



MINUTES OF THE FORESTRY COMMISSION TRADE UNIONS' DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22ND APRIL, FL1 RM4, IN SILVAN HOUSE, EDINBURGH

Present:	Robert Beaney	FCTU Chair
	Allan MacKenzie	FCTU Secretary
	Lorraine Adams	Prospect
	Tim Gill (by telephone conference)	Unite
	Mary Irvine	FCTU Silvan House
Minute Secretary	Sam Telford	FCTU Office

1. Introduction

Robert welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. Robert said that it was Allan's first Departmental Committee meeting as FCTU Secretary and Tim's last meeting as Unite's lead representative.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Roy Laird.

3. Minutes of 18th February 2009

The above were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. Managing Discipline

Robert referred to the Disciplinary Procedure papers circulated prior to the meeting and said that HR had asked for the FCTU view on the revised documents. Allan said that the documents had taken a new format similar to Operational Guidance Bulletins (OGB), which will be familiar to operational staff but added that non-operational staff may not be comfortable with the format. The group agreed that the FCTU will need to ensure that the procedure is clear and understandable for all staff. Allan emphasised that it was vital that the new procedure benefits members and that will be part of the process of and that there are clear opportunities for representatives to feed into the process.

The committee discussed the content of the papers in detail and concerns were expressed that the documents contain many links and therefore are designed to be read on a screen and that this could be a problem as not all staff have access to a computer. It was also not clear how the new procedure would be rolled out and if there would be any training involved. Allan advised that he would write to HR to ask these questions and suggested that Lindsay MacPherson was invited to a Departmental Committee meeting in the near future to discuss the policy. He also said that would ask HR to review and provide an update on how well the new policy is working in 2010.

Action Required: Allan MacKenzie

Following further discussion, it was agreed that the new policy serves to provide all sides with clearly defined roles and responsibilities and the group welcomed the change in format.

5. Pay 2009

Allan reported that Civil Service unions were continuing to maintain a dialogue with the Cabinet Office to take forward suggested solutions that will provide fair, equitable and affordable pay for hard pressed Government employees. He said that this led to unions awaiting the outcome of the new Treasury Remit Guidance for 2009, which sets out the criteria for Departments when bidding for money to meet their running costs and paybills. Allan advised that the Treasury Remit Guidance was issued on March 31st 2009 and as the FC is a non-ministerial departmental, their remit must be reviewed and approved by HMT.

Allan said that the remit guidance is very clearly in that any existing multi-year deals can not be reopened under any circumstance, meaning that the imposed pay award is safeguarded and there is no possibility of any further negotiation. However, Allan added that if the FC can identify extra efficiency savings that meet the criteria set down by HMT then those are treated as an 'ADD ON' to existing remits or multi-year deals. It was noted that if the FC were to identify efficiency savings they must apply to the Treasury before the deadline of May 30th 2009. Allan felt that the FCTU needed to ask the FC is they are prepared to investigate efficiency savings, in particular from using fewer consultants and it was agreed that Allan would write to HR to ask this question.

Action Required: Allan MacKenzie

6. FCTU Strategic Issues Programme

Allan referred to the FCTU Strategy paper, the purpose of which was to follow up on the previous papers produced in 2006/2007 and as a result of a meeting in August 2008. The papers proposed a Strategic Issues Programme for the FCTU Council which is now no longer in existence, and Allan stated that the programme will therefore revert to the Departmental Committee. He said that the emphasis was for the FCTU to become more proactive as well as reactive in its approach to the work of representing members.

It was noted that the aims of the programme are to:

- Refocus the strategic direction of the FCTUDC by increasing the emphasis on pro-activity
- Demonstrating delivery on members' concerns
- Adding value to union membership thereby promoting membership within the FC
- Adding value to the FC

Allan proposed that the Departmental Committee will:

- Manage the programme, project manage the programme and prepare project papers.
- Look at each project and agree who should be the lead representative in taking responsibility for there delivery.
- Monitor and manage progress at the FCTUDC monthly meetings.
- Report to the FCTU AGM on progress against the programme.

Allan said that if the programme is approved then this will lead FCTU towards agreed policy, and an action plan on all major issues. This will allow FCTU to present proposals, in detail to members and aid in our discussions with FC management rather than just reacting to actions promoted through the FC HR Department.

The committee discussed each element of the strategy in detail, agreeing on timetables, constraints and priorities. The following timetable for key work areas was agreed:

Priority 1 Key Work Area 2009/2010	Priority 2 Key Work Area 2010/2011	Priority 3 Key Work Area 2011/2012
Threats to the Forest Estate	Performance Management	T&S Allowances
Communication	Training of Union Representatives	Harmonisation of Leave Years
Harassment & Bullying	Work/Life Balance	Pay
Occupational H&S Reps		Modern Apprenticeships
Efficiency Programmes		FCTU Profile & Relevance
Recruitment of New Members		
Absence Management		
Area Committees		

The committee thanked Allan for his hard work in preparing the strategy. Allan said that the FCTU Strategic Issues Programme will be a standing item on the agenda for each monthly Departmental Committee meeting.

7. Staff Benefits

The item was deferred to the next meeting.

8. Facility Time Agreement

Allan advised that there had been minor changes made to the Facility Time Agreement and it was noted that the agreement now contained details of the grading of FCTU posts.

9. Scottish Climate Change Bill

The item was deferred to the next meeting.

10.AOB

There were no further items to be added to the agenda.