

9. JD requested nominations to represent Divisions for the nursery management groups at Alice Holt and NRS. HoDs to let JD have names. **Action: HoDs**

Agenda Item 4 - Feedback from GB EB

- 10.
- Procurement Strategy – Derek Gilfillan has been appointed as FC's Procurement Officer and he has met with JL and TC to ensure that the FC's strategy meets our needs. **Noted**
 - Talent management/graduate recruitment scheme is progressing as a central FC initiative. HoDs are invited to let JL know if there is a suitable project that such a person could be employed on as part of their development. Funding for these posts will be held centrally. **Action: HoDs**
 - Regulatory Reform Order is now in place, FR is mentioned specifically. **Noted**
 - A paper on Carbon Trading from Steve Gregory was discussed. **Noted**
 - FR was congratulated on its initiative with PSRE, thoughts were that this could be made available in other parts of the FC.

Agenda Item 5 – Feedback from TSU Service Board

11. JD presented her paper. Meeting to be set up with Gary Kerr [Service Board Chairman], TC, P F-S and JL to discuss a paper that Gary has written to JL. **Action: JL**
12. The remit proposed in JD's paper is too narrow but would suffice for the moment with one amendment, 'Forest Research, FC customers and other customers' but would be subject to review once the Service Board was underway and after the meeting referred to in para. 11. TC distributed an illustrative Terms of Reference. **Action: JD**
13. TSU Procedure Note No. 1 – principle agreed subject to (i) the need for feedback on the detail by HoDs to JD via the Service Board representatives [feedback to be given in time for the next Service Board meeting on 18 April], (ii) clarification by JD about 'research' and 'speculative' time booked with the TSU during the Feb/March time span. **Action: HoDs, JD**
14. Paper on the 'Budgeting and paying for TSU services' to be delayed until after the meeting referred to in para. 11. **Action: JD**

Agenda Item 6 – Update on Woodfuel Centre

15. Ian Tubby and Andy Hall gave an update and overview of progress with FR's Woodfuel Centre.
16. The scope of the Centre was described as follows:-
- To improve the efficiency and performance of the woodfuel supply chain.
 - To summarise and update independent 'best practice'.
 - To inform and support forestry and energy policy at GB level and beyond
 - Support and develop 'criteria and indicators' for the use of wood fuel.

17. Immediate action – ROAME statement prepared, SWOT analysis completed, discussions with CFS underway, outline budget preparation, FR Woodfuel Centre to be launched prior to official announcement of NBC in late April.
18. JL expressed his thanks on behalf of FREB for the work completed so far by Ian Tubby and Andy Hall and requested that the team should let FREB know what they needed by way of help from the centre. Alison Melvin said that we should also formally thank Andy Mason (FC England). **Action: JL**
19. The next update will be 5/6 June. **Action: CH**

Agenda Item 7 – Development assignment for researchers into Business Development function

20. FREB gave a qualified response to the proposal by AM that staff be offered a period of secondment into Business Development to enhance their experience of this area. The idea needs to be explored further, XC to report to next FREB. **Action: XC**

Agenda Item 8 - English Forest Industries Partnership (EFIP)

21. AM introduced her paper headed, 'Responding to the challenges and opportunities posed by Sudbrook Mill Closure'. EFIP is the primary route through which FC(E) communicates with the forestry industry as a whole. A task force has been set up to look at a number of actions in the short and longer term to mitigate the impact of the Sudbrook closure. FR HoDs were invited to contribute to this, AM will coordinate ideas. FREB agreed FR's interest in participating in EFIP but caution to be exercised in view of our limited resources. Participation can be shared, depending on matters being discussed. **Action: HoDs**

Agenda Item 9 - National Network of Forest Research

22. JL introduced this item with a draft map of our national links with universities, associated scientific organisations and FR Field Stations, the strength of these links and whether any had been missed. JL asked that HoDs let XC have details by 13 April of any centres that they have collaboration with, a bullet-point note of the nature of that collaboration and what opportunities there might be. **Action: HoDs, JD**

Agenda Item 10 – Finance

23. TC introduced his paper. Based on figures supplied by HoDs, he is forecasting a surplus of £76K for 2005/06. Capital authorised to date is £663K with an actual annual cash spend of £449K. £200K is being carried forward to 2006/07. **Noted**
24. 2006/07. A first pass budget has been done and one-to-one meetings will take place between TC, PFS and HoDs to bring their budgets into line with the Agency budget. JL will be involved as necessary. **Action: TC**
25. Capital funds available for 2006/07 is £500K plus carry-over from last year. Bids received to date total over £1M.
26. The plan for 2006/07 includes provision for the costs and savings associated with the TSU to be funded from our own resources. **Noted**

Agenda Item 11 – Staffing

27. KC presented his paper detailing recruitments, staff losses and end-of-year staffing figures. Current (and end-of-year) staffing level is 273. Average staffing level for 2005/06 is also 273 against a Corporate Plan figure of 278. The loss of posts associated with the TSU restructuring is not included in these figures. **Noted**
28. In the past week we have interviewed and selected candidates for the posts of Senior Economist, Entomologist and Technical Development Team Leader. The Research Liaison Officer (England) and Publications Officer start next week. We are about to interview for two Social Forestry posts, a Climate Change Project Leader and an Intellectual Property Manager.
29. Martin Abraham will brief the FREB on 27 April following his attendance at the ERMS Steering Group meeting and FC Sustainability Project meeting. **Action: KC**
30. Staff Survey. XC introduced a report on progress made following the staff survey. This has been compiled from the returns from HoDs. Those HoDs who have not yet sent a return to do so a.s.a.p and, once these returns are received, XC will release the FR summary report. A number of points were raised during discussion; 'staff felt overloaded with no time for new initiatives', 'the perception that work for CFS had to be done to a 'gold standard' when this might be in excess of the need', 'staff like to have the opportunity of talking to senior managers about their science'. XC is having a staff meeting next week and is using a facilitator. She will report back to the next FREB. KC will also give feedback to the FREB on progress within his Branch. 'Staff Survey' will be a routine agenda item. **Action: HoDs, XC, KC, CH**

Agenda Item 12 – Divisional Reports

31. Divisional reports have been circulated prior to the meeting and interested staff can access them on the Intranet.

Agenda Item 13 – AOB

32. PFS reported that FC Internal Audit is coming to Alice Holt to review progress with our Quality Assurance System. **Noted**

Date of next meeting **27 April 2006 at NRS**