**Forestry and Land Scotland Strategic Board Meeting**

| **Date of Meeting**  | Wednesday 21st August 2019  |
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| **Time**  | 10.30am  |
| **Location**  | Boardroom, 4th Floor, Silvan House  |
| **Attendees**  | **Present:** * Simon Hodgson, Chief Executive (Chair)
* Graeme Hutton, Director of Business Services
* Michael Hymers, Director of Corporate Support
* John Mair, Director of Estate Development
* Mark Pountain, Non-Executive Advisor
* Lisa Tennant, Non-Executive Advisor
* Pamela Zielinski, Non-Executive Advisor

**In Attendance:** * Rosetta Forbes, Head of Human Resources
* Linda McKenna, Corporate Development Officer
* Donna Mortimer, Head of Finance and Procurement

**Apologies:** * Trefor Owen, Director of Land Management
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#  1. Welcome

Simon Hodgson welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Graeme Hutton, Director of Business Services who had recently joined the organisation. Graeme provided information on his career to date, having moved from Scottish Government.

# 2. FLS Priority Work Programme

Simon Hodgson delivered a presentation outlining some of the current issues and challenges for the organisation. He advised that the Scottish Government was awaiting information on the Westminster Spending Review. Due to Brexit it was unclear yet if it would be a one year or three year review. This could potentially have implications for the forthcoming Programme for Government, due to be announced on 3rd September and Scottish Government Budget, usually put forward in December.

Simon also provide information on the Climate Emergency Declaration by the First Minister and some of the actions that FLS have put forward for inclusion. It was highlighted that there is lots that FLS is already delivering that helps mitigate climate change, but for this to expand or increase additional funding would be required. Following discussion by Board Members on the various mitigation actions that could be taken, such as an increase in renewables, planting targets and facilitated public tree planting, Simon agreed to speak to Jo O’Hara, CEO of Scottish Forestry, and Kate Higgins, Special Adviser to Mr. Ewing, to find out if there are any planned activities to encourage a citizens approach to tree planting.

**AP 1/08: CEO to liaise with Jo O’Hara and Kate Higgins to identify any actions planned to develop a citizens‘ approach to tree planting.**

Brexit was highlighted as another challenge facing the organisation. Simon highlighted some of the steps being undertaken within the organisation to prepare for all eventualities, including having staff on standby to help wider Scottish Government. Rosetta Forbes also advised that each Scottish

Government Portfolio is setting up a response centre, staff from FLS had already volunteered to work in the Coastal and Rural Operations Centre.

In responding to a question about the percentage of EU nationals employed by the organisation, Rosetta advised that figures from May 2019 show that there were approximately 50 people, who were clustered in nurseries. The HR Team has been helping EU Nationals with their applications for Settled Status. Michael Hymers advised that there may however be a bigger impact on the organisation as many FLS contractors employ EU Nationals. Rosetta addressed a query in relation to contingency plans and also advised that there is already an issue for the industry in attracting staff with the required level of skills. As such the issue of ‘Seed Supply’ has been added to the FLS Risk Register.

Discussion continued on various forthcoming issues for the organisation including the Programme for

Government. Simon advised that the three asks FLS would have for Scottish Government were around Peatland Restoration; expansion of the national forest and land; and more renewables. In responding to a query in relation to communications, Michael Hymers agreed to share the draft Communications Strategy with the Non-Exec Advisors.

**AP 2/08: Director of Corporate Services to share the draft Communications and Marketing Strategy with the Non-Exec Advisers.**

Following discussion it was agreed that a Chief Executive Update would be shared with Board members in advance of future meetings. It was also agreed that information on Health and Safety would also be shared with the Strategic Board in advance of future meetings

**AP 3/08: Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services to prepare and circulate a Chief Executive Update note to Board Members in advance of future meetings.**

**AP 4/08: Report on Health and Safety Accidents and Incidents to be shared with Board Members in advance of future meetings.**

# 2. Investing in our Current and Future Workforce

Rosetta Forbes provided a presentation outlining issues in relation to developing the FLS HR service and further investment in the workforce. She advised that the main focus in recent years had been around ensuring a smooth transition to the new organisational arrangements. Under the Forestry

Commission arrangements, the HR service had been somewhat confined by processes that had to work for Scotland, England, Forest Research and Central Services. However, following transition a more bespoke service can be developed and delivered including development of a new People Strategy and participation in the Civil Service People Survey. Regarding timelines for publication of the People Strategy it was suggested by non-exec advisors that this be aligned with the timing of the availability of the results of the forthcoming People Survey. Rosetta agreed to share the results of the 2017 FC People Survey with Board Members.

**AP 5/08: Head of Human Resources to share the results of the 2017 People Survey with Board Members.**

Rosetta advised that work was also taking place in relation to culture change. Details of the approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, the Fair Work Framework and also the expected benefits of the new HR Management Information System were shared and then discussed by Board Members. It was agreed that Rosetta would share details of the Fair Work Framework.

**AP 6/08: Head of Human Resources to provide Board Members with a copy of the Fair Work Framework.**

# 4. FLS Corporate Plan

Linda McKenna delivered a short presentation outlining the steps and process taken in developing the draft Corporate Plan. This included development of the FLS vision and mission, moving to an outcomes based approach and public consultation on the draft plan. Board Members welcomed the plan, in particular the articulation of the Corporate Outcomes in relation to the Forestry Strategy and National Outcomes and offered some suggested changes to improve the document. Following discussion around the audience for the Corporate Plan, it was agreed that any final comments should be provided directly to Linda.

**AP 7/08: Board Members to provide Linda McKenna with any final comments/suggested changes for the Corporate Plan before 27th August.**

# 5. Finance Update

Donna Mortimer presented information on the funding and finance for FLS. This included information on the current picture in relation to Income, Annual Subsidy Limit (ASL), Reserves and Forecast Spend.

Donna also provided information on the plans for procuring a new Finance System and how this would address current challenges in relation to managing financial information.

# 6. Summary and Reflections

Simon Hodgson summarised the main points, his reflections on the meeting and the value of the advice shared by the Non-Exec Advisers. Following discussion on the planned site visits in September, Michael Hymers agreed to send further information on all agreed dates of future meetings to Board Members.

**AP 8/08: Director of Corporate Services to email all Board Members to confirm future meeting dates.**