**SCOTTISH FORESTRY EXECUTIVE TEAM**

**Minutes (Approved)**

**Tuesday 23rd November 2020**

**SET Attendees: In Attendance:**

Dave Signorini (Chair) Marelle Dalziel (MD)

Brendan Callaghan (BC)Marliese Richmond (Minutes)

Alan Hampson (JH) Bridget Holtom

Jonathan Taylor (JT) Jason Liggins

Ross MacHardie (RM)Victor Vickers

Rosetta Forbes (RF)

John Dougan (JD)

**Summary of action points**:

| **Ref:** | **Action** | **SET Lead/Staff Member** | **Target Date** | **Status** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| AP 65/August | MD and AH to work together to develop detailed mentoring proposal.  | MD/AH | Jan 2021 | Ongoing |
| AP 69/October | BC/RMcH/AH to work together to identify other legal requirements and undertake procurement exercise.  | BC/AH/RMcH | Jan 2021 | Ongoing |
| AP 71/October | Update mitigation actions for top 2 risks in Strategic Risk Register, and review ideas and feedback from Eleanor Ryan and wider AAC. | JT | Jan 2021 | Ongoing |
| AP 72/October | Update EDI with feedback from Corporate Plan consultation, Trade Union comments, and action around increasing opportunities at more senior level and enable more diversity | MD | Jan 2021 | Ongoing |
| AP 74/October | Clarification on updated legislation around FGS | BC | Dec 2020 |  |
| AP 75/October | Project Plan for development of sustainability reporting will be submitted by correspondence. | MR/JT | Dec 2020 |  |
| AP 76/October | Change budget total in staffing report to actual budget of £8,430,000 | MD/RMcH | Jan 2021 | Ongoing |
| AP 77/October | Arrange additional SET meeting in December to focus solely on staffing | JT | Dec 2020 |  |

**1. Minutes and actions of previous meeting**

The minutes were approved. The action points and matter arising from the last meeting were discussed.

* AP 65/August – MD and AH still to work on mentoring proposal
* AP 68/October – Good progress on identifying options for managing extensive areas of  *P.ram* with FLS.
* AP 69/October – Option of re-entering an arrangement with FLS not possible. BC/RMcH/AH to work together to identify other legal requirements and undertake procurement exercise.
* AP 70/October – Job Evaluation Grading is being undertaken, outcome due by Christmas.
* AP 71/October - Strategic Risk Register has been updated and presented to AAC. RMcH to pass on feedback to JT/MR, including specific ideas from Eleanor Ryan. Need to identify mitigation actions for top 2 risks.
* AP 72/October - Feedback from Corporate Plan consultation still to be fed in to EDI, as well as action around options to increase opportunities at more senior level and enable more diversity. Awaiting feedback from Trade Unions. To be standing item on SET agenda.
* AP 73/October – AH and JT working on stakeholder mapping.
* AP 74/October - Legislation was lodged on 20th November. This downgrades the risks around lack of legislative basis for grants scheme. BC to clarify details.
* AP 75/October – Project Plan for development of sustainability reporting plans, policies and criteria – will be submitted by correspondence.

The minutes were approved.

**2. iTrent: Functionality overview and annual leave (A/L) change proposal**

Steven Grant (HR Change and Improvement Manager) presented a paper on the functionality and requested a decision on a change to the way that annual leave is processed by SF.

The two key elements of the paper highlighted:

1. Inconsistent and unfair practice around the amount of Annual Leave some flexible working staff are getting.

2. Unnecessary complexity – The annual leave year operates April to March whereas public holidays operate January to December.

To address these issues, the proposal is to calculate annual leave in hours from 21/22 and align the public holiday leave and annual leave years.

After discussion around the pros and cons of changing the way annual leave is recorded from days to hours, it was decided that:

* SET would support the change from recording A/L from days to hours, with a preference for both public holidays and A/L to run April to March.
* SET will support consultation with trade unions and with staff.
* It was noted that this will be an important first step towards improving systems within SF, including integration with flexi time.

**3. Wellbeing Update**

Bridget Holtom (Well-Being Advisor) and Jason Liggins (Head of Health Safety and Wellbeing) provided an update on activities taking place around wellbeing.

The good work which has been taking place recently was acknowledged, including:

* The messages in the staff briefings and DS’s videos;
* Webinars run on a variety of topics based on staff feedback, including bereavement, suicide prevention, mens health, menopause, financial management;
* Sessions being run in Conservancies, on topics such as tools to address stress and how to have better conversations on mental health and wellbeing.

Feedback from staff on these initiatives have been very positive.

Discussions among the SET meetings highlighted that:

* It is essential that we are mindful of the long term impact of Covid. We need to make sure we are alive to people’s mental health and wellbeing, and look to ways of keeping our messaging around this fresh and relevant.
* We are still at an early stage on this journey. We need to help managers and staff who feel out of depth in this area. We need to target and develop new support for staff who are reluctant to engage with formal mechanisms.
* As an organisation, we need to acknowledge that some staff feel they have unreasonable workloads; and particularly inexperienced staff find it difficult to cope with the demands made of them. Where stress factors around workloads can be addressed, this should be done through reprioritisation. For those staff/teams for whom the volume of work can make them feel they are constantly failing to deliver, they need to be assisted to see that they can break down their tasks and that they are delivering what matters, so that they have a sense of achievement.

**4. Staffing implications of changes to immigration rules**

Victor Vickers provided a verbal update on forthcoming changes to immigration rules from 1st January 2021 with EU Exit, and what this may mean for staffing. It was clarified that:

* Current staff from the EU can apply for settled status. Their confirmation should be sent on to HR, and no other action is required.
* For non EU staff, as long as their visa is valid, no other action is required.
* EU/non EU staff will be made aware of the actions they need to take and the support networks available to them.

A paper is to be circulated to SET laying out these changes, and the options available to SF in terms of future recruitment.

**5. HR Staffing Information**

Points highlighted included that:

* More people being recruited are between roles at the moment, so reduced lead in times to start dates.
* Over the year, SF has added 11 posts – we are expanding as an organisation and moving people from contract roles to permanent posts
* Report needs to reflect list of vacancies awaiting approval – SET needs sight that these posts exist and how much they will cost.

Actions agreed:

* Budget to be changed to actual budget of £8,430,000.
* Arrange additional SET meeting in December to focus solely on staffing. As well as discussing specific posts coming forward, include in the discussion what we need to achieve the 18,000ha target; and whether our posts are constructed in such a way that is attractive to people?

BC put forward Requests to Recruit:

* Ops and Development Manager - South Scotland Conservancy. This was approved.
* Operations and Regulation manager - Grampian Conservancy. This was rejected, as it was felt there could be other better options – BC to discuss with James Nott.