

RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING OF THE DELIVERY REFERENCE GROUP

12th April 2017, 12.00pm – 3pm.

Silvan House

Present

Jo O'Hara (Chair, Head of FC Scotland, and SRO for the project)

Brendan Callaghan (FCS, Head of Delivery & Regions)

James Nott (Programme Manager)

Shireen Chambers (ICF)

Tim Liddon (Confor)

David Sulman (UKFPA)

Sian Williams (LINK - RSPB)

Jamie Farquhar (instead of Stuart Goodall – Confor)

Kerry Wallace (instead of Ross Johnston – SNH)

Sasha Laing (FCS, Secretary)

Apologies

Sue Kearns (Scottish Government)

Alan Farquhar (SEPA)

Carol McGinnes (SEPA)

Charles Dundas (LINK)

Ross Johnson (SNH)

1. Note of last meeting and Matters arising (JOH)

An Action Point Log update was presented – See attached Document. The minute of the last meeting was agreed. No matters arising.

2. Summary of Actions (ALL)

JOH presented the current WC approvals data for 17/18 – 4070 hectares have been approved, 1822 hectares have been submitted with over 5000 hectares at pre app. Aware of more but taking a conservative approach to those that would progress to committed. FCS can see a step change and a healthy pipeline which is a very different message from last August. TL noted that this type of information wasn't available last year. BC commented that they had been collecting information over the last year a head of the challenge of getting up 10000 ha from a standing start. TL noted that there was increasing interest in WC and more land was becoming available but the challenge will be in some proposals coming forward on poorer ground leading to a need for a change in culture - say no at the outset.

JN asked about land availability and pricing, wondering if industry is seeing an increase in land prices. TL noted that they were but cheaper land is still available however it was cheap for a reason and some will still buy it for that very reason. The Ochils prices are rising though and had been much higher of late. JOH reflected on the potential to see an increased interest in forestry.

JOH announced that a follow up Industry Summit had been programmed for the 24th May in Perth with a second planned for South Lanarkshire in June date TBC. SC asked if it was to be one for the sector and one for the Environment organisations. JOH noted that both were currently planned for the sector, the direction from the Minister had been for two summits but that they would have a broad scope and were not just to report on this piece of work. DS noted that the locations were not that far apart. SL confirmed that the Ministers Private Office had requested two summits, suggested the preferred locations and offered the 24th May as the first most suitable date. JOH told the group that she would be commissioning Jim Mackinnon to undertake a review of the Implementation Programme, reporting to JOH as SRO of the programme. The Minister has also asked that Jim attend the summit.

JOH commented that Brexit would have time and resource implications on the delivery of the Implementation Programme as a new grant scheme would need to be built. TL appreciated the work that had been done by FCS to bridge the current and previous schemes. BC acknowledged that there had been a drop from 9000 to 5000 approved hectares during the changeover due to a lack of confidence in what was going to be available. TL responded by noting that investor confidence had been maintained and that it was due to FCS's actions during that transitional period.

JOH recognised that organisational change by 2019 was a real priority as was prep for the new Bill. However what could be looked to was the design and framework development for the new scheme. SC enquired about financing. JOH acknowledged that it was a difficult question but that they were looking at what could be done in preparation and what work pieces could be coalesced. TL noted that change was on the way and that we just needed to accept that. JOH asked how Industry felt Brexit would impact on land-use. SC put forward that Brexit would have a big, rapid impact due to the availability of funding and agricultural change. JN noted that it was a cyclical as land prices could increase reflecting where confidences lay. TL accepted the comment but noted the need to continue with our day jobs and that the Mackinnon work was a part of that. However this work comes with expectations and we need to deliver on that. JOH didn't see it knocking things out but needed the DRG to be aware that these things would impact on the delivery of the recommendations.

SW felt the need to ensure that the environmental outcomes are also achieved. KW highlighted the Climate Change target and noted that Brexit was a key point. SW reflected that Brexit could be taken as an opportunity to integrate land-uses.

3. Updated Delivery Plan (JN)

JN introduced the expanded delivery plan but expressed caution when noting any FCS named leads as the plan is a working document and they had not been confirmed as yet.

Work-streams 1 & 2, pieces of work are ongoing, looking for information on consultation processes. Need to establish proportionate responses and what level of information is required. It will eventually be used for training both internally and externally. TL asked if the idea was to produce a piece of work that will inform the consultation process. JN confirmed that it would feed into the relevant work-streams. TL also asked what would happen if the work-stream team rejected the information given by industry and stakeholders. JOH commented that such issues would go to the Project Board for a judgement. JN spoke about the scale and approach noting that it was important not to put in a process that had a lot of redundant steps, requiring to recognise need for transparency of process, of being open so it is possible to see both where it would start and then end. BC mentioned the importance of getting people with expert knowledge in a room and how different the result of that exercise can be dependent on the amount of people included. JN acknowledged that the delivery plan document looked quite complicated but that from a project management perspective it showed who was delivering what, against each recommendation, building into a complete work-stream.

JOH noted how it provided confidence in being able to demonstrate what FCS was doing and how they intended to get there. JF asked how it would be addressed if one point in a work-stream remained incomplete. JN noted that the Project Board would decide whether it really was a crucial point and address it accordingly, but the impact of it not being completed against the delivery of other work-streams would need also to be assessed. KW asked if anyone else knew how to use the expanded delivery plan in JN's absence. JN confirmed that there was with DS and TL voicing their approval of the approach being taken, noting that they jointly felt the Minister would also like the approach.

Action Point 1/14. SL to email the expanded delivery plan to all DRG members.

4. Discussion on Changing Cultures – FCS and Wider sector

JOH noted that a lot of what was being looked at; reflecting comments within the Mackinnon report was the need for a change in culture. A point also commented on in an Email to JOH from SK which was read out to the group. Following a Power point

presentation by JOH, a workshop was carried out with the aims of understanding what the group thought about industry culture and to come to a shared agreement on what culture change looks like.

Action Point 1/15. SL and JOH to produce the outputs of the workshop in a word document and circulate for comments.

5. Update on Work-stream 3 (JN/JOH)

JN wanted to clarify a point from the previous minutes that the group wanted to re-look at the recommendation relating to Accredited Agents and include RICS qualified persons on the work-stream delivery team. It was agreed that the group felt that a greater period of time, resources and full consideration of the range of options should be explored in relation to the delivery of this particular recommendation. That included having a RICS qualified member as part of the deliberations.

JOH mentioned that Jim Mackinnon was keen on this point and would also be keen to see some progress. However as everyone has raised concerns FCS will explore all the options. SC reiterated the need not to rush the delivery of this particular recommendation.

JN told DRG members that Ongoing Approval would be a direct breach of EU rules. That Mr Mackinnon had not looked at the EU rules before making the recommendation but that he and BC were working with Conservators to find a work around solution. The recommendation was made in the interests of reducing an approval time by a possible 4 weeks should a clearing round be just missed and having to wait for the next round. TL asked if there was a case for a Clearing on Demand i.e. so many at a time. JN noted that the approval process was a lengthy one. JF asked why. BC explained that when the case came in it is first checked by the WO followed by their Line Manger. They then check if there is available budget via RPID at which point the case is put onto casebook and on the Business tool. A report is run on the case and if any issues are raised then they need to be addressed before progressing any further. This could mean either a re-run of the case on the system or being passed back to the Conservancy to handle. National Office then has to complete a 10% random sample of cases submitted whilst checking the budget allocation against the various options. TL commented that it seemed to be more of an IT issue. JOH acknowledged that it was with BC noting that the RPID system was never going to be able to provide all the functionality needed to manage Forestry applications, however FCS are working very hard to manage the IT systems to make it as efficient as possible. TL commented that if the length of time to go through the pre app and application stages were reduced then clearing times wouldn't be seen as such an issue. JN responded that delivering Work-stream 1 was fundamental in

addressing that but that at present Ongoing Approval would be taken out of Work-stream 3.

TL then asked why there was a further 2 weeks between a clearing round and an NPAC round and if they could be programmed monthly. BC noted that they took time to set up and that they weren't needed every month. JN reminded the DRG that previously it could take up to a year to get the approval as it was a Ministerial decision. BC wondered if the need for NPACs should be looked at with JOH noting that the question could be raised. JF asked if the NPAC's met in person, JN responded that they were predominantly conducted over the phone.

Action Point 1/16. BC/JN to look into the continuing need for NPAC's

6. Update on Work-stream 4 (JN)

Phase 1 is looking at Management Information, what we currently hold, an identified the need to capture pre-app information and the ability to produce reports. Phase 2 will require further resource and so a case needs to be built to generate that. Industry input will be needed to understand what it is it would want to see, but again this will not be a quick delivery as an IT system will need to be built to produce that information. BC noted that FCS will have to investigate what information would be captured, why and who will use it, and identify the resource to build it. JOH commented that FCS had vastly improved in capturing and presenting management information. JF endorsed this point and recognised the efforts of BC and his team.

JF recognised that wider industry such as Plant Nursery involvement in this work-stream was important with regards to current and future stock management purposes.

Action Point 1/17. DRG members to think of a possible representative from the Plant Nursery Sector to be involved in Work-Stream 4 delivery.

7. Update on Work-stream 5 (JN)

JN noted how this particular work-stream very much tied in with addressing culture and that his intention is for the work-stream to be delivered as a complete package. SC commented that ICF had put forward Claire Glaister to be part of this work-stream as she has a lot of experience working with stakeholders and communities on understanding the benefits of forestry. Country File's recent piece was a good step forward but should think more about how to publicise the positive forestry messages. JOH asked if the work-stream will consider the views of Government and the Sector etc. JN replied that it will as it cannot all just come from FCS, looking at building publicity, including better website content and new promotional leaflets to be ready for the show season as a start. BC noted that the website was an area of concern

with internal discussions ongoing on the structure of the site, wanting to make the site more engaging with better graphics including a web based map.

Training - internal & external, FCS carried out joint training last year with TL delivering a presentation on Plans. Feedback suggested the shared approach worked well. SC noted she had also shared feedback from the event. BC commented that this area is a challenge but it should include wider stakeholders. SC mentioned that ICF have been delivering these types of events in England for the last 3 years.

JN said they would be looking to deliver as one complete work-stream rather than individual elements. L&D are involved in identifying training needs, visiting Conservancies to see what they do, looking to build a new entrants package for Woodland Officers to help establish a consistent and high standard approach to training. It would also help to address any areas where there is a lack of knowledge in new Officers and provide a mechanism with which to tackle it.

JF asked if when the L&D teams visited the Conservancies, would they be asking what areas the applicants are failing in and identify their training needs?

Action Point 1/18. JN/L&D to ask the current Woodland Officers what areas would they like training on.

8. Update on Work-stream 6 (JOH)

JOH noted holding back a little on this particular stream due to available resource. Seeing this piece of work as very important as the opportunities and risks could be huge so FCS are keen to get this right, meaning that it is not just about identifying resource it's as much about it being the right resource. It needs to be viewed in the round with Scottish Government from a land use change perspective. This stream would build on the WEAG outcomes looking at land availability and land which is tenanted.

JF asked how it would fit with the Aberdeen land use case study. JOH agreed that it would fit with both the Aberdeen and Borders studies and focuses the land use question. SC wondered if the pilot project was looking at too big a scale. DS expressed his support of the proposed scale and the significance being such that it should remain a separate piece of work. JOH supported the comment also noting that it would require political support and resource.

9. AOCB

No points were raised.