

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF FORESTRY BUSINESS UNITS STAFF COUNCIL
THURSDAY, 1 MARCH 2007 - MES HEAD OFFICE STIRLING**

Trade Union Side

Bruce Hamilton, FCE, PCS (TUS Sec)
Gavin Queen, FCE, Prospect
Lawrence Villa, MES, T&G
Eric Williams, MES, T&G
Jamie Brown, FCE, Prospect
Paul Bullock, MES, T&G
Roy Laird, MES, GMB
Alistair Gillies, MES, GMB (TUS Chair)

Management Side

Michael Ansell, Chair
Jeffrey Livingston, MES
David Killer, FCE

Mgt Shearer (Secretary)

Agenda Item 1: Introductions

Chairman welcomed everyone along to the meeting. As this was his first meeting everyone around the table introduced themselves.

Agenda Item 2: Apologies

Apologies received from M Reilly and N Russell.

Agenda Item 3: Minutes of 29 September 2006

Minutes agreed a true record.

Agenda Item 4: Matters Arising

Qualifications for Mechanical and Civil Engineers - website still required to be updated.

ACTION: M Reilly

List of Contacts - Issued.

Merging of FCE and MES England and Wales LSCs agreed. First meeting had to be called off due to adverse weather. Second meeting being arranged.

Agenda Item 5: Business Briefing (M Ansell)

Director gave a view to date. He was pleased by the high level of esteem FBUs were held in across FC and staff were to be commended for this. FBU seen as a first class service provider and the example to follow. Flexibility and adaptability to changing country agendas was seen as the norm from BUs. This level of performance has to continue and improved efficiencies and cost reductions will continue to be sought out. Similar reviews are ongoing across FC. On the Ground initiatives also continue to be considered and there is a need to consider consolidating into buildings with other organisations such as Sepa in Stirling, etc.

Discussing the development of BusinessWise it had been agreed with the Service Board and Countries that there was a need for more transparency and more

measurable action plans to be developed from the first document. Information which flowed from this process would be shared with FBUSC. A review of fixed costs of providing service will also be included in the development of BWISE. Director mentioned the review of BSD which was ongoing and FBUs involvement in discussions on the activities to be covered by BSD in future. Potential projects to develop external income streams had been discussed at the last EB meeting and approval had been given on the progress to date plus a mandate to develop the thought process further ahead of a future EB meeting. FBU were also considering areas within FC where internal service gaps may be identified.

The recruitment of a PB3, Renewable Energy Development Manager was underway. Potential exists to extract additional income for FC via small-scale run of the river, hydro schemes in the first instance. Director outlined the process REDM will follow when in post, ie categorising and identified sites. The next phase in this development could be small to medium scale windpower and further down the road potentially, biomass. The new unit will draw on existing MES/FCE resources/expertise.

A Gillies queried the Shared Services Protocol and asked if this brought forward opportunities for BUs. M Ansell advised this was linked to the Review of Shared Services within FC. Rules of engagement had been drafted by W Harper and B Glen, covering conditions which would apply to any part of FC seeking to move away from internal service providers, ie a business case would have to support the proposal and unilateral action is to be discouraged.

Querying the new REDM post B Hamilton was advised that this would be funded by Countries and proportioned out for the amount of work undertaken. Indemnity/responsibility liability would be similar to the rest of FC. Querying cost recovery M Ansell advised that a 25 year projection had been undertaken and payback was anticipated in approx 6 years. Revenue from the project would be receipted directly by Countries.

Continuing with his briefing, meeting was advised that the FC Story was now gaining momentum. There was a need to concentrate on the corporate FC and away from sub logos and colours, etc. Design standards and guidance are currently being worked up.

Updating the meeting on Race Disability and Gender discrimination he advised that this was an extremely important topic, hence the Diversity Officer appointment and the need for us all to be cognisant of the issue.

Greenerways: Chris Probert will be taking over from Antony Wallis to continue with the collation of the FC's carbon footprint. There was a need for the Greenerways agenda to be agreed and priorities established.

Briefing (D Killer)

David reported eoy looking good with +£800k internal work completed, £13m of SLA plus £2m of non-SLA work. FCE had received an award from the British Construction Industry for their involvement in the Salcey Walkway project and have had considerable enquiries on the back of this. Early indications show that a healthy response will be received from customers re this year's Customer Survey. A Recreation Engineer has been recruited in Scotland, principally to deal with mountain bike routes/structures. Recruitment problems have been identified and 2 new trainee posts have been created as a result. The latest round of EFQM covered customer relations and FCE customers were invited to attend. Very positive feedback coming from EFQM.

Regarding JEGS, post-reorganisation the aim was to evaluate all posts. The JEGs exercise will be ongoing from March 2007. A 10% sample will be drawn from PB6b-PB3 posts and the exercise will be concluded in 07/08. D Killer agreed to discuss the sample with TUS.

Briefing (J Livingston)

Jeff advised that G Hodgson would be moving to East Anglia in July 2007 to fill the OME England/Wales post. MES had now achieved their aim of having OMEs located in different offices to TMEs. MES were moving from Contract Hire to Operating Leases which allows more hands on work for MES and increases identified savings. Chapelhall Workshop now offers a turnkey service for 90% of the fleet which requires conversion work prior to delivery. The main aim is to reduce overlap time between new/old vehicles entering/leaving the system. A review undertaken by Lex Momentum had identified a number of savings which MES will feed into the BusinessWise efficiencies/CSR submission, ie extended vehicle lives, etc. Chapelhall Workshop and FCE are working together to produce laminated wooden bridges. A round of meetings with machine manufacturers has taken place. Price rises are to be expected but have been held to a level. Timberjack are currently heavily investing in structures. FBU will once again host a stand at the 2007 Royal Highland Show.

Agenda Item 6: On the Ground

On the Ground project was still ongoing with no decisions yet taken.

Agenda Item 7: AI Gore Film

Meeting was advised that this was shown as part of the Greenerways initiative, ie an educational tool. Director believed unusual methods can work but that this should not be considered to be the norm.

Agenda Item 8: New Business Unit - covered by Director's Briefing.

Agenda Item 9: Employee Survey 2005

Feedback paper had been issued by J Livingston. He covered the main action points. This was seen as a useful exercise and would be issued to staff. TUS ratified this paper.

ACTION: J Livingston

Agenda Item 10: Job Evaluation Programme - covered by D Killer's briefing.

Agenda Item 11: Apprenticeships and Pay Scales

R Laird proposed that apprentices should be PB7 for the first 3 years, PB6B for the 4th year and on completion be retained as PB6As. J Livingston advised that only MES have FTA apprentices and that the PB level was set by HR. P Bullock expressed the view that Head of MES has discretion on where in the PB the apprentice sits. J Livingston would consider this further but reported that there were no difficulties being experienced in recruiting apprentices.

ACTION: J Livingston

Agenda Item 12: Health & Safety

R Laird reported a nil return.

Agenda Item 13: Any Other Relevant Business

a. M Ansell advised of the sad news that Colin Wills had passed away and recorded appreciation of his efforts on behalf of the Forestry Commission.

b. NOC Meeting/FBUSC Meetings

J Livingston queried the meeting earlier this week as he thought it had been agreed that NOC and FBUSC meetings would take place in future on the same day. A Gillies advised that the NOC meeting had taken 6 hours and that it was not possible to hold them both on the same day. It was suggested that for the next meeting commencing at lunch time on day 1 for the NOC meeting and following on the next day to hold the FBUSC meeting in the morning should be tried.

c. Eric Williams

Eric advised that this would be his last FBUSC meeting as he was resigning from the SC. He was thanked for his contribution over the recent years.

Agenda Item 14: Date of Next Meeting

Meeting agreed as 26 September 2007, Stirling.