need for additional discussion this will be undertaken through email correspondence.

5.2 The WDNA Action Group will proceed as follows:

5.2.1 Draft agenda circulated 2 weeks prior to each meeting

5.2.2 Agenda items will be agreed by all members

5.2.3 Core agenda will include reports on progress with existing actions and consideration of proposals for new actions

5.2.4 Minutes of meetings will be circulated to all members for approval

6 Communication

6.1 Communication is key to the success of the WDNA Action Group. The WDNA Action Group will facilitate the following lines of communication:

6.1.1 Between agencies

6.1.2 Between agencies and the deer sector

6.1.3 Between members of the deer sector

6.1.4 Between community groups, NGOs, membership organisations and the above

6.2 Communication to the deer sector (outwith group membership) will utilise pre-existing forums, meetings, groups and other communication channels e.g. DMRT.

7 Merger

7.1 The WDNA Action Group will continue after the merger of DCS and SNH. The terms of reference will be updated post merger to reflect the new structure and processes of the merged organisation.

Scotland's Wild Deer: A National Approach

Objectives

1. CONTRIBUTING TO A HIGH QUALITY, ROBUST AND ADAPTABLE ENVIRONMENT
 - Safeguard the welfare of all species of wild deer
 - Minimise the further spread of non-native deer species in Scotland
 - Secure the favourable condition of features in designated sites
 - Conserve and enhance biodiversity in the wider countryside
 - Maintain the integrity of natural processes
 - Help tackle and adapt to the effects of climate change
 - Conserve and enhance the cultural and historic environment

2. CONTRIBUTING TO SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
 - Increase the economic opportunities associated with wild deer
 - Minimise the economic costs attributable to wild deer
 - Develop the market and supply chain for venison
 - Contribute to the social and economic development of communities
 - Ensure the skills and knowledge required to manage deer as an integral part of Scotland's natural resources

3. CONTRIBUTING TO SOCIAL WELL-BEING
 - Increase participation in management and enjoyment of wild deer
 - Contribute to a safe and healthy environment for people
 - Manage the impacts of wild deer in and around communities
 - Integrate opportunities for outdoor recreation
 - Promote venison as a healthy food

Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill: Update on Consultation

Prepared by: Katy McNeil, (Director of Deer Policy, Projects and Research)

1. Purpose

To provide Members with a progress report on the proposed Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill.

2. Action

To note progress to date and the next steps.

3. Background

The Scottish Government launched the consultation on the Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill on 15 June and the consultation closed on 4 September 2009. The consultation included all of the recommendations of the DCS Review of Legislation which was submitted to Ministers in January 2009.

4. Consultation responses

The Scottish Government has received around 450 responses to the consultation to date. These will be made public in due course. The responses are being analysed in detail and this report is expected during the autumn.

It is our understanding that, although there are some high profile dissenting responses, for the most part, the duty to manage deer is supported, subject to satisfactory definition, as are improvements to the backstop deer management powers. A compulsory demonstration of competence is not supported by sporting and landowning interests, but supported by animal welfare, environmental and public sector respondents.

5. Next Steps

The Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill was announced as part of the Scottish Government's forward legislative programme on 3 September 2009. The detail which was included with this announcement is attached as an Annex. The Bill has not yet been timetabled in detail, but introduction is expected by the middle of 2010.

The Scottish Cabinet will be asked to make decisions on the draft content by the end of the year. During the period between now and then, Scottish Government colleagues will be giving regular advice to Ministers on the options for the content of the Bill. This may include advising on changing or removing some elements which were contained in the consultation. DCS may be asked to advise officials during this period, helping to develop detail and advising on the impact of alternatives.

2009-2010: Summary of Bill – Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill

The Scottish Government will introduce legislation ensuring wildlife and natural environment legislation is efficient, effective and proportionate, supporting sustainable economic activity, particularly in the countryside.

The consultation on a draft Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill ends on September 4, 2009 after which Ministers will make final decisions on content. The Bill is expected to be introduced to Parliament in Spring 2010.

The Bill will be a wide-ranging piece of legislation modernising outdated statute and addressing anomalies and weaknesses in current laws. It will reduce regulatory burdens while helping to protect and enhance the natural environment for future generations.

The Scottish Government is keen for legislation relating to natural heritage to be fit for purpose, support sustainable economic development, deliver public benefit and to be able to react to changing circumstances. Proposals include:

- A package of measures for improved deer management
- Modernisation and deregulation of game law (relating to game birds and ground game) currently dating back to the 19th century, making it more efficient and effective
- Creating a more robust framework in relation to the keeping, release and control of invasive non-native species
- Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of species licensing administration
- Enabling greater flexibility in how muirburn (controlled burning of heather, grass and other moorland) is carried out
- Addressing anomalies in badger protection legislation
- Implementing Ministerial commitments on snaring, including a tough new accreditation scheme for those who set snares
- Changes to the technical operation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) legislation

DCS/SNH Proposed Merger: Update on Progress

Prepared by: Nick Halfhide, (Chief Executive)

1. Purpose

To provide Members with an update on the proposed DCS/SNH merger.

2. Action

To note progress on the proposed merger.

3. Public Sector Reform (Scotland) Bill

Stage 1 of the Scottish Parliament's consideration of this Bill has now begun. The Chairman, along with Ian Jardine of SNH, Duncan Orr-Ewing of Environment LINK, and Robert Balfour of ADMG, gave oral evidence to the Rural Affairs and Environment Committee on 16th September. We expect the Stage 1 debate to take place in the Chamber before the Christmas break.

4. Merger Programme

The merger programme continues to make good progress in preparing for the proposed merger. As part of this, Management Team held a workshop for all DCS staff in Stirling on 13th August to provide information on staffing structures, learn tools to deal with the change, and identify the strengths of DCS that we wish to retain through the merger.

Whilst the merger is still subject to the will of Scottish Parliament, in July, the Programme Board approved the creation of two new Units within SNH; and the creation of a Wildlife Management Programme. The allocation of posts within these two units has commenced and affected staff in DCS and SNH have met individually with SNH HR and will soon be assigned to posts within the new Units or other parts of SNH as appropriate. DCS assignments will formally take effect from the start of the merger. Following the completion of the assignment process, SNH will begin to recruit among SNH and DCS staff to vacant posts within the two new units.

Plans are being developed for the transfer of the DCS Board Members' workload, skills and expertise to the merged organisation, including the creation of a Deer Advisory Panel.

Other parts of the merger programme continue to develop. There is particular emphasis at the moment on cleansing and reorganising DCS' electronic information so that it is compatible with SNH's system.

5. Next Steps

The estimated date for merger with SNH remains 1st July 2010.

The Programme Merger Board is next due to meet early in the New Year to take stock of the progress of the Public Sector Reform (Scotland) Bill and on-going work in SNH and DCS to prepare for merger.

**Draft Minutes of Meeting of Deer Management Committee
held on 25th August 2009**

Attending: Earl of Dalhousie (Convenor)
Prof J Milne
Dr C Shedden
Dr P Mayhew
Dr A Barbour
Mr N Rowantree
Sir Michael Strang Steel

Mr N Halfhide (Chief Executive)
Mr R Kernahan (Director of Deer Management)
Ms K McNeil (Director of Policy, Projects & Research)
Mr R Edwards (Head of Administration)
Mr I Hope (Deer Officer)
Mr D Fraser (Deer Officer)
Mr J Hammond (Deer Officer)
Mr G Taylor (Deer Officer)
Mr J Irvine (Deer Support Officer)
Mr R Rose (Collaborative Project Officer)

Observers

Mr R Burton (SNH)

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 There were apologies from Alastair MacGugan, James Scott, Sinclair Coghill and Sir Patrick Hunter Blair (SNH).

**2. DRAFT MINUTES OF DEER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEEMEETING HELD ON
12TH MAY 2009 Paper: DMC 20/2009**

2.1 Members **agreed** to amend paragraph 12.1 to read:

‘Colin Shedden reported that the number of firearm licences issued during 2008 in Scotland had been announced earlier in the day. This had increased by 1% since 2007 to 26,500, and the number of rifles as a proportion of these had increased by 4%.’

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

Action: Raymond Edwards

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM DEER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 12TH MAY 2009 Paper: DMC 21/2009**

Scibbercross Section 7

3.1 Robbie Kernahan advised Members that a draft Section 7 Agreement should be available for consideration by mid-September 2009.

Upper Deeside

3.2 Donald Fraser reported that the agencies were on course to have management agreements in place for Upper Deeside by April 2010.

3.3 Members **noted** the contents of the paper.

4 DEER COUNTING PROTOCOL

Paper: DMC 22/2009

4.1 Robbie Kernahan introduced the paper updating Members on DCS' counting policy and the processes in place to determine the annual count programme.

4.2 During discussion, the following points were made:

- counting techniques have evolved in recent years through using new camera technology, GPS and GIS systems and integrating this technology with the use of helicopters, and would continue to evolve in the future;
- the proposed policy was a refinement of an existing policy rather than a new one;
- the policy need to state more clearly what was meant by the phrase 'negative impacts on the public interest';
- a count area could extend over more than one Deer Management Group;
- whilst the revised policy would guide the count programme for 2010-2011, there was a need to review the count programme for 2009-2010 to explore opportunities for carbon savings;
- given the high carbon cost of counting, the Board needed to be more closely involved in agreeing the details of future counts; and
- the link between estimating regional trends and the range and frequency of publicly-funded counts needs to be clarified.

4.3 Members agreed to consider a redraft of the policy, taking these comments into account, at their next meeting.

Action: Robbie Kernahan

5 DILG UPDATE

Paper: DMC 23/2009

5.1 Robbie Kernahan introduced the paper providing Members with an overview of progress on the Joint Working programme.

5.2 Members **noted** that progress on the individual sites within the programme continued broadly in accordance with the associated project plans; and that staff estimated that the number of features affected by wild deer in 'favourable' or 'recovering' condition will increase to 93% during 2009/10.

5.3 Members discussed progress on individual sites and made the following comments:

Mar Lodge

- The Estate and agencies aim to agree a woodland management plan this winter, supported by a deer management plan;

- Discussion of a Section 7 agreement to support this deer management plan was premature as the Board had yet to consider this; and
- Better dialogue is required with neighbouring estates and the local communities to take account of their concerns including the benefit of deer to tourism businesses.

Rum

- Staff had contributed to the revised National Nature Reserve plan for the island; and
- Staff had suggested that consideration be given to managing the goat population.

Glenfeshie

- The current Section 7 agreement is due to end in June 2010;
- There has been good regeneration of seedlings in the last 2/3 years – seedlings are taller and more numerous;
- Discussions are on-going with the Estate to secure this investment once the Section 7 agreement ends and to integrate it with work across the wider Cairngorms SAC;
- Staff are discussing a Communications Plan with the Estate for the end of the Section 7 Agreement; and
- Staff are discussing with the Estate and other agencies how best to rationalise future monitoring and include other qualifying SAC habitats.

5.4 Members discussed progress on those sites listed in Annex 2 which are currently not part of the Joint Working Process, and agreed that staff undertake further analysis of their status for the next meeting.

Action: Robbie Kernahan

6 SITE DISCUSSIONS: STRATHGLASS

Paper: DMC 24/2009

6.1 Graeme Taylor provided an overview on the issues surrounding the Strathglass Complex SAC.

6.2 During the discussion, Members made the following comments:

- One of the roles of DCS is to help deer managers to focus their activities to implement agreed Deer Management Plans;
- DMGs in this area were historically proactive but there were some difficulties in working across sub-groups;
- DCS should consider greater involvement at an earlier stage in guiding the development of plans;
- DMGs should be encouraged to review their existing plans to move beyond preventing damage to realising favourable condition. Only if this

failed to produce better plans should DCS consider a Section 7 agreement;

- Achieving a plan to return blanket bog on the site to favourable condition is likely to be challenging, and different approaches to this will need to be considered;
- The next step is to meet with the estates to discuss the monitoring results.

7 OVERVIEW OF SCOTTISH RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (SRDP)

Paper: DMC 25/2009

- 7.1 Robbie Kernahan provided Members with an update on progress with SRDP together with information on options which may be currently considered by deer managers and those that are being developed for future years.
- 7.2 Members **noted** the content of the paper and offered their support for the proposed new planning measure for upland habitat management plans under the SRDP as an important tool to support the achievement of the National Performance Indicator 37.

8 CASE STUDIES ON LOCAL SUSTAINABLE DEER MANAGEMENT:

PROGRESS UPDATE FOR MAY – JULY 2009

Paper: DMC 26/2009

- 8.1 Ronnie Rose introduced the paper informing Members on the progress of the Case Studies Project on Local Sustainable Deer Management.
- 8.2 Members **noted** the contents of the paper including the Private Sector Summary Reports for South Perthshire DMG and also a NGO/Agency Summary Report.
- 8.3 Members discussed the value of a case study considering roe deer management in an agricultural context and **agreed** that staff should consider further. This might include contacting the emerging lowland deer management groups, SAC advisors, and farming groups.

Action: Robbie Kernahan

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 There was no other business.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 10.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held in the Atholl Palace Hotel, Pitlochry on 2nd November 2009 – *tbc*.

Draft Minutes of Meeting of Strategy Committee held on 26th August 2009

Attending: Mr S Pepper (Convenor) – Items 1 – 6 and 8 only
Prof J Milne
Dr A Barbour
Mr A Hamilton
Dr S Walker

Mr N Halfhide (Chief Executive)
Mr R Kernahan (Director of Deer Management)
Ms K McNeil (Director of Policy, Projects and Research)
Mr R Edwards (Head of Admin)
Mr A MacGugan (Director of Stakeholder Relations)
Mrs J Findlay (Policy Officer)
Dr L Seivwright (Best Practice Officer)

Observers

Mr R Burton (SNH)

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 There were apologies from Prof. J Pemberton and Sir Patrick Hunter Blair (SNH).

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING HELD ON 13TH MAY 2009 Paper: S18/2009

2.1 The draft Minutes were approved.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON 13TH MAY 2009 Paper: S19/2009

Corporate Plan: Interim Progress

3.1 Nick Halfhide reported that the Scottish Government had accepted the addition of a further target in the DCS Corporate Plan focussing on facilitating the development of local sustainable deer management.

Single Outcome Agreements

3.2 Roger Burton reported that Roddy Fairley had taken the lead within SNH in developing closer links with local authorities.

3.3 Members noted the contents of the paper.

4. SUPPORTING LOCAL DEER MANAGEMENT: PROGRAMME PLAN Paper: S 20/2009

4.1 Robbie Kernahan introduced the paper to promote discussion on how Scottish Government and DCS could better support local deer management, and seek agreement on the aims and objectives or a programme of work achieve this.

4.2 During discussion, Members made the following points:

- Key deliverables should include building skills and capacity among Deer Management Group members. This could include developing and running targeted training and Best Practice Events. Whilst some of this could be funded through SRDP, other opportunities such as LEADER and existing rural development routes should be explored;
- The Code of Practice would be very important in offering direction to Deer Management Groups;
- The Code would need to define public benefits;
- Would a statutory code reduce the possibility of attracting European funding?
- It was important to involve wider stakeholders the different elements of the Programme;
- Some of the language and diagrams supporting the programme were complicated and needed to be simplified for a wider audience;
- It would be helpful to include a short analysis of the current situation; and
- Staff needed to give careful consideration to how best to disseminate the results of the Case Studies Project.

4.3 Subject to these comments, Members **agreed** the aims and objectives of the Programme and that staff provide quarterly updates on progress to the Committee.

Action: Robbie Kernahan

4.4 Members **agreed** that Ronald Rose should provide a presentation on the Case Studies project at a future meeting.

Action: Ronnie Rose

5 VALUE OF DEER DAMAGE TO AGRICULTURAL CROPS Paper: S 21/2009

5.1 Katy McNeil introduced the paper setting out what we currently know about deer damage to agricultural crops.

5.2 During the discussion, Members made the following comments:

- It was not clear why the profile of agricultural damage by deer has decreased so markedly over the last 50 years. It may be due in part to changing cropping patterns, eg less root crops, CAP funding and a decrease in the value of some crops;
- Agricultural damage by deer was still regularly reported in some parts of the country, particularly in some crofting areas and lowland farms growing high value horticultural crops;
- Reports of agricultural damage may increase if the proposals in the Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill consultation are implemented; and
- Most of the research to date to quantify agricultural damage has been carried out in England.

- 5.3 Members **agreed** that staff should prepare a briefing paper on agricultural damage by deer; and present a similar review paper on deer damage to forestry for the Strategy Committee meeting in November.

Action: Katy McNeil

6 STIMULATING ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Paper: S 22/2009

- 6.1 Katy McNeil introduced the paper exploring the impact that the economic downturn was having on the deer sector and what DCS could do to support it.

- 6.2 During the discussion, Members made the following comments:

- More should be done to encourage links between venison producers and farmers' markets;
- Demand for roe stalking currently outstrips supply, and it may be possible to increase access to stalking on public land; and
- There may be opportunities for different lease arrangement for stalking such as day permits.

- 6.3 Members **agreed** that:

- DCS should continue to work on projects for mutual benefit together with monitoring the position and respond to any direct requests for advice and support;
- Staff should present a paper on wildlife watching at the Committee's meeting in November;
- the DCS Board should be asked for their views on other opportunities DCS should consider.

Action: Katy McNeil

7 WILDLIFE AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BILL CONSULTATION UPDATE

- 7.1 Katy McNeil provided the meeting with an update on progress of the Wildlife and Natural Environmental Bill. She explained that the consultation would close on 4th September and that responses to date had expressed a wide range of views.

- 7.2 Members **agreed** that DCS should send a short response to the consultation. This would be circulated to Board members by the Chairman for comment before submission

Action: Chairman; Katy McNeil

8 EXPERT DISCUSSION: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND WILD DEER

Paper: S 23/2009

- 8.1 Simon Pepper introduced a short paper providing an overview of how the environmental movement's view of wild deer had changed in recent decades and where it was likely to go in the future.

- 8.2 Members discussed the paper and thanked Simon Pepper for his contribution.

9 COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

Paper: S 24/2009

- 9.1 Alastair MacGugan introduced the paper providing the Committee with an update on PR/Media activity between May and August and outlined the proposed media activity for the next 3 months.
- 9.2 Members discussed the paper noting that there had been no formal liaison meetings during the period and that a note of the open public meeting held on the evening of 8th June 2009 in Braemar would be circulated to all attendees, including Members. They welcomed the new format.

10 BIODIVERSITY STRUCTURES

Paper: S 25/2009

- 10.1 Jessica Findlay provided Members with an update on the new Scottish Biodiversity Structures.

11 DCS/SNH MERGER UPDATE

- 11.1 As this topic had been discussed the previous evening at the informal Board meeting, no further update was required.
- 11.2 Members **noted** that SNH would be pursuing the possibility of Crown Exemption through the Public Service Reform (Scotland) Bill.

12 RESPONSES TO EXTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

Paper: S 26/2009

- 12.1 Members **agreed** that the paper needed to be updated as some of the information was incomplete.

Action: Katy McNeil

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 13.1 Staff provided Members with a short progress report on the action plan for 'Scotland's Wild Deer: A National Approach' for Quarter 1 in 2009/2010. Members **agreed** that it should be circulated to those Members of the Committee not present and an appropriate acronym for this strategy was 'WDNA'.

Action: Jessica Findlay

- 13.2 There was no other business.

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 14.1 The next meeting will be held on 3rd November 2009 in the Atholl Palace Hotel, Pitlochry - *tbc*

Draft Minutes of Meeting of Resources and Audit Committee held on 26th August 2009

Attending: Mr A Hamilton (Convenor)
Prof J Milne
Mr S Pepper
Dr P Mayhew – Items 1 – 5 only
Dr S Walker

Mr N Halfhide (Chief Executive)
Mr R Kernahan (Director of Deer Management)
Ms K McNeil (Director of Policy, Projects & Research)
Mr A MacGugan (Director of Stakeholder Relations) – Items 1 – 5 only
Mr R Edwards (Head of Administration)
Mrs J Findlay (Policy Officer)

Observer

Mr R Burton (SNH) – Items 1 – 5 only

1 APOLOGIES

1.1 There were apologies from Sir Patrick Hunter Blair (SNH).

2 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING HELD ON 13TH MAY 2009

Paper: R 14/2009

2.1 The draft Minutes were approved.

3 MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON 13TH MAY 2009

Paper: R 15/2009

Overview of Progress in 2008/2009

3.1 Alastair MacGugan reported that he had not yet sought to highlight DCS' achievements for 2008/2009 but planned to use the publication of the Annual Report as a trigger for publicity.

Draft Abstract of Accounts for 2008/2009

3.2 The Chairman noted that he and the Chief Executive had raised the issue of the early closure of the Scottish Executive Accounts System with Scottish Government and were awaiting a response.

3.3 Members noted the contents of the paper.

4 CORPORATE PLAN TARGETS – Q1 2009/2010

Paper: R16/2009

4.1 Nick Halfhide provided the Committee with an assessment of progress in Quarter 1 of 2009-2010 against the targets in the Corporate Plan for submission to the Scottish Government.

4.2 Members noted that activity in Quarter 1 focused on progressing a number of Joint Working sites; helping to promote understanding among stakeholders of the consultation on the proposed Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill; a variety of events such as the RTA campaign, the Northern Seminar, and the Royal Highland Show; and preparing plans for the proposed merger.

- 4.3 He highlighted two main on-going concerns.
- Although DCS and its partners continue to make good progress towards achieving the 95% target for features on designated sites, the current estimate was that only 93% would be in favourable or unfavourable recovering by April 2010. There was also a possibility that additional features in woodlands being worked on by FCS will enable the public agencies to reach the 95% target and
 - It remained unlikely that DCS would meet its target of reducing DCS' carbon footprint by 10% by 2011. Options for addressing this were to be considered by the Committee later in the meeting.
- 4.4 He advised Members that Scottish Government had agreed in principle to the inclusion of the additional target to facilitate the development of local sustainable deer management although the exact wording of the target had yet to be agreed.
- 4.5 Following discussion of the information in the paper, and the subsequent paper on the carbon footprint target, Members **agreed** with the assessment on progress in Quarter 1 for submission to the Scottish Government subject to providing an additional update in italics to the comment on the carbon footprint target. This would state that good progress had been made to date and that in response to the challenge of making further carbon savings, the Committee had agreed to set up a sub-group of the Board to prepare recommendations for the Board on the implications of reducing or slowing the delivery of other Corporate Plan targets in order to produce less carbon. Accordingly the assessment for Q2 and Q3 could be reduced to 'amber'.

Action: Jessica Findlay

- 4.6 Members congratulated staff on maintaining a focus on delivery despite the workload in planning for the proposed merger. They agreed that future reports should contain more detail on achievements in the quarter.
- 4.7 Management Team will conduct a further review of progress against the Corporate Plan targets in October 2009 and present their findings to the Committee in November 2009.

Action: Nick Halfhide

5 CARBON FOOTPRINT TARGET

Paper: R17/2009

- 5.1 Jessica Findlay introduced the paper highlighting the need for a review of the approach to the DCS corporate carbon footprint target.
- 5.2 She explained that for DCS to achieve its Corporate Plan carbon target, the organisation would have to reduce its annual carbon footprint from 133,148 Kg CO₂ in 2008/2009 to 115,239 Kg CO₂ within 2 years, a reduction of 17,909 Kg CO₂. As an illustration, this would equate to a reduction of approximately 42, 500 vehicle miles over two years.
- 5.3 Members considered 3 options presented in the paper:
- a) accept that DCS cannot achieve the carbon target and be clear in their reasons for not doing so;

- b) look to more radical solutions which would have an impact on other core areas of DCS operational and business activities; or
- c) review and possibly change the current corporate target

5.4 During the discussion, Members made the following points:

- There is a strong political drive for public bodies to reduce their carbon footprint;
- Of the three activities producing most of DCS' carbon (Great Glen House, helicopters, and cars), the easiest to reduce further in the short term is the amount of space occupied by DCS in Great Glen House;
- Some further reductions could be achieved by sharing operations with other organisations such as sharing transport to meetings;
- Decisions need to be made on robust data;
- The collecting and analysing of data has resource implications;
- Procurement needs should take carbon production into account;
- Measuring carbon output per capita is a useful way of explaining progress;

5.5 Members **agreed** to set up a sub-group of the Board to consider further immediate efficiencies and the implications for other Corporate Plan targets of the carbon footprint target. An initial paper for the Board in September would be prepared, with a more detailed paper for the Board to consider in December.

Action: Jessica Findlay

6 ANNUAL PLAN QUARTER 1 UPDATE INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Paper: R18/2009

- 6.1 Nick Halfhide presented the paper providing an overview of DCS' performance in Quarter 1 of the Annual Business Plan for 2009-2010, and the content of the Strategic Guidance letter from the Scottish Government.
- 6.2 He noted that most activities were on track for completion with the main areas of slippage relating to some areas of research and the implementation of measures to reduce carbon production.
- 6.3 Members **noted** that spend against budget in the first quarter for the activities contained within the Annual Business Plan was £322,396, some £44,052 below what was profiled (£366,448). However, most profiled costs were expected to be incurred.
- 6.4 Management Team will conduct a further progress in implementing the Annual Business Plan, and allocations within the budget in October 2009 and present their findings, including a revised budget, to the Committee in November.

Action: Nick Halfhide

7 RISK REGISTER: QUARTERLY REVIEW

Paper: R19/2009

- 7.1 Nick Halfhide introduced the reformatted and updated risk register for Members' comments.
- 7.2 Following discussion, Members agreed to accept the assessment of corporate risks and actions to manage them subject to changing the score of risks 21 (DCS/SNH merger) and 22 (Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill) from 'medium' to 'high'.

8 STAFFING UPDATE

- 8.1 Nick Halfhide provided the meeting with an oral update on staffing issues noting that:
- a) Vaila Stride (Management Support Officer) and Katy MacIntosh (Procurement Officer) had left the organisation. Nicola Dando and Roberta Bradley had joined DCS on a part-time basis on secondment from SNH to cover part of the duties of the Procurement Officer and Management Support Officer.
 - b) DCS were in the process of appointing a replacement Head of Administration who would be in post from 1st November 2009 until the end of September 2010; and
 - c) DCS had held interviews to fill the Research and Data Manager vacancy and staff were currently in negotiations with the preferred candidate.

9 DCS ACCIDENT AND NEAR MISS REPORT QUARTER 1 2009/10

Paper: R20/2009

- 9.1 Raymond Edwards introduced the paper providing details of an Accident Report submitted by a member of staff for the period 1st April to June 2009. The accident involved a member of staff cutting their hand when folding step ladders in the file room.
- 9.2 Members noted the contents of the report and the action taken to ensure that a similar incident would not happen in the future.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 10.1 There was no other business.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 11.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 3rd November 2009 in the Atholl Palace Hotel, Pitlochry - *tbc*

**External Meetings Attended/
To Be Attended by Chairman and Chief Executive**

External Meetings Attended			
Date	Staff	Meeting	Location
10-Jun-09	Chairman, Chief Executive	Northern Seminar	Inverness
16-Jun-09	Chairman, Chief Executive	SNH Board meeting	Edinburgh
19-Jun-09	Chief Executive	Merger Staff User Group	Inverness
22-Jun-09	Chief Executive	OM Project Board	Inverness
24-Jun-09	Chairman, Chief Executive	Strategic Integration Project Board	Inverness
26-Jun-09	Chairman, Chief Executive	Royal Highland Show	Ingliston
2-Jul-09	Chairman, Chief Executive	Merger Programme Board	Battleby
3-4-Jul-09	Chairman, Chief Executive	Scottish Game Fair	Scone
6-Jul-09	Chairman	Roe Deer Conference: Field Visit	Falkirk
29-Jul-09	Chief Executive	Co-ordinated Agenda for Marine, Environment, and Rural Affairs Science Board (CAMERA)	Edinburgh
3-Aug-09	Chief Executive	Designated Sites Steering Group	Edinburgh
3-Aug-09	Chairman, Chief Executive	SG Sponsor Team	Edinburgh
7-Aug-09	Chairman, Chief Executive	Moy Game Fair	Moy
10-Aug-09	Chairman	ADMG Regional Meeting	Inverness
11-Aug-09	Chairman	Caenlochan Section 7 meeting	Spittal of Glenshee
12-Aug-09	Chief Executive	SNH staff meeting on merger	Inverness
14-Aug-09	Chief Executive	All staff site visit with SNH	Stirling
14-Aug-09	Chairman, Chief Executive	BASC	Trochry
18-Aug-09	Chief Executive	Merger Staff User Group	Inverness
18-Aug-09	Chairman	SNH Board meeting	Glasgow
19-Aug-09	Chairman	Glenfeshie Section 7 meeting	Grantown
20-Aug-09	Chief Executive	OM Project Board	Inverness
21-Aug-09	Chief Executive	SG and SNH HR	Battleby
24-Aug-09	Chairman	Richard Gledson	Balmoral
2-Sep-09	Chairman, Chief Executive	Environment Link/DCS Liaison meeting	Dunkeld
9-Sept-09	Chairman, Chief Executive	BDS Meeting	Braemar
10-Sept-09	Chief Executive	SG Rural Affairs and Environment Family	Edinburgh
16-Sept-09	Chairman, Chief Executive	Scottish Parliament Rural Affairs and Environment Committee	Edinburgh
16-Sept-09	Chief Executive	SG Wildlife Policy Team	Edinburgh

17-Sept -09	Chairman	Venison Reception	Edinburgh
18-Sept-09	Chairman	SNH Conference	Perth
23-Sept-09	Chief Executive	Single Outcome Agreement seminar	Inverness
24-Sept-09	Chief Executive	SEARS Programme Board	Inverness
25-Sept-09	Chief Executive	SG and SNH HR	Battleby

External Meetings To Be Attended			
Date	Staff	Meeting	Location
6-Oct-09	Chairman/Chief Executive	SNH Board	Inverness
26-Oct-09	Chief Executive	Merger Staff User Group	Inverness
28-Oct-09	Chief Executive	CAMERA Board	Edinburgh
29-Oct-09	Chief Executive	OM Project Board	Inverness
4-Nov-09	Chairman	ADMG Regional meeting	Lairg
9-Nov-09	Chairman, Chief Executive	Land Use Summit	?
12-Nov-09	Chairman	Caenlochan Section 7 meeting	Braemar
24-Nov-09	Chairman, Chief Executive	SEARS Strategic Board	Edinburgh
25-Nov-09	Chairman Chief Executive	DMRT	Bridge of Allan