**SCOTTISH FORESTRY EXECUTIVE TEAM**

**Minutes (Draft)**

**Tuesday 20 July 2021**

**SET Attendees: In Attendance:**

Dave Signorini (Chair) Claire Blakely (CB)

Alan Hampson (JH) Bob Frost (BF)

Jonathan Taylor (JT Helen Mackay (HM)

Ross MacHardie (RMacH) Esther O’Neill (EO)

Doug Howieson (DH)

**Apologies:**

Rosetta Forbes

Marliese Richmond

Marelle Dalziel

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

DS welcomed everyone to the meeting. The action points were updated and the pervious minutes were agreed.

**2. Standing Item – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

**EDI Action Plan Review and Equalities and Diversity Mainstreaming Reports:**

* DS and MD have looked at the EDI plan and the majority of the SMART objectives have been completed.
* Agreed to refresh the action plan, emphasising how people can make a difference; to be done in second half of 2021.
* End of By-stander training; really positive feedback from staff. Agreed to consider how to have refresher training and link to our Values. Also ensure that new starts have the training.

*AP22/July: DS & MD to refresh EDI Action Plan during second half of 2021.*

*AP23/July: DH & MD to look at on boarding material to see how By-stander training is available for new starts.*

*AP24/July: JT to discuss with comms about highlighting how staff have used or real life examples our Values and By stander training in action.*

**3. Standing Item – Budget and Staffing Information**

The SET had a general discussion around on-going recruitment exercises and the jobs market. The group then had an exchange on how teams are coping with work pressures and their capacity. Acknowledgement that considerable work has been done to build capacity and progress posts, but shouldn’t lose sight that although wider Covid restrictions are easing, pressures are still a very live issue in teams. The SET agreed to keep this under review and provide support to those teams were there are significant gaps.

In particular the group discussed the pressures within the Operation Development and Transformation team. DS noted the appointment of Zahid Dean as the new Head of Op Dev and Transformation, but that some of vacant posts in the team would have to be filled before he starts in October.

Agreement that the Improvement Programme need reviewing and refreshing when Zahid starts.

MD to update the recruitment tables and do a stock take of all the approved posts as part the Business Plan and include these in future updates.

DS also noted the intention to build more time for leadership development for the SET and we’d discuss how to incorporate this into the meetings.

*AP25/July: DS to send Claire the job spec for the Head of Digital.*

*AP26/July: MD to update the vacancies document and undertake a stock take of where each post is in the recruitment process.*

**Budget and Outturn Update**

RMacH spoke to the paper which set out the high-level budget and outturn position as at 30 June 2021.

The SET discussed the issues raised including:

* The pressure on the tree health spend. DH noted the budget is nearly all allocated on the tree health grant, with expected grant applications and claims still to be made in the current claim year.
* It may be possible once other grant monies and claims have become clear to manage a reallocation. However DH did emphasise the woodland creation costs are higher this year.
* AH confirmed that £0.4M spend on tree health does not include any grant support associated with tree health, so that would be an additional pressure to be recorded.
* CB noted that should be no difference in budget associated with proposed pay deal.
* DS noted the saving identified and pressures within the business. It was agreed that it was worth providing advice to the Minister on how Scottish Forestry was going to manage its savings and the implications of that.

*AP27/July: Ross to work with Dave about preparing advice for the Minister regarding the SG budget revision and saving exercise.*

4. DELEGATED FINANCIAL AND PURCHASING AUTHORITY POLICY – APPROVAL OF REVISED FINANCE SUPPORT VISITS

RMacH talked to the paper and the recommendation to seek the approval on the proposed scope, format and content of revised Finance Support Visits within Scottish Forestry.

The SET welcomed the proposals and approved the proposal for the implementation of Finance Support Review’s which will help enhance and strengthen the organisation’s assurance and governance processes.

**5. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SECOND FORESTRY STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (2022-2025)**

BF presented proposed process and timeline to develop the second Forestry Strategy Implementation Plan (IP) (2022-2025).

The SET had a discussion on the proposals:

* Agreement that the Forestry Strategy is not open for revision.
* Agreement on the proposed timetable, and to be framed around actions and deliverables.
* Need the right balance of incentives and push for stakeholders who haven’t delivered on their actions. The National Stakeholder Group meeting will be a useful starting point to raise this.
* It will be able to pick up some of the actions from the PfG, and consider how we take a ‘team Scotland’ approach.

The SET thanked Bob for his work, and noting the comments above agreed with the proposed process and timeline to develop the second IP 2022-2025.

**6. New approach to probation policy**

EO presented thepaper to update on the new approach to probation and share the outcomes of the business engagement process. The paper sought approval of the new probation policy and adoption of iTrent prior to Trade Union consultation.

The SET discussed the paper highlighting:

* The need for a culture change when using the policy, in that it should work for both sides (staff member and manager).
* Agreement that probationers can apply for jobs.
* Six months is a sensible time period to judge performance.
* Agreement that SF is content to use i-Trent for probation.

The SET thanked Esther, noting the above, agreed with the paper’s recommendation and no further changes were suggested for the policy.

1. 7. FUTURE APPROACH TO SUPPORTING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN SCOTTISH FORESTRY

This paper had previously been circulated by correspondence by John Dougan; agreement had not been reached and was therefore tabled again.

The SET discussed the issues raised, in particular:

* The rationale for a centralised ‘core’ team managing the skills development for the organisation, versus delegating this to local teams.
* Overall the SET agreed the proposed approach to central coordination.
* However the issue of where the proposed posts sit and how they interact with other parts of the business, the Improvement Programme, L&D and HR. Therefore the role and responsibilities of the new posts couldn’t be agreed.

The SET agreed that the before signing the recommendations off it needed more analysis. To help inform this HM would meet with Peter Scallon (Head of L&D) and come back to SET with proposals.

*AP28/July: Claire to share the SET paper on the future approach to L&D in Scottish Forestry with Peter Scallon, and seek feedback.*

*AP29/July: Helen to meet with Peter and discussion the issues the paper raises. The papers/feedback would come back to the SET for a decision.*

**Next Meeting:**

17 August 2021