



Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) Executive Team Meeting

23 Sept 2020

Attendees:

Simon Hodgson, Chief Executive (Chair)

Trefor Owen, Director of Land Management

Andy Hunt, Regional Manager (West)

John Mair, Director of Estate Development

Graeme Prest, Regional Manager (North)

John Thomson, Regional Manager (East)

Michael Hymers, Director of Corporate Services

Gwen Hamilton, Head of Communications, Marketing & Media

Rosetta Forbes, Head of People and Organisational Development

Sallie Bailey, Regional Manager (South)

Graeme Hutton, Director of Business Services

Julie Ketley, Area Land Agent (Central Region)

Rhondda Salmond, Secretariat

Apologies:

Carol McGinnes, Regional Manager (Central)

Donna Mortimer, Head of Finance and Procurement

Others:

Jason Liggins, Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing (Item 4)

Charlie Taylor, Strategic Planning Manager (Item 7)

1. Minutes of last meeting 25 August 2020

The Executive Team (ET) noted that an informal meeting was held on 25 August 2020 and no minutes were produced.

2. Action Points and Matters Arising

Ref:	Action	Who	Target Date
1/12	Head of HR and Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing to consider options to enable duty of care requirements for capturing that people lone working have arrived safely at work.	RF	22 Oct 2020
3/05	Head of L&D and L&D Pipeline Chair to develop and circulate L&D Pipeline Terms of Reference to ET for agreement.	MH & AM	22 Oct 2020
4/05	Head of L&D and L&D Pipeline Chair to develop and circulate L&D Pipeline comms outlining approach and	MH & AM	22 Oct 2020

Ref:	Action	Who	Target Date
	how to submit requests to the panel for consideration		
1/09	Head of People and Organisational Development to consider options and timing for staff pulse surveys.	RF	22 Oct 2020
2/09	Ongoing restrictions for vehicle sharing to be clarified by the Head of H,S&W and circulated to ET members.	RF	22 Oct 2020
3/09	Director of Corporate Services and Head of H,S&W to consider next phase of staff communications, including messaging from the ET focussed on mental health and wellbeing.	MH & JL	22 Oct 2020
4/09	ET members to provide feedback on any additional requirements or enablers to support the approach to flexible working.	All	22 Oct 2020

Action Points 3/06, 1/07, 2/07, 3/07, 4/07, 5/07, 6/07, 7/07, 1/08 and 2/08 are discharged.

3. Chief Executive Update

Simon Hodgson advised that Scottish Government (SG) continue to focus efforts on Covid-19 following the introduction of a new phase of restrictions. There is ongoing consideration of the impacts as we move in to the winter period in anticipation of increased cases of colds/flu.

He recognised the ongoing support requirements for staff working from home, particularly with increased restrictions. Work will continue to draft appropriate guidance and training materials to support staff and managers.

The ET discussed options for considering regular pulse surveys to monitor staff morale and impacts in relation to the ongoing situation. It was felt that to reduce potential “survey fatigue” this may better introduced following completion of the annual People Survey which was due to go live in a few weeks, and to be focussed on sample groups of staff at regular intervals.

AP1/09: Head of People and Organisational Development to consider options and timing for staff pulse surveys.

A discussion followed on restrictions around vehicle sharing, particularly in response to new guidelines, how enforcement will be monitored and reminders issued to staff. Details will be circulated confirming if the new guidance is relevant to business or private vehicles.

AP2/09: Ongoing restrictions for vehicle sharing to be clarified and circulated to ET members.

Simon advised that Fergus Ewing, Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Tourism continued to recognise and thank staff for their efforts during the current circumstances.

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

Jason Liggins advised that the HS&W Team were continuing to work with business leads on Covid-19 workplace checks, and noted good levels of compliance. Undertaking checks will be an ongoing challenge, particularly monitoring during periods of ongoing restrictions.

Internal Audit have now completed the H,S&W audit report for the audits undertaken in 2019/20. The report is a fair reflection of our management systems, recognising the complexities of the organisation. Details will be presented to the ET in Oct 220, including proposed actions in response to recommendations.

In the last month there has been one accident involving a staff member who fell from height when a ladder rung broke. Fortunately the staff member was not seriously injured, and a reminder will be issued to inspect all equipment for any damage before use.

The H,S&W Team are continuing to engage with HSE on HAVS to ensure our approach is compliant.

Continued focus remains on supporting mental health and wellbeing initiatives. A webinar and materials linked to World Suicide Day was very well attended and has received positive feedback. A recording of the webinar will be made available for those staff who were unable to attend.

AP3/09: Director of Corporate Services and Head of H,S&W to consider next phase of staff communications, including messaging from the ET focussed on mental health and wellbeing.

5. Flexible Working Update

Rosetta Forbes presented a paper seeking input and agreement on options and enablers to support flexible working arrangements across the organisation.

She highlighted that once HR had a clear understanding of the supported approach to flexible working going forward then additional work would be undertaken regarding feasibility, including costs, digital needs, dependencies with Smarter Working principles, etc.

The ET discussed the options and enablers, reflecting that there needs to be an adaptive approach to ensure requirements support the business needs at a national, regional and local level. However, in principle they agreed the options and enablers presented.

AP4/09: ET members to provide feedback on any additional requirements or enablers to support the approach to flexible working.

6. 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 and agreed there were no additional emerging risks for consideration or inclusion. The corporate risk register will now be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) the following week as part of assurance requirements.

7. Project Next 100

Charlie Taylor presented an update on the project which aims to provide understanding on how our overall approach to managing national forests and land will affect economic, environmental and social benefits far into the future.

Forest Research have been commissioned to develop an ecosystems services model that will provide predictions of implementing approved Land Management Plans. From this baseline we can model future requirements and impacts, including carbon storage, biodiversity, timber resources, recreation, etc.

The ET discussed progress to date, including how this sits alongside our strategic requirements and long term financial sustainability.

8. Moving Towards Financial Sustainability – Next Steps

Simon Hodgson and John Mair provided the ET with feedback from the FLS Strategic Board, where the progress on the development and implementation of the Business Sustainability Action Plan (BSAP) was discussed.

The ET then discussed how requirements from the BSAP would form a key component of activities for inclusion in Annual Financial and Business Plans. This would underpin communications and discussions with staff on new ways of working at a national, functional, regional and local level.

9. Reducing Organisational Bureaucracy

The ET held an open discussion to consider opportunities to reduce organisational bureaucracy.

It is recognised that that a lot of our organisational processes inherited from the Forestry Commission in administration and operational areas are either out of date, over complicated or duplicated. As we are now in our second year of operation as FLS, it seems timely that we undertake a thorough assessment of all of these to ensure that we are better able to achieve our mission and objectives.

A working group will be established to map processes to help understand the scale of this work, and options presented to the ET later in the year for consideration and prioritisation.

10. Performance Management System (PMS) – Standard Setting

The ET discussed and agreed proposed mid-year performance ratings for staff within their direct management hierarchy.

11. AOB

- **Engaging the Bystander Training** – Rosetta Forbes advised that a virtual training session was in the final stages of implementation, supported by e-learning for all staff. A specific session for the virtual training will be delivered to ET members on Oct 2020. Details will be circulated as soon as possible.

The date of the next ET meeting is 29 Oct 2020.