



Forth Estuary Forum

Business Plan 2009–2011

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The Forth Estuary Forum is a charity registered in Scotland, No: SC027467. It is also a company limited by guarantee. Company No: SC 175839

Executive Summary

The Forth Estuary Forum is a voluntary partnership of organisations based around the Firth of Forth. The Forum's main aim is to promote the wise and sustainable use of the Forth and it plays a key role in encouraging better understanding of the Firth of Forth and the many impacts upon it. The Forum supports and encourages communities around the Forth who wish to care for their local coastal environment.

This Business Plan details the purpose and strategic aims of the Forum and the main objectives for the next two years (2009 –2011). The objectives will be converted into an Annual Work Plan for the Forum and its staff. The plan also outlines the resources required to deliver the plan and the challenges of balancing the resources available with successful implementation of the objectives.

Within the Plan period, the Scottish Parliament is expected to agree a Scottish Marine Bill. The legislation will introduce a new organisational regime for the marine and coastal environment. Within this, the future role of voluntary coastal partnerships is unclear and the challenge for the Forum Directors and staff will be to find a balance between continuing to deliver practical projects, assisting in development of the forthcoming Bill and managing, adapting and contributing to the changes ahead.

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1. Introduction

The Forth Estuary Forum is a voluntary partnership of organisations with the principal aim of promoting the wise and sustainable use of the Firth of Forth. The partnership draws its members from a wide spectrum of interests including business, statutory agencies, local authorities and voluntary groups from around the Forth. The Forum is a charity and company limited by guarantee.

This Business Plan is for the period 2009 to 2011. An Annual Work Plan will be produced based on the strategic aims and objectives within this plan.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Forum is:

“To promote the wise and sustainable use of the Forth”

The work of the Forum is based on the concept of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) which is recognised at national, European and wider international level. ICZM aims to bring together all those with an interest in the development and use of the coast to obtain a balance between economic growth and environmental protection through good planning, management and communication. In particular, good communication is key to aiding understanding of the impacts and pressures on the coastal and marine environment.

The Forum aims to improve awareness of issues and matters affecting management of the Forth estuary and Firth of Forth. It does not represent any particular sector and has a range of interests amongst its members. The Forum is the only organisation that has a strategic overview of the Forth and it aims to promote improved understanding and communication between organisations and people who live around the Forth. The Forum has had long experience of working with its members and relevant organisations to initiate and manage a number of high profile and complex projects to take forward the sustainable development of the Forth and to demonstrate best practice.

3. Summary of Achievements

Achievements of the Forth Estuary Forum¹:

- Developed the Forth Integrated Management Strategy in 1999
- Established the highly successful Coastal Litter Campaign which ran from 2001 to 2004 and inspired communities and volunteers to help look after their beaches
- Produced the final report for the Coastal Litter Campaign, ‘Working towards a Litter-free Forth’, in 2004
- Coordinated the production and secured funding for a Beach Litter Education Pack and CD which is now available across Scotland (2006)
- Set up Friends of the Forth in 2005 to help coastal communities take action to improve their local environment
- Set up the Forth Access Initiative (FAI) and funded the initial feasibility study in 2002
- Established the first Scottish ‘managed realignment’ feasibility study at Skinflats in Falkirk
- Produced a ‘Wildlife around the Forth’ leaflet in 2007.
- Produced leaflet ‘On the Forth’ in January 2008 aimed at recreational boat users encouraging safe use of the Forth

¹ More information and reports on all these projects available from the Forum
FEF Business plan 11 June 2009

- Erected interpretive panels at Cramond and on Cramond Island in 2009, encouraging safe access to the island and providing information on its natural and cultural heritage.
- Promotes and improves communication between all sectors around the Forth by:
 - Organising an annual conference on relevant topics
 - Producing and circulating newsletters
 - Updating members by means of regular bulletins
 - Organising members' meetings to promote exchange of information
 - Designing and continually improving the Forth Estuary Forum website

The Coastal Litter Project ran for 3 years, was successful in raising the profile of beach and coastal litter in communities around the Forth and led to the establishment of the Friends of the Forth Project in 2005. The Forum also started the Forth Access Initiative and was successful in obtaining resources to fund a comprehensive feasibility study. Based on the study, the project was picked up by the local authorities around the Forth and by Sustrans, with the Forum having a role in promotion of access.

The Forum organises an annual conference attended by a diversity of interests around the Forth, which provides a unique and valuable opportunity for exchange of views and promotion of links between groups, organisations and individuals.

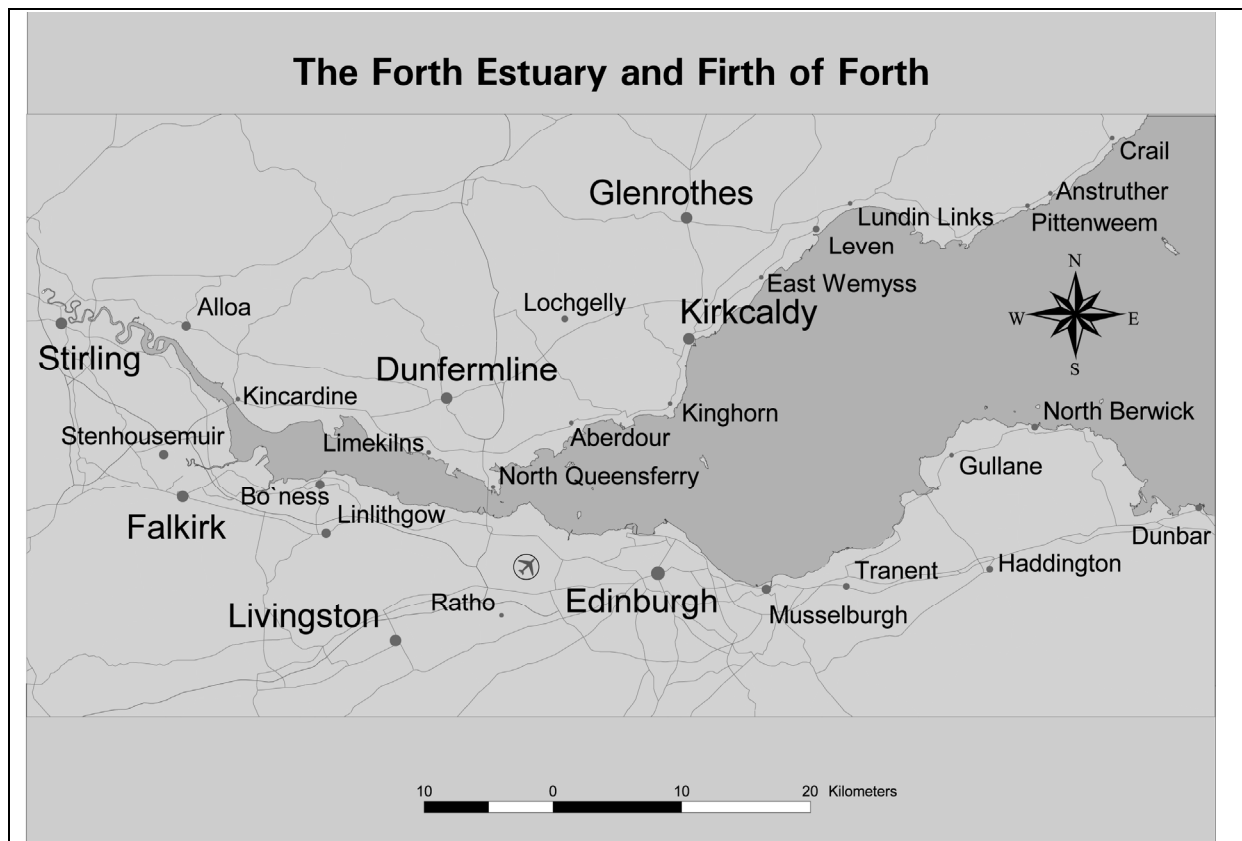
In 2007 the Forum produced the first in a planned series of leaflets aimed at users of the Forth. The leaflet, '*Wildlife around the Forth*' has been very successful with 70,000 copies produced and distributed to outlets around the Forth and beyond. The recent '*On the Forth*' leaflet grew out of a need to provide information to small boat users on the potential risks of collision with commercial vessels using the busy shipping lanes in the Forth. Additional information is designed to help novice or visiting boat owners enjoy and take advantage of their visit to the Forth. Both leaflets have involved working with a wide range of partners which has helped raise the profile of the Forum.

In all projects the Forum aims to give 'added value' – by carrying out projects for which there is an identified need and the Forum is in a position to take on because of its status and ability to work across organisational boundaries.

4. Background

The Forum was first set up in 1993 as part of the Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) Focus on Firths initiative. It began as a grouping of varied interests from around the Forth with the aim of creating a more coordinated approach to the planning and management of the Forth and to improving exchange of information and communication between users.

The Forum has an interest in the Firth of Forth and Forth Estuary from the tidal limit at Stirling to a line drawn from Fife Ness to Dunbar including the Isle of May (see Map 1)



Map 1

The Forth Estuary and Firth of Forth is a valuable resource for local people, businesses and visitors to Scotland. As well as being home to over a quarter of Scotland's population it is an important wildlife area and this is recognised by a variety of national and international nature conservation designations. Most of the Forth is designated a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the Birds Directive. The Isle of May is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for its breeding grey seal population.

The Forth is a busy commercial shipping area with exports of oil and gas and imports of goods from all over the world. Grangemouth is the largest container port in Scotland and approximately 20% of Scotland's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) goes through the port. Hound Point exports North Sea oil and is the largest oil exporting facility in Scotland. On the Fife side of the Forth, Braefoot Marine Terminal exports products such as propane, butane, ethylene and natural gasoline from nearby Mossmorran.

In 1999 the Forum, with funding from the EU LIFE programme, produced the *Forth Integrated Management Strategy*², which provides the framework for the work of the Forum. It was one of the first strategies for Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) in Scotland. The overall principles and themes of Strategy are still relevant, but in a changing financial and political climate the Forum recognised that a more focused approach was required to help its members, potential funders and the general public understand its work and plans for the future.

The Forum is one of several Local Coastal Partnerships (LCPs) around Scotland. LCPs are represented on the Scottish Coastal Forum (SCF), which is a grouping of organisations with

² The Forth Integrated Management Strategy (1999) was prepared on behalf of the Forth Estuary Forum with funding from the EU Life programme.

an interest in coastal matters at a national level. The LCP's, including the Forth Estuary Forum, meet on a regular basis to discuss coastal and marine matters and develop joint projects and responses to marine legislation consultations.

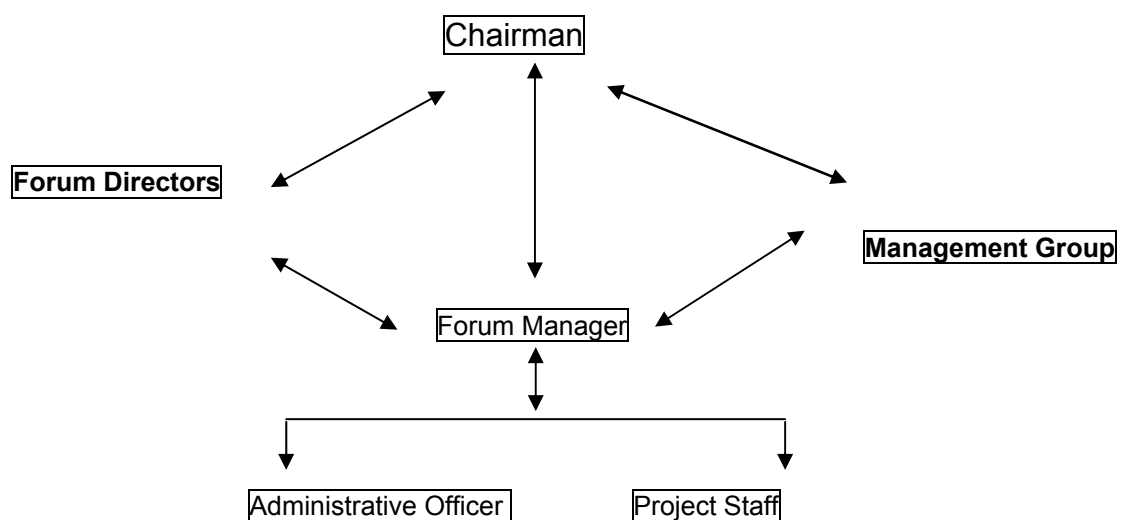
5. Organisation

The Forum is a partnership with around 80 members ranging from large commercial organisations to interested individuals. All members pay an annual subscription fee. (See Appendix 1 for a list of member organisations.)

The Forum is a charity and company limited by guarantee. The business of the Forum is managed by a Board of Directors, which gives strategic direction to the Forum as well as overseeing financial matters, staffing and relevant legislation including health and safety. The Directors, who give their time voluntarily, have extensive experience of management, environmental issues and legislation in other sectors

The Management Group is drawn from local authorities and key agencies, organisations and businesses around the Forth. The Management Group provides guidance on the policy context in which the Forum operates and also advises on the overall direction of the Forum and on projects and work plans. The Group has an important role in encouraging exchange of information on key issues between members. It meets at least 4 times per year.

The organogram below outlines the relationship between the Directors and Management Group. See Appendix 2 for a list of Directors and Management Group members.



The Forum currently employs 2 staff:
Forum Manager (full time)
Office Manager (part time)

Staff are based at the Port of Rosyth in Fife. Forth Ports PLC provides the offices as an additional in-kind contribution.

The Forum also employed a Project Officer to run the Friends of the Forth project. This ran from November 2005 until March 2009.

The Friends of the Forth project aimed to encourage and support communities and groups who wish to look after their local environment. Although the project was designed to go beyond the litter objectives of the previous 'Coastal Litter Campaign', inevitably a lot of the projects focussed on marine and beach litter. The project supported schools, corporate and community groups on beach cleans and similar projects. The Friends project also coordinated the production of an educational CD rom on Beach Litter which is available throughout Scotland.

The Friends project is important in providing a link into communities and schools around the Forth and highlighting the formal and informal environmental education aspect of the Forum's work. There is a commitment from the Forum's Directors to continue this element of the Forum's work and to integrate it with the day to day work of the Forum Manager.

Core funding of the Forum comes from membership subscriptions and a grant from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). Individual projects such as the 'On the Forth' leaflet, are funded separately. SNH has supported the Forum with core funding since the Forum's inception. The Forum applied to SNH for grant funding for the period 2009 to 2011 and was successful in an offer of £50,000 over two years. The grant funding comes with a number of conditions including agreement of a revised business plan by April 2009.

6. Key issues

The two years until 2011 will see major changes in the political and organisational regime around coastal and marine organisations in Scotland. The first Scottish Marine Bill is expected to receive Royal Assent towards the end of 2009. As part of the proposed changes to management of the marine environment in Scotland, the Government will establish a new organisation called Marine Scotland, which will oversee many of the statutory roles and functions of existing organisations in relation to the marine and coastal environment. In addition Marine Scotland will be responsible for setting up Scottish Marine Regions (SMRs). Each SMR will develop a local plan for its area. No one has yet defined the boundaries and extent of the SMRs and it is not expected that they will be formally established until mid 2011. The future of voluntary partnerships under SMRs is as yet uncertain. The SMR will have a clearly defined statutory role, a remit to collect and provide data on the area and to produce a statutory plan. The Forum in common with all the LCP's in Scotland works on limited resources and on a voluntary basis. However the Forum has extensive experience of working with stakeholders and a wide knowledge of the Forth as well as the confidence and trust of local organisations.

Over the next two years, the Forum will need to maintain close links with the Marine Directorate in the Scottish Government and develop links with the new organisation, Marine Scotland. It will also be important to monitor the progress of the Bill through Parliament and it will be vital that the Forum positions itself to assist in the transition to the new SMR. The future of the Forum beyond the establishment of the SMR is uncertain but it is very probable that core funding from SNH will no longer be available making the continuation of the Forum dependant on finding alternative funding sources or ceasing to operate. It will be up to the Forum Directors to scrutinise the longer term implications of the Bill and plan and manage the future of the Forum accordingly.

Throughout this period of change it will be important to maintain lines of communication between and with organisations and groups around the Forth. The Forum is in a key position to assist in this process. The Forum's links to the Scottish Government Marine Directorate, with the new organisation Marine Scotland and with the Scottish Coastal Forum will help ensure that the Forum has access to up to date information and is in a position to

disseminate information through its various channels of communication including newsletters, bulletins and events.

The Forum's current annual running costs are around £60,000. Membership subscriptions contribute *approx.* £18,000 and with the offer of core funding from SNH of £25,000 per year anticipated income is around £43,000 per year. The Robertson Trust has agreed to fund Friends of the Forth communities work for a further two years with £15,000. However at current costs and current expenditure, the Forum will be drawing on its reserves over the next two years. (see Appendix 3). The Forum does have sufficient reserves built up by prudent management of its resources and it can operate at this level for the next two years. Additional sources will be sought for specific areas of work and new funding will be required beyond 2011 to allow the Forum to continue.

The Forum has a contingency plan in place which outlines the actions and costs involved if the Forum was to cease operating. It will be important to maintain and update the plan over the next two years.

The Forum has always aimed to identify and meet the needs of its members. In particular, it has always had a close relationship with local authorities around the Forth. The Management Group which represents most of the larger statutory and commercial organisations around the Forth, is a valuable source of advice on the strategic direction of the Forum. As we approach this period of change it will be vital to maintain links with key organisations and funders around the Forth and ensure the Forum is delivering what they require from the Forum.

7. Options for the future

Within the new legislative system to be created by the forthcoming Marine Bill, the Forum will be faced with a number of options for going forward. To some extent this will be dictated by external events over which the Forum has no control. The new body, Marine Scotland, operates as a 'shadow' organisation from April 2009. Amongst the many new duties and responsibilities of Marine Scotland will be the designation of Scottish Marine Regions (SMR). Each SMR will cover a specific geographic area, likely to be larger than the Forth of Forth. Within each SMR, there will be a 'lead' body to coordinate the development of a plan for the area with appropriate stakeholder involvement.

The future shape and remit of a voluntary organisation, such as the Forum, within a SMR framework will be clarified as the process of setting up the SMR is advanced. At the time of writing this business plan there are a number of options for the future shape and direction of the Forum.

These are:

- 1) **The Forum will continue to operate as a voluntary partnership alongside a SMR.** The Forum could assume a community and/or education role if this is not in the SMR remit. The Forum could continue to operate in the Forth as part of larger SMR which could possibly cover the south east of Scotland from the Tay to Berwick. Its role would have to be defined but working with stakeholders and developing community and education projects may be a gap in the SMR role.
- 2) **The Forum could form the basis of a SMR and staff and resources integrated into the new organisation (merger).** The Forum will develop a lead role in the creation of an SMR centred on the Forth (but likely to include the coast from Tay to Berwick). As an existing voluntary partnership, the changeover to a statutory organisation will require considerable input of resources. The main advantage is the

proven credibility of the Forum working with the partners around the Forth and the Forum's ability to draw together the partners to form a SMR. In the southeast with up to 10 local authorities, a lead partner with a 'neutral' position, such as the Forum may be the most appropriate way to set up the SMR.

- 3) **The SMR will be set up and subsume the Forum role and resources (takeover)**
The SMR will be set up by Marine Scotland and the Forum's resources absorbed into the new organisation. The Forum could have an important role leading up to the creation of the SMR. This could involve arranging meetings of key stakeholders and using its existing information channels to communicate the process of setting up the SMR.
- 4) **The Forum will cease to operate before or on the introduction of the SMR.** The Directors may decide to close down the Forum in advance of any new organisation being set up. The Forum already has a contingency plan in place for closing down the Forum and this will need to be updated on a regular basis.

The Forum Manager, Management Group, Chair and Directors will monitor the situation as the implications of the new legislation become apparent. The Forum has considerable experience of working with communities and stakeholder groups around the Forth and is sufficiently flexible to be able alter direction if considered necessary. It will look to contribute to the groundwork for developing SMRs and marine spatial plan(s).

In the immediate future (2009-10) there is sufficient flexibility within the annual work plan (see separate document) to assess and accommodate options as and when they occur, although new areas of work would require to be specifically resourced.

8. Strategic Aims

The Forum's strategic aims

- 1) **Sustainable Use of the Forth** - To promote and encourage integrated sustainable development of the Firth of Forth and support practical demonstration of the balance between the social, economic and environmental principles of sustainable development.
- 2) **Communication** - To promote communication between all interests and increase understanding of the impacts and issues on and around the Forth.
- 3) **Communities** - To work with communities around the Forth to encourage stewardship of their coastal and marine environment.

Underlying the strategic aims of the Forum is the need for the Forum to:

- look to the future, identify and seek to influence policy trends which may impact on the future of the Forum and on its projects and actions
- be properly managed and administered in line with regulations governing charities and companies
- be accountable to its members, funders and to the general public
- manage, motivate and develop its staff to deliver the highest possible levels of service to members and stakeholders particularly in a period of organisational change

9. Objectives

The objectives are based on the strategic aims and cover the period of the Plan. Each year the objectives are converted into an Annual Work Plan for the Forum (see separate document). The topic areas are based on the themes developed as part of the Forth Integrated Management Strategy. Not all the themes have been picked up in the Business Plan as some are no longer applicable.

10. Risk Management

The Forum has developed a Risk Management Strategy to identify and control the risks associated with managing the Forum.

A number of the most significant risks to the management of the organisation are listed below. A more comprehensive Risk Register is maintained by the Forum. By identifying risk the Directors are better able to look ahead and control the risks. Alongside each risk is the action to minimise the likelihood of the risk occurring or reduce the impact of the risk should it occur. The Risk Register is a dynamic list and is reviewed quarterly at each meeting of the Forum's Directors.

Category	Risk	Potential impact	High /Med/Low (HML)	Control action
Financial	Core funding reduced / ceases	Financially not viable	Med	Finances reviewed quarterly at Directors' meetings Liaison meetings held with key core funder (SNH) 6 months prior to end of financial year. Core funding agreed until 2011.
	Membership numbers drop	Reduction in income	Med	Membership numbers and finances reported quarterly at Directors' meetings Regular information provided to members on Forum activities and achievements
	Loss of in kind office accommodation	Need to find rent for new office space. Loss of output in office move	Med	Directors to seek office space from member organisations and have enough in financial contingency to cover office rental for 12 months
	Financial management resulting in draw on reserves	Reserves reduced to less than sum agreed in Forum reserves policy	High	Regular monitoring of finances and maintenance of adequate contingency
Organisational	Key staff and directors leave	Loss of experience	Med	Manage recruitment and leaving dates
	Poor or inadequate staff performance	Failure to achieve objectives. Loss of	Med	Key objectives and outputs specified in job plans. Annual staff

Category	Risk	Potential impact	High /Med/Low (HML)	Control action
		confidence		appraisal. Training, development and performance management system in place
Reputational	Bad publicity	Loss of confidence and neutral status	Med	Responses to issues managed by Chair/Directors. Consultation with Management Group on significant issues
	Failure to achieve Business Plan objectives and outputs	Loss of stakeholder confidence	Med	Progress on Business Plan reviewed by Management Group quarterly and reported at Director's meetings
Legislative	Marine policy changes introduced as part of the Scottish Marine Bill.	Change of status for LCP's	High	Keep abreast of proposed changes. Seek direct contact with or updates from SG Marine Directorate and Marine Scotland. . Prepare contingency plan for winding up or transfer of Forum business including costs
Health and Safety	Accident	Injury to staff/ visitor	Med	Risk assessment for office. Adhere to Health and Safety policy. Separate risk assessment for external events
	Lack of policy and procedures	Health and safety incident	Med	Review health and safety policy for the Forum and work with staff and Directors to implement.
	Lone working	Health and safety incident	Med	Lone working policy in place

11. Financial Resources

Funding for the plan will come largely from core funding and membership subscriptions with separate project funding sought and applied for as required.

Funding is from membership subscriptions and a grant from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).

While currently sufficient funds are in place to secure the 1.5 FTE jobs it does not allow any expansion of activities. Fund raising will be required against many of the projects identified in the business plan. With limited staff and resources the challenge is to demonstrate to funding partners and members that value for money is being achieved.

The Robertson Trust has agreed to provide £15,000 over two years from 2008 to 2010. This is specifically for projects derived from the Friends of the Forth programme including community support projects and education.

Appendix 3 shows annual core costs and outline budgets for 2009/10 to 2010/11.

Income from membership in 2007/08 was £19,478. However it is likely to be around £17,855 in 2008/09 due to loss of support from a couple of organisations. SEPA is currently unable to fund the Forum.

Challenges are to:

- Retain existing members and sign up new corporate and individual members
- Spread the cost of core funding amongst the members
- Demonstrate value for money for funders
- Identify opportunities for new and/or specific project funding

There are no plans to increase the current staff unless specific project funding is sought and obtained. Volunteers and student placements are an option to undertake straightforward and time limited tasks but they do require input of time from existing staff.

Demonstrating value for money is also an issue and with a wide spectrum of interests amongst its membership, the Forum has to work closely with all its members to ensure that its policy direction and actions are supported by members.

12. Monitoring

The Business Plan will be monitored and reviewed annually to assess success against the strategic objectives. The Annual Report is available to all members and funders. The Forum Manager will develop an annual Forum work plan, linked to the Business Plan. This will have quantifiable outcomes where possible and will be agreed by the Directors. It will be reviewed by the Management Group. Progress against the objectives set in the Business Plan is reported quarterly to the Management Group and Directors.

Staff will have individual work plans based on the overall Forum plan.

The annual review of the Business Plan will take account of national and local policy and the Plan will be reviewed as required. A major review of the Business Plan before the end of the present plan period may be required to reflect changes in legislation.

Appendix 1

List of member organisations (as at January 2009)

Corporate	INEOS Manufacturing Scotland Ltd
	Muir Construction
	Forth Ports
	Scottish Power
	Shell
	Stagecoach East Scotland
Statutory	Scottish Natural Heritage
	The Crown Estate
	Fife Council
	East Lothian Council
	City of Edinburgh Council
	Stirling Council
	West Lothian Council
	Falkirk Council
Charities/Research	ERT Scotland Ltd
	Port Edgar Marina
	SUSTRANS
Ordinary	Fife Coast and Countryside Trust (FCCT)
	Fife Fishermans Association
	Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB)
	Scottish Fisheries Museum
	KHREG
	Rosebery Estates
	Cramond Association
	Forth Yacht Clubs Association
	Paths for all P/ship
	Forth Construction
	Forth Corinthian Yacht Clubs
	RYA Scotland
	BASC
	UNITE/AMICUS
	Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust
	Oatridge Agricultural College
Affiliate	Dalgety Bay & Hillend Community Council (CC)
	Musselburgh and Inveresk CC
	Living Water
	SWT Lothians
	SPOKES
	Burntisland 2020 Development Trust
	Boarhills and Dunino CC
	Low Valleyfield CC
	Save Wemyss Ancient Caves
	CleanFerry
	Aberdour CC
	Forth Naturalist and Historian
	Portobello Amenity Society
	Culross CC
	Trinity CC

Note individual members are not listed

Appendix 2

Forth Estuary Forum Directors (as at March 2009)

Ruth Briggs (Chair)
Iain Rennick
Derek McGlashan
Hugh Henderson
Ian Howarth

Management Group (as at March 2009)

The Management Group is currently drawn from the following organisations:

The Crown Estate
Forth Ports PLC
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)
Fife Council
West Lothian Council
City of Edinburgh Council
Stirling Council
Falkirk Council
Scottish Power
INEOS
Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB)

(Note: Local authorities are represented by officials rather than elected members)

Appendix 3

Financial Information

<i>Forecast Income</i>	Financial year 2009/10 £	Financial year 2010/11 £	
SNH	24,000	26,000	50,000
Membership (<i>note 1</i>)	18,000	18,000	
The Robertson Trust	8,000	7,000	15,000
Total	50,000	51,000	
<i>Forecast expenditure</i>			
Staff (<i>note 2</i>)	46,289	48,209	5% increase
Operational (<i>note 3</i>)	7,902	8,026	
Promotional (<i>note 4</i>)	8,260	8,260	
Total	62,451	64,495	
-Deficit/surplus(<i>note 5</i>)	-12,451	-13,495	

The forecast expenditure does not include 'in kind' income including provision of office accommodation from Forth Ports PLC.

1. Based on membership income of £17,855 for 2008/09
2. Based on FM salary + Admin officer p/t salary + NI + payroll costs + travel + training
3. Based on telephone charges, insurance, postage etc
4. Cost of running annual conference and producing 2 printed newsletters and 2 bulletins per year
5. The Forum has reserves of approximately £33,000 which can absorb the predicted annual deficits for these two years