

27 June 2019

Non-Executive recruitment proposals

Purpose

1. To discuss and agree the proposed Vacancy Description, Briefing Pack for Applicants and outline plan for recruiting a Non-Executive Member of the Forest Services Board.

Recommendations

2. The Board are asked to agree:-
 - Vacancy Description and Briefing Pack for Applicants (Annexes A and B).
 - The proposed time commitment of 20 days per annum for this role.
 - Composition of the Selection Panel for this appointment.
 - Either Option 1 (advertise as soon as possible) or Option 2 (delay advertising until second half of the summer holiday period) in relation to timescales for this recruitment.
3. Additionally, the Board are asked to consider two questions raised in this paper:
 - At the meeting of the Forest Services Board on 24 April, it was agreed that diversity, geographical location and social considerations should be factored into this recruitment process. How might this best be done?
 - How can the members of the Board use their own networks to promote this opportunity and leverage maximum value?

Background

4. The Future Forestry Commission document, which set out FC governance arrangements post April 2019, states that the Forest Services Board should have at least one Non-Executive member who is not a Commissioner. There is currently a vacancy on the Board for such a member.

5. At the first meeting of the Forest Services Board on 24 April 2019 it was agreed that the role should be recruited via open competition and that the likely timescale to complete the recruitment would be approximately six months.
6. Given the skills and expertise of the current membership, the Board agreed that a non-executive member with ecological, social and/or urban forestry expertise would bring the maximum benefit and that diversity, geographical location and social factors should also be considered in the recruitment process.
7. The Forest Research Board currently have two vacancies for non-executive members who are not Commissioners. The Forest Research Board are meeting on 27 July and will agree a role specification and recruitment timescales at that meeting. Depending on timelines, the Forest Services and Forest Research recruitment campaigns could run in parallel.

Key Facts

8. This non-executive role is not regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA). This means that no ministerial approval is required and the appointment is entirely within the gift of the Forestry Commissioners. Any appointment would need to be formally approved by the Commissioners, but this could happen via correspondence.
9. A proposed Vacancy Description (Annex A) and Briefing Pack for Applicants (Annex B) are attached to this paper. These documents are based on the pack produced for the recent Forestry Commissioner recruitment campaign.
10. The proposed time commitment for this role is 20 days per annum. This is less than the commitment asked for from Forestry Commissioners, and reflects the fact that this non-executive member will not be involved in wider FC business. For reference, the non-executive member on the Forestry England Board (who is not a Commissioner) is committed to 20 days per annum.
11. The proposed Selection Panel for this appointment is Liz Philip (Chair), Fiona Harrison and Richard Greenhous.

Timescales for Recruitment

12. A four week application window is recommended by colleagues in the Defra Public Appointments Team for non-executive recruitment campaigns. The summer holiday season will start at the end of July, running until the beginning of September. To avoid an application window that sits entirely within this period and potentially limits the field of candidates who will see the advertisement and/or have an opportunity to apply, it is proposed that at least two weeks of the window sit either before or after the holiday period.

13. On this basis, there are two options in relation to timescales:

Option 1

Advertise the role as soon as possible.

Suggested application window: 8 July 2019 to 8 August 2019.

The disadvantage of this option is that availability of the panel for sifting, and of the panel/candidates for interview may potentially be limited due to the holiday period. However, under this option it is reasonable to expect that an appointment could be confirmed before the next meeting of the Forest Services Board on 3 October.

Option 2

Delay advertising the role until the second half of the summer holidays.

Suggested application window: 19 August 2019 to 15 September 2019.

The disadvantage of this option is that this would mean a delay in the process and that an appointment would not be made before the next meeting of the Forest Services Board on 4 October. The first Board meeting that the new non-executive member could attend would be 10/11 December.

A potential advantage of this option is that there may be a greater chance of aligning with the Forest Research non-executive recruitment campaign, although this cannot be guaranteed until the Forest Research Board have agreed their approach and timelines.

The Board are asked to note that the Defra Public Appointments Team recommend that the application window is limited to four weeks. This is because there is a risk, if the window is longer, that candidates start to withdraw from the process and/or request to change their applications.

Risk Assessment

14. There is a risk that potential applicants for this role do not see the opportunity due to the summer holiday period. This risk can be mitigated through selecting one of the two options above, with their suggested application windows.

15. There is a further risk that the opportunity does not reach a wide enough audience, thereby limiting the field of potential applicants. This risk can be mitigated by developing a targeted stakeholder engagement strategy to highlight the opportunity, as referenced at paragraph 20 below. Given the option, a joint

recruitment with that for Forest Research non-executives may gain a higher profile and therefore attract more applicants but this cannot be guaranteed.

16. Terms of Reference for the FS Board state that it 'may act by three of their number notwithstanding a vacancy in their number'. Given the current membership of the FS Board, there is no risk in relation to quorum if the recruitment campaign were to be unsuccessful on this round.

Equality Analysis (EqA)

17. Although no formal Equality Analysis for this recruitment has been carried out, the Briefing Pack for Applicants includes a Diversity Statement which has been cleared by the Forestry Commission's Diversity & Inclusion Manager.
18. At the meeting of the Forest Services Board on 24 April, it was agreed that diversity, geographical location and social considerations should be factored into this recruitment process. The Board are asked to suggest how this might best be done.

Communications

19. The role will be advertised on the Cabinet Office Public Appointments website, at no cost.
20. It is proposed that instead of paying for advertising, a plan is developed for highlighting the opportunity to key stakeholders and other networks. For example, amongst others, this could include FWAC networks, CONFOR and Institute of Chartered Foresters. This strategy worked well for the recent Commissioner recruitment and resulted in a strong field of applicants.
21. The Board are also asked to consider how this opportunity might best be promoted through use of the members' own networks to leverage maximum value.

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