

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

**FORESTRY COMMISSION EXECUTIVE BOARD
MINUTES OF THE 97TH MEETING
Conference Room, National Office, Bristol
3 September 2019**

Attendees:

Ian Gambles
Richard Greenhous
Steve Meeks
Jo Ridgway
Meirion Nelson
James Pendlebury
Steph Rhodes
Mike Seddon

Kate Debley - minute secretary

Paul Johnson and Julie Macnamara – for item 4, New Learning Platform for Government

Paul Johnson, Karen Moore, Richard Maddock and Tristram Hilborn – for items 5, 6, 7 and 8, Offer 2020

Rebecca Grundy – for items 7 and 8, Offer 2020

Rob Gazzard – for item 10, FC Contingency Planning

Richard Barker – for AOB, Data Protection Policy

1. Welcome

Ian Gambles opened the meeting. No apologies had been received.

2. Minutes and actions

The minutes of the meeting of the FC England Executive Board (EB) of the 21 May 2019 were agreed as a true and accurate record except for the following amendment:

Under item 5 Future Forests, the first sentence of the second paragraph should now read *'The board supported the action plan at annex 2 in principle but agreed further work was needed to confirm the scope and develop the position statement.'*

All actions were confirmed as having been discharged.

3. Update

Ian Gambles advised the Board that he and Sir Harry Studholme had had a positive first meeting with new Minister Zac Goldsmith.

Ian confirmed that the FC Chair recruitment campaign is now live and he had already had conversations with several credible potential candidates.

James Pendlebury advised the Board that Lord Gardiner would be visiting NRS on 12 September 2019.

4. New Learning Platform for Government

The Chair welcomed Julie Macnamara and Paul Johnson to the meeting. Julie presented paper 6/19 updating the Board on the launch of the New Learning Platform for Government, which will replace Civil Service Learning (CSL).

The Board thanked Julie for the paper and welcomed the launch of the New Learning Platform. There was a wide-ranging discussion in relation to the various recommendations in the paper and the following points were made:

- It was hoped that reporting/MI capability in the new system would be an improvement on the current system.
- That treatment of new starters to FC is very important. The Board welcomed the work to produce an updated new starter induction checklist.
- That further work is required in relation to health & safety mandatory learning, to ensure that this does not cut across work being done by the Health & Safety and Technical Training teams.
- As a guideline, staff should not be expected to complete more than two mandatory learning modules per year.

It was agreed that:

- Completion of mandatory learning should be included as a key objective in annual reviews, but that there should be as much flexibility as possible in relation to timings for undertaking this learning.
- The learning modules suggested in the paper at 3.3 should be designated as mandatory, except for the two Health and Safety Awareness courses for which further work is required with the Health & Safety and Technical Training teams as set out above.
- Julie Macnamara should prepare a short note to capture the discussion and set out a proposed schedule of mandatory learning to come back to the Board for approval.

Action 1: Julie Macnamara to prepare a short note capturing discussions in relation to the New Learning Platform and proposing a schedule of mandatory learning to be approved by the Board.

- [REDACTED]
- All green and amber workforce reforms (paper 2, Appendix 7) should be kept 'on the table' during discussions with FCTU about a total package of reforms.
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- The Offer 2020 project should work closely with the FCTU to try to reach a collective agreement and joint business case. Advice would be needed on the options open to the EB if agreement could not be reached with FCTU.
- [REDACTED]
- The Offer 2020 project board membership should be updated for phase 2, and governance strengthened. Ian Gambles will join the board as SRO.
- The task and finish operations group has completed its work and should now be stood down.
- The business case package, when finally agreed, must be treated as a package and there should be no 'cherry picking' by any party. The project was asked to advise the Board about these risks.

This part of the EB minutes has been redacted under Section 36 of the FOIA, because the disclosure of information it contains would be likely to prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs. If you have any queries please contact the Commissioners' office at:

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Email: commissioners@forestrycommission.gov.uk

Action 2: Ian Gambles to invite an FC non-executive to input to phase 2 of the Offer 2020 project

Action 3: Karen Moore to bring a draft business case to EB in December, including advice on any risks associated with cherry-picking.

7. Offer 2020 – Wellbeing Proposals

The Chair welcomed Rebecca Grundy to the meeting. Rebecca presented paper 9/19 outlining the benefits of the revised wellbeing offer for staff in Forest Services, Forestry England and Commissioners' Office, and providing an update on Forest Research's wellbeing plan.

The Board agreed and welcomed the principles set out in the paper. It was agreed that it is important that plans are taken forward in a consistent way across the organisation including approaches to wellbeing awards. Timing should be linked to Offer 2020 and business planning/finance availability, which was a matter for the relevant budget holders to determine not for EB. It was further agreed that any proposal for mandatory learning should come back to the Board as part of the wider schedule being prepared by Julie Macnamara as set out at item 4.

8. Offer 2020 Communications

The Chair introduced and led a discussion about Offer 2020 communications and how these should align with FCTU engagement. It was agreed that internal communications expertise should be included in the refreshed project board membership.

A question was raised about potential FOI requests from staff in relation to Offer 2020 papers and the risks posed by the release of such sensitive information before it is ready to be communicated. It was agreed that Steve Meeks would clarify this issue with Richard Barker as Data Protection Officer.

It was further agreed that Ian Gambles and Karen Moore would have a conversation outside the meeting on project communications and governance.

Action 4: Karen Moore to include finance and communications expertise in the refreshed Offer 2020 project board membership

Action 5: Steve Meeks to clarify with Richard Barker the position on FOI requests relating to Offer 2020 papers

Action 6: Ian Gambles and Karen Moore to have a conversation outside the EB on Offer 2020 communications and project governance.

9. FC Contingency Planning, Incident Management and Training Packages

The Chair welcomed Rob Gazzard to the meeting. Rob presented paper 10/19 requesting a decision on future contingency planning and incident management arrangements across the Forestry Commission.

There was a wide-ranging discussion on the recommendations in the paper and whilst the Board were unable to agree the specific proposals contained therein, they did agree the principle that this is an important issue that cannot be taken for granted and that:

- The next step is the development of an agreed PPG.
- A common strategic framework should be adopted for the whole FC and common training requirements scoped out.
- This approach may have the effect of rationalising the involvement of FR.

10. Vehicle Policies

Mike Seddon presented paper 10/19 prepared by Ian Hood and informing the Board of the current position and target for lowering the emissions from the vehicle fleet currently used on official FC business.

The Board welcomed the work being done on this issue and invited a more detailed paper later in the year.

Action 7: Mike Seddon to bring a more detailed paper on fleet and vehicle policies back to the EB later in the year.

11. Meeting schedule

The next EB meeting would be scheduled for 16 December.

12. AOB

The Chair welcomed Richard Barker to the meeting. Richard had previously circulated a draft updated FC Data Protection Policy and had received a minor amendment from Mike Seddon. However, the document had not been received by

Jo Ridgway or James Pendlebury and it was agreed that Richard would re-circulate. Subject to Jo and James's agreement, and to include Mike's amendment, the Board were happy for the policy to be adopted. Richard Barker agreed to assist Board members in ensuring that each part of the FC complied with the policy.

Action 8: Richard Barker to re-circulate draft Data Protection Policy to Jo Ridgway and James Pendlebury for clearance by correspondence.

There was a brief discussion in relation to preparation for the Tier 1 Staff Council meeting on 16 September and attendance by members of the EB. The point was also raised that the Board would need to sign off on the pay award and it was agreed that Jo Ridgway would speak to Richard Maddock about the best way for this to happen.

Action 9: Jo Ridgway to speak to Richard Maddock about EB sign off for the pay award.