



SCOTTISH FOREST & TIMBER TECHNOLOGIES LEADERSHIP GROUP MEETING

Thursday 28th June 2012, Board Room, Scottish Enterprise, Edinburgh

Present:

Alistair McKinnon (AM)	Cameron Maxwell (CM)
Andy Leitch (AL)	Stuart Goodall (SG)
Derek McDonald (DM)	Greg Walker (GW)
Philip Turner (PT)	Cathy Black (CB) – NOTE TAKER
Fergus Tickell (FT)	Rob Orr (RO)
Guy Watt (GW)	Charlie Fulton (CF)
George Webb (GeW)	Neil Donaldson (ND)
John Kissock – CHAIR (JK)	Steve Harrison (SH)

Apologies: Alex Brownlie, Stephen Good, Ben Westland, Colin Kennedy, Ed Suttie, Neil Stoddart, Tom Bruce Jones, Joy McClean - SECRETARIAT

1. Welcome and Introductions – JK

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted as above.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising – JK

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and approved. (Outstanding items are noted at the end of this meeting note).

JK reported that he has had no further feedback following his meeting with Aberdeen University. The Head of Biological Sciences has been delegated to move this forward.

3. Timber Development Programme/Wood Product Innovation Gateway – Current Activity – AL

AL reported that the Sustainable Building Materials Library was launched at the lighthouse. Samples are still required.

Timber Transport Scheme – there have been 19 applications for £4.5m co-funding. 14 have been offered awards. There is likely to be a further round of bids in November.

The BRE Visitor centre is almost complete. Features a closed panel system (CCG/BSW) and is the first time Scottish CLT used in construction.

The carbon calculator project is progressing, albeit slowly. A symposium is planned in the next few months to bring together various experts.

WPiG – 2-3 products have been taken forward from concept.

- AL to circulate images of the FCS WfG awards.

4. Forestry Commission Update – CM

Woodland Expansion Advisory Group report published with 20 recommendations. The target for planting has been revised to 10,000 hectares per annum to 2022. There was some discussion about the grant rates relating to native vs. productive woodland, with changes anticipated in the near future.



Biomass – decision on the banding is still pending consideration by Ministers. The enquiry relating to Forth Energy's site at Grangemouth has now closed. The UK strategy is in favour of enhanced co-firing and conversion but no bands have been published mainly due to concerns relating to onshore wind.

Tree health – Phytophthora is an issue in Galloway with about 100 acres affected. A tree health industry group is to be set up to explore the potential impacts and is due to report in December – currently looking for members. Dothistroma Needle Blight has been found in FCS estate in the north of Scotland where it is being removed. CM explained that there were limited options for replanting.

CM reported that the production Forecasts are likely to be produced towards the end of July. (England is due to report 4/7).

5. Innovation Centres – AM

AM updated the group on progress with Innovation Centre bids. Round 1 closed on 20th June and bids will be evaluated with successful ones going forward for a full submission by the end of October. Funding will be awarded Jan/Feb 13.

There is Construction bid (Napier led) to develop commercial value research. PT advised that he had submitted a bid focusing on new biomaterials and algae as a source of cellulose. It is seeking investment with the global players (UPM etc) for new material development and manufacturing. Another bid with potential links is a Bio-refining one, led by UoG.

AM explained that the next round would require industry commitment in terms of support and funding. There was some discussion as to whether in-kind funding would suffice. AM explained that in-kind funding was acceptable but there would be a need for hard cash too.

6. Rates of Planting Update/CAP Reform - SG

New planting statistics are "opaque". 9000 hectares planted, so close to the 10,000 target, but it is not clear exactly 'what is productive woodland'. Restocking rate is an area of concern as this is running behind felling. Confor is working with FCS to get more robust stats.

A study is planned to look at how we maximise future annual supply of softwoods. It will look at the inventory and potential scenarios to determine next steps. Discussion with industry will take place once the production forecasts have been published.

CAP reform – negotiations continue and are likely to take such a long time that there potentially is a gap between funding schemes. Investment could be affected as confidence diminishes – this is being raised at ministerial level.

Geographical expansion was discussed with the backlash from agriculture being noted. Some highland areas are geographically inaccessible.

7. FTT Futures - SH

SH updated the group on progress with the FTT futures project. The size of the sector has been baselined and the research has identified scope for an additional 2500 jobs and 3100m GVA. There was discussion around the figures with the comment being made that 2010 was a particularly bad year for the industry, whilst 2011 was better.

JK led the discussion on the potential projects with the plea for the industry to be more proactive in terms of coming up with ideas. ND suggested that the greatest challenge was to get consumption back up to previous levels and that growing the actual market was not the real issue. UK sawn timber consumption now half of the 10-12 million m³ that it used to be.

PT pointed out that 80% of their turnover was from international companies and questioned why that was the case. Was there a role for SE in terms of trying to understand the value chain as a whole?



Industry needs to recognise the medium - long term opportunities and determine where the competitive advantages actually are.

- JK suggested that a meeting of industry “leaders” might be appropriate so that the work gets broad industry feedback and buy-in. There is also the potential within the regional groups for the development of projects. JK and CB to progress.

8. Skills - RO

RO reported that the Skills sub-committee had been convened and met on 25th May. The objective is to support the ILG in developing a Skills Action Plan which pulls in all of the elements from the Skills Strategy.

There was discussion about the current activity taking place and RO made the point that whilst there is a lot going on, none of it is co-ordinated. RO also explained that there is no clear career pathway guidance, nor is there any clear direction on access to qualifications. The Modern Apprenticeship uptake is declining and there is no clear map of how graduates are being brought into the industry. Promotion of the industry is required.

- SDS is to seek a short term resource to assist RO to pull the draft plan together by end August (to share with ILG at Sept meeting).

9. Forward Agenda - JK

GeW advised that the next meeting could be hosted in Inverness irrespective of whether the minister was likely to attend.

There were no other items raised on the forward agenda.

- AM to check if Mr Ewing is available for September’s meeting.

10. AOB - ALL

GW highlighted Scotland’s Finest Woods Awards which had an award for the best commercial new planting project, supported by James Jones. There were 20 entries.

CF outlined the work of the South of Scotland regional group, highlighting the benefits of the best practice visits which had taken place.

Next meeting – 27th September, 10.00 – 12.30, venue tbc



DATE	ACTION	WHO	STATUS	
29/03/12	ES / JK to be informed of any ideas for a site visit for our autumn meeting	ALL		
29/03/12	The detailed report of results to be circulated to all SFTTLG members.	ANGELA / JM		
29/03/12	The successful applicant for the post Angela is currently advertising for is to rerun the process conducted for the Sector's Potential Scale of Export Growth report, so that we can construct an export plan for the UK and International markets.	ANGELA		
29/03/12	Feedback on the strategy, good news stories and case studies to be sent to JM.	ALL		
29/03/12	Volunteers for meeting regarding the draft TFR Draft Report to contact AM.	ALL		
29/03/12	TFR Draft Report to be circulated to SFTTLG members.	AM / JM		
29/03/12	Need to take forward the Communications Strategy with Weber.	JK / CB		
29/03/12	A lot of work done on website by Virginia Harden. Feedback on the site and good news stories/case studies are requested.	ALL		
28/06/12	Images of the FCS WfG awards to be circulated	AL		
28/06/12	In regards to FTT Futures, A meeting of industry "leaders" to be considered, as might be appropriate so that the work gets broad industry feedback and buy-in. There is also the potential within the regional groups for the development of projects.	JK & CB		
28/06/12	SDS is to seek a short term resource to assist RO to pull the draft plan together by end August (to share with ILG at Sept meeting.)	RO		
28/06/12	Mr Ewing's availability to be checked for September's meeting.	AM		