

12 September 2022
TITLE: CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE FC
1. Purpose

Interviews with a range of senior stakeholders, showed that the current method of delivering leadership and management learning and development opportunities for PB3 and above, including Senior Civil Servants (SCS), is inconsistent. This paper outlines the current approaches, issues and risks. It proposes a selection system which is open, transparent and fair to select colleagues for master's level learning and other development opportunities.

2. Recommendations

EB members are requested to agree:

2.1 The creation of an FC-wide strategy for talent management and development. This will include:

2.1.1 An analysis of the gaps in the leadership knowledge, skills and abilities within the business and identification of possible ways of addressing these gaps

2.1.2 The development of an FC-wide system to enable open, fair and transparent selection of individuals based on their potential and the needs of the business for master's level learning and other senior leadership and development opportunities

2.1.3 Agreement of the number and type of sponsorships required per year and an appropriate budget as outlined below:

Development type	Max Number	Average Cost per person	Total proposed budget
Masters Level qualification	6	£27,000	£162,000
Leadership development programme eg CSL Future Leaders Scheme	4	£12,000	£48,000
Other development programmes eg Women in Leadership	10	£5,000	£50,000
Grand Total			£260,000

2.1.4 Agreement of appropriate paid and unpaid absence for attendance, revision and examinations

2.1.5 Centralised management of the process within the OD team. This will ensure an open and fair selection process along with advice on the range of opportunities

available to suit the needs of the individual and the business

2.1.6 Identification of and agreement on the resource required to implement a talent management strategy.

3. Background

In recent years, whilst there have been many opportunities for senior leadership development across the three arms of the business, there has not been a fair, transparent and consistent approach to how these are accessed. There is not a robust and auditable process for applications and there is no approach to training needs analysis for leadership and management training and development within the Commission.

This means there is scant reliable management information about who is or has been able to access opportunities, with the additional risk that colleagues may leave the FC to develop and progress their careers. Taking this in the context of our current pay scales (which in some cases are not competitive, when compared with pay across the industry), this may have a serious impact on our talent retention and succession planning at the most senior grades.

Further, there is no assessment about whether the development being accessed is right for the individual or the organisation. We need to have a means to measure and understand a return on investment for the business and the individual.

4. Discussion

4.1 Scope

The grid below outlines what is in and out of scope for this paper:

<p>What is in scope?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership development offered by CSL for senior leaders • Access to qualifications such as MBAs • Coaching and Mentoring • Leadership and Management development including apprenticeships • Guidance and transparent approval processes to access development in a fair and open way across FC • An FC central budget to fund the learning
<p>What is out of scope?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All specialist workforce development and training • Induction process and procedure • Talent identification e.g. 9 box grid/similar • The FC Professional Manager Programme • Discovery Insights and other personality assessment tools • Succession planning • Workforce development • Forestry Apprenticeships – L6 – Managed by FS, L3 Managed by FE HSTT • Educating the wider forestry sector

What is out of scope?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist skill sets • Other programmes – for non-managers at PB 3, 4 and 5 as highlighted by PMP • Institute of Chartered Foresters and other professional memberships except where they may offer leadership and management training.
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4.2 Key issues identified

4.2.1 Access to development opportunities

We need to consider if the right people have access to the right opportunities and development at the right time. To date because of a lack of processes and governance around senior leadership development, it is unclear if this has happened. Moving forward we need a process which allows the right people to be highlighted for such opportunities.

Following interviews with key stakeholders and anecdotally across the business, the current picture is as follows:

4.2.2 Forestry England and Forest Services

- There is no clear system and no agreed method of allowing colleagues access to development programmes or further education at master's level
- there is no way of formally and consistently recording who is accessing development opportunities, although some colleagues in Forestry England are currently undertaking an MBA
- Forestry England has developed a Continuing Professional Development PPG linked to them being an Apprenticeship Employer/Provider. This has not been used or formally launched and could be adapted and used as part of the guidance for FC CPD. See Appendix 1
- some colleagues may use the learning module on the HR system (iTrent) to record qualifications, learning and memberships. The approach is inconsistent as not everyone records this information. Data can be accessed centrally if we wish to see the learning and qualifications currently recorded on the system.

4.2.3 Forest Research

- Learning records are retained by the HR team on their budgets/HR system which is updated once a qualification is concluded. Details of those on degree apprenticeships, PhD sponsorships and MPhil/MSc are outlined in the FR report "Forest Research – CPD in FC- Current Picture" in Appendix 2

- The HR team has built a career and development hub on the intranet with links to the CS professions and career paths. Further development on the hub is ongoing
- FR has a clearly defined approach to further education sponsorships and has produced guidance for this at Appendix 3. This could be adapted and used as part of the guidance for CPD across the whole FC.
- There are some historic records of developmental activities on the HR system though these may not be up-to-date. Completion of the PMP is now recorded.

4.2.4 Management of L&D budgets

The budgets for L&D activities across the three business areas are managed as follows:

4.2.5 Forestry England

- All L&D budgets are held at unit manager (FMD or equivalent) level. The budget spend on all external training, which excludes all health, safety and technical training provided by the Forestry England HSTT team is as follows:

21/22 Spend: £276,242

22/23 YTD spend: £46,919.

- This includes a very wide range of training, development and qualifications for staff at all levels. Further detail can be provided on a longer time frame if required.
- There are a few exceptions (e.g. PMP is centrally managed/costed and is cross-charged out on a pro rata headcount/attendance basis to Forestry England, Forest Services and Forest Research.)
- FE HR has on occasion funded MBA qualifications, but this is an exception
- There is no budget set aside for formal qualifications, and if funded then it is either from an underspend from a non-ringfenced budget (like NCF) or a compensating reduction, for example a cut against an existing requirement.

4.2.6 Forest Services

- Funding is not an issue when it comes to supporting L&D and there is a general learning and development budget held and managed centrally

- Cost centre managers have access to training and other budgets. This allows them to decide to support any development outside the central training budget and programmes
- Professional development including undertaking a master's is approved by heads of teams and not paid for from the FS central L & D budget
- FS receives its funding from Defra. See Appendix 6 page 18 for further details.

4.2.7 Forest Research

- In Forest Research there is a general L&D budget for all staff and training budgets in each of the centres. See Appendix 2 for further details.

4.3 Supporting and developing our senior leaders of the future

To support motivation, engagement and retention of our best talent we need to ensure a level playing field where all staff are enabled to take responsibility for their own professional development. This may be through encouraging and paying for professional memberships, something we do well and by ensuring staff and managers are aware of developmental opportunities available. Examples of these, which provide some good quality development options through reputable business schools and training providers are:

[Leadership College for Government](#) provides access to good quality developmental opportunities and programmes for senior leaders at pay band 3 and above including [Leadership and Management Apprenticeships](#)

[Government Campus online](#) is the front end of Civil Service learning and offers a wide range of development programmes for leaders and managers at all levels

[Career Frameworks linked to the Civil Service Professions](#) help staff to understand their profession better and provide a career framework with suggestions for development.

5. Resource implications

5.1 Staffing

The FC OD team will provide sufficient resource to implement the recommendations from this paper.

5.2 Central Budget for senior leader development

The typical cost of a good quality, affordable MBA programme in 2021 ranges between £18,300 and £33,000. Online MBAs offer much lower costs between £4,000 and £14,500 per year. See Appendix 4.

The cost of CSL and other leadership development programmes such as the Future Leaders Scheme aimed at pay bands 1 and 2 is around £12,000.

Other considerations are:

- cost of travel and subsistence
- cost of absence from work for studies, revision and examinations
- the potential impact on individual and team productivity and
- covering duties of participants during any absence.

5.3 Reasonable absence for taking part in developmental activities

The EB will need to agree what is considered reasonable paid and unpaid time to undertake developmental activities so this can be documented in the guidance. The suggestion for this is as follows:

- 5.3.1 Time will be allowed to attend the formal taught or facilitated elements of any developmental programme (either online or face-to-face)
- 5.3.2 Up to 5 paid days leave will be allowed for any necessary revision
- 5.3.3 Paid leave will be allowed for any examinations or assessments including apprenticeship end point assessments
- 5.3.4 Reasonable unpaid leave to be agreed with line management on request.

6. Risk Assessment

Risks and mitigations are outlined in appendix 5.

The main risk is that colleagues may leave if we do not have clear processes which allow access to leadership and management development opportunities for PB 3 and above. In turn this may impact on our ability to grow as a business.

Furthermore, if a centrally managed process and budget are not implemented, this increases the risk of unfair and inconsistent approaches to how development is accessed and allocated. This is because development may be encouraged and supported by some leaders in some parts of the business and may not be seen as important by others. This may lead to staff becoming disengaged, unable to progress and reach their full potential and to them leaving the organisation for better opportunities elsewhere.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment, if required, will be undertaken at an appropriate stage as the recommendations are progressed.

8. Communications

A comprehensive communications plan will be developed as the recommendations from the paper are implemented with clear information available in news stories on the respective business's intranet pages and being incorporated into the appropriate pages for future reference. This is what we currently say about [funding L & D](#) on Roots for FE/FS staff.

Communications need to be clear about what colleagues can expect from the development opportunities available. They may also include presentations at Senior Leadership Group meetings and MS teams calls to promote the new approaches.

9. Conclusion and next steps

This paper has outlined current approaches across the FC on access to CPD including master's level and above qualifications for colleagues at pay band 3 and above and made recommendations for improvements.

We anticipate that the outcomes following the EB discussion, agreement and subsequent implementation of the recommendations will lead to a fairer, more transparent system for our staff, focussed on the needs of the three business areas.

The next steps are to discuss and agree the recommendations and decide on how these will be implemented. By effecting the recommendations, the EB will have a clear system in place to understand the investment being made in individuals and the business in the future and a fair and open system will be in place to support CPD for senior leaders across the FC.

Name and Title: OD Leadership Development Manager.

Date:02/09/22