

# **Deer Commission for Scotland**

## **CORPORATE PLAN 2001 – 2004**

CORPORATE PLAN

INDEX

INTRODUCTION.....	3
SECTION 1 : THE ROLE OF THE DCS .....	4
The Deer Commission for Scotland.....	4
Hierarchy of Plans .....	5
Key and Strategic Objectives .....	5
SECTION 2 : ACHIEVING KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES .....	7
I. PUBLIC POLICY FOR DEER FULLY INTEGRATED INTO THE WIDER POLICY CONTEXT.....	7
A: LONG TERM VISION AND PUBLIC POLICY.....	8
II. ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DEER MANAGEMENT AT LOCAL LEVEL.....	10
B: STATUTORY CONTROLS .....	12
C: MINIMISATION OF DAMAGE.....	13
D: DEER MANAGEMENT PLANNING AT A LOCAL LEVEL .....	14
E: INFORMATION, ADVICE AND TRAINING.....	15
F: RESEARCH.....	16
III. DCS RESOURCES FULLY ALIGNED WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES .....	17
G: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT .....	19
SECTION 3: PROVISIONAL BUDGET ALLOCATIONS .....	20
The percentages are based on guidelines agreed by the Commission in the previous Corporate Plan, although the percentage for B: Statutory Controls has been considerably reduced to take account of the tasks now allocated to that category, since the introduction of category C: Minimisation of Damage. The reduction for B has been compensated by increases in C and D. ....	20
SECTION 4 : EFFECTS OF CHANGES IN RESOURCES .....	21
SECTION 5 : PERFORMANCE AGAINST PREVIOUS CORPORATE PLAN.....	26

## ***INTRODUCTION***

This Corporate Plan succeeds the Corporate Plan approved on 8 February 2000. It lays out the Deer Commission for Scotland (DCS) strategic objectives and key tasks for the financial years April 2001 – March 2002, April 2002 – March 2003, and April 2003 – March 2004.

It is designed:

To demonstrate what the Commission aims to achieve within its allocated resources;

To give a clear plan of how the Commission will work towards achieving its stated Objectives;

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 5 Sections:

- Section 1 explains the role of the Commission, its principal aims and objectives, and the hierarchy of plans to which it will be working.
- Section 2 describes the 3 Key Objectives agreed with the Scottish Executive, the 7 Strategic Objectives through which the Key Objectives are to be implemented, and the key tasks for each Objective, with broad target timetables, indicative costs and output indicators.
- Section 3 outlines proposed budget allocations for the three years of the Plan.
- Section 4 considers the probable effects of decreases or increases in overall resources.
- Section 5 reviews performance against the previous 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 (from January 2001) of 10 appointed Members and a Chairman. It has 19 staff ( Director, 9 technical, 5 administration and 4 stalkers) based in offices in Inverness and Stirling. The Commission's net budget for 2000-2001 was some £942,000 (including a nominal allowance of £21,000 for rental of its HQ).

The Commission undertakes a wide range of activities throughout Scotland. As well as exercising 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 participates in the operation of Deer Management Groups, undertakes and commissions research projects, conducts and co-ordinates deer counts, disseminates best practice, assists in training, works with other agencies on wider policy issues, and advises Government on all deer matters in Scotland. In all its activities the Commission seeks a co-operative and consultative approach.

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 1999, following a period of consultation with key partners, the Commission agreed an Interim Strategic Plan. This sets out the Commission's strategic objectives and broad targets for the next few years.

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 therefore constitutes the Corporate Plan for the next 3 years, based on the Interim Strategic Plan as well as the overall objectives set out in the Management Statement.

The Commission's Annual Report will be the formal and public mechanism for reporting on progress on the Interim Strategic Plan, the Corporate Plan and the relevant Annual Plan.

## **Key and Strategic Objectives**

Three key objectives have been agreed with Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department (SERAD) and are incorporated in the DCS Management Statement. The three objectives are based on the duties established in Section 1 of the Deer (Scotland) Act 1996. They are:

- I. Public Policy for Deer fully integrated into the wider policy context

- II. Encourage and support 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.
- III. DCS resources fully aligned with strategic priorities, consistent with efficient, effective and economic use of taxpayers money.

The Interim Strategic Plan sets seven strategic objectives for the Deer Commission for Scotland (DCS), which align with the three key objectives in the Management Statement:

*Public policy for deer in Scotland fully integrated into the wider policy context.*

A. Long Term Vision and Public Policy

*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.*

- B. Statutory Controls
- C. Minimisation of Damage
- D. Deer Management Planning at a Local Level
- E. Information, Advice and Training
- F. Research

*DCS resources fully aligned with strategic priorities, consistent with efficient, effective and economic use of taxpayers' monies.*

G. Resource Management

In Section 2, each of these is considered in turn, with a brief discussion, and a table showing Key Tasks, Timetable, Outputs or Indicators for Monitoring, and estimated Resources. These are described in broad terms; the Annual Plan will expand the level of detail.

## ***SECTION 2 : ACHIEVING KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES***

### **I. PUBLIC POLICY FOR DEER FULLY INTEGRATED INTO THE WIDER POLICY CONTEXT**

#### ***Introduction***

Wild deer and their management interact in many and various ways with wider policy issues such as land management and use, agriculture, forestry, rural development, natural heritage and biodiversity, and public safety. It is important that, in proposing public policies and practices, the DCS takes these wider issues into account. Similarly, DCS needs to ensure that other bodies engaged in formulating relevant policies are kept informed of deer policy developments .

#### ***Strengths***

The DCS has developed good relations with a wide range of people and organisations to facilitate this more integrated approach. It is considered by many to be an objective, knowledgeable and pragmatic organisation, basing its advice on sound science and practical experience. Further development of liaison groups, consultations and communications will remain a priority for DCS.

#### ***Weaknesses***

The DCS has few statutory powers and resources. Much of its policy work is to achieve consensus through advice and influence. As the need for integration with other policies increases, so the DCS is having to engage with interests with which it has traditionally had little dealings. This in turn can lead to tensions with some of the DCS' longer standing partners. However, there is increasing recognition in all sectors that deer management cannot be consider in isolation.

#### ***Opportunities***

The creation of the Scottish Parliament provides a new opportunity to integrate policies. Other public bodies such as Forestry Commission and Scottish Natural Heritage appear to be as keen as DCS to pool knowledge and to co-operate both on policy formulation and on implementation. Changes in land use, such as in agriculture, may give a new impetus toward deer management as a significant land use. The emphasis on rural development, on land reform and on local solutions may also promote wider consideration of deer management. Further development of liaison groups, consultations and communications will remain a priority for DCS. DCS consults widely through a number of liaison groups, by public consultation, and through the Deer Management Round

Table. The development of a Long Term Strategy for wild deer in Scotland can and should be integrated with other national Strategies and Frameworks, such as those for Forestry, for Agriculture and for Rural Development.

### Threats

The challenges of controlling deer numbers, the perceived threat to field sports and the significant diversity of land owners and land use objectives can lead to new tensions and suspicions. DCS has to maintain a neutral stance on a number of political issues which deer managers and others consider have a major bearing on deer and their control.

### Fulfilling the Remit

DCS will fulfil this first Key Objective through Strategic Objective A: Long Term Vision and Public Policy.

### Key Targets agreed with SERAD

Annual Measure of Promoting and enabling the achievement of a fair and reasonable balance of interests:

### **Long Term Strategy published by October 2001, integrated with other relevant national Strategies.**

The first key objective is being progressed through the Strategic Objectives as follows:

#### A: LONG TERM VISION AND PUBLIC POLICY

The Interim Strategic Plan committed the DCS to undertake a major public consultation exercise to help inform a long term vision for the management of wild deer. Following an extensive public consultation, the DCS published its Long Term Vision in October 2000. The Vision sets out 11 long term aims for the place of wild deer in Scotland in 15 to 20 years time ( a copy of the Vision Statement is appended to this Plan). The next step will be to develop DCS's Long Term Strategy, which will identify what needs to be done, when and by whom, to make the Vision a reality. The DCS aims to publish its Strategy in October 2001. The Strategy will be one of a number of inter-related and mutually supportive national strategies, such as for Forestry and for Agriculture. The Corporate Plan will need to be comprehensively reviewed in the light of the Strategy.

The key tasks under the first objective reflect this approach.

no.	TASK	TARGET DATES	OUTPUT / INDICATORS	COMMENTS
	Long Term Strategy	document by October 2001	Strategy Document integration with other national strategies acceptance and participation by other key partners	
	Partnerships: development of joint objectives, liaisons groups and concordats	ongoing	joint policy documents, projects	
	Deer Management Round Table	ongoing	2 meetings per year, minutes of meetings	

Financial Year	Estimated total expenditure
2001 / 2002	49K
2002 / 2003	50K
2003 / 2004	50K

## **II. ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT 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.

### *Introduction*

The core of the DCS' statutory duties and powers relate to the provision in the Deer (Scotland) Act 1996 to "further the conservation, control and sustainable management of deer in Scotland". The DCS has some statutory controls to fall back on, but much of this objective is achieved through seeking to minimise the damage done by deer and through working with partners on practical deer management at the local level. The DCS also has an important role in providing information, advice and training, and through conducting or commissioning research. There is a valuable tradition of co-operation in the deer sector which will continue to be vital to success.

### *Strengths*

The DCS continues to enjoy close relations with Deer Management Groups (DMGs) and other key partners (Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission, etc.). The "deer industry" on the whole appears to hold the Commission in high regard. An important factor is that the DCS continues to employ technical staff with sound, practical and hands-on knowledge of deer management, backed up by objective research and data.

### *Weaknesses*

The DCS must rely largely on consensus and persuasion. For example, the annual cull targets set by the DCS are purely advisory – they have no statutory force. DMGs often rely heavily on the DCS to attend meetings, organise deer censuses and help with the production of Deer Management Plans. Current resources mean that demand far exceeds the DCS' capacity, particularly in terms of staff. The DCS had no grant giving/developmental powers.

### *Opportunities*

Many land owners, occupiers and managers are proposing or are open to new approaches to land management and the place of deer within it. Changes to agriculture and forestry, and developments in natural heritage management, should provide a new impetus to

adopt deer management tools such as habitat assessments and deer management plans. Integration of policies could foster a wider appreciation of the place of deer and their management in Scotland. A review of deer legislation is planned in 2002.

### Threats

Despite record culls, deer numbers are still increasing in many areas. There is a real concern that the capacity to increase culls further may not be available. Deer management is still isolated from most land use grant and incentives schemes. DCS statutory controls are limited; and their use could be so resource-intensive that the rest of the DCS' work would be seriously curtailed. An outdated view of deer management is still prevalent in some cases, and there is a major need for education. The extent of degraded land remains a major problem, and true sustained recovery is a huge task.

### Fulfilling the Remit

DCS will fulfil this second Key Objective through its Strategic Objectives B: Statutory Controls; C: Minimisation of Damage; D: Deer Management Planning at a Local Level; E: Advice, Information and Training; and F: Research.

### Key Target agreed with SERAD

Annual measure of effective deer control:

**30% of open range groups and 10% of woodland groups to be covered by voluntary written management agreements by March 2002 (15% and 5% by March 2001).**

The second key objective is being progressed through the Strategic Objectives as follows:

**B: STATUTORY CONTROLS**

The DCS has a range of statutory powers intended to enable it to promote and, where necessary, to enforce responsible deer management. Some of these powers remain untested, others which have been used regularly may need a procedural review. As noted in the Interim Strategic Plan, *“the Scottish Executive’s Land Reform Action Plan includes ... a review in due course the need for stronger enforcement of deer control measures ... complete by end 2002”*, for which the DCS aims to be able to give authoritative and well-considered advice on the need for any changes. The Interim Strategic Plan commits the DCS *“to work with relevant public agencies, land managers and other interests ...in order to agree definitions and interpretations and procedures”* in relation to the existing deer legislation, and *“to advise Ministers on any legislative amendments or additions which it concludes may be necessary”*.

no.	TASK	TARGET DATES	OUTPUT / INDICATORS	COMMENTS
	Issuing and administration of statutory controls	ongoing	case work records	
	Review with partner organisations, the scope and interpretation of Deer Act powers and duties and associated procedures	by end 2001	preparation of advice for Ministers, implement revised procedures	
	Use, where necessary, S.8 Control Scheme, and in any event review internal procedures	review end 2001; use as appropriate	implement revised procedures	

Financial Year	Estimated total expenditure
2001 / 2002	49K
2002 / 2003	50K
2003 / 2004	50K

**C: MINIMISATION OF DAMAGE**

The Interim Strategic Plan states that “at its simplest, the so called "deer problem" can be described in terms of the fact that for many people and in many circumstances deer constitute a problem, causing damage and disruption which is economic, social and environmental in nature. At the same time deer can be a valuable economic, social and environmental asset, as well as being (other than exotic species) a component of natural biodiversity. Finding and maintaining a reasonable balance between these contradictory attributes has been and remains a major public challenge... The Act therefore largely defines the challenge for the DCS with respect to its duties and its powers to control deer and prevent these negative impacts from occurring.” Monitoring, defining and seeking ways of minimising such damage remains a key priority for DCS and for deer managers.

no.	TASK	TARGET DATES	OUTPUT / INDICATORS	COMMENTS
	Review and administer authorisations	review by June 2001; administration ongoing	revised procedures; number of authorisations applied for and granted	
	Review, develop and monitor use of Section 7 Control Agreements	review by May 2001; use and monitoring ongoing	written policies number of S.7 agreements; assess success of agreements	
	Monitoring of damage, pursuing complaints about damage	ongoing	written procedures, case reports; number of damage cases (by type)	
	Culling by DCS staff	as required	rationalised involvement, with clear objectives and costs	

Financial Year	Estimated total expenditure
2001 / 2002	146
2002 / 2003	149
2003 / 2004	149

#### D: DEER MANAGEMENT PLANNING AT A LOCAL LEVEL

The Interim Strategic Plan states *“the development of Deer Management Groups has been a vital step in building deer management capacity at a local level”*. This remains a core part of the Commission’s work. Regular feedback from partner organisations and deer managers shows that the tasks undertaken within this objective are regarded as essential. Much of the Commission’s ability to influence and guide on deer management policy and practice stems from the reputation and “field credibility” gained from these activities. With increasing demands on scarce resources, a long term aim is to help, encourage and support deer managers to take on more of these tasks themselves, to release more Commission staff time and other resources for new initiatives. However, that will be a long term and gradual process. The Interim Strategic Plan sets targets including *“the DCS intends to publish...recommended guidelines for DMGs”, “...to identify...priority areas where local deer management planning mechanisms are required”* and *“to work closely with the ADMG, FC and others to achieve a situation by 2002 in which 30% of the open hill deer range and 10% of the forest/woodland deer range is covered by a DMP or equivalent local planning mechanism.”*

No.	TASK	TARGET DATES	OUTPUT / INDICATORS	COMMENTS
	To advise, support and encourage the formation and effective operation of Deer Management Groups and other local deer management structures, and to maintain up to date information on them	ongoing	Maintain and extend coverage of local collaborative mechanisms	
	To promote and support the preparation and implementation of a hierarchy of effective Deer Management Plans	agreed target by March 2002	30% open range and 10% woodland covered by deer planning mechanisms; increased effectiveness of DMPs	
	To develop and promote sustainable and integrated target deer populations and associated cull levels, using appropriate deer management tools	annual targets, set in June	results of culls and counts (by species) ; cull targets set & achieved	
	To collect, assist collection and analyse deer data, including population assessments and performance	ongoing	new data; improved analysis of data; links with research; census programme achieved;	

Financial Year	Estimated total
2001 / 2002	389K
2002 / 2003	398K
2003 / 2004	398K

## E: INFORMATION, ADVICE AND TRAINING

The DCS has a fundamental role in informing, advising and training an ever widening range of people in an equally widening range of issues. Deer Managers look to the DCS for authoritative and accurate information, and objective and pragmatic advice. Those with other interests affected by wild deer and their management also need information and education which the DCS is in a unique position to provide. The general public also require clear and appropriate information. We are also the government's adviser on all deer matters. The DCS has adopted an External Communications strategy to contribute to the delivery of these services through a range of media and methods. The Interim Strategic Plan envisages "a series of advisory leaflets under the broad theme of *Good Practice in Deer Management*". There has also been the introduction and development of a website, representation on appropriate bodies, forums and conferences, etc. As the management of deer becomes ever more underpinned by science and affected by ever wider interests, the need for training and professionalism will increase. The DCS has a role to support and facilitate such training, and to lead by example. The DCS must also continually improve its openness and accountability.

no.	TASK	TARGET DATES	OUTPUT / INDICATORS	COMMENTS
	Continue and improve advice and info, service to DMGs and others	ongoing; as laid out in agreed publications programme	achieve publications programme; users surveys;	
	Implement a comprehensive communications strategy	ongoing, regular revision	Published strategy; uptake of publications; hits on website; media coverage	
	Support training initiatives e.g. Deer Management Qualifications	ongoing	improved DMQs; better uptake of training	
	Review policies and practice on openness and accountability	May 2001	published statement in line with govt. guidelines/legislation	
	DCS policy on deer fencing	mid 2001	published policy	
	Advise government and agencies	ongoing	user feedback	

Financial Year	Estimated total expenditure
2001 / 2002	194K
2002 / 2003	199K
2003 / 2004	199K

## F: RESEARCH

The DCS will continue to encourage, participate in and commission research. There are three broad strands to research relevant to the DCS' remit: Deer Science (e.g. population dynamics, biology, welfare); environmental (e.g. impacts on natural heritage, habitats, biodiversity); and socio-economic impacts (e.g. direct and indirect employment, social inclusion, impacts on other land uses). Of these, the third has to date received the least attention and will be given a new emphasis, although the other two categories remain very important.

The DCS budget for research is modest, and there will be an increasing effort to encourage others to undertake relevant research either separately or in partnership. DCS can sometimes offer help in kind as its contribution to a research programme. As intimated in the Interim Strategic Plan, the programme will include *“an initial investigation and review of the economic, social and environmental costs and benefits of wild deer in Scotland”* and *“to consider how deer management might be integrated into the delivery of socio-economic and environmental benefits for which public finance may become available”*.

no.	TASK	TARGET DATES	OUTPUT / INDICATORS	COMMENTS
	Review all relevant current research	ongoing	annual update of Database of relevant research projects	
	Undertake, encourage or participate in research into:			
	-Biology & Ecology of Deer	ongoing	reports and follow up	
	- Deer Management	ongoing	reports and follow up	
	-Economic and social impacts of wild deer	ongoing	reports and follow up	

Financial Year	Estimated total expenditure
2001 / 2002	97K
2002 / 2003	100K
2003 / 2004	100K

### **III. DCS RESOURCES FULLY ALIGNED WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

consistent with efficient, effective and economic use of taxpayers money.

#### Introduction

The DCS has a budget of under £1m per year, and a staff complement currently of 19.

#### Strengths

Much of the DCS' budget is committed to ongoing and therefore predictable annual revenue expenditure. Financial control and monitoring has recently been upgraded following an internal audit.

#### Weaknesses

Accurate profiling of some budget heads can be difficult, with expenditure often peaking in the last few months of the year (deer counts, research invoices). The small amount of uncommitted budget means that significant unexpected additional expenditure would be difficult to cover.

#### Opportunities

DCS is actively seeking opportunities for joint funding of research and demonstration projects. A staff review has identified skills and skills gaps, and is informing staff deployment for future work.

#### Threats

Demands on the DCS are increasing very rapidly. Staff resources in particular are under increasing pressure, and there are already increasingly difficult choices having to be made about what can and what cannot be delivered.

#### Fulfilling the Remit

The DCS will fulfil this third Key Objective through its Strategic Objective G: Resource Management.

Key Target agreed with SERAD

Annual Measures:

- **DCS outturn within 2% below annual net allocation**
- **Leverage increased annually by 10% over previous year**

The third key objective is being progressed through the Strategic Objectives as follows:

## G: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Although the DCS is a small organisation, its work is very varied. There are increasing demands on its strategic role, on its information, advice and training activities, on its partnership work and on its research effort. Administrative burdens are also sure to increase, not least from the demands of openness, accountability and such initiatives as Investors In People. At the same time, the DCS is frequently made aware of the importance of its “in the field” work (such as deer counts, participation in culls, on the ground research), which is the foundation of the organisation’s credibility.

There are therefore a range of important tasks to ensure that resources are deployed according to clear priorities, and used effectively, efficiently and economically. The activities identified in the Interim Strategic Plan and in this Corporate Plan have a high priority, but a balance must be found to ensure that the less high profile but equally essential day to day activities are not left wanting.

The DCS is due for its quinquennial Performance and Financial Management Review in 2001/2002. The Interim Strategic Plan states that the DCS “*will...review existing resources against developing strategic priorities, and ensure that the necessary staff development plans are in place to meet forecast requirements*”.

no.	TASK	TARGET DATES	OUTPUT / INDICATORS	COMMENTS
	Implement procedures in line with internal audit recommendations	continuous	periodic audits	
	Stay within Budget	annual	Financial reports	
	Prepare detailed Annual Plan to ensure adequate resources, appropriately prioritised	February annually	Plan agreed with SERAD	
	Updating of Procedures Manual	ongoing	up to date manual for all Members and Staff	
	Continuous improvement in IIP	ongoing	external assessment	

Financial Year	Estimated total expenditure
2001 / 2002	49K
2002 / 2003	50K
2003 / 2004	50K

## DEER COMMISSION for SCOTLAND

### *SECTION 3: PROVISIONAL BUDGET ALLOCATIONS*

		2001/2002 budget inc.	2002/2003 income £ 000's	2003/2004
<b>TOTAL BUDGET (including income)</b>		<b>982</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>1025</b>
KEY OBJECTIVE:	%			
A: Long Term Vision & Public Policy	5	49	50	51
B: Statutory Controls	5	49	50	51
C: Minimisation of Damage	15	147	149	154
D: Local Deer Management	40	393	398	410
E: Information, Advice & Training	20	196	199	205
F: Research	10	98	100	103
G: Resource Management	5	49	50	51
		982	995	1025

The provisional budget allocations are based on the Commission's intended spend to reflect priorities. Actual spending plans will be detailed in Annual Plans each year. It is likely that there will be considerable deviation from the "ideal" share of spend in 2001/2002 as existing commitments are discharged, priorities are reviewed, staff deployment is shifted and costing systems are refined. Thereafter annual allocations should increasingly converge with the expenditure aims outlined above. Note that allocations for each of the categories include both a cash element and an element of staff costs based on allocated staff time.

Figures are based on total budgets indicated as guidelines by SERAD.

# DEER COMMISSION for SCOTLAND

## ***SECTION 4 : EFFECTS OF CHANGES IN RESOURCES***

The Corporate Plan has been prepared on the assumption that financial and other resources available to the Commission remain essentially static in real terms. This Section considers the probable effects of:

A 5% reduction in real terms of financial allocation

A 10% reduction in real terms of financial allocation

It also considers what the Commission is not able to do within its current projected resources for the next three years.

The Commission will be investigating how it can increase its effectiveness and the range of its activities through other means, such as partnerships (for example on research projects), external funding (such as matching funding from European sources in partnership with eligible bodies), and through secondments.

### *Effects of a 5% reduction ( - £48,600 in 2001-2002)*

The DCS budget has little flexibility, in that much of it has to meet staff and other fixed costs.

A 5% reduction would most likely have to be met by cuts in the research cash budget (say from 45K to 25K), reducing the publications cash budget (from say £29K to £14K), and severely reducing the budget for communications and for the deer census programme.

### *Effects of a 10% reduction ( -£97,200 in 2001-2002)*

A reduction of £97K would be impossible to achieve without curtailing one or more of the DCS' key functions. In addition to the savings outlined for a 5% reduction, the additional £47K would need to be found either by completely ceasing our contracted research programme, together with further reductions in the communications and the deer census budgets, or (in the longer term) by a reduction in staff which would impinge in particular on our activities on supporting local deer management.

## DEER COMMISSION for SCOTLAND

### Activities which cannot be undertaken within existing resources

Wild deer and their management is becoming an increasingly complex and wide-ranging issue. Since the 1996 Act significantly broadened the DCS' remit, there has been ever increasing pressure on staff and other resources. The DCS published its Vision Statement in October 2000, and will publish the DCS Strategy in October 2001. It is anticipated that this Strategy will have major implications for the work of the Commission, in terms of volume, complexity and breadth. The DCS considers that its current resources are being used on priorities and duties which cannot be downgraded. All the stakeholders at the Deer Management Round Table concur that the DCS' priorities are about right, but that more could be done if additional resources – in particular additional staff – were available.

Public expectations are growing for action on issues such as ecological damage, public safety, deer welfare and the economic and social importance of wild deer. The DCS is resourced largely on the basis of continuing with its "traditional" roles of advising deer managers, collating basic data and issuing "run of the mill" authorisations. The DCS is reaching the stage where it will have either to increase its resources, notably in terms of technical staff, or else fail to meet some of the challenges currently emerging.

**ILLUSTRATION:** The Vision Statement envisages continuous improvement in the ecological value of deer habitats. This will entail DCS staff working with other agencies and with deer managers to assess and monitor habitat response: and may also require sources of funding for deer managers. The DCS currently has no staff capacity for such work: at the very least, a dedicated technical officer would be required at an annual cost of about £25 - £30 K.

## DEER COMMISSION for SCOTLAND

The DCS is working with SNH to prepare a list of Priority Sites where environmental damage appears to be occurring because of deer. These sites will need to be assessed in detail. This will certainly lead to an increased use of Section 7 (control agreements) of the Deer Act, and it is likely that Section 8 (control schemes) may have to be used in the near future. The use of these statutory powers involves a considerable amount of ongoing work for technical and administrative staff.

**ILLUSTRATION:** The DCS has been dealing with a site where a complaint about environmental damage by deer has been made. So far this has taken 30 man-days of work, 16 of which were at senior staff level, plus expenditure of £7000 on a habitat assessment. With present staff resources it is unlikely that more than two such cases could be dealt with concurrently, and there is no budgetary provision for funding habitat assessments.

The DCS would wish to undertake better and more frequent data collection, especially deer censuses and monitoring of damage. DCS's key advisory and regulatory functions are dependant on its unique research and information expertise for credibility and influence. Demands for information and advice, for publications and for electronic communications are increasing. DCS is now expected to take a more pro-active approach to issues such as deer fencing and road safety.

## DEER COMMISSION for SCOTLAND

ILLUSTRATIONS: It is estimated that some 600 man-days per year are used in open range census work alone, together with a dedicated budget of £32K for equipment. Yet this only allows about  $\frac{1}{7}$ th of the open range to be counted annually.

DCS has a list of publications for which there is immediate demand, but within the enhanced printing budget for 2001-2002 of £29K, it will take three years to complete. There is also considerable constraints on staff time to write or edit the publications.

There has been intense public interest in road safety and deer; DCS research, due to be reported in April 2001, will inevitably lead to calls for action: no resources are currently allocated for this.

The DCS has identified a research programme which greatly exceeds the available annual cash budget (£45K in 2001-2002); progress has been made in seeking external funding, but the DCS is still often obliged to undertake short term, low cost superficial research on key deer issues for which matching funding is impossible to find.

Issues identified as requiring priority research but for which resources are currently inadequate include:

- Woodland Deer Population Assessment Methodologies;
- Underlying Causes of Deer Population Changes;
- Extent and Nature of Current Deer Damage to Agriculture;
- Deer and Road Safety (follow up research);
- Economics of Private Sector Deer Management;
- Deer Shooting Skills, Standards and Capacity;
- Alternative Culling Methods;
- Supplementary Feeding of Wild Deer;
- Interaction between Deer and Native Woodlands.

## DEER COMMISSION for SCOTLAND

DCS are very active in working with Deer Management Groups, particularly in promoting the adoption of Deer Management Plans, including habitat assessments and properly conducted deer censuses or population assessments. At present very little public funding is available to help DMGs to do this. DCS is investigating, with key partners, the case for such funding. If it is considered desirable that such funding is made available, resources would need to be identified. Under current legislation, it is unlikely that DCS could make payments directly to DMGs, so the administration of any such funds would need to be considered: DCS might usefully become a grant giving body.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Some 1100 man days – about 25% of staff resources – is currently spent on these local deer management initiatives. A key target is to increase the number of DMGs and other groups with written and effective Deer Management agreements. This will require additional and ongoing staff effort.

Clear and verifiable outputs are being refined and cost allocation systems are now in operation which can accurately illustrate the resource implications of existing and anticipated future work. Estimates of staff time spent on each task in the corporate plan are available and a new time recording system has been in operation since January 2001, which will allow more accurate staff resource allocations. Read in conjunction with the Budget for 2001 – 2002, there is clear evidence that the Commission's budget is now fully committed.

At present, the only significant source of income to the DCS is from venison sales, which yield about £10k per year. The DCS is reviewing its charging policy, but there is limited scope for raising income from most of its activities without adversely affecting the uptake of DCS advice, guidance and information. At present, any unexpected additional income reverts directly to the Scottish Executive, without benefiting the DCS.

## DEER COMMISSION for SCOTLAND

### ***SECTION 5 : PERFORMANCE AGAINST PREVIOUS CORPORATE PLAN***

The previous Corporate Plan covered the years 2000-2001 to 2002 –2003. In some ways it was a provisional Plan, as discussions on it continued with SERAD.

The Annual Report for 1998/1999 contains information about achievements during that year. The Annual Report for 2000-2001 will review performance both against the previous corporate plan and against the Annual Plan.

To summarise performance in 2000 - 2001 against the objectives of the previous Corporate Plan:

Key Objective	Main targets	Achieved	Not Achieved
LONG TERM VISION AND PUBLIC POLICY	Vision consultation and publish Vision Statement Develop partnerships Develop Round Table	Vision launched Oct.2000  FC and SNH liaison groups new constitution & roles	
STATUTORY CONTROLS	Issuing and administration of controls Review interpretation and use of powers Use S.8 if appropriate, and review procedures	ongoing  Review of Statutory information S.8 review begun	reviews need to be completed  key partners to be consulted
MINIMISATION OF DAMAGE	Review authorisations Administer authorisations Review use of S.7 agreements Monitor damage, pursue complaints Culling by DCS staff	review in progress ongoing review begun (with S.8) ongoing: key test case undertaken ongoing: critical review of established culls	requires completing  requires completing

## DEER COMMISSION for SCOTLAND

<p>DEER MANAGEMENT AT A LOCAL LEVEL</p>	<p>Advise, support and encourage collaborative mechanisms</p> <p>Maintain up to date info. on Groups</p> <p>Promote Deer Management Plans</p> <p>Promote target populations and culls using appropriate tools</p> <p>Collect, assist collection and analyse deer data</p>	<p>Coverage of local collaborative mechanisms has been extended – e.g. new DMGs and groups formed</p> <p>Research undertaken</p> <p>target of 15% in open range, 5% in woodlands achieved</p> <p>near-record cull in 1999-2000: cull figures for 2000-2001 awaited</p> <p>Successful deer census programme; began to review indirect population assessment methods</p>	
<p>INFORMATION, ADVICE AND TRAINING</p>	<p>Continue and improve advice and info. to DMGs and others</p> <p>Develop comprehensive communications strategy</p> <p>Support training initiatives e.g. DMQ</p> <p>Advise government and agencies</p> <p>Review fencing policy</p>	<p>Publications programme agreed and being implemented; Website developed</p> <p>External Communications Strategy agreed and being implemented</p> <p>ongoing: advised Government (carcass tagging), much advice and consultation with other agencies (e.g. National Parks, WGS schemes, etc.)</p> <p>review in progress</p>	<p>Little action on this during 2000-2001</p> <p>not ready for publication</p>

## DEER COMMISSION for SCOTLAND

RESEARCH	<p>Review all relevant current research</p> <p>Undertake, encourage or participate in research into biology and ecology of deer, deer management and economic and social impacts of wild deer</p> <p>Increase leverage by 10%</p>	<p>Database prepared</p> <p>Wide-ranging research programme agreed and number of projects let to contractors</p> <p>Exceeded target (Project on Habitat Assessment by Stalkers; Northern Periphery Programme project). Other joint funding initiatives being negotiated</p>	<p>Further work on effective updating techniques required</p>
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	<p>Implement procedures inline with internal audit recommendations</p> <p>Prepare detailed Annual Plan to ensure adequate resources appropriately prioritised</p> <p>Staff Review based on Corporate Plan</p> <p>Compile Procedures Manual</p> <p>Review of Commission Committee Structure</p> <p>Continuous Improvement in IIP</p>	<p>Re-audit satisfactory; measures implemented</p> <p>Annual Plan agreed with initial allocation of staff and other resources</p> <p>First Stage completed</p> <p>Achieved</p> <p>Achieved and changes implemented</p> <p>External assessment of S.E. successful</p>	<p>Outstanding Personnel issues to be resolved</p> <p>Further action required within DCS to ensure continued compliance</p>