



**Scottish Forest and Timber Technologies Industry Leadership Group Meeting  
29 October 2019  
Apex House, Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh  
Draft Meeting Note**

**Present:**

Martin Gale (Co-Chair)  
Fergus Ewing (Co-Chair, item 3)  
Guy Watt  
Andy Leitch  
George Webb  
John Paterson  
Hugh Montgomery  
Liz Barron-Majerik  
Scott Sheills  
Neil Sutherland  
Gordon McLean  
Ralland Browne  
Stuart McKill  
David Sulman  
Peter Whitfield  
John Dye  
Trefor Owen  
David Leven  
Margaret Watson  
Elaine Ellis  
Jason Hubert  
Johan Belfrage  
Karen Jackson (for item 4)

**Apologies:**

Sean Smith  
David Leslie  
Steven Hutcheon  
Caroline-Jane Gordon  
David Symons.

**1. Introductions**

**2. Discussion on priority actions for next 2 years.**

The Group discussed in detail the Roots for Further Growth action plan and agreed on the industry priority actions for the next two years. The main themes were the increased productivity, the sector's contribution to climate change emergency, timber

in construction, digitisation of the sector, improving the quality and frequency of data production, skills and promotion.

Agreed priority actions and numbering taken from the action plan in the Roots for Further Growth document are:

### **Strategic Priority 1: Theme - Strategic Growth**

Proposed Project 1. Commission an economic study to update economic contribution of the Forest and Timber Technologies sector in Scotland 2021.

Proposed Project 5. Scope and carry out a wood cascading study to understand the economic and environmental outputs from various woodflows in Scotland.

Proposed Project 6. Continue to support innovation, research and development to increase wood fibre production and capture.

### **Strategic Priority 2: Theme - Improving efficiency and increased productivity**

Proposed Project 11. Identify ways to increase wood fibre recovery from our harvesting operations through innovation, research and development.

Proposed Projects 12 and 13. Making better use of data across the supply chain.

- *Industry developing a project towards developing paperless transactions for roundwood delivery.*

### **Strategic Priority 3 Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing**

Proposed Project 18. Identifying existing and new markets suitable for home grown timber and products.

- *Engagement with building standards and Westminster government promoting carbon credentials of using wood in construction.*
- *Focus on new and retrofit homes.*

Proposed Project 19. Identify and develop new and innovative wood-based value-added products processes and services.

### **Strategic Priority 4: Theme – Skills and Future Workforce**

Proposed Project 23. Publish an industry skills action plan for 2020-22.

- *Increase FMO apprenticeships and general T&T MA.*
- *Explore pre-apprenticeship scheme to support micro businesses to train new recruits for operational delivery.*

Proposed Project 24. Proactively engage with education providers and training to ensure sector needs are clearly understood and met.

- *Support both colleges through populating curriculum advisory groups.*
- *Update existing framework for the T&T MAs*
- *Support Edinburgh Napier to continue development and expansion of Built Environment Exchange.*

### **Strategic Priority 5: Theme – Communication and Promotion.**

Proposed Project 28. Support the Regional Groups and events.

Proposed Project 29. Maintain website presence.

Proposed Project 30. Continue work on carbon benefits of timber in construction.

Proposed Project 32. Hold a conference to report on progress of action plan.

### **3. Discussion with Mr Ewing**

- Martin Gale welcomed Mr Ewing and provided him with a short report on the current state of the market from supply to processing, others updated on their segment of the market.
- Mr Ewing reinforced the importance of the ILG and particularly made comment on the apparent enthusiasm in the room. He stated that this was a great opportunity for the ILG and its public sector support to showcase how effective and productive a “Team Scotland” approach could be to deliver the objectives of Roots for Further Growth. He went on to make the point that forestry and wood-based industries had a huge part to play in helping Scotland contribute to mitigating the climate change emergency through woodland creation and increasing the amount of wood products used in construction.
- Mr Ewing asked to meet with public sector agency members of the ILG to discuss how they can support the delivery of Roots for Further Growth, initially for actions 6, 11 and 18.  
**Action: Andy Leitch to arrange meeting.**
- Mr Ewing also expressed that he would like to attend future ILG meetings.  
**Action: Andy Leitch to liaise with Mr Ewing’s office.**

There was a lot of discussion and some actions agreed on a number of topics:

- COP26: Mr Ewing and David Leven think there is an opportunity for the sector to showcase its credentials for mitigating climate change at the forthcoming COP26.  
**Action: Opportunity to be explored by public/private sector partners of ILG.**
- Woodland Creation investment: Hugh Montgomery mentioned that there was still interest in investment in woodland creation. Mr Ewing reported that Shell has just committed to spend £5M for tree planting to carbon offset its activities.

He thinks there may be further opportunities with other major oil and gas companies.

**Action: ILG to follow up with Oil and Gas team and others.**

- Mr Ewing asked the ILG their view on introducing a more flexible planning process in relation to woodland establishment schemes where planning permission for woodland creation would be connected to the inclusion of planning permission for affordable homes in rural areas. Overall, there was a positive response to the proposal.

**Action: Industry reps to make representation if and when required.**

- Neil Sutherland presented his discussion paper “Scottish Zero Carbon Homes - 11 Year Timber Development Roadmap” amplifying the ambition of the ILG to increase the use of timber in construction through innovative new wood fibre rich products and timber construction systems. Mr Ewing asked what barriers were in place to prevent this happening not just in Scotland, but in the three other administrations. Mr Ewing went on to emphasise that storing more carbon in building is in everyone’s interest to help mitigate the climate change emergency. He asked the ILG to identify how this could be achieved and what barriers might be in place in building regulations across the UK. Scott Shiells stated that it would be useful to have more direct engagement with housing developers in regard to adopting timber-based construction.

**Action: Neil Sutherland (lead), Sean Smith and Stuart McKill. I would also include Zero Waste Scotland in this discussion.**

- Mr Ewing also asked that Jason Hubert, Scottish Forestry arrange a series of meetings between Mr Ewing, ILG reps and appropriate departments in England and Wales, as well as Building Regulations in Scotland.

**Action: Jason Hubert**

- John Dye raised the importance of having accurate market data for processors and investors and welcomed the current review of forestry statistics. It was agreed that digitisation of the whole supply chain could give huge efficiency benefits and that a Working Group should be formed as soon as possible to take forward Strategic Priority 2. This should try to address the impact of current sales methods on maximising the recovery of wood fibre from harvesting sites.

**Action: ILG members to forward suggestions for membership of “Efficiency in the supply chain through digitisation working group”.**

- John Paterson introduced the need for the sector to have a greater understanding of the environmental and economic impacts of current and future woodflows in Scotland and it was agreed to address this in Action 5 of RFFG. Wood cascading has been studied at a European level in the last two years.

**Action: ILG partners.**

- Johan Belfrage provided an outline of the work being carried out to improve the opportunity for wood fibre as a feedstock for bio-refining in Scotland. It was agreed that this could be an important emerging market.

- Elaine Ellis reported that SDS were working in partnership with the ILG Skills Group and were currently about to start the process of refreshing the current Sector Skills plan. Liz Barron-Majerik reported on the progress of the various outputs and current projects of the ILG Skills Group. She outlined how the framework for the Trees and Timber MA has been updated to account for the Forest Machine Operator MA. She also reported on the development of a pilot pre-apprenticeship scheme. The Group will be looking for engagement with contractors and industry reps to take this to the next stage. Mr Ewing welcomed the idea of pre-apprenticeship scheme and asked to be kept informed of progress. Martin Gale offered the support of Tilhill to take this forward. Mr Ewing also asked about the progress of the FMO apprentices and stated that he wanted to see more FMO apprenticeships. Andy Leitch and Trefor Owen reported that the current cohort in the pilot scheme were well through their training with two of the apprentices planned to move to private sector contractors in February.

**Action: Andy Leitch and Trefor Owen to discuss options for increasing FMO apprenticeships.**

- Martin Gale emphasised that Roots for Further Growth truly gave the sector an opportunity to grow, but industry could not expect the public sector to continue to fully resource the priority actions identified above.

**Action: ILG public/private partners to explore options on how to resource priority actions.**

- Mr Ewing acknowledged that this would be David Sulman's last ILG meeting and thanked him for all of his positive contributions to the industry during his career and wished him well for the future.

#### **4. Outline of the South Scotland Enterprise the new economic development agency**

Karen Jackson from Scottish Government provided a detailed outline of how and why the South Scotland Enterprise development agency will be launched in April 2020. One of the key points is that forestry and wood-based industries are deemed to be a key industry in that region. They would welcome more detailed discussion as early as possible on how they can support the ILG deliver Roots for Further Growth and the wider industry.

#### **5. Meeting Note and Actions from previous meeting**

The main matters arising from the previous meeting were:

Funding for Regional Meetings: The two of the three first round of evening events have taken place, attendances are holding up and over 70 expected at the Central meeting on 30 October. Still to receive contributions from two or three ILG members.

**Action: Guy Watt to send reminder to outstanding contributors.**

Website Review: The findings and feedback of the Website review was discussed. It was agreed that the website is an important asset and should be updated as soon as

possible and maintained. Although, non-essential material should be stripped out. This work has to find funding. It was also discussed that the ILG needs to do more to promote its activities using social media and normal methods of communications.

**Action: ILG to discuss as part of the overall resourcing.**

Annual Conference: It was agreed to hold an annual conference in March to promote the various projects and initiatives to deliver Roots for Further Growth. If possible, this should coincide with the date of the next ILG meeting with Mr Ewing in attendance.

**Action: Andy Leitch to coordinate with other ILG members.**

#### **6. Date of Next Meeting.**

To be held in March subject to Mr Ewing's availability.