

DEFRA announcement and FS Briefings**9th December 2013**

The DEFRA announcement today relates to handling of payments within CAP (Common Agricultural Policy), schemes including RDPE (Rural Development Programme England). The new payment delivery system for Pillar I and II payments means that DEFRA have been looking into the most effective way to process these in future. Processing will be done together, transactional functions from NE (Natural England), FC (Forestry Commission) and the RDPE currently run inside DEFRA will all move in to the RPA (Rural Payments Agency).

The briefings given to FS staff today in Bristol, Exeter, Alice Holt, Santon Downham, Worcester, York and Penrith will have given a high level account of these changes and we can conclude that there will be significant implications to FC staff especially within the admin hubs. There needs to be a detailed look at redesigning roles. There will be a transfer of work from them to the RPA. More work to be done looking at roles carried out within the Bristol Office, which support grant functions and are associated with transactions (will they stay or be transferred to the RPA).

Woodland Officers stay in the FC though there will be a need to refresh job profiles due to organisational changes. This decision has been worked through at a high level in DEFRA and as such there is still a lot of detail to work through in the coming months and years.

FCTU have provided union representatives at the briefings and they will continue to advise members locally as details emerge from DEFRA and the FC.

We have asked to meet with the FC on 17th December to discuss with them ongoing implications arising from the DEFRA announcement and other issues emanating from the WPEP. FCTU will provide the constituent unions and their members with as much information as they need in understanding how these changes will affect individuals; and how posts will be altered to accommodate the changes being proposed.

Again FCTU will further discuss with the FC what this means for each of our members within the scope of these organisational changes and support them through these changes.

Please contact your union representative if you are concerned or wish to make a comment on these changes and how they impact on you.

FCTU Secretary.