

SNH Report to ADMG AGM 2019

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Whilst there is a range of deer related work ongoing the most significant for today's audience will be the Report on progress of Deer Management in Scotland 2019 and the Independent Deer Working Group's report to the Scottish Government.

SNH will be producing a report for the Cabinet Secretary in Autumn 2019 and we are keen to work with ADMG and other interested stakeholders to ensure there are 'no surprises' in what we are presenting. We want the process in bringing together the work to be as open and transparent as possible.

The report will incorporate a review of a number of strands of work:

- Most significantly for ADMG membership will be the re-assessment of DMGs on Benchmark and Public Interest, on the same basis as 2014 and 2016.
- There will be an update on the use of SNH regulatory powers to support and underpin sustainable deer management across Scotland.
- We will include our response to the lowland deer panel report and recommendations.
- We will also incorporate our view on compliance with the Deer Code.
- The independent Deer Working Group, which is a separate piece of work, is due to submit its report to the Scottish Government in Spring 2019 and we await their report and recommendations.

DMG Assessment 2019

Again, to emphasise for this audience, Groups should all be well aware of the forthcoming DMG assessments having been covered at last year's AGM, the letter from SNH to each DMG in August 2018, discussions at the various local and regional meetings and the recent e-scope newsletter.

We will be focussing on the priority criteria outlined in the letter written to DMGs in August 2018 particularly looking at how the group plans are being delivered.

- There is a relatively tight timescale to ensure Groups get the maximum amount of time to prepare and deliver on the actions whilst meeting the reporting timescales for report production.
- We are looking to undertake the Assessments between **1 April and 15 May 2019**. Local area staff will be in touch to arrange meetings with Groups.
- We will provide a draft assessment to Groups to form the basis of discussion. This may be a change for some in terms of how assessments were carried out last year but should provide for a more focussed discussion at the meetings. We will share this at least one week in advance of the meeting.
- The Assessment point is the meeting date – so there is an opportunity for the DMG to provide any additional evidence and demonstrate what they have done to meet the criteria and to support any change they think is appropriate.
- We have built in a Review process where there isn't agreement between the DMG and local Area staff on the any of the priority criteria.

We have done work to ensure a consistent approach is taken, our Quality Assurance processes are in place and have worked with ADMG on some of the issues they flagged through the 'health check' process.

The assessment process is the opportunity for groups to demonstrate what progress they have made since the last review in 2016.

We have had regular discussion with the ADMG Executive and office bearers along with Linzi (Seivwright) and Victor (Clements) over the last year, not least on the 'health checks' and assessments but also on a wide range of issues from Best Practice, Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, woodlands and contributions DMGs can make to wider Scottish Government objectives. Much of this is covered in the annual review and Scope publications.

It will be a busy year ahead and we seek to maintain the open and constructive dialogue we have with DMGs and ADMG over the coming months.