

**Forest Research Executive Board Meeting – 18 June 2007**  
**Northern Research Station, Scotland**

**Present:** Prof J M Lynch (Chair)                      Dr H F Evans  
Mr W L Mason    Dr X Christophers  
Dr A J Moffat (AJM)                                   Prof. P Freer-Smith  
Dr Helen McKay                                        Dr Janet Dutch  
Dr C Quine    Mr T Cornwell

**Apologies:** Mr K N Charles

Wilma Harper (from Agenda item 13)  
Bob McIntosh, Director FC Scotland (for lunch)

**Copies to:** Mrs Liz Holmes, Head of Internal Audit  
Mrs Wilma Harper, Director of Corporate & Forestry Support  
Mrs Ros Bull, Secretary to the Chairman

**Agenda Item 1 – Introduction to purpose/format of meeting**

1. JL introduced this item. FREB started by recording its congratulations to David Read for his Knighthood as announced in the June Honours list. JL explained that due to the processes underway in FC Scotland, following the changes in the Scottish Government, Bob McIntosh would not be able to attend the meeting, but that he would join FREB for lunch.

**Agenda Item 2 – Minutes of last meeting (16 – 17 May 2007)**

2. Agreed.

**Agenda Item 3 – Matters arising**

3. Christine Cahalan is to deliver the Wales report at the end of June, for development of proposals by the end of July. Convergence of funding won't be known until October funding is confirmed.
4. Spreadsheet Update on progress towards KPIs to be developed for next meeting.  
**Action: XC**
5. Review of Inventory Survey Report – see **Agenda** Item 13 below. A new Head of Service post to manage the new unit was discussed.
6. Corporate Plan – confirmation that endorsed by FC EB to be sought from WH.

#### **Agenda Item 4 – Update on Development Strategy**

7. Confirmation that the Development Strategy is a working/living document, and will be updated after significant developments. David Shannon's preliminary report to the CE was presented as a PowerPoint printout. It identifies specific progress:
  - a. Business meetings (monthly) are taking place.
  - b. Finance Review Group including David Shannon and David Evans has been holding constructive meetings – to report to CE by end of June and final report by end of July. Aim to introduce changes in 2008/09. **Action: DS/DE**
  - c. PAWGs have been progressing their tasks. Ian Willoughby has taken on leading the Biomass PAWG. Delivery of PAWG reports to CE is scheduled for end of June. There is a need to consult staff more widely – options including presentations to staff were considered. An email will be sent to all staff inviting comments to the chairs of the PAWGs/HoDs. **Action: DS/JL**
  - d. DS/PFS will do analysis of PAWG reports in time for discussion at July FREB including areas of priority or sunset. **Action: DS/PFS**
  - e. Exploration of possible steps for site development, initial scope by PUK on site development are in progress. Provisional report by the end of August. **Action: KC**
  - f. Visiting Groups – The FR Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee on Forestry Research) prefer to finish the five year cycle and then move on to whole agency review in 2009.

The report also recognises tension in providing applied R&D and world class research and the need to ensure customer satisfaction.

#### **Agenda Item 5 – External Communication Strategy**

8. XC introduced the External Communication Strategy. This sets out the difference between knowledge transfer and marketing and points out that FR will need separate strategies for the two. FR's customers are overwhelmingly concerned with knowledge transfer to their stakeholders. FR has a need to undertake marketing activities in order to win external business. These two activities are complementary but different. Supplementary communication plans will be developed for particular activities including publications and other outputs.
9. The paper presented focused on knowledge transfer – it gives details of objectives, audiences, priorities, processes and mechanisms. It was noted that

the Commercial Director will need to be fully involved in developing the marketing strategy.

10. Comments were invited. **Action: All**

**Agenda Item 6 – Feedback from ACFR and Commissioners' meetings and tour**

11. JL reported on a two very constructive meetings. The ACFR tour of Thetford showing the work of Tree Health Division was well received and Commissioners found Tom Nisbet's work on floodplain woodlands an interesting example of innovative partnership working.
12. It needs to be established whether Advisory committee members and Commissioners are under contract to the FC and/or have signed non-disclosure agreements. **Action: KC**

**Agenda Item 7 – External Business partners**

13. No action on this item

**Agenda Item 8 – Business Update**

14. Alison Melvin's paper was discussed and the following noted:
- a. HoDs to check the FP7 shortlist for priority areas. **Action: HoDs**
  - b. Responsibilities will be assigned at the next Business Development Group meeting.
  - c. C&FS research purchasers to be contacted to determine any co-funding issues. **Action: HoDs/AKM**
  - d. AKM & TC require more feedback on bids in progress from the early stages of preparation. **Action: HoDs**
  - e. Planned BDG meetings will go ahead despite diary difficulties.

**Agenda Item 9 – Finance**

15. TC's report was noted. 2006-07 final result shows a small deficit (finalised at £21,000) and the forecast for 2007-08 is showing an overall deficit of £37,000. Forecasts need to be updated in time for the next FREB meeting. **Action: All**

**Agenda Item 10 – Staffing**

16. Staff statistics were noted.

17. Recorded that Sam Catchpole (TSU) is to move to Newton for six months and approvals given for an extension to Geoff Hogan (Biometrics) and for a replacement FTA for Alexis Achim FMD.
18. Retention of staff beyond age 65. Agreed that requests would be considered on a case by case basis. Any extensions granted would be on a reviewable basis on a term to be specified in each case and must be approved by CEO before confirmation.

#### **Agenda Item 11 – Divisional Reports**

19. No specific points were raised.

#### **Agenda Item 12 – Interaction With FC Scotland**

20. Over lunch JL and Bob McIntosh led a constructive and productive discussion of FC Scotland's priorities and research requirements.

#### **Agenda Item 13 – Update on C&FS**

21. Wilma Harper presented a view of the complex and widely diverse activities of C&FS including the new responsibilities resulting from the review of BSD.
22. Discussion focussed on the implications for FR of the Forshaw review of production forecasting. This would be taken forward as a phased approach to allow fuller analysis of the scope of the new unit before it is set up. Concern was expressed that the complexities involved in implementing the report had not been fully identified and FR stressed the importance it attached to having adequate representation on the steering group being set up to take the report's recommendations forward.
23. Peter Weston has been asked to take forward work to produce the 2010 production forecast.

#### **Agenda Item 14 – AOB**

24. ICT Service Board. Options to be circulated for dealing with IT, GIS and MIS as separate issues to be circulated for comments. **Action: BM**

Date of next meeting: 12 – 13 July, Alice Holt