

**FR REFRESH PROJECT BOARD
NOTES OF THE 1ST MEETING HELD ON 27TH FEBRUARY 2015**

Present: Jean Lindsay (SRO), James Pendlebury, Wilma Harper, Nicol Sinclair, Simon Hodgson, Richard Greenhous, Jo O'Hara, Jim Henderson, Edward Shephard.

Apologies: Mike Cowan

1. INTRODUCTION

- Jean welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from Mike Cowan. Jean extended a particular welcome to Jim Henderson, representing the FCTU. The meeting noted and agreed that Jim's role is to feedback any early views on behalf of FCTU members but that this does not constitute any formal consultation which may be required under the ICE regulations.
- Jean reminded everyone that a preliminary scoping meeting took place in December, in order to capture initial thoughts about the scope of this project, as well as the purpose and possible future functions to be undertaken by a refreshed agency. The key points from that meeting have been incorporated into today's papers.
- Edward introduced paper 01~15 comprising the first draft of the project plan.
- The board discussed and agreed a number of changes:
 - Phase 1 of the project structure needs an additional point to agree the remit and purpose of the agency.
 - A number of changes to the stakeholder analysis were suggested; in particular the inclusion of entries for parent departments and NGOs. It was also reaffirmed that neither Welsh Govt nor NRW would be invited to join the project board (and it is an internal FC process) but that they should be identified as 'customers' in the stakeholder plan.
 - An initial risk register is required.

Action 01/15: Edward to update the project plan and recirculate for agreement.

Action 02/15: Edward to draft a risk register and circulate it for agreement.

Action 03/15: Edward to draft comms articles as per initial comms plan.

- Jo O'Hara noted that tri-section of funding is one of the topics that she will raise with the new Environment Director in Scotland. However, it is out of scope for this project as it is for one of the Administrations to start that dialogue.

2. REVIEW OF WIDER CHANGE AGENDA

- Forest Services in England: Work on the new CAP payment arrangements are progressing and several FC staff will be transferring to the RPA on 1st June. This will be followed up by a review of the FCE admin arrangements. Discussions with the CPHO on plant health are at an early stage, with one area being the options to simplify the governance arrangements across Defra. Post-election decisions on funding are likely to colour many, if not all, decisions going forward.
- FEE+: Further clarity on any future PFEMO legislation will not be available until after the General Election. In the interim momentum and progress is being maintained and work on reorganising the

head office functions in Bristol should be complete by 2016. The strengthening of the FEE+ Head Office team has resulted in an increase in costs.

- **Shared Services:** The Shared Service Roadmap has now moved to the implementation of the first tranche of projects; progress is however rather slow and work is underway across the business to strengthen the delivery plan and increase the project development capacity. An associated strand of work is now developing final arrangements to move from Service Boards to Strategy Advisory Groups.
- **Scotland:** There have recently been a number of changes to senior staff in FCS and the Environment Department and this, along with two forthcoming elections, is creating a fluid and dynamic operating environment. A new policy director for FCS will shortly be in post and this, along with increased capacity in the FES planning function, will help to progress a number of important areas of work.
- **NRW:** NRW is now reaching its second anniversary and our relationship with it remains positive and stable. A number of significant service changes are due to come into full effect at the end of March and further reductions in the scope of services are forecast for 2015/16. It was noted that NRW are active in commissioning bilateral work from FR.

3. PURPOSE OF THE REFRESHED AGENCY

- Jean introduced Paper 02~15 which aims to pick up the points from the December meeting and present these in the form of a compelling proposition for FR. The Board welcomed the paper and thanked James and the FRMB for the work that had gone into preparing it. In discussion the following points were highlighted:
 - We need to clarify the meaning of ‘technical support services’ and ‘devolved administrations’.
 - The vision needs to highlight FR’s niche USP, but without precluding its potential scope at this stage.
 - The Europe wide focus was supported.
 - It was clarified that the reference to professional training was relating to areas such as PHD’s, MSc’s and CPD.
 - The new organisation needs to be able to respond to changes in its balance of funding.
 - We need to be clearer why FR would be the supplier of choice. This relates to a having a service provider which is close enough to properly understand the needs of the FC businesses and other customers.

Action 04/15: James and Edward to update paper and circulate revised copy for agreement prior to seeking wider views around FC.

4. INITIAL ANALYSIS OF FUNCTIONS

- Jean introduced paper 03~15 which provides FRMB’s initial analysis of which of the existing CBFs might be suitable for incorporation in a refreshed FR.
- The Board noted that the analysis was based on the list of teams and activities which was drawn-up under the first phase of the CBF project. The Board discussed that it might be better if this were changed to the new ‘service’ analysis being developed for the business planning process, as this would help clarify the future requirement for functions prior to any consideration of the impact on teams or individuals. This was agreed providing that it was then possible to marry this up with costs and roles at a later stage.

Action 05/15: James, Nicol and Edward to update paper and circulate revised copy for agreement prior to seeking wider views around FC.

- The question was asked as to whether or not the economists and statisticians could be transferred to the Agency and still be a part of the wider Civil Service professional networks. It was agreed that they probably could, but that this might be an issue if the agency were then moved to one of the shortlisted models being considered by the WPEP CBF project.

Action 06/15: Wilma to clarify whether or not the economists and statisticians could be transferred to the Agency and still be a part of the wider Civil Service professional networks.

5. NEXT STEPS AND COMMUNICATION

- It was noted that it may not be possible to get considered feedback by the end of March but that there was a bit of slack around this: the important point is to be able to gather the feedback in time for the next meeting at the end of April.

The meeting closed at 11:10.