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| SF_col_landscape_logo | Strategic Advisory Group |

MINUTES of SCOTTISH FORESTRY STRATEGIC ADVISORY GROUP

1. 23 March 2022, Teams Meeting

**Present:**

Dave Signorini (Scottish Forestry Chief Executive)

Eleanor Ryan (Non-Executive Committee member)

Phil Taylor (Non-Executive Committee member)

James Stuart (Non-Executive Committee member)

Alan Hampson (Head of Standards Evidence & Expertise)

Zahid Dean (Head of Operational Services and Transformation)

Jonathan Taylor (Head of Scottish Forestry Executive Office)

Doug Howieson (Head of Operational Delivery)

Helen McKay (Chief Forester for Scotland)

**Apologies:**

Ross MacHardie (Head of Finance and Business Support)

**Summary of actions**

* **Action:** *Future discussion on improving the capacity and skills in the forest sector, with a specific focus on improving woodland creation applications, their development and submission. For SAG discussion later in 2022. HM/DH*
* **Action:** *Future working arrangements discussion at next SAG meeting. JT*
* ***Action:*** *To share draft versions of the Business and Corporate Plan with SAG. JT*

**1.** Welcome from Dave Signorini, Scottish Forestry CEO

The Minutes from the last meeting were agreed, with one update to the previous actions point 5, para 1 to correct the year date to 2022.

No declarations of interest declared which impacted on the agenda. PT noted a new directorship which has been updated on his register of interests.

ER noted that the non-execs would welcome a more detailed discussion on finances, in particular cash management, forecasting and multi-year planning. It was agreed that this would be raised at the upcoming Audit and Assurance Committee.

HM raised the issue of capacity building within the sector, the skills of applicants, in particular to how to improve the quality of woodland creation applications, improving the end to end process to complete schemes and claims. Agreed that this would form a session at a future SAG, possibly later in the year.

**Action:** *Future discussion on improving capacity and skills in the sector, with a specific focus on woodland creation applications and their development and submission. For SAG discussion later in 2022. HM/DH*

**2.** DS gave an update and reflection on current issues and recent meetings with Scottish Ministers. The issue of future working arrangements (hybrid working, return to offices etc.) was raised and agreed to bring an update to the next meeting.

**Action:** *Future working arrangements discussion at next SAG meeting. JT*

**3.**  **Shaping the approach to the next Framework Document, Corporate and Business Plan**

JT presented an outline the approach and timetable for developing next Framework Document, Corporate and Business Plans. The group fed back points, key points included:

**Corporate Plan**:

* Look to engage Ministers early and identify their expectations to shape the style and outcomes.
* Reflect the progress which has been achieved and the continuous improvement, as opposed to a focus on hard targets.
* The CP has the ability to be more confident and set out our ambitions/improvements.
* Hold onto the good work to develop SFs brand, culture and values, but where possible making it a positive and confident outward looking document (the BP can be more useful for internal purposes).
* Recognise that the wider forestry sector is changing and need to position ourselves correctly within the sustainable land use debate. In addition how we articulate our commitment to and delivery of wider SG priorities around e.g. NetZero, Just Transition or community benefit.
* Recognition that the current suite of KPIs are not balanced and reflective of the business. They need to be updated/reviewed as part of the CP process, and also clearly link to allied work, especially the Target Operating Model.

**Business Plan**

* Recognise that current plan is not a document that can be easily used on a day to day basis. Look for opportunities to communicate or place key parts of the plan into staff’s routine work – through updates, dashboards, within performance management.
* It should be focused on an internal staff audience, enabling them to prioritise their work. The narrative is still very much an emphasis on our values, improvement and delivery.
* It needs to clearly show how the various processes, programmes and governance structures are linked and what they do; staff need a clear view on where their work fits - this will be an evolving piece regularly updated.
* The structure can be shorten and needn’t be ‘over produced’, focus on its application.

ER also noted that the Public Bodies Unit is consulting on the model templates for Framework Documents; JT agreed to make contact with PBU to have sight of any updated versions.

Agreement to reflect on the feedback and share draft versions with the group when available, likely to autumn for the CP.

***Action:*** *To share draft versions of the Business and Corporate Plan with SAG. JT*

**4. Scope of the new Improvement and Delivery Programme and update on progress with the Scottish Forestry-wide Target Operating Model** – Zahid Dean

ZD presented a paper outlining the scope of the new Improvement and Delivery Programme and an update on progress with the Scottish Forestry-wide Target Operating Model.

The group thanked Zahid and his team for the work done in a short space of time.

The group discussed a number of points:

* The scope of the TOM: how the SLA arrangements would be incorporated (either if delivered by FLS or other providers). The SLA is not within scope, as the resource taken to deliver that would dominate the programme. Separate work is underway to discuss the transition of the SLA and that would identify the specific resources/systems required.
* ZD also clarified how elements, once finished/delivered transition out of improvement into BAU.
* The group noted whether there was any targeting or prioritisation of activities? ZD noted that it may be possible, but at this stage the TOM development it wasn’t possible to set that out.
* DH noted that the future Forestry Grant Scheme project was not within scope and the risks and rationale for that, however it was noted this could change, and would take account of the outcome of the review of the FGS enhancements.

**ENDS**