

**Research Management Board Meeting – 19 March 2003 (via video link)**

**Present:** Dr P Freer-Smith  
Mr W Mason  
Mr T Cornwell  
Mr K Charles

[cc: Head of Internal Audit  
Professor J Lynch ]

Minutes of Last Meeting

1. Accepted

Matters Arising

2. Once CEO is happy with schedules for 03/04, a complete set of schedules to be copied to FR Liaison Officers for information and for use in discussion with National Offices.  
**Action: TC, PFS**
3. CEO has had meetings with Tim Rollinson and Bob Selmes. FC (Forestry Group) spend with FR for 2003/04 agreed at £9.64M.  
**Noted**
4. HoF has sent RMB members a list of Capital Bids which will be discussed at next RMB. HoF to place on agenda.  
**Action: TC**
5. P&AO to draft a minute for CEO to Jim Anderson, Director Personnel, regarding the implementation of agreed policy for the transfer of end-of-tour FR staff.  
**Action: KC**
6. Health & Safety, centralisation of function at Silvan House, CEO has responded to proposals.  
**Noted**

Reports

7. CEO to remind those concerned about the need to supply end of project reports for those projects funded through the CEO's Discretionary Fund.  
**Action: PFS**
8. The RMB thanked Ken Charles and Martin Abrahams for their efforts in keeping the Woodland Survey move on track.  
**Noted**
9. FC Service Boards are being introduced with FR representation on some, but not all, of them.  
**Noted**

Finance

10. 02/03, HoF keeping a daily check on progress which, today, indicates a surplus of £9K. This may change. Capital allocation of £500K is fully allocated. Noted that the response, from HoBs, to the holdback on spending has been very positive.  
**Noted**
11. HoF to keep CEO informed about progress in 02/03.  
**Action: TC**

12. 03/04, the year will start with a manageable operating deficit of £41K. We have only £300K for capital investment which may be boosted by any cash savings we can achieve in 02/03. Up to £100K may become available in this way. **Noted**
13. RMB discussed Cost Centres where there were deficits for next year and the implications for post filling. **Noted**

#### Staffing

14. Agreed that the post of Publications Officer will be full-time from 1 April 2003. **Action: KC**
15. Analyst/Programmer, Stats & Computing Branch, NRS, permanent post approved at PB5. **Action: KC**
16. Hydrologist, ERB, PB4, approved in principle subject to the Branch providing a financial case. **Action: KC**
17. P&AO to remind HoBs that bids for staff will only be considered with a financial case according to the protocol and that cases must be presented to the RMB with at least 3 working days notice to allow proper consideration. **Action: KC**

#### Risk Management

18. P&AO presented his paper and a revised Risk Register which took account of changes to the objectives of the Agency as published in the revised Corporate Plan. The RMB agreed the paper subject to minor amendment and the following action;
  - presentations to the Audit Committee (this afternoon)
  - the submission of a report to Boyd Glen detailing the action we have taken
  - circulation to HoBs/Senior Managers
  - publication on the Intranet
  - discussion with Boyd Glen about what needs to be done with regard to presentation to the FC Management Board.**Action: KC**

### Financial Forecasting

19. HoF reported that in his opinion the quality of financial forecasting is unsatisfactory in some parts of the organisation. RMB agreed that HoF will give short seminars covering the importance of good, regular financial forecasting (North and South) around early June. An initial budget meetings (Autumn) HoF will take the opportunity to examine current year's progress with HoBs. **Action: TC**

### Staff Survey

20. P&AO presented his paper. The results of the FR Staff Survey indicated, overall, that we had made progress but the RMB was concerned that FR had not made as much progress as we might have. The RMB agreed that we seek assistance from the Change Management Team and that we call for volunteers and hold meetings facilitated by the Change Management Team at Alice Holt and NRS to discuss the issues. The RMB was particularly concerned that there were differences in overall progress between the FC and FR, that there were differences in levels of satisfaction in FR between Alice Holt and NRS and that in some areas we were regressing. Following these meetings, the RMB will discuss next steps in consultation with the Change Management Team. **Action: KC**

### National Office Liaison Role

21. The RMB agreed that H. of NRS will draft (a) a note for CEO clarifying the role of Country Liaison Officers which will be put out to staff in FR and (b) a letter to Country Directors. **Action: BM**

### Any Other Business

22. Following Scottish and Welsh elections in May, H. of NRS and CEO to invite respective new Ministers to visit NRS and Alice Holt respectively. **Action: PFS, BM**

Date of next meeting: 14 May 2003 at Alice Holt