



**Scottish Forest and Timber Technologies Industry Leadership Group meeting  
20 May, 2019**

**Venue: Apex House, 99 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH2 5HD**

Present: Guy Watt (acting Chair), David Leslie, Stephen Stanley, Peter Whitfield, Caroline Gordon, David Sullman, Liz Barron-Majerik, Neil Sutherland, Gorsdon McLean, John Dye, Trefor Owen, Sean Smith, Andy Leitch, Alistair Mackinnon, Margaret Watson, Steven Hutcheon, Jason Hubert and Elaine Ellis

Apologies: Martin Gale (Chair), Tom Bruce-Jones, Ralland Browne, Scott Sheills, Hugh Montgomery, George Webb, David Symons, Stuart McKill, John Paterson, Ian Archer,

**Meeting Notes**

**1. Welcome and Introduction**

Martin Gale was unavoidably detained at short notice and therefore Guy Watt (GW) took on the role as chair for this meeting.

**2. Purpose of the Group**

2 a . Governance

GW reiterated the purpose and importance of the Group (see Governance paper) as a Forum to engage with senior politicians and public sector bodies in relation to strategic opportunities and issues affecting current and future economic growth.

The Group discussed the content of the Governance paper sent out with the agenda, in the main all agreed with the content and intention. It was identified that some references have to be updated and it should be made more explicit that deputies are accepted with the agreement of the Chair.

**Action: Andy Leitch**

2 b. Membership

In general, the Group was content with the scope of the membership. It was agreed that others should be invited as associates when there was a relevant topic on the

agenda or issue to be addressed, such Community Woodlands and/or Forest Tourism.

### 2 c. Span of Activity.

AL explained that the span of the Group reflected the economic activity of the important supply chains in Scotland's forest and downstream wood-based industries, which includes businesses directly associated with virgin, reused and recycled wood.

### 2 d. What and how group will deliver

There was discussion around the importance of the opportunity for the Group to engage with senior politicians, particularly Mr Ewing who has agreed to be co-chair of future meetings, but careful preparation would have to be done to maximise the outcome of such discussion.

It was agreed that the next step would be to identify the actions within the strategic priorities that should be addressed first. Everyone, including public sector, was asked to provide their top 2/3 actions within each of the 5 strategic priorities by the ends of June. AL would also identify where activities are already underway that will contribute to the delivery of the Action Plan.

**Action: all**

Neil Sutherland (NS) proposed a specific piece of work that would focus on promoting the benefit of wood products and timber construction systems in achieving "real" zero carbon homes. It was agreed that this could provide important evidence on how wood products can help with the response to the global climate emergency acknowledged by the First Minister recently. Neil was asked to produce a one page outline of what such a project may look like.

**Action: Neil Sutherland**

## **3. Delivering and Updating the Action Plan**

### 3 a. Public Sector Support

AL explained that the public sector agencies sat round the table, and with logos in the published Roots for Further Growth document, had agreed to work with ILG to help them deliver the Action Plan when appropriate to the objectives of each of the agencies. The key will be for industry partners to prioritise actions for this year and then we can explore how to move forward. Reps from HIE and SE expressed their support for this approach and looked forward to putting activities in motion. AL also mentioned that there were other public sector bodies either currently involved or are interested in being involved in wood related projects, e.g. Architecture and Design Scotland, Zero Waste Scotland, Construction Scotland Innovation Centre, More Homes Division Scottish Government and Historical Environment Scotland.

### 3 b. Working Groups

AL proposed that the activities associated with delivering the Action Plan should be directed by working groups, however, we should minimise the creation of additional working groups and look to use current groups as a reference where possible.

AL proposed the following in regard to working groups:

- Priorities 1 and 5 - full ILG covers these.
- Priority 4 is covered by an existing Skills group and FMO (Forest Machine Operator) sub-group. It was agreed that the Skills Group should now widen its activities to cover more than the forest floor. **Action : Chair of Skills Group (currently AL)**
- Priority 2 – It is intended to create a new group of operational managers, AL to propose a composition and get feedback from the ILG. **Action: AL**
- Priority 3 – For the time being, use the current SIRT Management Board, the Scottish Biorefinery Working Group and Offsite Solutions Scotland as reference groups.

### 3 c. Current Progress

AL gave a presentation on a list of projects and activities currently underway across the sector that will contribute to the delivery of Roots for Further Growth. It was agreed AL will keep ILG members apprised of progress of relevant work.

### 3 d. Next Priorities and resourcing.

It was agreed to revisit this item once the ILG had agreed its priorities, see item 2.d.

### 3 e. Reporting Progress

There was discussion on how the ILG reports the progress of delivering the action plan.

It was agreed that the current action plan should be reviewed on an annual basis responding to opportunities or emerging issues. Agreed activities through the working groups will reported back to the ILG via email and formal meetings.

Dissemination to the wider audience will be agreed as part of the communication plan, but initially, this will be through the regional meetings and an annual conference/seminar. We should also explore using the website to promote current progress.

## **4. Communication activities and resourcing**

### 4 a. Regional meetings

AL explained that the Regional meetings are used to disseminate the activities and outputs of work aimed at delivering Roots for Further Growth, as well as enabling networking across the sector at a level that doesn't happen in normal working hours. The events are deemed a huge success with delegates and the steering groups involved. AL had shared a summary report from Confor who organise the events in

three regions and AL gave an outline of the HIFIC events. AL explained that the events were co-funded by SF, HIE and the ILG. The recent strategy ILG strategy group had agreed a £500 contribution from each industry member, the 2018-19 events have been delivered and invoices will be sent out for those by GW as soon as possible.

The ILG agreed that the regional meetings were an important part of its activities and agreed to continue to support these financially and in-kind.

#### 4 b. SFTT Website <http://www.forestryscotland.com/>

AL introduced the current ILG website and asked for the Group for feedback on whether they wanted to keep it and if so, did it require an overhaul or a refresh. AL reminded members that there is an annual cost to hosting and maintaining the website and resources will have to be found to deal with any additional work agreed on the website. asked for feedback on this within the next few weeks.

**Action: all**

There was additional discussion about what media the ILG should use to promote its activities. Liz Barron-Majerik and Peter Whitfield agreed to take this forward, Sean Smith volunteered Dan Ridely-Ellis to participate.

#### 4 c. Internal Communication within the Group.

Covered in item 3c.

#### 4 d . Annual Report/seminar

This item was mainly covered through discussion in item 3e. It was agreed that it would be good practice to hold an annual conference/seminar promoting the outputs of the sector in relation to Roots for Further Growth. It was agreed to plan for such an event in November, 2019.

A brief progress report against the action plan will be collated and presented to the Cabinet Secretary and published on the website on an annual basis.

### **5. Update on Current Work Programme**

AL introduced more detailed outline of four pieces of work currently underway related to Roots for Further Growth.

#### 5 a. 2019-21 Skills Plan and proposed skills summits. (SP 4) (see also attached ppt)

AL explained that the Skills Group was now over 20 strong, but could do with more support and direction from industry reps rather than just trade associations and skills organisations. The main focus of the Skills group at the moment is to refresh the current skills plan to 2019-21. The next Skills meeting is 27 June.

AL went on to inform the ILG that Mr Ewing plans to have two Skills summits in June and the outputs of these events will help inform the sector skills plan.

There is also a piece of work underway commissioned by Lantra and under the name of the ILG to update the numbers associated with future labour in forestry. Claire Glaister is carrying out this work and it will be complete by end of June.

#### 5 b. Coniferous Roundwood Supply and Demand report (SP 1) (see attached ppt)

Guy Watt provided an outline of the headlines from his draft roundwood supply and demand report.

#### 5 c. Early Production figures from Improved Sitka Spruce (SP 1, AP 6) (ppt attached)

AL gave a brief update on initial results from measurement taken from felled improved stock Sitka plantations in Wales and Scotland. He stressed that much more work was required to increase the sample size before we can make conclusions, but early indications are showing significant volume gains. The ILG agreed it was important that we tested the characteristics of the improved crop to assess impact on quality. This could be an ILG supported project?

#### 5 d. Potential impact of C16+ graded spruce (SP 3, AP 18)

AL explained that he commissioned four pieces of work with Robert Hairstans team at Edinburgh Napier University focussing on 1. Gap analysis for R&D for solid wood engineered products from homegrown timber, 2. Opportunities for HG timber in retrofit, 3 Sustainable communities from offsite timber construction and digitisation of design of 3 bed house using C16+ graded HG timber. He illustrated that early results in the c16+ project were interesting in that it showed that the additional strength and density properties of that grade could mean less fixings and wood required in a typical timber frame construction. The full results of all these pieces of work would provide excellent material for the annual conference.

## **6. Moving forward and topics for next meeting**

It was agreed to have the next ILG meeting in September with a view to invite Mr Ewing, subject to his availability. This should be taken forward by Martin Gale and Andy Leitch.

In addition, a summary of the ILG members' 3 key projects in each of the 5 strategic priorities will be circulated as soon as all the responses have been received?

Proposed memberships of the working groups will be circulated once this has been agreed?

**Andy Leitch**

**6 June 2019**