

Agenda Item 7

Executive Board Meeting
5 March 2014

Memo No 4/14

Review of Leadership Programme

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to update the board on the outcome of the review of our Leadership Programme and to seek their agreement on the recommendations.

Introduction & Background

2. In 2010 Learning & Development (L&D) worked with the business to develop a leadership development programme. The programme was designed to support the Forestry Commission's (FC's) workforce planning by identify employees who had the potential to operate as Senior Staff Group (SSG) level.
3. The selection stage of the programme took place during the autumn of 2010 and four individuals were selected for the programme. Each individual received 1 to 1 development support although self-directed learning was a key theme of the programme
4. Evaluation of the programme would be based on evidence of applications for promotion and successful promotion into an SSG role.

Details of the review

5. In 2013 a review of the programme was carried out to establish if it had successfully identified staff with potential to operate at SSG level and if suitable development opportunities had been provided. The review also considered if there was a continuing desire for a central programme.
6. A number of engagement methods were used including a questionnaire to some senior staff, discussions with HR Business Partners and their management boards and structured interviews with the four successful participants.
7. Overall, it was viewed that those included on the programme do have the potential to operate at SSG level although there was feedback about possible

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areas of improvement, in particular the management of unsuccessful candidates and their development.

8. Participants of the programme have applied for SSG roles although none have been successful to date. However, two are in a higher pay bands and two are on TRA to a higher pay band. It was suggested that these individuals may well have succeeded in securing these posts at a higher pay band irrespective of the programme and therefore it is difficult to conclude how much the programme impacted on their progress.
9. Programme participants provided feedback on the development opportunities provided and felt that there should be an improvement in the link between the specific skills required in SSG posts and development plans. There was a suggestion about including a formal Leadership qualification or specific funding for fast-track development and training. The coaching provided was well received and there were examples of opportunities to work in different areas of the business.
10. There was a concern that the programme was aimed at too wide a group of roles and should have been more targeted. This would have allowed staff to be clearer on what they were applying for and help in managing unsuccessful applicants.
11. There was a general consensus that there was no longer an appetite for a centrally managed leadership programme.

Resource Implications

12. If the programme did not continue then there would be minimal resource implications in supporting existing participants as the development is self-directed and funded from local budgets.

Risk Assessment

13. Discussions at both HR Management and HR Service Boards concluded that without a central Leadership Programme there is a risk around how succession planning and talent is managed for senior leadership roles. Consideration should be given at a country level about what mechanisms could be used to identify and nurture talent in place of a central Leadership Programme.

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Communication

14. Current participants of the programme should receive an update on the future of the Leadership Programme and a commitment to continue to support their development.

Recommendation(s)

15. The board are asked to agree;
 - a) A centrally managed leadership programme is no longer required within the Forestry Commission
 - b) A continued commitment to supporting the development of the 4 existing participants
 - c) Consideration should be given at a Country, Forest Research and Shared Service level as to how succession planning and talent is managed for their senior leadership roles.

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