

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FORESTRY COMMISSION SCOTLAND MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING, SILVAN HOUSE, EDINBURGH ON 15 AUGUST 2007

Attendees:

Bob McIntosh
Simon Hodge
Paul Snaith
Hugh Insley
James Simpson
Jean Lindsay
Jo Ellis

Also attending:

Rebecca Carr (item 9)
Nicol Sinclair (item 10)
Dominic Driver (item 11)
Zoe Laird (item 12)
Allan Tanner (item 13)

1. RECORD OF THE MEETING ON 12 JUNE

Jean noted a correction to the minutes of the previous meeting regarding a review of Fixed Term Appointments. In fact, a workforce review is underway, of which FTAs were a part. Subject to this change, the note of the meeting on 12 June was agreed as a true record.

2. MATTERS ARISING

- Regarding information to staff from the Staff Survey Steering Group, it was agreed that the end of this year (Nov/Dec) would be the time for a **communications round** including meetings around Scotland for all staff and involving senior staff and trades union representatives. This would cover SEARS, spending review and staff survey.

Action Jean

3. Exempt from publication, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Action 2000, Part 2, Section 35(b) – ‘Ministerial communications’.

4. Exempt from publication, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Action 2000, Part 2, Section 43 – ‘Commercial interests’.

5. SECONDMENTS

Bob noted that the Executive is keen to have secondees from FCS, particularly into John Mason’s climate change and flooding group, and that there are opportunities to bring Executive people into FCS.

6. HEADS OF SECTIONS REPORTS

The Section Heads briefly reported on several issues including:

- Planning permission has been granted for the development at Glentress (Hugh).
- Timber receipts are continuing to hold up (Hugh).
- Carron Valley Development Group members are submitting large numbers of FOI requests. We may need to use cost or ‘vexatious requests’ provisions to refuse answers to these questions (Paul). **Agreed that a meeting be offered to CDVG.**
- Exempt from publication, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Action 2000, Part 2, Section 22 – ‘Information intended for future publication’.
- Contingency and transitional options for SRDP were in development with woodland creation scheme having been launched (James).

- There were some difficult cases in progress, including a grant reclaim going to arbitration and a felling licence which FCS is minded to refuse (a subset of the local RAC will be asked to decide) (James).
- Hugh Clayden is co-ordinating our response to Foot and Mouth Disease (Simon).
- There had been a dynamic and positive first meeting of the woodfuel taskforce with six working groups having been established (Simon).
- Bob Perrett will join us for six months to provide support on crofting and rebranding the whole community partnership approach (Simon).
- We are planning to take part in an environmental quality and flooding summit where will seek to demonstrate how woodland can help vulnerable catchments (Simon).

Action Paul/James

7. Exempt from publication, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Action 2000, Part 2, Section 43 – ‘Commercial interests’.

8. Exempt from publication, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Action 2000, Part 2, Section 35(a) – ‘the formulation or development of government policy’.

9. Exempt from publication, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Action 2000, Part 2, Section 22 – ‘Information intended for future publication’.

10. Exempt from publication, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Action 2000, Part 2, Section 35(a) – ‘the formulation or development of government policy’.

11. SFS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Zoe reported progress with the SFS Implementation Plan, highlighting areas where progress was slower than expected. Regarding the milestone “Secure time in the legislative programme for amendment of forestry legislation to enable...lease of national forest estate land for woodland management.”, **Bob asked Simon and Dominic to develop a line-to-take to explain why this is no longer a priority.** Bob said that he considered this first Implementation Plan to be a valuable learning exercise. **Zoe agreed to report back in November.**

Action Zoe/Simon/Dominic

12. HR UPDATE

Jean explained proposals for diversity training. The board accepted Jean’s recommendations, noting that cost centres would meet the costs from their own budgets.

13. Exempt from publication, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Action 2000, Part 2, Section 35(a) – ‘the formulation or development of government policy’.

14. PUBLISHING FCS INFORMATION ON THE SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE WEBSITE

Allan explained his proposals for publishing FCS information on the Scottish Executive website once the ‘Rural, Farming and Fishing’ section has been produced. Bob said that he saw forestry pages as an entry into the FCS site including lots of links to items on our website. He hoped that it would be possible to make a seamless transition between the two sites. **Simon agreed to gather the information which would be required on the web page, which Allan would then organise into a format to fit the Executive’s template.**

15. A.O.B.

- It was agreed that the **RFF chairs should be offered a 10% increase in their annual payment.**
- Jo asked for the board's advice on organising a Scottish Forestry Forum meeting. Simon said that the purpose should be to review progress with SFS Implementation, and to start developing the three year Implementation Plan. The date should be during November.
- Exempt from publication, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Part 2, Section 35(b) – 'Ministerial communications'.

16. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be 12 September 2007 at the S. Scotland Conservancy office in Dumfries.

Jo Ellis
20 August 2007