



Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) Executive Team Meeting

20 January 2021

Attendees:

Simon Hodgson, Chief Executive (Chair)
Donna Mortimer, Head of Finance and Procurement
Trefor Owen, Director of Land Management
John Mair, Director of Estate Development
Graeme Hutton, Director of Business Services
Andy Hunt, Regional Manager (West)
Graeme Prest, Regional Manager (North)
John Thomson, Regional Manager (East)
Carol McGinnes, Regional Manager (Central)
Sallie Bailey, Regional Manager (South)
Michael Hymers, Director of Corporate Services
Gwen Hamilton, Head of Communications, Marketing & Media
Rosetta Forbes, Head of People and Organisational Development
Rhondda Salmond, Secretariat

Others:

Helen McKay, Chief Forester for Scotland – Observer
Jo Ellis, Head of Environment and Planning (Item
Jason Liggins, Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing (Item 9 and 10)
Vince Donaldson, Head of Digital Service Delivery (Item 9 and 10)

1. Minutes of last meeting 22 Dec 2020

The Executive Team (ET) agreed that the record of the 22 Dec 2020 was held to be a true and fair reflection of the meeting.

2. Action Points and Matters Arising

Ref:	Action:	Who:	Target Date:
4/10	Head of People and Organisational Development to present People Strategy Action Plan infographics/dashboard to ET when developed.	RF	17 Feb 2021
6/10	Director of Corporate Services and Head of People and Organisational Development to consider any staff communication requirements in relation to managing staff capacity/workloads in addition to what has already been planned.	MH & RF	15 Jan 2021

Ref:	Action:	Who:	Target Date:
3/12	Head of People and Organisational Development to develop draft People Survey action plan and present to ET at future date for agreement and implementation.	RF	17 Feb 2021
1/01	ET members to ensure the Finance Team are notified of any external or additional funding allocations to ensure the BMR accurate.	All	17 Feb 2021
2/01	Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager to circulate H&S Improvement Plan to ET members.	JL	17 Feb 2021
3/01	Director of Business Services to review Business Continuity plans to ensure they are adequate in relation to cyber security and potential business impacts.	GH	17 March 2021

Action Points 1/12, 1/11, 1/12, 2/12, 4/12, 5/12 and 6/12 are discharged.

3. Chief Executive Update

Simon Hodgson advised that Scottish Government (SG) continue progress towards achieving a settled budget position, including anticipating Brexit settlements.

Mr Ewing, Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Tourism continue to praise the efforts of staff and the wider organisation. He recognises the requirement to build resilience over the coming years, including climate change challenges, commitment to biodiversity and forest expansion.

Simon reiterated the need to continue to recognise and remained focussed on supporting staff health and wellbeing, particularly if restrictions are ongoing. Efforts of the ET need to remain positive and focussed on leading our staff.

He also welcomed Helen McKay, Chief Forester for Scotland to the meeting, highlighting that she will be attending the ET occasionally throughout the year in her new role.

4. Chief Forester for Scotland

Helen McKay, Chief Forester for Scotland provided an overview of her role, highlighting the three key areas of:

- Provision of professional forestry advice to Scottish Ministers, including Mr Ewing
- Head of Profession for the forestry sector (public organisations), and
- Promotion of professional forestry across the public and private sector.

She outlined a number of key priorities, including the impacts of policy on carbon/climate change and understanding professional development in the agency.

5. Finance Update (Q3)

Donna Mortimer presented the Q3 financial position, highlighting that the net cash forecast at Q3 stands at a £8.7 deficit; after non cash adjustments i.e. depreciation, the forecast accrued deficit is £12.2m.

£3.6m of the deficit relates to New Woodland Investment Programme (NWIP). Leaving a deficit of £5.1m after non cash adjustments. After taking into account the agreed ASL of £15.2m the forecast net cash surplus of £7.5m reported at P8 has increased to £10.1m at the end of December, representing a £2.6m.

Michael Hymers also advised that the Cabinet had recently met to discuss allocations of funding, including Annual Subsidy Limits (ASL). Fiscal assessment will need to be undertaken before confirmation of the final budget, which is expected to be published on 28 January 2021.

Provisionally FLS has been allocated £37.54m, including monies for increased staff costs, capital for the Newton Nursery Project and NWIP.

AP1/01: ET members to ensure the Finance Team are notified of any external or additional funding allocations to ensure the BMR accurate.

6. Climate Change Action Co-ordination

Jo Ellis presented a report to describe the current situation in FLS with regard to climate change legal requirements, identify gaps and propose a way forward.

She outlined that Action to mitigate against climate change is a key component of the Scottish Government's aim to create a growing, sustainable and inclusive economy. From an FLS perspective there are three main areas on which we need to focus:

- Setting targets for achieving net zero greenhouse emissions including use of forestry and land to increase carbon sequestration opportunities, to help SG reach a target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045;
- Adapting the economy, society and environment to the changing climate;
- Ensuring that the public sector body is taking a leadership role, aligning its spending plans and resources to meet the climate change emission reduction targets and the additional reporting requirements.

The ET agree the proposed co-ordination arrangements and outline programme plan to meet our climate change requirements.

7. Health, Safety and Wellbeing (H,S&W) Update

Jason Liggins advised that work was ongoing to complete the H&S Audits across the business, including a programme of work with Internal Audit (IA) leads.

The H&S Improvement Plan was now complete, and work had been undertaken to integrate details in to the People Promise.

AP2/01: Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager to circulate H&S Improvement Plan to ET members.

The HS&W Team continue to engage with and gather feedback from the business on the development of H&S roles and responsibilities, including engaging with Safety Committees on employee involvement.

Efforts remain on ensuring compliance for Covid-19, including adapting to new legislation, ensuring guidance and materials are up to date, and ongoing support for staff wellbeing.

Online training and webinars have been secured to support staff health and wellbeing. There are 75 places at the moment, but if successful this could be expanded and rolled out further.

8. Emerging Risks

Rhondda Salmond presented the corporate risk register, providing an outline of new risks and changes to existing risks during the period.

She highlighted that the corporate risk register continues to reflect organisational progress for mitigating restart and recovery activities in relation to Covid-19 and other potential political, economic and market impacts, i.e. Brexit, etc.

The ET discussed the corporate risk register, highlighting one new emerging risk in relation to cyber security following SEPA's systems being hacked.

AP3/01: Director of Business Services to review Business Continuity plans to ensure they are adequate in relation to cyber security and potential business impacts.

9. AOB

John Mair provided the ET with an overview of the "Forest Footsteps" campaign that had been launched earlier in the week. The aim is to encourage staff to continue to remain active during the winter period and ongoing restrictions through collectively undertaking activity equivalent to the length of all trails across all our forests

The date of the next ET meeting is 24 February 2021.