



An Agency within the Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk



FOREST SERVICE



**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**

Business Plan

2019/2020



Forest Service Business Plan 2019/2020

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Foreword

By the Chief Executive



I am pleased to present the Agency's Business Plan for 2019/20. This Plan sets out the key activities for the year ahead and has been prepared for consideration and approval by an incoming Minister. It will remain as a draft until then.

As I write, the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the UK's proposed exit from the EU brings with it an ongoing responsibility to ensure that our plans and preparations for EU exit are advanced, comprehensive and meticulous. As a result this challenge will continue to be a major focus of our work in the year ahead. We must continue to work closely with colleagues in GB and Ireland, in the wider Department and across Departments to ensure that we safeguard plant and tree health and in so doing protect the environment and our local agriculture, horticulture and forestry sectors' economic capability.

We will work to maximise the opportunities for trade in forest and plant products, and manage the challenges of a new regulatory environment. We will continue to review and adjust our resourcing plans to ensure that we have right number of people with the required mix of skills and experience to develop and implement effective plans.

The Forest Service manages a natural capital asset of 75,000 hectares of productive forest and green space and we remain committed to providing public goods and services through sustainable management of this natural capital asset to deliver a balanced mix of ecosystem services. Meeting the longer term aim to increase the level of afforestation contained in the Forestry Strategy is proving particularly challenging at a time when more forests are needed to help address the impacts of climate change. We will support forest expansion through the Rural Development Programme, however with some reduction in demand materialising in the current year. To augment this, we will seek to acquire land suitable for new woodland particularly in areas where it consolidates existing forests. Additionally, this year we will focus our attention on developing the case for expanding forests within the context of post-EU exit Agricultural and Environmental Policy development and establish an afforestation forum of senior officials and policy makers to gather perspectives and opinions on how planting rates can be increased. We will continue to invest in our forests where this improves environmental quality, public access and the supply of timber.

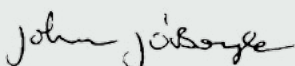
The key draft Programme for Government outcome that '*we live and work sustainably – protecting the environment*' provides the focus for all our work. We will continue to manage our forests in compliance with established and verifiable standards working collaboratively with our partners in:

- industry to improve bio-security in agriculture, horticulture and in forestry to ensure a reliable and sustainable supply of timber from our forests to the wood processing industry;
- local government to provide opportunities for people to enjoy the diversity of our forests for walking, cycling and holidays;
- environmental organisations to improve biodiversity in the forest estate; and
- statutory agencies to protect and improve water quality.

Forest Service will continue to contribute to the development of a strong, competitive and regionally balanced economy and the provision of places for activities that improve our health and wellbeing. We remain keen to consider opportunities for habitat restoration where these will improve the environment and support the development of the economy.

I recognise that our people are our key strength and continued delivery of high quality outcomes is not possible without the skills and expertise of our dedicated staff across the industrial, administrative and professional and technical disciplines. I am committed to continuing to build on existing work to provide opportunities for the continuous professional development of staff across the organisation. As part of a broader People Management Plan I aim to continue recent improvements in our staff engagement by ensuring that staff are kept informed and properly involved in key decisions.

I thank all of our staff for their continued contribution to the Departmental vision of supporting '*a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone*'.



John Joe O'Boyle

Chief Executive

1 Introduction

1.1 **Status**

Forestry and Plant Health functions (inclusive of those relating to farming and horticulture as well as trees) are delivered by Forest Service, an Agency within the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). Forest Service became an Executive Agency on 1 April 1998 and the broad framework within which it operates is set out in the Framework Document.

The Agency is subject to the overall direction of the Minister¹, who determines the policy framework, the scope of Agency activities, and the resources available for the Agency's work. This draft Business Plan, sets the key performance targets and forms the basis for monitoring the Agency's performance; and remains subject to the Minister's agreement when appointed.

1.2 **Vision and Aims**

Forest Service works to realise the Department's Vision and the Strategic Outcomes assigned to DAERA within the context of the draft [Programme for Government](#) (PfG).

Draft PfG outcome for which DAERA has lead responsibility:

'We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment'

DAERA Vision

'A living, working, active landscape valued by everyone'

To achieve our vision, we will:

- **work collaboratively within the DAERA family and with others to set the direction for, and foster the conditions to achieve, the following strategic outcomes:**

Strategic Outcomes

- **SO1** - Sustainable agri-food, fisheries, forestry and industrial sectors
- **SO2** - A clean, healthy environment, benefitting people, nature and the economy; **and**
- **SO3** - A thriving rural economy, contributing to prosperity and wellbeing
- **SO4** - further develop our capability and improve our systems to ensure **'we are a well led, high performing organisation focused on outcomes'** through:
 - strong leadership and decision making across the Agency;
 - an engaged, motivated, flexible and highly skilled workforce valuing individuals and diversity;

¹ This plan is informed by the draft Programme for Government pending its finalization by an incoming Executive and/or a Minister.

- o *strong and effective communication and cooperation with the Department;*
- o *innovative, accessible and responsive systems and processes for customers and delivery partners.*

Forest policy is to steadily expand tree cover and to manage woods and forests sustainably. The aim is to increase the area of forest to 12% of land area by the middle of the century, to manage forests to provide a wide range of ecosystem services consistent with national forestry standards and to seek independent certification of our own forest management practice against the UK Woodland Assurance Standard.

The Agency is responsible for policies informed by research and evidence to protect the plant health status of our land-based, horticultural and forestry industries as well as sustaining the plant health status of the wider environment. To deliver this we will continue to develop improvements in biosecurity in partnership with key internal and external stakeholders. As we prepare for EU exit we continue to plan to implement, in common with the UK Plant Health Service, the approach to Plant Health envisaged in the new EU Plant Health Regulation that comes into force in December 2019.

We shall manage costs and maximise income and increase our focus on business intelligence to manage risk and horizon scan for new and emerging threats in trade.

1.3 **Functions**

The purpose of Forest Service is set out at section 1 of the Agency Framework Document. Forest Service fulfils DAERA's legal obligations² in the areas of forestry, plant and bee health, reproductive materials and horticulture marketing standards.

Our key tasks are:

- 1) To promote forest expansion through grant aid under the Rural Development Programme;
- 2) To promote the arrangements for partnership working on forestry lands by formalising agreements to supply timber, provide access and enhance biodiversity;
- 3) To provide a regulatory framework as part of the UK Plant Health Service and processes to encourage compliance with forestry, plant and bee health legislation, aid scheme rules and potato seed certification and forest reproductive material schemes;
- 4) Monitor compliance and enforce legislation through inspection programmes, and protect the productive capacity of agriculture and forestry lands by monitoring for the presence of organisms harmful to plants;

² Forestry Act (NI) 2010, the Plant Health Act (NI) 1967, the Seeds Act (NI) 1965, the Bees (NI) Order 1980, and secondary legislation made under these and the European Communities Act 1972.

5) To manage the Department's forests so as to:

- Supply timber, regenerate and protect forests;
- Promote public access by maintaining and improving facilities and visitor services through partnership arrangements;
- Verify sustainable management performance through a process of independent audit against the UK Woodland Assurance Standard; and
- Accommodate the development of existing and emerging PfG outcomes that may require the release of land from forestry for renewable energy generation and environmental improvement projects.

2 Strategic Context / EU Exit

The Agency Framework Document sets out the context for our work on forestry and plant health consistent with the vision and strategic outcomes set out in the DAERA 2020 Strategic Plan. Increasingly, we are working with partners to deliver services because they are often better placed to do so than ourselves, and this allows us to focus on regulation, strategic planning and the technical aspects and control of forest management.

Forest Service is responsible for delivering statutory services for forestry, plant and bee health, and seed potato certification. It provides official inspection services that aim to balance effective regulation with minimising the regulatory burden on industry and trade. It plays a role in facilitating trade by advising industry on best practice and international standards. It manages forests, and provides advice and financial support to the forest industry.

As the UK Government prepares to leave the EU, we will continue to plan as part of the UK Plant Health Service for the effective delivery of plant health controls to facilitate trade in regulated goods, and protect our plant health status under a common framework. When the UK leaves the EU there may be an impact on our work because timber, crops, plants and plant products are traded and move freely across the Irish border. We continue to have a common interest in plant health matters with our colleagues in the Republic of Ireland and continue to align on plant health policies and legislation to support the maintenance of the single epidemiological status of the island.

Within the EU, the rate of forest expansion has been strongly influenced by the arrangements for agriculture. There is scope for forestry to make a greater contribution to wealth formation, economic development and service provision in Northern Ireland post-EU exit. This year we will focus our attention on developing the case for expanding forests within the context of post-EU exit Agricultural and Environmental Policy development; and establish an afforestation forum of senior officials and policy makers to gather perspectives and opinions on how planting rates can be increased. Accordingly, we shall look to inform land use studies and economic modelling that assist us to

communicate policy options clearly in support of changes in land use to forestry.

Where the policy environment supports intervention in a post-EU economy we would wish to consider a programme of public sector land use and forest expansion to develop the forestry and wood processing industry; to contribute to flood alleviation, public access and other non-timber eco-system services; and to provide a pathway for those wishing to exit farming. Our stocks of growing timber can support industry restructuring, and resilience against supply shortages arising from EU exit.

It is in this context that we will:

- Protect and promote forestry, to increase the stock of natural capital represented by forests to deliver a sustainable programme of forest ecosystem services;
- Strengthen our approach to forest planning so that we are better able to identify the potential for forestry to contribute to land-use change in a post-EU membership economy, predict forest growth, and mitigate the effects of changing climate and other external impacts on forestry;
- Maintain independent certification of state forests;
- Safeguard the plant health status of our land-based industries through implementation of the new EU Plant Health Regulation (EU) 2016/2031 while new trade relationships under any future economic partnership emerge. Through this period we will mitigate the most important risks to plant health and promote the adoption of better bio-security principles by professional operators and the general public in support of maintaining the plant health status of the whole island;
- Invest in science, technologies and in our people to develop new, more efficient and more effective means of delivering our services and achieving our objectives.

The strategic aims are:

- Increased horizon scanning and risk assessment capability to improve preparedness;
- Effective control of plant pest and disease outbreaks locally and plan for responsiveness including on a trans-boundary basis;
- Improved agricultural and forestry economy;
- Healthier people, plants and environments;
- Increased forest cover;
- Profitable and sustainable forestry and land management; and
- Improved policy making.

These priorities are reflected in the Agency key targets: to safeguard plant health status; to extend forest and woodland; to supply at least 400,000 cubic metres (m³) of sustainable timber

to industry; and to earn over £10 million from forestry resources. The Agency will continue to safeguard its staff while maintaining productivity by reducing absenteeism and accidents. We will seek out opportunities for investment to improve and extend the life of assets.

We will engage in partnership working on forestry land to supply timber to wood processors, to develop public access with councils and other organisations to improve recreation. We will safeguard plant health and enhance the environment through partnership working with environmental NGOs, trade representative bodies, and the public. We will maintain the knowledge base about forestry and plant health by working with the academic community.

This plan also contains supporting targets to provide greater clarity about how the key targets are to be achieved, and to support progress in future years.

3 Performance Measures

Measurement criteria are set for the Agency's targets to facilitate audits so we can monitor progress and measure success. These will generally be refinements of the following general metrics:

Operational

- Plantations established in hectares (ha);
- Volume of timber produced cubic metres (m³);
- Forest visitor surveys³;
- Area of woodland qualifying for UK Forestry Standard in hectares (ha);
- Plant health partnerships, awareness, inspections, sampling, survey and enforcement programme compliance.

Customer Service

Performance against prescribed standards of service to the public⁴.

Value for money

- Net annual cost of the forestry and plant health programmes;
- Maintain income and expenditure within agreed limits.

³ <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dard/forest-service-visitors-survey-2014.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/our-customer-service-standards>

4 Corporate Governance

The Chief Executive is responsible to the Minister for the Agency's operations and performance, and is the Agency Accounting Officer. He is advised by a Management Board comprising 3 Executive Directors and 2 Non-Executive Board Members. The latter are currently senior SIB official and a Non-Executive Board member.

The Chief Executive is also advised by an Audit Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC), established as a Sub-Committee of the Board, about business risks, internal control and governance of the Agency. The Sub-Committee is currently chaired by a Non-Executive Board Member and has two additional members independent of Agency executive functions.

The Management Board has established a Governance Committee, an Investment Committee, an Information Systems Committee, a Finance Committee and a Health and Safety Committee. These consider issues referred by the Board and/or its ARAC, and report back to it. This provides for a hierarchy of governance and business activity and oversight inclusive of input from Non-Executive Board Members.

Robust procedures are in place to provide for continuity of service in the event of a civil emergency. Our business continuity plan sets out the controls in place and we review the plan regularly to ensure that it provides the necessary assurance that the controls remain effective.

Forest Service adheres to standards for how we deal with customer correspondence and complaints, and for financial control. These standards are set out at [Appendix 1](#).

5 Organisation and Resources

5.1 *Operating model*

The Agency has a baseline of 215 multi-disciplinary staff (full time equivalents) located at: the Agency's headquarters in Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh; DAERA Direct offices; forest offices at Castlewellan, Co. Down and Garvagh, Co. Derry/Londonderry; and at various forest locations. We will continue to implement better ways of working to utilise modern information and communications technology to improve efficiency and effectiveness of our workforce. The Agency shall seek to develop our capability and improve our systems in the context of reducing public sector expenditure. We will continue to embed a new financial management architecture on the Account NI platform to help improve our management information reporting.

In the context of preparing for EU Exit and safeguarding plant health under future trade relationships we continue to monitor our organisational capability and capacity to implement official controls and ensure that trade in plants and plant products is as frictionless as possible. Increasingly we will focus on a partnership approach to biosecurity and seek to collaborate to improve the understanding of plant health risks and mitigating actions.

Forest Service is committed to promoting the ongoing professional development of its staff. We shall promote membership of the relevant professional bodies, continuing professional development and accordingly will fund membership fees. In recognition of the challenges for plant health regulation outlined above, we continue to encourage continuous professional development of our existing 15 members of the Royal Society of Biology Plant Health Register.

We shall also ensure that personal development plans are developed and reviewed for all staff at all levels in line with professional, technical, operational and NICS competence frameworks.

Details of the current senior staff organisational structure and main office locations can be found at Appendices [3](#) and [4](#).

5.2 *Staff Engagement*

The Agency is an 'Investors in People' employer and we promote the health and wellbeing of staff and provide all necessary training and equipment. We engage with staff through formal surveys at NICS, DAERA and Agency level, at staff conferences and events and encourage contributions to staff briefing and news publications through regular team briefs that cascade down from weekly senior officer meetings.

We shall fully participate in the development and roll out of a DAERA-specific Employee

Engagement Implementation Plan and a new DAERA People Strategy. This approach shall inform our work to ensure that our culture and behaviours are centred on delivering high quality outcomes by valuing, supporting and respecting staff. We shall aim to positively contribute to a 5% increase in the DAERA Employment Engagement index score by 31 March 2020 as a measure of our success in developing an engaged, motivated, flexible and skilled workforce.

5.3 ***Managing absence***

Specific action to manage absenteeism will include the strict application of absence management procedures and measures for the prevention and investigation of staff accidents. We shall work closely with our NICS HR business partners to support staff back to work. Our aim shall be to reduce sickness absence by 10% (based on average days lost per person) against our current baseline.

⁵ <http://ukwas.org.uk/>

6 Operating environment

6.1 *Scope for forest expansion*

The changes to the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) in Northern Ireland and policy after the UK leaves the EU will be the main factor determining the rate and type of forestry expansion. There is little sign that landowners intend to change land-use from agriculture to forestry and, while they are adjusting to the CAP reforms and arrangements after EU exit take shape. This year we will focus our attention on developing the case for expanding forests within the context of post-EU exit Agricultural and Environmental Policy development and establish an afforestation forum of senior officials and policy makers to gather perspectives and opinions on how planting rates can be increased. Accordingly, we shall look to inform land use studies and economic modelling that assist us to communicate policy options clearly in support of changes in land use to forestry. The Department will continue to support new planting and sustainable management of existing woodland through 3 schemes that complement support for small scale planting under the Department's Environmental Farming Scheme. The fifth phase of the Forest Expansion Scheme will open in July and close in September 2019. Forest Service will seek to acquire land suitable for new woodland particularly in areas where it consolidates existing forests. A revised Forest Protection Scheme will open to support woodland owners affected by Chalara ash dieback and the Woodland Investment Grant Scheme will remain open.

6.2 *Managing forests sustainably*

Our principal obligation is to ensure that forests are managed in a sustainable manner. As evidence of this, our sustainable forest management practices remain compliant with the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)⁵, confirmed through an independent audit accredited by Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) (Licence Code: FSC-C084232) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC) (Licence Code: PEFC/16-40-1924). This year we will undertake a procurement exercise to ensure that a full re-assessment audit takes place in sufficient time to allow certification to extend seamlessly beyond May 2020. Compliance with the requirements of UKWAS means, broadly, that forest management complies with all legal obligations and is committed to a rigorous planning process that pays proper attention to the needs of people and public values in the design of forests at all stages of development. Forest Service ensures that forest operations comply with the plans and follow good practice; that forests are properly protected and maintained; and that conservation and enhancement of biodiversity are given significant consideration. The Agency encourages community participation and supports community access.

Previous investments created a substantial forest and timber asset which is also used to deliver

⁶ <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dard/indicative-map-for-woodland-creation-2009.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.forestry.gov.scot/sustainable-forestry/ukfs-scotland> - See Page 159

public access to forests and environmental improvement. This year we will extend the recreation facilities in at least three forests in partnership with local councils. This will facilitate improved opportunities for child learning and play; exercise, health and wellbeing; and better access for less able people. We also expect to finalise partnership arrangements with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council for Hillsborough forest as it progresses its ambitious development plans.

Current plans indicate that timber can be supplied at current levels for about 15 years but thereafter supply will decrease. Subject to our obligations to manage forests sustainably, we will market timber to support the timber industry and the rural economy, and we will seek to agree terms with our timber customers and recreation delivery partners to realise the benefits of the investments in growing timber and recreation infrastructure.

Extensive plantations occur in areas which are now considered unsuitable for forestry on grounds of loss of natural habitat⁶ and water quality⁷. As these plantations mature we will ensure that replacement plantations remain consistent with our forest policy obligations and, where land would be better under another use, consider how it can be restored to natural habitat or made available for renewable energy development or flood attenuation.

6.3 ***Plant Health***

Outbreaks of tree diseases in recent years illustrate the increased risk faced by foresters, horticulturalists and farmers from novel plant pests and diseases. We are working with our partners in the UK Plant Health Service and the Republic of Ireland to evaluate the risks from serious pests and diseases and to prioritise these on the Northern Ireland Plant Health Risk Register. Our approach is to ensure that policy and legislation are supported by science, research and evidence. The inspection and surveillance programme, implemented by an accredited, professional inspection service, helps us detect and make risk based decisions about where we should intervene to control disease and provide the best possible outcome for industry. We continue to assess in-field diagnostics as a means of improving our capacity to detect introductions of new plant health threats as early as possible.

7 Outcomes and Targets

The Agency shall seek to achieve the following outcomes in the context of the DAERA 2020 strategy and the draft [Programme for Government](#):

Performance

- Lower net cost of the forestry programme.

Customer

- Stronger partnership working with industry and delivery partners;
- Wind farm sites considered in forests within a public sector energy strategy;
- Access to a sustainable supply of high value timber;
- Forests contribute to enjoyment of long, healthy, active lives.

Process

- First registration of title to forestry lands;
- Shared understanding of operating agreements over forestry lands;
- Independent certification under FSC® and PEFC that forests are managed sustainably.

Organisational Capacity

- Accreditation with continuing professional development;
- Target Operating Model delivered;
- Improved knowledge of forest condition and forestry opportunity.

Forest Service will contribute primarily to the draft [Programme for Government](#) (PfG) Outcome PfG 2: *We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment*, protecting plants from serious pests and disease, the sustainable management of Forest Service woodland and encouraging an increase in new woodland. These activities will help protect and enhance the environment including its soil, water, landscape, cultural heritage, and biodiversity. Growing trees will help capture carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store carbon in the forest ecosystems that will mitigate climate change. This year we will promote, by example, good forest management and

societal value of woodland through presenting forest ecosystem services provided by a Forest Service woodland in a nationally recognised award scheme.

Forest Service will also contribute to a number of other PfG outcomes including:

PfG1 - *We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy* through release of timber for wood processing and protecting plant health;

PfG 4 - *We live long, healthy, active lives* by encouraging people to exercise in forests; and

PfG 10 - *We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest* by improving the tourist potential of forests in partnership with local government.

Pending appointment of a Minister, we have set 8 key targets for the Agency this year and agreed these with the Department. The key and supporting targets are shown below at Table 1. Some are time bound, some are multi annual, and some are measures likely to be more relevant at the end of the current strategic programme to 2020/21. All targets are signposts for what we aim to achieve during that programme.

Table 1 - Forest Service Business Plan Balanced Scorecard - Key and Supporting Targets 2019/2020.

Link to DAERA Strategic Outcomes	PfG links	Key Target	Supporting Target(s)
FINANCE			
SO 4	1+2	Achieve an income of at least £10.8 M from all sources by 31 March 2020.	Secure sales of timber to achieve an income of at least £9.5 M. Develop advanced felling contingency plans to maintain current levels of timber supply to industry in the event of short term shortages through EU Exit transition by 31 March 2020.

Link to DAERA Strategic Outcomes	PfG links	Key Target	Supporting Target(s)
S01 + S02	1+2	<p>Develop the case for expanding forests in the context of post EU Exit Agricultural and Environmental Policy development by 31 March 2020.</p> <p>Achieve at least 200ha of new woodland by 31 March 2020.</p>	<p>Open the fifth phase of the Forest Expansion Scheme supplying a range of ecosystem services in July 2019;</p> <p>Support at least 130ha of new woodland through the Forest Expansion Scheme.</p> <p>Support at least 20ha of new woodland through planting agricultural land acquired by the Department.</p> <p>Establish an afforestation forum of senior officials and policy makers to gather perspectives and opinions on how planting rates can be increased.</p> <p>Promote good forest management and societal value of woodland through presenting forest ecosystem services provided by a Forest Service woodland in a nationally recognised award scheme;</p> <p>Open new forest recreational facilities in at least three forests in partnership with Local Councils by 31 March 2020;</p> <p>Review relevant existing data sources and publish an updated woodland register before 31 March 2020;</p> <p>Publish a forest visitor survey final report by 31 March 2020;</p>

Link to DAERA Strategic Outcomes	PfG links	Key Target	Supporting Target(s)
		Supply at least 400,000m³ of sustainable timber to industry by 31 March 2020.	<p>Produce at least 10% of timber supply from forest thinning operations by 31 March 2020</p> <p>Supply 200,000m³ of sustainable timber to industry by 30 Sept 2019;</p> <p>Update our GIS legal summaries in relation to 7,000 ha of first registered land and prepare a further 3,000ha for first registration by 31 March 2020.</p>
S01, S02, S04	1+2	Hold independent certification that the Forest Service management system meets the requirements of a well-managed forest.	<p>Complete a procurement exercise before Feb 2020 to ensure that a full re-assessment audit takes place in sufficient time to allow certification to extend seamlessly after May 2020;</p> <p>Implement findings from the 2019 certification audits by 31 Mar 2020;</p> <p>Review and publish plans for the Down and West Fermanagh forestry planning areas including updating plans on North West, West Tyrone, Armagh and East Tyrone/East Fermanagh planning areas by 31 Mar 2020;</p> <p>Report on the assessment of standing timber and growth status by 31 March 2020;</p>

Link to DAERA Strategic Outcomes	PfG links	Key Target	Supporting Target(s)
SO 2	1+2	<p>Develop a draft NI Plant Health policy and strategy to safeguard plant health post EU Exit transition by 31 March 2020.</p> <p>Develop and implement a NI biosecurity action plan to support implementation of official controls by 31 March 2020.</p>	<p>Consult with stakeholders on NI plant health legislation amendments required to deliver protection and risk management within the UK Plant health framework;</p> <p>Amend the Plant Health Order (Northern Ireland) 2018 to update the Statutory Instrument amendments;</p> <p>Consolidate the Wood & Bark Orders into the Plant Health Order (Northern Ireland) 2018.</p> <p>Develop and implement a communications plan to increase industry awareness and inform management of the 5 most serious plant health risks by 31 March 2020;</p> <p>Inform key stakeholders (e.g. importers and exporters) of relevant guidance for compliance with plants and plant products' regulatory requirements by 31 August 2019;</p> <p>Publish plant health control plans for 5 specific pests identified as most serious risk on the NI Plant Health Risk Register by 31 March 2020.</p>

Link to DAERA Strategic Outcomes	PfG links	Key Target	Supporting Target(s)
SO 1 + SO 2	2 & 5	Develop and implement a Workforce Planning Strategy for Forest Service for the period 2019 to 2024 in close co-operation with NICS HR, by 31 March 2020.	<p>To support 15 plant health professionally accredited staff to retain membership of the RSB Plant Health Professional Register, by March 2020.</p> <p>Support and promote engagement in, and facilitation of, opportunities for professional development of forestry staff offered by the Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF), Society of Irish Foresters and the Royal Forestry Society.</p> <p>Encourage Administrative staff to pursue professional competences via the NICS core competence framework.</p>

Table 2 shows the net budget allocated to the Agency to deliver the work programmes. The core Department provides support services, accommodation and standard ICT, as set out in the Agency's Framework document, charged on a notional basis.

Table 2 - Budget allocated to the Agency to deliver the work Programmes

	19/20 (opening baseline) £000's
Income	
Timber Sales	(9,099)
EU Grants	(1,217)
Other	(1,607)
Total Income	(11,923)
Running Costs	
Resource	12,816
Grant Payments	716
EU Exit	237
Total Running Costs	13,769
Capital	
PV&M	1,233
Grant Payments	984
Expense Total	2,217
<i>Depreciation/ impairment</i>	<i>1,765</i>
<i>Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)</i>	<i>5,100</i>
Other Total	6,865
TOTAL	10,928

8 Monitoring and Reporting

The Forest Service Management Board will monitor performance against the key targets (see [Appendix 2](#) If it appears that the achievement of key targets may be at risk due to factors outside of the Agency's control, the Chief Executive will consult with the Department and the Minister (when appointed) about options for remedial action. In these or other circumstances it may be necessary to review the Business Plan during the year and make changes in policies and/or priorities. The Business Plan is subject to in-year and year-end reviews by the Deputy Secretary reporting to the Permanent Secretary in discussion with the Agency's Board.

Following the end of the financial year the Chief Executive will publish an Annual Report and Accounts. The Report will review the Agency's activities during the year and will comment specifically on its performance against the key targets.



Appendix 1

Forest Service Standards

Customer Service standards

We will follow the published DAERA Customer Service Standards for informing the customer about our programmes and services, taking reasonable steps to make sure that our services and facilities are accessible to everyone. We will seek your views on how our service will be delivered, we will be polite and helpful, act with integrity and discretion and treat you with respect at all times. We will aim to see you and answer telephone calls promptly, and will acknowledge and respond to your correspondence within the Department's target times.

The Departments customer service standards are published at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/our-customer-service-standards> .

If you are unhappy with the quality of service you receive from us please let us know why you are unhappy as quickly as possible. We will fully and fairly investigate your complaint, keep you informed of progress, offer a full explanation of the circumstances and take appropriate action.

Our complaints procedure is published at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/how-do-i-make-complaint-if-i-am-unhappy-quality-service-i-received> .

Financial control standards

We will aim to lay our annual report and accounts before the NI Assembly by 5th July 2019.

We will aim to achieve a financial outturn that is within the Department's targets that the Provisional Capital and Resource Outturns should be between 98.5% and 100% of the Final Budget.

We will aim to pay for goods and services within 10 days of verified receipt.

Forestry Standards

The UK Forestry Standard (UKFS)⁸ is the official reference standard for sustainable forest management⁸. We will continue to verify, by independent audit, our sustainable woodland management practice against the UK Woodland Assurance Standard, which is an independent certification standard recognised by the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).

⁸ <http://www.forestry.gov.scot/sustainable-forestry/ukfs-scotland>

Appendix 2

Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements

The Agency has established monitoring and reporting arrangements in place in relation to its Business Plan targets. In the first instance, each target is assigned to a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) who will have responsibility for ongoing monitoring throughout the year.

During the course of the financial year, progress against each Business Plan target will be reported to the Agency Board, both through Directors' reports and in overview format. The Agency's Senior Management Team will also oversee the level of progress being made towards the milestones and targets set and will approve corrective actions required, as appropriate, during the course of the year.

Progress with the Forest Service key targets that are included in the DAERA Business Plan is reported to DAERA for onward reporting to the Departmental Board, and the Minister and Departmental Assembly Committee if appointed. These detailed reports will be produced for the periods ending 30 September, 31 December and 31 March.

Progress will be reported in accordance with the methodology adopted for the [Programme for Government](#) (PfG) Commitment reports to the NI Executive. This on a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) basis as follows:

- GREEN** - achieved or on track for delivery;
- GREEN/ AMBER** - level of progress is broadly on track with easily redeemable deviations from plans;
- AMBER** - rate of progress is less than planned; and
- RED** - not achieved or not expected to be achieved.

The Agency's Annual Report, published in the summer, will provide a summary of achievements under each of the business activities.

Appendix 3

Agency Organisational Senior Structure

MANAGEMENT BOARD

John Joe O'Boyle, Chief Forest Officer (G5)

Kevin Hegarty, Non-Executive Member

Brandon McMaster, Non-Executive Member

Ian Irwin / Stuart Morwood, Deputising Division Heads (G7)

Jim Crummie, Acting, Director of Plant Health (G6)

Gordon Bell, Acting Head of Corporate Services (G7)

BUSINESS AREA HEADS

Diane Stevenson, Head of Plant Health Policy (G7)

Vacant, Head of Plant Health Inspection (Grade I)

Ian Irwin, Head of Forest Management (DFO/UG7)

Stuart Morwood, Head of Forestry Policy, Standards and Regulation (DFO/UG7)

Appendix 4

Agency Offices

Forest Service Headquarters

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CASTLEWELLAN
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Phone: 028 4377 8664

Forest Office
6 Forest Road
GARVAGH
BT51 5EF
Phone: 028 7034 0870

Staff are also based at DAERA Headquarters and various DAERA Direct offices.

Should accessible formats such as large type, audio cassette or a language other than English be required, please contact the Customer Services Manager at Forest Service Headquarters and appropriate arrangements will be made as soon as possible.

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web sites: www.nidirect.gov.uk/forests
<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/forestry>



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