

**Forest Research Executive Board Meeting – 16 April 2008
by video conference**

Present:	NRS	Alice Holt
	Peter Freer-Smith (Chair)	Hugh Evans
	Ken Charles	Helen McKay
	Janet Dutch	Alison Melvin (AKM)
	Andy Moffat	Xanthe Christophers
	Wilma Harper	
	Sandra Smith	
	Bill Mason	
	Chris Quine	

Lesley Crozier, FC's Diversity Manager attended for Agenda Item 3.
Fiona Alexander, FC's Head of People Support attended for Agenda Item 6.

Copies to: Liz Holmes, Head of Internal Audit
Ros Bull, Secretary to the Chairman

Agenda Item 1 – Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

1. Two reports concerning climate change have been produced, (1) by James Morison (Review of FR Climate Change-Related Research) and (2) by James Pendlebury (Options for a Forestry and Climate Change Centre). These will be circulated around FREB in due course. Consideration is being given to FR playing a greater role in taking the Forestry Commission's Forestry and Climate Change Centre forward. **Action: PF-S**
2. The above is likely to be the subject of the next meeting of FR's Advisors' Joint meeting. **Action: WH**
3. Following discussions between Barry Gardiner and Janet Dutch, it was decided that a combined approach to determining requests from the TSU and Biometrics Professional Services could be possible. This will be developed in the next few months (prior to development of work plans for 09/10) and a proposal brought back to FREB for discussion. **Action: JD, BG**
4. XC has contacted Pat Snowdon and James Morison who are meeting on 14 April to plan a joint presentation to staff regarding the FC's Centre for Forestry and Climate Change. Presentations likely to take place in May. XC has also contacted Chris Nixon to arrange a presentation of his paper, 'Framework for Woodland Carbon Management and Emissions off-setting'. **Action: XC**
5. HoDs to remind staff to keep notes in diaries to enable TIME Summary input to be made accurately at the end of April. SS to speak to Steve Atkins about 'going live'. **Action: HoDs, SS**

6. QA Manager, Carl Foster, to report to FREB in June about how the QA system can be developed to accommodate the requirement for customer care auditing, advisory work and output delivery. **Action: CF**
7. AM has a draft QA progress note in preparation to be sent out to staff. **Action: AM**
8. Standards Meetings have been held at NRS and Alice Holt. **Noted**
9. Dates for 'Who we are Workshops' have been set by XC. 20/28 May (NRS), 22/30 May (Alice Holt). **Noted**
10. FR Corporate Plan has been signed off by Commissioners. **Noted**
11. Need to incorporate Greenerways targets into Divisional Business Plans, Steve Lee has given PF-S a form of words to be used. SS has checked with Steve Lee about what we need to feed into the Greenerways database and the FC systems available for us to do this in order that we can gauge our performance against targets.
12. Tony Hutchings will brief FREB about the Urban Regeneration and Greenspace Centre at the June meeting. **Action: AM**

Agenda Item 2 – Divisional Reports

13. Following the failure to attract a suitable candidate following the internal trawl PB2 Wales post, PF-S, HE, KC and BM will meet and look at options. **Action: PF-S**
14. The TUS have produced a Workload Survey which PF-S has circulated to FREB members. FREB was invited to look at this and give comments to PF-S prior to the FR Staff Council meeting on 9 May. **Action: FREB**
15. AM proposed that AKM and SS prepare a paper with specific recommendations for the next FREB detailing how future contracts and external bids are recorded and handled. **Action: SS, AKM**
16. The Inventory and Forecasting Project Board has met and will be putting proposals to the FC EB. FREB recorded thanks to Helen McKay for representing FR on the review. **Noted**
17. Biometrics, a revised edition of 'Timber Measurement' which was first published in 1983 has been produced by Robert Matthews and Ewan Mackie. **Noted**
18. Ecology has had an active period for discussion with stakeholders over the results of work on forest habitat networks. Darren Moseley presented results from the SNIFFER contract, 'Urban networks for biodiversity and people at a SNH/FR multifunctional green networks seminar. Roger Trout and Graham Gill have had a number of discussions with FC England about the local management of wild boar.
19. E&HS, David Edwards submitted the final report to FCS, on behalf of the SERG

team, for the Forestry for People project (a valuation of the economic and social contribution of forestry for people in Scotland). Congratulations to Rhona Pitman on being awarded the 2007 Silviculture Prize for her paper 'Wood Ash use in Forestry'.

20. FMD, Gary Kerr has revised OGB7 (Management of Continuous Cover Forests) which was well received by OSU and other FC staff. Peter Gosling reported that the new x-ray apparatus is taking some stunning x-radiographs of fruits and seeds.
21. Tree Health, good interaction with Scion during Hugh Evans' recent visit to New Zealand. High profile interactions on the *Phytophthora* keep the work of Joan Webber and her colleagues at the forefront of Biosecurity research.
22. Business Development, FR has won a significant SW(E) inventory tender following a presentation by Mark Oram, Barnaby Wilder and Robert Matthews to Rural Renaissance. Planning in progress for the RRSP launch.
23. TSU, talk given to CEH at Bush on TSU and the services that could be offered to CEH. Good response from OSU at the OSU/TSU liaison meeting about the work that TSU has been undertaking for OSU.
24. Communications, letter from British Ambassador in Russia giving good feedback from the recent visit of Russian scientists which Hugh Williams organised. **Noted**
25. WH reported on some live issues:
 - Stump removal research by FR had been well received
 - FR's involvement will continue to be required into the badger debate.
 - How we deal with Defra, finance and on a day-to-day basis
 - Carbon trading/Carbon reduction

Agenda Item 3 – Diversity Action Plan Update

26. Lesley Crozier, FC's Diversity Manager attended for this item and briefed FREB on the FC's Diversity Action Plan. We are in discussion with the Equality and Human Rights Commission to ensure that the FC is fully meeting its diversity obligations as to how we treat our employees (and potential employees) and how we plan to deliver our services. We are about to introduce diversity training for all staff (at four different levels) and any services we provide or documents/policy we publish where 'people' are the main focus of the document/policy or service will be 'equality proofed'. **Noted**

Agenda Item 4 – Staffing

27. KC introduced this item, average staffing for 2007/08 stands at 268 against a planned figure of 270 (FTEs).

28. Three companies were short-listed and 'interviewed' regarding PRINCE2 training. The successful company is Carnegie Enterprise Ltd. KC to put a note out to staff explaining that project management training will be provided (at different levels) through this contract and that ad-hoc project management training should not take place outside of this contract. **Action: KC**
29. Our Investors in People (IIP) accreditation is due for renewal in November. Methods of assessment have changed and the new 'Profile Network' will be used. Representatives from Quality West will be briefing the FC EB on what this entails. **Noted**
30. A Management Development programme is being developed by Learning and Development. Work is well underway on MDPI for first line managers. Work is about to begin on MDP2 (for middle managers) and a 'volunteer' is sought from FR at about PB3. BM and CQ offered to consider a nomination from NRS. **Action: BM, CQ**

Agenda Item 5 – Finance

31. SS introduced this item and provided a forecast for 07/08. Work is needed on Work in Progress and other end of year adjustments before a final outturn is available. **Noted**
32. External income is below target. SS will be asking HoDs for explanations of variances and asked that HoDs review forecasts immediately. **Action: HoDs**
33. 2008/09 budgets have yet to be finalised, there are some outstanding issues to be resolved with FC Finance namely Service Board charges, general income from the countries and a confirmation of CFS funding. HoDs asked to provide AM with details of site specific advice to countries which is not already included in CFS funding by 23 April. AM/XC to co-ordinate. **Action: AM, XC**
34. The following actions were agreed;
- HoDs to go through forecasts and identify budget savings. **Action: HoDs**
 - AKM, SS to look critically at forecast external income. **Action: AKM, SS**
 - A working group comprising PFS and SS to be set up to look at cost savings involving bi-laterals such as James Pendlebury as necessary. Consultation with HoDs on an individual basis to take place by next FREB. **Action: PFS, SS**
35. PFS to put out the CFS draft budget to HoDs **Action: PFS**
36. HoDs to ensure that TSU are aware of their 08/09 requirements and to finalise these by 30 April. **Action: HoDs**

Agenda Item 6 – People Strategy and 'Your Good Health'

37. Fiona Alexander, Head of People Support attended for this agenda item. 'Your Good Health' is an FC initiative which focuses on lifestyle, healthy eating and

active living. Although some events have been held at Alice Holt and NRS the main thrust of the initiative has taken place at Silvan House. Fiona was keen to widen this. Local Events Co-ordinators were needed who could be assisted by People Support. Janet Lacey will take this on at Alice Holt and CQ will speak to Martin Abrahams and Evelyn Hall for NRS.

38. HoDs asked about sick absence statistics and when these were made available. KC undertook to send HoDs the latest FR and FC sick leave statistics. **Action: KC**

Agenda Item 7 – AOB

39. SS is updating the Risk Register which will be passed around FREB. **Action: SS**
40. XC reminded FREB about the workshops on branding. A consultant is looking at the future direction of FC websites after which senior managers will be brought up to date on the options for change. **Noted**
41. A note has been received from Allan Dungavel giving an update on data protection requirements and the standards for Information Security Management across government. An Information Security Management Forum is being set up and an FR representative is being sought to serve on this. PFS to talk to SS regarding a nominee. **Action: PFS**

Date of next meeting – **11.00am, 9th June 2008 at Alice Holt**