

THE FORESTRY COMMISSION ENGLAND EXECUTIVE BOARD
MINUTES OF THE 111TH MEETING
Conference Room, National Office, Bristol
5 February 2018

Attendees:

Richard Britton
Ian Gambles
Richard Greenhous
Simon Hodgson
Jo Ridgway
Mike Seddon

Jean Lindsay – for item 3
Jenny King – Minute Secretary

Apologies:

Steve Meeks

1. Welcome

Ian Gambles opened the meeting. Apologies had been received from Steve Meeks. Jean Lindsay was welcomed to the meeting for items 2 and 3.

2. Minutes and actions

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

Jo Ridgway confirmed that an update on FEE apprentices would be brought to the EEB in April 2018. Jenny King confirmed that tax management had been scheduled as an annual item on the EEB agenda.

2. Future FC implementation plan

Ian Gambles introduced the paper and implementation plan and asked the EEB for comment on the delivery structure. Ian reported that many of the work areas of the implementation plan formed part of existing projects and therefore analysis of the implementation plan was required to avoid any duplication of work. Jean Lindsay reported that the actions attributed to Central Services and FR were already included within other projects or could be handled by line manager/ FJP responsibilities. Richard Greenhous added that the synergies between projects should be maximised and key dependencies managed. The Board agreed segmenting the implementation plan by business area, FE, FS, FR, would improve the plan's effectiveness.

The Board discussed the work areas that should be led centrally. The Board agreed that Board appointments and supporting documentation should be led as one central campaign for the Forestry Commission.

The Board discussed current collaboration between FS, FE and FR and the need to communicate the importance of working together to staff. The Board agreed the need to refresh existing documentation. The Board agreed that the FC Chair should be invited to participate in the development of a working together protocol.

The Board discussed brand identity and agreed that established projects would be sufficient to address brand identity. Mike Seddon added the importance of reviewing path junctions of the work streams and the Board agreed dependencies between the business areas and brand identity must be managed actively.

The Board discussed future central corporate functions and how these roles should be split across the Director's Office and FS, FE and FR. Jean Lindsay added the need to include collective bargaining in this work area.

The Board agreed that work on the Employee Offering PID and communications would feature as additional work streams.

Jean confirmed that the closing down of current governance structures was in scope of the corporate and legal project.

The Board discussed staff resource available for project managing the implementation plan and the potential to use methodology of the corporate services establishment projects. The Board agreed business areas should utilise their existing project management experience to support Steve Meeks leading this project for FCE.

ACTION 1: Ian Gambles to draft a clear commission for the implementation for the Future Forestry Commission, for the EEB to approve.

ACTION 2: James Pendlebury and / or Jean Lindsay to attend future EEB meetings as a project board for the implementation of the Future Forestry Commission plan.

The Board thanked Jean Lindsay who left the meeting.

4. Finance Report

Ian Gambles passed on Steve Meeks' apologies and summarised the finance paper. Ian highlighted the CDEL forecast reduction as a result of the WCF, but noted that Forestry Innovation Fund resource had been recycled to make available for the following year.

Ian reported that delivery bodies were continuing to be asked for savings. FC had already offered substantial savings options to Defra but it was not yet clear whether we would be asked to go further.

The Board discussed possible savings that the FC could be asked to make and the timelines expected. It was noted that while significant savings in staff costs were undeliverable in the short term, once the 18-19 settlement was agreed business areas should begin to consider strategic options with a view to responding to even greater challenges in the next Spending Review.

5. Employee Offering

Jo Ridgway presented the Employee Offering PID and outlined the scope of the project. Jo stated that while some costs could be met through the HR budget, additional resource was being requested as part of the presentation of the PID to the Board.

The Board agreed the importance of the work outlined in the PID. The Board discussed the stage at which to engage with Trade Unions on the development of the PID. The Board agreed further work was needed to engage with FR and that greater definition was required to outline the offer proposed to FE, FS and FR. The Board agreed that additional resource would be required to deliver the scope of the project outlined. Ian Gambles stated that it would not be possible to commit to funding this additional resource until the outcome of 18-19 budget discussions was known. He would communicate a decision to Jo Ridgway at that point.

6. GDPR update

Jenny King updated the Board on developments of the GDPR project and the actions of the project board. Jenny reported on developments for staff training, staff engagement through roadshows and closer working with Defra. Jenny summarised the GIAA draft audit report (annex A), FC responses to GIAA's report as well as further areas requiring work from the project board. The Board confirmed the continuing need for an FC GDPR lead and DPO, while confirming our willingness to work closely across the Defra Group on this important issue.

Ian Gambles reported that more frequent communications to staff were required and the Board discussed ways to make communications on GDPR and staff requirements as engaging as possible. The Board discussed the need for additional resource for the project board and FC's preparation for GDPR.

Action 3: Ian Gambles to discuss resource requirements for GDPR with Richard Barker and Steve Meeks.

7. Staff Survey

Jo Ridgway summarised the results of the staff survey, completed autumn 2017. Jo reported that next steps included better aligning the staff temperature check and the staff survey.

The Board discussed the importance of a Board level action plan to sit alongside cost centre responses to the staff survey results.

Jo agreed with Richard Britton's request for more time for FS Area action plan finalisation pending receipt of suitable cost centre report from Capita to resolve issues with some Unit level reports.

Action 4: Jo Ridgway to present staff survey action plans to the next EEB.

7. AOB

The Board discussed continuing FC WIG membership and whether FC staff could continue access WIG benefits without Forestry Commission membership of WIG.

Action 5: Jenny King to confirm cost differences for FC staff to continue to use WIG without FC membership and report back to Ian Gambles who would make a decision for 2018-19.

Ian Gambles closed the meeting.