

THE SEVENTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
HELD IN THE SILVAN HOUSE BOARDROOMS
ON TUESDAY 14 APRIL 2015

MINUTES

Members: Ian Gambles (Chair), Wilma Harper, Simon Hodge, Simon Hodgson, Jean Lindsay, Jo O'Hara and James Pendlebury

Guests: Emily Ramsay (agenda item 6 only) and Nicol Sinclair (agenda item 2 only)

Secretary: Stephen Bennett

1. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 March were agreed.

All of the action points from the previous meeting were in progress or completed.

2. Proposal to Establish the Forestry Futures Delivery Programme

EB members discussed this paper at length.

Three distinct change programmes were underway:

- The Woodland Policy Enabling Programme (this included changes in England, cross border functions and Forest Research);
- A developing change programme in Scotland; and,
- A programme to respond to the new requirements of England and Scotland for the shared service functions (and parts of CFS not compatible with the refreshed Forest Research Agency).

It was agreed that in each of these areas a programme management approach needed to be followed to co-ordinate all of the change programmes currently underway, not least to consider and manage all of the interdependencies between the projects. The role of the central teams, including the change support unit, was to support delivery and implementation of what the countries wanted going forward.

There was agreement that the pace of the project would be picked up as much as possible, perhaps working to a quicker timetable of around 3-4 years to fully devolve shared services. Therefore, perhaps a more risk-based approach could be adopted for the devolution of services. This would require commitment of resource both at a

strategic level from the business and to develop and implement business cases and project plans for transition and implementation. Work was underway in England on Business Cases and these would be completed in May.

The Strategy Advisory Groups had been proposed to focus on developing the future requirements which would underpin the business cases for shared service devolution.

Therefore, it was decided that further consideration would be given to the structure and scope of the change programme. Director Central Services would bring a paper to the next meeting of the EB to inform a discussion. This would cover the timetable, key actions and resources required for the programme and consider the impact of the Business Cases that had been prepared to date.

Action: Jean Lindsay & Wilma Harper

3. FC Scotland Change Programme

The Board was joined by the Director Environment and Forestry at the Scottish Government to share information on the state of play with the various change programmes across the Forestry Commission, and to provide insight into the Scottish Government position.

Updates were provided on the England and Cross Border projects. The latest position of Scottish Government regarding the ENFOR review and the establishment of the Rural Affairs, Food and Environment (RAFE) Board under the chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary was discussed. It was agreed that sharing of information between the Executive Board and Scottish Government would be continued whenever possible.

4. FC England Change Programme

Director England briefed the EB on the following developments in FC England:

- The operating, business and financial models were well-developed for the new Public Forest Estate Management Organisation; ready to be confirmed after the election.
- Staff morale in Forest Enterprise England was currently good, partially due to the fact that staff had more knowledge of their future.

5. FC Cross Border Project

Director Central Services briefed the EB on developments with regard to cross border functions.

The project to refresh Forest Research Agency continued. Proposals on the purpose and the functions that should be included had been circulated for views and discussion. It was envisaged that the refreshed Agency structure would be in place from 1 April 2016.

There was also a workstream looking at potential future models for the Agency. Contact had been made with Chief Executive of Forest Enterprise England to understand the process that was carried out to develop the PFEMO business case.

Head of FC Scotland would keep Director ENFOR informed of progress with regard to this project. Linda Pooley from RESAS would also be invited to engage with this project.

Action: Jo O'Hara

6. Shared Services Update

The EB was briefed on the following:

- **Payroll - ePayfact implementation**

The new ePayfact system would be used to deliver April's payroll. Employees would receive payslips from the new system this month. Communications included notification in the next issue of Central Line and the Connect Bulletin.

- **Pension – Introduction of alpha pension scheme**

Eligible members had been successfully moved across into the alpha scheme from 1 April. All the protected and tapered members had been communicated to and were aware of their specific arrangements. The Civil Service Pension website provided an excellent source of further information. The FC Pension team had been highly praised by the Cabinet Office and MyCSP for their contribution to the project.

- **2015/16 Pay Award**

The Cabinet Office had confirmed the Pay Award guidance for both staff and the Senior Staff Group for 2015/16. For the Staff Group a 1% increase across the total salary bill had been awarded. Departments had flexibility in how they allocate this award and modelling was ongoing to establish best possible use of the 1%. Awards would be applied from 1 October. This award may need to be applied retrospectively as the general election this year had impacted on normal timescales. FCTU had been advised of the award.

- **Civil Service Expert Services**

- **Civil Service Learning (CSL)**

Civil Service Learning was successfully launched on 1 April. A Development Adviser was linked to the following professions to ensure that CSL was

promoted as a way to meet continuous professional development needs: Communication, Finance, HR, IT.

➤ **Civil Service Recruitment**

The CS electronic recruitment portal went live on Monday 13 April after a considerable period of testing, background checks, etc. Key operational staff had been trained on the system and comprehensive guidance was available on-line.

➤ **Civil Service Employee Policy (CSEP)**

The HR Policy Team was utilising CSEP to develop and deliver FC HR policies in line with the wider Civil Service. It was early days but the team was currently using CSEP to produce FC policy, procedure and people matters guidance on Shared Parental Leave.

➤ **Civil Service Organisational Development and Design (CSODD)**

The FC now had access to this advice and support service, via the L&D team, as and when required. There was a cost implication to utilising this service above the basic level of advice.

• **Health and Safety**

The Health and Safety Strategy Group had discussed the Forestry Commission Safety Climate Tool survey results and how they should be disseminated across the organisation. A total of 70% of FC staff had taken the time to complete the survey. The Health and Safety Strategy Group took the view that staff communication should bring out the highs and lows of the Forestry Commission report. It should also state how we proposed to improve based on the survey results. Access to the full report would be possible via the intranet. The positive areas identified in the survey were:

- Organisational commitment
- Health and safety trust
- Engagement in health and safety.

The negative issues identified were:

- Accident and near miss reporting
- Procedures could be brought together.

The England, Scotland, Forest Research and Shared Services and CFS Reports would go to Directors and the Health and Safety Committees. Local reports would then go to Unit Managers and the local Health and Safety Committees. The first

level of communication would go out in April 2015 listing the positive and negative areas. The involvement and endorsement of EB members was important to deliver the three key messages of expressing appreciation to staff for taking the time to answer the survey, highlighting the positives and the areas requiring improvement.

The EB would have further discussion on the work of the Health and Safety Strategy Group at their meeting in June.

7. Mobility Clause

EB members agreed that a contractual mobility clause would be retained in the terms and conditions of FC staff.

All staff had a mobility obligation but there was a wider obligation for those staff in PB5 and above. The wider mobility clause would continue to apply to staff in Pay Band 5 and above. The clause would not be applicable to fixed and short-term appointments.

EB members decided that the clause would not be expanded to introduce cross civil service mobility at this time, although they may revisit this issue at some point in the future.

8. Senior Staff Group Event

EB members discussed the option of holding a meeting of the FC's senior staff on 9 September, after the normal EB meeting in the morning. It was agreed that this may be an opportune time to engage with the senior staff about the future of the FC, the structural changes underway and ensure a common leadership message. The EB would discuss and make a final decision whether to go ahead with this meeting at their meeting on 3 June. Meanwhile, EB members would provide a list of those that they wished to be involved in the September meeting to enable the date to be provisionally placed in diaries.

Action: Stephen Bennett

9. Any Other Business

Four items of other business was raised:

- **Forestry Journal**

EB members were appalled and dismayed to see recent editorials, adverts and a cartoon strip in the Forestry Journal which they considered to be both wholly incompatible with FC values in relation to gender equality and personally offensive. It was also noted that the publishers had failed to respond in a constructive manner to a complaint from the Institute of Chartered Foresters. The Communications Team would be advised and asked to keep the Journal content under review going forward.

- **Diversity in the Forestry Sector**

The new Scottish Minister had indicated that she was keen to improve the diversity of the forestry sector (particularly gender diversity). FC Scotland were awaiting further engagement and instruction on this but had already begun some time ago their own initiatives to improve the gender diversity of the workforce of FC and FE Scotland.

- **Forest Enterprise Scotland**

An organisational development programme had been initiated looking at the Agency's business processes, systems and structures, especially in light of the shared service decentralisation and other changes to the external environment.

- **Annual Reports and Accounts**

The timescales for production of these publications had been delayed because of the general election. A revised timescale would be agreed and circulated to EB members.

Action: Ian Gambles

10. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the EB was scheduled for 10.30am, Wednesday 3 June, in the West Boardroom of Silvan House.