

Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) Management Board Meeting

23 March 2017

Attendees:

Simon Hodge, Chief Executive
Trefor Owen, Head of Land Management
Michael Hymers, Head of Corporate Support
Michael Ansell, Head of Estates Development
Donna Mortimer, Head of Finance and Procurement
Rosetta Forbes, Head of HR Scotland
Nicol Sinclair, Head of Business Services (Acting)
Rhondda Salmond, Secretariat

Apologies:

Brent Meakin, Head of Business Services
Alan Stevenson, Head of Community and Visitor Services

Others:

Scott Craig (Scott Moncrieff Business Advisers & Accountants) (Item 5)
Rebecca Boenke (Item 6 and 7)
Liz Walker (Item 6 and 7)

1. Minutes of last Meeting 9 February 2017

The FESMB agreed that the record of 9 February 2017 was held to be a true and fair record of the meeting.

2. Action Points and Matters Arising

Ref:	Action	Who	Target Date
12/04	Bring a further developed Built Asset Management Strategy to FESMB in the new year.	NS	19 May 2017
1/02	Develop appropriate communications for staff reinforcing drivers of wider change programme	MH	21 April 2017
7/2	Consider programme of future FES Team Leaders meetings, including locations and guest speakers	MH	21 April 2017
1/3	Communication to staff to be issued outlining that FES will deliver L&D and Human Resources from April 2017, including services to staff in wider FC Scotland.	NS	31 March 2017
2/3	Circulate copy of VAT Guidance and training notes to FESMB members	DM	21 April 2017
3/3	Provide update to FESMB following 2016/17 VAT Reconciliation exercise.	DM	18 Aug 2017
4/3	Function Leads to promote adherence with VAT Guidance and ensure appropriate accounting actions are taken.	All	21 April 2017

Ref:	Action	Who	Target Date
5/3	Review and group existing programmes/projects within the Portfolio	RB	19 May 2017
6/3	Deliver interactive FESMB workshop to consider options for developing and agreeing weighted assessment criteria, with associated benefits and metrics that Portfolio Management will deliver against	RB	21 April 2017
7/3	Circulate email with contact details for Amanda McInnes and Siobhan Thompson	MH	31 March 2017

Action Points: 11/02, 12/5, 2/2, 3/2, 4/2, 5/2, 6/2, 8/2, 9/2, and 10/2 are discharged.

3. Chief Executive Update

Simon Hodge advised that initial scoping of the Forestry Devolution Programme is progressing. This will place the 'New Agency Project' in a clear programme framework linked to the forestry bill and other forestry devolution workstreams.

To support the programme a number of key roles/responsibilities have been agreed, including Bridget Campbell (Director for Environment & Forestry) as Programme Director/Sponsor; Keith Connal (Deputy Director, Natural Resources) as Senior Responsible Owner; Liz Walker (Forest Enterprise Scotland) as Programme Manager. David Patel (Deputy Director, Office of the Chief Economic Adviser) will lead the Human Resources strand supported by Alison Kennedy (Forestry Commission Scotland).

Work continues on developing the Cross Border elements of the programme, in dialogue with Defra and NRW.

Fergus Ewing (Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity) recently met with representatives from the Forestry Commission Trade Unions (FCTU). A formal response on the outcome of the Future of Forestry in Scotland consultation is awaited.

There is continuing momentum on developing links with leads in Scottish Government. Simon Hodge and Alan Stevenson recently met with colleagues from the Enterprise Directorate, Transport Scotland & Active Scotland to discuss mountain biking developments in the Tweed Valley.

Scottish Futures Trust has also met with Scottish Government and forestry leads regarding models for generating woodland creation in the third / private sector.

Simon Hodge and Jo O'Hara (FC Scotland) will meet with Fergus Ewing next week on forestry, which will include discussion on the future work programme.

Learning and Development (L&D) and Human Resources are due to move in to FES from April 2017.

AP1/3: Communication to staff to be issued outlining that FES will deliver L&D and Human Resources from April 2017, including services to staff in wider FC Scotland

Work is ongoing to consider improvements to our internal and external digital communications for Health, Safety & Wellbeing (H,S&W). This includes considering how we place H,S&W values at the core of our business, and how we share this with external stakeholders and the wider forestry sector.

4. Performance Management System (PMS) Standards

The FESMB discussed and agreed proposed end of year performance ratings for staff within their direct management hierarchy.

5. VAT Update

Donna Mortimer and Scott Craig (Scott-Moncrieff Business Advisers & Accountants) provided the FESMB with an overview of progress with HRMC and taking forward recommendations from the VAT Report. This included an update on staff training regarding VAT changes in preparation for the April 2017 deadline.

AP2/3: Circulate copy of VAT Guidance and training notes to FESMB members

AP3/3: Provide update to FESMB following 2016/17 VAT Reconciliation exercise

AP4/3: Function Leads to promote adherence with VAT Guidance and ensure appropriate accounting actions are taken

6. Portfolio Management

Rebecca Boenke provided an update on continuing to develop FES's approach to Portfolio Management. This included an overview of the current balance of the Portfolio against FES's Operating Framework, and potential future criteria for assessing any new initiatives/programmes/projects.

The FESMB agreed that any new initiatives/programmes/projects that have resource requirements and/or impact on or have dependencies with existing work programmes must be submitted through the Portfolio office for agreement by the Portfolio Board prior to commencing.

AP5/3: Review and group existing programmes/projects within the Portfolio

AP6/3: Deliver interactive FESMB workshop to consider options for developing and agreeing weighted assessment criteria, with associated benefits and metrics that Portfolio Management will deliver against

7. Forestry Devolution Programme

Liz Walker provided an update on the Forestry Devolution Programme, highlighting progress to date, risks/issues and next steps in the process.

8. Organisational/Functional Updates

Corporate Support: Michael Hymers advised work is underway to update the Brand Manual, and associated template, email signatures, etc. to reflect the current agency status in Scotland. Details will be communicated to staff outlining the appropriate action required once the updates are complete.

Fergus Ewing has a period of leave from 29 March until 10 April 2017. As his email/box will be closed during this period any submissions must be submitted in advance of this date or they will not be actioned until after his return.

The Corporate Support team has two new members – Amanda McInnes takes up post as Personal Secretary to the CEO, and Siobhan Thompson as Secretariat/Corporate Liaison Officer. An email will be circulated with their contact details.

AP7/3: Circulate email with contact details for Amanda McInnes and Siobhan Thompson

Finance/Procurement: Donna Mortimer advised that the Procurement Team had recently contacted business leads to ascertain future requirements for inclusion in the Procurement Pipeline. Information submitted suggests that requirements would place the Procurement Team at full capacity, with little scope to support any emerging issues. The team are working with the wider business to consider a solution.

Estates Development: Michael Ansell advised that work is ongoing with a utility company following some recent safety issues.

A recent audit of lease administration received limited assurance. An action plan is currently being developed to address issues and consider recommendations.

Tenant farmers have recently been successful with legal action against Scottish Government, and we are remaining alert to any implications for FES.

Business Services: Nicol Sinclair advised that following some recent resignations and staff changes work was underway to consider resourcing in L&D and HR. This will include consideration of ongoing to the wider change programmes, including Establishing Corporate Services Scotland (ECSS) and Organisational Redesign.

Work is continuing with business leads on how to redistribute Business Services costs as part of the Business Planning process.

Human Resources (HR): Rosetta Forbes advised that the Equality Steering Group met recently and discussed progress towards readiness for moving to the Scottish Public Sector Equality Duties. Work is also ongoing to report progress on and update the annual Equality Objectives.

The HR Team are experiencing a significant increase in employee relations, particularly around providing informal support to managers.

FC Trade Union are in the process of confirming their Accredited Representatives for the next financial year as part of the Facility Time Arrangements.

Land Management: Trefor Owen advised that although at an early stage positive feedback has been received from external stakeholders regarding their inclusion in the development of the restocking Strategy. A similar co-production approach is also being considered for the Timber Marketing Strategy.

Work is continuing on the Land Management Corporate Dashboards for 2017/18, to monitor and highlight performance against forecast and cost.

A draft report has been received following an investigation in to a firearm incident involving a staff member.

9. AOB

Intellectual Property: Rhondda Salmond advised that work was ongoing to consider impacts on intellectual property as part of devolution of the Forestry Commission.

The date of the next FESMB is the 27 April 2017.