

**FORESTRY COMMISSION EXECUTIVE BOARD
MINUTES OF THE 2024 STAFF SURVEY RESULTS
via MS Teams and in Bristol Conference Room
29 August 2024**

Attendees:

Richard Stanford (Chair)
Anna Brown
Amanda Grist
Tristram Hilborn
Derrick Osgood
James Pendlebury
Steph Rhodes
Paula Rice
Mike Seddon
Interim Chief of Staff (observer)

DJS research
Organisational Development Manager
Julia Lovell – minute secretary
Head of Organisational Development

1. Welcome and introductions

Jo Ridgway sent her apologies.

The Chair opened the meeting and thanked everyone for their engagement with the staff survey. This session is to talk about the results and what action to take on the focus areas. It was noted that while pay is a top concern for staff, there are other findings that also need consideration by the Board.

2. Staff survey results

DJS research briefed the Board on results of the survey and suggested four focus areas for action.

- Inspirational leadership

The Board briefly discussed what ‘Inspirational Leadership’ means in the Forestry Commission.

It is possible that as the senior leadership programme (SLP) is still in its infancy, there is a delay for improvement in this indicator. The Board also noted that it would be challenging to inspire staff who have been in post for a prolonged period of time and have been through several changes in the organisation. This is especially underlined by that the results around satisfaction with pay and benefits. The Board briefly covered that we can do more to communicate the benefits of working for FC to staff but this is unlikely to inspire someone who has a long tenancy in post. The Board agreed that this result is likely to be underpinned by the work on change management.

- Change management and direction

The survey results show that most staff, apart from in the top pay bands, consider change management is not done well in the Forestry Commission. The EB discussed this result and the challenge of pinpointing why this might be the case so that it can be addressed. The Board agreed to look at drilled down results by teams and areas.

- Workloads

There is a split by grade in the way staff perceive their workloads to be manageable. The Board agreed that more information would be helpful, including by length of service, areas and teams.

- Pay and benefits

The Board noted that the proportion of staff who agree that they receive fair pay and benefits for their role is at the lowest since the survey began. However, there is also a noticeable split that those who have been in post for less time are more likely to be satisfied. Without more information it is unclear whether the over-riding factor is that newer staff have better awareness of the market and so better information of the benefits package could alleviate some of this, or that the growth in dissatisfaction is through the lack of pay progression in post.

Overall, the Board agreed on next steps. Each area will get their own results, and work out if there are any cross-FC themes that need to be addressed together. The Board can then consider FC-wide staff survey action plan at the November meeting.

Action 1: DJS to provide survey data by length of service and age.

Action 2: OD to provide heatmap data, cost to departments of PMP and SLP, to overlay with the survey results by team and area.

3. AOB

- Pay negotiations

Mike Seddon outlined the pay negotiations schedule to confirm pay remit in October 2024. The Board endorsed the lines previously worked up for this period.