

DEVELOPMENT OFFERING FOR FORESTRY COMMISSION (FC) MANAGERS

Purpose

1. To seek board approval on the final proposal and recommendations for a development programme for FC managers, as outlined at paragraph 51.
2. To agree to funds, already within budget, being used to support the initial development of the programme.
3. To outline the likely ongoing costs required beyond the design and initial roll-out phase.
4. To explain proposals about how the programme will be run.
5. Agree on the basic content of a 'commercial awareness' option.

Background

6. The FC Executive Board (EB) listened to the results of the staff engagement survey 2019, presented by the FC HR Director (HRD) on 29th January 2020. As a result, an action agreed was: "that performance management will need to be addressed consistently and collectively across the FC, potentially through a management programme. The EB asked Jo Ridgway, FC HRD to put together options for a management programme".

7. It was noted a degree of good management development has occurred over the years across all areas of the FC, resulting in a number of competent and confident managers. But this is not consistent enough.

8. The EB acknowledged that the staff engagement survey results of 2019, presented in early 2020 highlighted several areas where staff reported improvements were necessary, most notably:

- Total benefits package
- Managing workloads
- Giving and receiving feedback on performance from and to line managers
- Leadership and managing change well
- Communications across individuals and teams.

9. The EB agreed the current inconsistent approach to development across the FC was not sustainable for an organisation with ambitious plans across all three business areas.

10. On 15th December 2020, the EB approved proposals for a development programme in principle, and requested a final proposal be brought for consideration by the board.

Progress to Date

11. This paper builds on the detailed paper presented on 15th December 2020, which provided a direction of travel with vision, aims, and a broad outline of programme content.

12. Following that meeting, these have been revised, based on EB feedback - see Appendix 1.

13. The project group has developed four possible options, as at paragraph 48, for the board to consider along with a final recommendation from the Senior Sponsor and Project Group which the EB is asked to approve.

14. The project group has worked on two examples for the design of the programme. These are outlined in Appendix 2.

15. A suggested name for the programme is "The Professional Manager Programme" (PMP) with a strapline "Growing to lead".

Discussion, Proposal and Scope

16. It is the intention of the programme to provide the key practical, managerial skills required to be an FC successful manager. Essentially, getting the basics right. It is anticipated that where possible, some elements of the programme will be facilitated by internal subject matter expert staff. For example, finance, Discovery Insights and Equally Yours.

17. As a single employer, it is desirable for the FC to be consistent in its approach to management development, where management job roles are common across all parts of the business.

18. It is the intention of the programme to provide across FC, the foundations of exemplary leadership through behavioural development, as well as practical skills, using external suppliers for the majority of this delivery.

19. The ambitious programme content, as set out in the previous board paper has been revised to realistically meet managers' needs and come in against the agreed initial budget of £50,000. Therefore, the scope in terms of the programme content has been revised. The Senior Sponsor, the Project Group and Heads of HR in Forestry England and Forest Research support the recommendations outlined herein.

20. The FC is evolving and will continue to evolve over coming years. The Coronavirus pandemic has provided an opportunity to work differently creating greater flexibility. Working successfully in this changed world requires new skills and behaviours as well as strengthening of existing skills in a more remote world of work. Elements of this are being considered across the business in the Changing the Way We Work project (CWWW). Further, the England Tree Planting Programme (ETPP) provides additional scope for growth and change which new and existing managers will help shape and be supported with, via the programme. The world has changed beyond expectation in the last twelve months and the FC is preparing for the next phase. This new programme is taking account of such national and global changes to support FC managers to develop the skills and behaviours they will need to be the very best they can be.

21. As part of government's new learning offer to Civil Service departments, which went live in October 2021, bespoke learning design and delivery is now available. The provider for this is [Ernst & Young](#) (EY).

22. The EY community collaborates to combine leading academics with innovative learning providers to design and deliver engaging and highly effective bespoke learning solutions, that meet specific Department, Function or Profession learning needs.

23. EY works with organisations like [Bailey & French](#), which has a network of global associates. Bailey & French's approach is based on the latest evidence-based research, applying neuroscience to the topics they cover, for example, the neuroscience of stress and how we can harness that for resilience and dealing positively with change. They offer tailored programmes with simple but effective solutions to upskill and enable.
24. The Project Group has had initial, without prejudice, conversations with EY and Bailey & French. These are two training providers available for us to access without the need to undertake a formal procurement exercise. This is because they are part of the Civil Service Learning Framework. Their expert guidance, knowledge and experience thus far, working with the Project Group, has resulted in the two options outlined in Appendix 2, page 9 - 10.
25. The programme's format will see a blended learning approach, including online, face to face (once permitted), self-managed networking group development and self-managed learning. The programme will provide for a bespoke approach which will allow subtle tailoring to suit the differing needs of the businesses across the FC. This should not detract from the one FC cultural programme approach.
26. In order to support the self-managed networking groups and self-managed learning, it is anticipated there will be a need for an additional member of staff in soft skills training/facilitation. This would be an FC wide resource with location and grade to be determined in due course. For costings purposes the role is likely to be a pb5/4. Their role would be to support self-managed groups to get set up and settled, offering facilitation and a degree of coaching. Further, the role would lead the Discovery Insights and Equally Yours elements of the programme.
27. The modular approach proposed, will establish a core set of elements and allow signposting to other specific learning activities which may not be appropriate to all managers. Some of these may be delivered by other suppliers, for example Civil Service Learning (finance, commercial and project management), ILX Connect (Project Management), Futurelearn (Procurement training), or other internal teams.
28. The project group will consider the pros and cons of accreditation of the programme at a later stage, in discussion with the appointed supplier.
29. The programme is aimed at all FC line managers at Pay Bands 3 to 5. New line managers promoted internally will be given priority. These currently number around 350 colleagues. Access to certain role-appropriate modules for line managers from Pay Bands 1 and 2 and also 6a may be permitted subject to need and available funding. The calculations are worked on an assumption that 300 line managers will requiring training as the programme may not be necessary for all.
30. Agency staff, Senior Civil Servants, volunteers and external contractors are not included and are therefore out of scope.
31. The work on continuous improvement (currently PMS) is a separate OD project.
32. **Financial Awareness Training** is now considered outside the scope of this project and the Project Manager is working in parallel with the three Finance Directors, Steve Meeks (FC Finance and Corporate Governance Director), David Hodson and Meirion Nelson to provide appropriate support in the development of a separate finance training package. This will have core elements for all managers and bespoke elements suitable to managers in each part of the business.
33. **Project Management Training** will be an optional element which the programme will signpost managers to investigate, as appropriate to their particular job role. The Project Manager is working with the Forestry England Project Management Office and with Defra, to identify key learning which may be accessed (some of it free of charge), with time set aside within the programme for suggested learning.

34. **Commercial Awareness Training** will be an optional element which the programme will signpost managers to investigate, as appropriate to their particular job role. The Project Manager has identified various options of training available (some of it free of charge), which can be accessed, and time has been allocated in the programme content for suggested learning. EB is invited to clarify exactly what they want to see on a commercial awareness training module. Commercial awareness varies considerably between organisations. In order to deploy the best module, this paper asks for EB input.

35. The project group believes this gives the programme the best, most flexible and cost-effective way of achieving the original aim of offering a comprehensive development programme to all line managers.

Resource implications

36. An initial budget of £50k is set aside in the HRD's budget for early work in this area. This has gone unspent to date, due to delays in commencing the project because of Covid-19.

37. It is expected the initial budget will cover the costs of the external supplier supporting the final design and development of the programme, a communications approach and the initial roll out phase.

38. The anticipated investment in our managers and leaders, based on our current work with EY and Bailey and French for the options set out in Appendix 2 are as follows:

- Total investment 2021/22: **£53,100**:
- Total investment 2022/23: **£71,445**
- Total investment 2023/24: **£71,445**
- Overall investment: **£195,990**.

39. This does not include any costs for delivery of:

- Discovery Insights (approx. £60 per head),
- Financial training
- Project management and
- Procurement training
- Commercial awareness

The expectation is that some elements of these will be delivered internally complemented by additional learning which is available from external sources some of which are a low cost or free of charge.

40. The project group suggests travel and subsistence costs (if/when required) will need to be budgeted for from team budgets, unless, in order to track/monitor spend, the business wishes to set up a separate budget cost centre for associated programme costs.

41. Additional costs for any face-to-face events (hotels, equipment, catering etc) will also need to be considered and accounted for when the likely delivery plan is known. Year one is not expected to see hotel accommodation required due to the ongoing pandemic and unknowns regarding the virus implications for the workforce.

Risks and Challenges

42. The risks of not adopting this proposal are that the FC is seen as failing to act upon feedback from staff in the 2019 staff engagement survey and subsequent pulse surveys. The FC also risks lower levels of productivity and employee engagement. Improvements to decision making through a more effective leadership culture, as well as retention of staff, nurturing future leaders and improving its reputational capital as an employer of choice, may be at risk.

43. A challenge will be to support leaders in adopting new ways of working, where they remain resilient, inclusive and support diversity and are confident to challenge inappropriate behaviours. Diversity, inclusion and fair treatment of all staff is written large throughout the entire programme. This approach will support critical ongoing initiatives such as Women in Forestry and support the FC's determination to be an inclusive and engaging employer.

44. The prevalence of Covid-19 has impacted the type of development programme planned. There is a small risk of participants being unable to commit to the programme due to future Covid-19 unknowns. This may impact the aims and outcomes of the programme.

45. The suppliers of elements of the programme may be adversely impacted by as yet, Covid-19 unknowns, in respect to absence. This may impact the timelines and delivery of the programme.

46. Some delivery costs and other ongoing costs are not yet fully known. Whilst any development spend at this challenging time must be carefully considered by each business area, investment in this area has stalled over recent years and must now be considered essential for business growth.

47. Risks associated with the specific options outlined, are included in para 48 below.

48. Further risks from the business case may be reviewed in Appendix 3.

Options for EB to consider

No	Option	Risks	Comments
1	Do nothing	<p>Fail to deliver what staff have asked for in staff surveys and feedback for the business</p> <p>Managers/leaders not developed, with impacts on culture, succession and workforce planning as well as managers being unable to grasp the benefits of CWWW.</p> <p>Staff may leave</p> <p>Low morale</p> <p>FC reputational damage and loss of business growth</p>	<p>Not a real option, but would save money</p> <p>Alternative options may be identified</p>
2.	Develop and deliver the programme internally	<p>Time required to do this means we would fail to deliver a timely response to feedback</p> <p>Expertise to deliver this may not be available or where it is available it may not have capacity to engage fully</p> <p>Staff may leave</p> <p>Low morale</p> <p>Managers/leaders development delayed, with impacts on succession and workforce planning</p>	<p>More cost effective</p> <p>Would have to buy-in some expertise to support development</p> <p>Need to recruit soft skills trainers to deliver the programme internally</p> <p>Staff may not consider it a 'real' programme of development if delivered by those they know</p>
3.	Deliver the suggestion outlined in this proposal working with CSL Framework suppliers	<p>May not offer best value for money</p> <p>May not understand our culture sufficiently</p> <p>Attendees may not bond with external trainers</p> <p>C-19 may impact availability of external trainers and our staff</p>	<p>Timely response – can be set up within 3 or 4 months if required</p> <p>Supplier offers high quality development options, has experience of this type of training and skilled, experienced facilitators</p> <p>Blended approach can be developed to integrate other elements of training our managers/leaders need</p> <p>Known/respected across CS</p>
4	Go out to tender in open market for a supplier	<p>Takes more time and resource to organise large tender exercise</p> <p>Loss of momentum and need for change is now</p>	<p>Offers a greater choice</p> <p>May be able to get better value for money</p>

		May not identify the best fit for our organisation Delays start of roll out considerably	
--	--	---	--

Conclusion

49. The FC enjoys a cadre of committed line managers who demonstrate a range of managerial expertise. However, evidence and feedback from staff, and from line managers themselves, indicates a lack of confidence and competence in a range of people management techniques for some. Many cite a need for assistance in communicating appropriately, creating conditions where they and their staff may thrive within the organisation and beyond. Also highlighted is the need for greater skills around emotional intelligence, resilience, change, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing. The alignment to Changing the Way We Work and supporting managers in working efficiently and effectively within increasingly flexible and blended working practices is also significant.

50. This revised programme and suggested approaches will address these elements, which are critical for individual and organisational development and success, through an inspiring, tailored development offering.

Recommendations

51. The Project Group believes that the recommendations set out below are the most appropriate approach to the successful delivery of a programme to meet the identified development needs for managers across the FC. The Board is invited to approve these recommendations as follows:

- a) To agree to undertaking the approach identified in option 3 in paragraph 45
- b) To sign off the revised vision and aims for the programme as set out at Appendix 1
- c) To agree to the use of an initial available budget of approximately £50,000 for EY and Bailey & French (the supplier), to be appointed through direct appointment as opposed to a competitive tender, to support the final design, delivery model, communications approach and initial roll out of the programme.
- d) To approve the proposed name of the programme as at paragraph 14
- e) To agree to fund the recruitment of a full time FC HR soft skills trainer to support the running of the self-managed networking groups and to support the delivery of Equally Yours and Discovery Insights (DI) training (so we have a nominated resource for this)
- f) To agree to allocate £4,000 to train the soft skills trainer to be a DI Practitioner
- g) To agree to allocate £5,000 to train another 5 - 8 facilitators to include the soft skills trainer and four other internal colleagues, to support the delivery of Equally Yours.
- h) To agree the Leadership Development Manager will continue to work with internal teams from Finance, Project Management Office and Procurement to develop these elements of the programme to meet business and manager needs.