

**Forest Research Executive Board Meeting – 11 September 2007
NRS**

Present: Prof J M Lynch (Chair) Dr H F Evans
Dr X Christophers Prof. P Freer-Smith
Mr W L Mason Mr K N Charles
Dr Helen McKay Mr T Cornwell
Dr C Quine

Apologies: Prof A J Moffat (AJM)
Prof S Evans

In attendance: Dr David Shannon, FR Change Management Consultant
Mrs Alison Melvin (AKM),
Dr J Dutch
Dr Roger Moore

Copies to: Mrs Liz Holmes, Head of Internal Audit
Mrs Wilma Harper, Director of CFS
Mrs Ros Bull, Secretary to the Chairman

Agenda Item 1 – Introduction and purpose of meeting

1. JL introduced this item.

Agenda Item 2 – Minutes of previous meeting

2. Accepted.

Agenda Item 3 – Matters arising

3. XC to speak to Rod Leslie on 10 September and arrange dates for policy seminars.

Action: XC

4. AJM will notify FC(E) (Paul Johnson) of the names of FR's project leaders in each of the three main streams identified in the Strategy.

Action: AJM

5. An ICT Service Board has been arranged by BM for 7 November.

6. Finance Review Group: TC has produced a summary of recommendations indicating ease of implementation, by whom and priority, etc. He would like HoD comments on this. He is meeting with Keith Gliddon this month. It was agreed that the report be issued to staff on the same basis as other 'PAWG' reports by the CEO's office.

Action: HoDs, JL

7. A paper has been sent to James Ogilvie in connection with his Inventory and Forecasting review. James has responded to FR's paper and an intermediate report is expected in November. **Noted**
8. FR needs to be establishing, as the review continues, how FR might be affected by possible outcomes. PFS will open the debate by circulating a short options paper to FREB members. **Action: PFS**
9. As James Ogilvie's papers are agreed, they will be placed on a central website and as papers are being developed they can be circulated to staff. HM to arrange this through the CEO's office. **Action: HM**
10. A factual note to FR staff informing them of progress to date will be prepared and issued by HM. It will give details of the central website where papers will be posted. **Action: HM**
11. CQ raised our recent recruitment difficulties (lack of candidates for certain posts) with the HR Service Board. This will be tabled for a full discussion at the next HR Service Board. **Action: CQ**
12. CQ also raised our disappointment about not being offered access to the recently recruited management graduates. The HR Management Board will oversee future graduate deployment with a greater emphasis on communication to ensure this goes smoothly. **Noted**

Agenda Item 4 – Feedback from GBEB

13. FR should consider bidding for funds from increased timber revenue in England and Scotland to assist with the implementation of our Development Strategy. Increased revenue may be used by the Welsh Assembly for areas such as climate change, flooding and land-use. More likely to be used by the other countries for one-off capital projects rather than recurrent expenditure. **Action: PF-S**
14. JL will draft a note to go to Bangor University (Christine Cahalan) in response to the Welsh network proposal. **Action: JL**
15. A paper was presented by Michael Ansell about the Business Units and FC (Scotland) entering the hydro-power market which will rely on large investment. Renewable energy will be one of the thrusts of the Business Units. **Noted**
16. A lack of apparent speed of implementation of the FR Development Strategy is causing the GBEB some concern. JL felt that progress was being made taking into account the sensitivity of some of the areas being covered. JL feels that we are moving in the right direction but need to

ensure that progress is made with more urgency.

Noted

Agenda Item 5 – PAGs/CFS financing/PAWG Follow-up

17. Chris Quine reported on these items.
18. CFS have introduced a new project proposal template to replace ROAMES and Schedules and which will require summary financial information in support of the proposal. FR needs to be consistent in its approach to preparing the headline costing and adapt a standard form of detailed costing for retention and use in subsequent monitoring/negotiation. TC will make a Ready Reckoner available to HoDs which was developed for use in Biometrics to help them with overhead calculations. He will also make available the standard full costing model (which is already in place) with instructions as to how it is used. **Action: TC**
19. PAGs are fewer in number and broader in scope with varying degrees of fit to the Development Strategy and Divisional structure. We need to consider a mechanism that gives an FR prioritisation to our proposals. Internal processes need to be in place to filter proposals being put forward to PAGs. A more strategic view will be taken next year by HoDs and Research Director (between April and September) about proposals over £100K. PFS will consider the process as part of his role as 'portfolio manager'. **Action: PFS**
20. PFS to ensure that RSMB agrees dates for the 'PAG-FEST'. **Action: PFS**

Agenda Item 6 - Stocktake of Change Management Programme

21. DS introduced this item under the following headings;
 - Finance and Management System Review - following TC's meeting with Keith Gliddon (17-19 September) it is hoped that the recommendations can be signed off and an implementation plan agreed. Following this, items of principle need to be discussed and agreed by FREB (e.g. Divisional budgets, basis of time charging, implementation schedule, etc (see item '6' above). **Action: TC**
 - PAWGs, discussions have been held, two new centres to be established, revamp the BEC, emphasise bio security and a risk based approach to THD. Business Plans for these proposals will be costed by the following and put through the PAG system;
 - Biosecurity HM
 - Climate Change PFS

- Urban Greening AJM
22. In relation to the Woodchain PAWG, BM was asked to develop further and come forward with refined proposals in April 2008. **Action: BM**
 23. DS will draft a definition of what we expect a 'Centre' to be (or not to be) and will include; a definition of the structure, title and power of centre leaders, reporting arrangements, business plans, monitoring and review. **Action: DS**
 24. HM, BM, PFS to let XC know their timetable for centres to be launched and by whom, information to be given to staff and how publicity for the launch should be handled. **Action: HM, BM, PFS**
 25. HE will discuss the plans and timetable for bio-security integration into THD with the Visiting Group. **Action: HE**
 26. BM to convene the likely future Woodchain team to focus on the proposals and for a more narrowly defined core forest woodchain programme prior to putting proposals to the 'PAG-FEST'. **Action: BM**
 27. Little option to evolve a more modern pay and reward system in the short term outside of the FC system. KC to let HoD have details of GN10 - Loyalty and Reward staff notice. **Action: KC**
 28. Customer care, a satisfaction survey is needed for external/internal customers which will give feedback to individual researchers and which can be used to improve standards. **Action:**
 29. KC to give feedback to FREB on the skills/training KPI. **Action: KC**
 30. DS is working on areas which will help to improve efficiency. He is in contact with Jeff Livingstone regarding transport efficiencies. DS invited FR staff to email him with any suggestions they may have for improving efficiency savings. A copy of DS's presentation will be circulated to FR staff. **Action: DS**

Agenda Item 7 - TSU Service Board follow-up

31. Roger Moore presented this item and gave a brief history of why the Board was set up, its membership and achievements.
32. He made particular emphasis on TSU Procedure Note 1 (PN1), 'Commissioning work from TSU - FR Annual Work Programme' and the difficulties in implementing the procedure based on the delay in having firm budgets in place. FREB felt that the Service Board was making good

progress especially with the adoption of Procedure Notes. TC felt that the Service Board had a role to play as an arbiter between the customer and TSU with the TSU being obliged to accept the views of the Service Board. JD expressed concern about the start to the year which usually predicted a large loss which was eroded as the year progressed.

33. It was agreed that the Head of Finance be a member of the Service Board, attending when there were subjects relevant to his expertise.

Action: TC

34. FREB extended its thanks to Roger and his Service Board. **Noted**

Agenda Item 8 - Library Review/ Who We Are Brand progress and roll-out across Agency/Media Training

35. XC presented these items. The draft library report was circulated amongst FREB members for discussion at the next FREB. **Action: XC**

36. XC recommended and it was agreed that we set up a Working Group to consider the report and to come back with recommendations. XC was requested to draft terms of reference and proposed members for discussion with the report at the October FREB. **Action: XC**

37. XC to investigate whether the FC has a statutory requirement to have a Departmental Library and, specifically, what this entails. **Action: XC**

38. 'Who We Are Brand' and roll-out. XC will liaise with L&D with the plan of rolling this out on a Station-wide basis. **Action: XC**

39. Media Training. XC is organising media training on a bespoke basis. HoD to nominate members of their staff (by end September) who might be called upon to speak to the media and who might benefit from the course. Care to be taken with the timing of these course so as not to over-load staff with training ('Essential Skills for Manager' and 'PRINCE2' which are also being rolled out). **Action: HoDs**

Agenda Item 9 - Finance

40. TC reported that our forecast for 2007/08 indicates a small surplus which takes account of the reduction in CFS funding. External funding has increased which makes our target figure achievable. **Noted**

41. His report on the Financial Information Systems Working Group has been covered earlier in this agenda. **Noted**

42. Some funding remains for capital expenditure. HoD are invited to put in bids. **Action: HoD**
43. The 2008/09 planning cycle will need to get underway soon. Some uncertainties over the outcome of CSR7 funding review. A draft timetable will be circulated this month. **Action: TC**

Agenda Item 10 - Staffing

44. KC reported that our present staffing figure is 260.6 against a 2007/08 planned staffing of 270 (FTE). This should increase to 270 at end of December and fall back to 260 in March 2008. A number of successful recruitments have recently taken place and interviews are being held for 2 x Research Liaison Officers, an IP Manager, a Timber Modeller and an Economist. **Noted.**
45. Nominations have been received from HoDs and staff contacted regarding the 'Essential Skills for Managers' courses. These will be held at Alice Holt from 23 - 25 October and at NRS from 27 - 29 November. A tender for the provision of PRINCE2 project management training has been put on our website (and 23 responses have been received to date). **Noted**
46. It is intended to start the arrangements for the next round of FR Research Promotion Boards. **Action: KC**

Agenda Item 11 - Division Reports

47. Reports will be published on the Intranet.

Agenda Item 12 - AOB

48. TC asked HoDs to ensure that staff made him and Alison Melvin aware of new contract bids being submitted. **Action: HoDs**
49. New Scottish Forestry Minister (Mike Russell) wishes to visit NRS. **Noted.**
50. JD wishes to brief FREB on the Nursery Management Advisory Committee in October. **Action: CH**
51. FREB thanks Jim Lynch for all his work over the past 4 plus years and wished him every success in the future.

Date of next meeting 9/10 October at Alice Holt.