

Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) Management Board Meeting

22 Sept 2016

Attendees:

Simon Hodge, Chief Executive
Trefor Owen, Head of Land Management
Michael Hymers, Head of Corporate Support
Michael Ansell, Head of Estates Development
Alan Stevenson, Head of Community and Visitor Services
Rosetta Forbes, Head of HR (Scotland)
Rhondda Salmond, Secretariat

Apologies:

Brent Meakin, Head of Business Services
Donna Hutchinson, Head of Finance and Procurement

1. Minutes of last Meeting

The Board agreed that the record of 26 July 2016 was held to be a true and fair record of the meeting.

2. Action Points and Matters Arising

Ref:	Action	Who	Target Date
9/01	High level Portfolio Management Delivery Plan to be circulated by 21 Oct 2016	MH	21 Oct 2016
9/02	All initial scoping meetings for Organisational Design projects to be complete	SH, TO, AS, BM, MH	14 Oct 2016
9/03	All SRO's, Programme and Project Managers for portfolio priority areas to be identified	SH, TO, AS, BM, MH	14 Oct 2016
9/04	Continuing efficiency of Recruitment Panel process to be reviewed, and revised guidance and management information shared with managers	RF	18 Nov 2016
9/05	Individual subjects from acquisitions and disposals to be included in BMR capital table	DM & LW	21 Oct 2016
9/06	Management Information to be checked to see if reporting includes temporary arrangements whilst posts are filled	RF	18 Nov 2016
9/07	Ensure all accidents and incidents are reported on AIRS, enabling the generation of lessons learned reports for communication to all staff	AS	21 Oct 2016
9/08	Function Leads to advise Michael Hymers whether they wish to undertake individual function Health, Safety & Wellbeing awareness days or deliver	TO, BM, MA, & AS	23 Sept 2016

Ref:	Action	Who	Target Date
	collaboratively		

Action Points: 5/11, 5/22, 7/01, 7/02, 7/03, 7/04, 7/05, 7/06, 7/07, and 7/08 are discharged.

3. Chief Executive Update

The Scottish Government have launched the consultation, The Future of Forestry in Scotland, of which the three main elements are organisational arrangements, cross-border services, and legislation. The Board, and wider FC Scotland (FCS), will need to consider possibilities and potential impacts of the proposals going forward. The consultation closes on the 09 November 2016.

Simon Hodge and Jo O'Hara (Head of FCS) will be holding a series of staff communications event during Oct 2016, with an emphasis on the consultation and/or organisational change.

The Scottish Government launched the Programme for Government, outlining the actions the administration will take in the forthcoming year and beyond, including forestry.

Engagement with Fergus Ewing MSP (Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity), and his office, has continued to develop following an increase in submissions, and in response to new ways of working.

The Cabinet Secretary will be holding two Forestry Summit events during Sept and Oct 2016, with attendees from the wider forestry and commercial sectors. FES will have representatives at both events.

Simon Hodge met with Edward Mountain, Convener of the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee to provide an overview of how FES operates, including generation of income and funding, and plans for future woodland creation.

4. FES Financial Sustainability

A joint meeting of National Committee Scotland and FES Management Board will be held in early Oct 2016. The meeting will consider strategic financial directions for FES going forward.

5. Portfolio Management Office Update.

The Portfolio Management Office team continue to develop and embed the portfolio management approach, including how to incorporate workforce planning and finance.

An interim Portfolio Strategy, Governance Framework and Delivery Plan will be presented to the Board in Oct 2016 for agreement.

AP 9/01: High level Portfolio Management Delivery Plan to be circulated.

All programmes and projects to support Board portfolio priority areas are underway, and high level details have been communicated to FES staff. Feedback on the communications has been received from FC Trade Unions, and shared with the Board.

AP 9/02: All initial scoping meetings for Organisational Design projects to be complete.

AP 9/03: All SRO's, Programme and Project Managers for portfolio priority areas to be identified.

6. Workforce Planning

Rosetta Forbes delivered a presentation to the Board outlining that there was no specific approach to workforce planning within either the public or private sector. Following recommendations from Audit Scotland she will engage with business leads to develop an approach that recognises the current position, what is required to transition, and then the future state.

The approach will also consider and specify assumptions, including Scottish Government influence, skills identification/investment, and the required tool and mechanisms to enable delivery.

7. Recruitment Panel

Rosetta Forbes sought the Boards feedback on the effectiveness of the Recruitment Panel, which was established to ensure consistent principles were applied to recruitment discussions and decisions across FES.

The Board highlighted that the panel adds value, enabling the management of the salary/pay bill. Management information received by the panel should include details of any decisions made locally not to fill vacancies.

It was agreed the process must remain as efficient as possible, and should be aligned to the development of the workforce planning going forward.

AP 9/04: Continuing efficiency of Recruitment Panel process to be reviewed, and revised guidance and management information shared.

8. Organisational / Function Updates

Estates Development:

Michael Ansell advised that there is a reduction in new estimates of income of approx £400k from wind generation due to low wind levels. Income will still remain above the original budget.

A new Acquisitions & Disposals Manager has been appointed, with immediate effect. A priority will be to reappraise the acquisitions and disposals budget, specifically disposals, and align to the Business Monitoring Report (BMR) capital sheet.

AP 9/05: Individual subjects from acquisitions and disposals to be included in BMR capital table.

A new Land Registration Project Manager has been appointed, and the successful candidate will take up post in Nov 2016.

Activity around ex-coalfield development has increased. Potential sites are being identified to support Creation of Woodland and Vacant & Derelict Land priorities.

Land Management:

Trefor Owen and Mick Bottomley are undertaking introduction visits with major timber customers. They have received positive messages from customers about the service received from FES, and are being encouraged to engage with the Scottish Government consultation.

Progress continues within Land Management to identify, commission and scope appropriate change/improvement opportunities.

Human Resources (HR):

Rosetta Forbes advised that feedback has been received on the HR management information dashboard, and action is being taken to reflect absence data.

The proposal on pay, which remains capped at 1%, has been presented to FC Trade Unions and a response is awaited. It is likely any pay award payments will be made in staff's Nov 2016 pay, and associated communications, guidance and Q&A will be issued by FC HR.

KPMG will now undertake audits quarterly instead of annually to ensure that Civil Service Recruitment principles are applied. The Board agreed to provide assurance to FC HR that Short Term Temporary Appointments (STTA's) will be kept below 10%, through monitoring by the recruitment Panel.

AP 9/06: Management Information to be checked to see if reporting includes temporary arrangements whilst posts are filled

Community & Visitor Services:

Alan Stevenson advised that progress continues to investigate accidents and incidents involving members of the public on the National Forest Estate.

AP 9/07: Ensure all accidents and incidents are reported on AIRS, enabling the generation of lessons learned reports for communication to all staff

FES and FC England have been working with the Motor Sports Association to reach financial agreement regarding motor rallies on the National Forest Estate.

An update was provided on Forest Holidays.

FES has met representatives from Dumfries & Galloway Council to explore opportunities for investment in the area, particularly around delivery on the National Forest Estate.

Development of Glenmore continues in partnership with Cairngorms National Park, however any opportunities will be impacted by limited funding.

The Cabinet Secretary has agreed the approach for the Community Asset Transfer Scheme. The next step is to undertake stakeholder engagement.

Alan and Brent Meakin have submitted four proposals to the Cabinet Secretary for consideration to grant additional funding for rural projects through the Programme for Government Capital Stimulus Programme. The proposals include £0.5m toward deer larder improvements; £0.5m for Starter Farms; £0.3m to complete Mull Pier; and £0.7m for sustainability and broadband connectivity improvements to FES Offices and Depots.

Positive feedback has been received from the Quality & Planning Awards following submission of the Nevis and Glentress Masterplans. The award outcomes are not yet known.

Alan will present a paper to National Committee Scotland, and circulate to the Board, following the completion of research on the Public Perception of the FCS Brand.

Finance:

Michael Hymers, in Donna Mortimer's absence, advised that a VAT report, prepared by external specialists in relation to FES and FE England had been submitted to HMRC in advance of next week's visit to Kielder Forest, where an overview of forestry activities will be given.

Corporate Support:

Michael Hymers advised that the Internal Communications Manager takes up post on 26 Sept 2016, and will provide support for FES and FCS with regard to change management communications.

Following the launch of the Scottish Government consultation there has been more engagement with the Consultation/Bill Team regarding the legislative aspects, recognising the complexity of FES and FCS remit and activities.

Michael and Rosetta Forbes are meeting FC Trade Union colleagues on 26 Sept to update them on progress of Portfolio Management. Key messages include reassurance that all Organisational Design projects are still in very early stages of being scoped; there are organisational issues that still need to be addressed; and FC Trade Union colleagues are welcome to participate in the Organisational Design project scoping meetings.

The Board agreed to trial a Communications Planner, and associated Communications Protocol with effective from the 06 Oct in advance of rolling out to the wider senior leadership team.

9. AOB

Reporting Standards:

Rosetta advised that midyear reviews were due to be held across the organisation. Managers will be reminded of the importance of these reviews and the appropriate approach in the next FCS News.

FES Head Office Health, Safety & Wellbeing awareness days:

Michael Hymers reminder the Board of the importance of all staff having the opportunity to attend a Health, Safety & Wellbeing awareness days.

AP 9/08: Function Leads to advise Michael Hymers whether they wish to undertake individual function Health, Safety & Wellbeing awareness days or deliver collaboratively.

The date of the next FESMB is the 25 Oct 2016 2016.