**Note of the meeting of the National Forestry Stakeholder Group**

**25 November 2021**

**Decarbonising the forestry sector’s activities in Scotland**

The second of the National Forestry Stakeholder Group meetings. The focus of the meeting was to discuss the actions required to decarbonise the forestry sector’s activities – the management, machines, transport, recreation and processing.

The meeting was chaired by Dave Signorini, and attended by Mairi McAllan MSP, Minister for Environment and Land Reform.

Dave introduced the topic and noted the background discussion paper which had been circulated previously.

The Minister gave a short speech to the group which emphasised:

* The forestry sector needs to accelerate and scale up actions to decarbonise the forestry sector’s activities – the management, machines, transport and processing.

* To help coordinate sector’s actions the minister will announce the establishment of a Strategic Working Group, led by Scottish Forestry to help facilitate actions.
* Forestry is well placed continue to play a vital role in tackling the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss – and supporting our economy.

* The sector needs to seize the opportunities that the transition to NetZero presents. We want to take a strategic approach to working together, across sectors and organisations, to deliver our collective ambition for forestry.

The meeting was split into two groups; topics for each group taken in turn. The Minister joined each group and the discussions. The topics were.

1. What are the risks, issues and challenges for the sector in decarbonising its activities.

2. What are the opportunities, investments, skills and next steps we collectively need to take.

A summary of the group’s discussions are contained in the Annex. In summing up the Minister welcomed the enthusiasm and opportunity which the sector has shown in recognising the need for decarbonising. She welcomed that action was already being taken, and that with the help of Scottish Forestry, the working group can help coordinate specific actions and highlight opportunities to work effectively together. Ms McAllan noted she would welcome an update on progress in the new year.

The next meeting would be in the spring of 2022.

**Annex**

**Summary of ideas and discussions raised in break out groups and online ‘chat’**

Forest management

* Nature and climate linked emergencies. Need to consider the roles of native woodland for biodiversity and long term carbon sequestration, and productive woodland with faster initial sequestration and harvested low-carbon wood products to displace steel and concrete
* Need to develop resilient silviculture for a climate changing world using tools like ESC that identifies suitability of species in future climate projections.
* Substantial energy and resource put into deer management (steel fencing, tubes, culling) and deer numbers significantly limit silvicultural options – tree species diversification and natural regeneration. Venison!
* Consider energy in harvesting and restocking approaches – clear fells, thinning and continuous cover forestry and the carbon cost of infrastructure required
* Cultivation guidance to minimise organic soil disturbance of planting (and restocking) may reduce the carbon footprint of operations. Natural regeneration may play a role.

Operational Carbon

* Need a carbon audit overview of supply chain.
* Understand targets, e.g. interim targets of 70% reduction by 2030, 2040 for no new diesel HGVs.
* Aim to meet decarbonisation targets of 2045 while maintaining international and domestic competitiveness. Recognise early adopters may pay more.
* Consider the timelines for the technology becoming available from international machinery supply chains
* Company carbon audits will help inform investment strategies, machinery replacement cycles.
* Informed by international comparisons/benchmarking and cross sectoral work with other manufacturing/ haulage/landuse (agriculture)
* Use procurement to influence suppliers of materials and services recognising role of SMEs in sector that have limited capital to invest
* Right machine for the right job
* Logistic efficiency and scope to reduce timber miles, move less water (in wet logs) promoting local markets, adding value locally
* Modal shift of timber transport to ship and rail
* Sector is on a scale that could offer an attractive test bed/ pioneer sector for some machinery suppliers - involve both investors and operators
* Engage with work on charging and refuelling infrastructure in rural Scotland.
* Develop skills and servicing resource for new technologies
* Scope for forestry and timber companies to help shape and deliver services in rural areas.
* Innovations such as engineered timber, drones, hydraulic recovery in cranes, tree tape in nurseries or LIDAR in inventory and operational planning have potential for major energy efficiency.
* Circular economy ideas e.g. Wood First – in modular construction and the wood cascade principal, can ensure timber is used in a way that maximises carbon value in the economy.
* Integrated industry allows recycled timber and sawmill by-products into board materials and woody biofuel for manufacturing /kiln drying.

Wider issues

* Decarbonising recreation and visitors to forests - 20 minute neighbourhoods/ WIAT
* Skills agenda – need to ensure we train, attract and develop people with skills to deliver the new practices and technologies