

## How 'one business' and Strategic Alignment affect you

'**One business**' is Defra's response to Civil Service Reform and '**Strategic alignment**' is the approach they use to get all parts of Defra and its wider network of executive agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) to work more closely with each other and to bring together structure, systems and processes. 'One business' means developing a future Defra business model that is more strategic, flexible and resilient. Defra need to bring together the structures, systems and processes across the network to deliver better customer experience at a lower cost.

On Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December and within the context of the paragraph above an announcement was made right across the Defra network to communicate the decision of Ministers about changes to the way this network manages all the payments it makes under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). This included the Forestry Commission England grant schemes.

The Ministers decided that the processing of all the transactions across CAP will be done together. This means that the transactional function will move from the Forestry Commission into a refocused Rural Payments Agency (RPA).

Permanent secretary Bronwyn Hill says: "Defra has a challenge to deliver EU payments in a more customer-friendly way, get the best deal for farmers and the countryside and deliver value for money. This is the first decision that has been made as part of the 'one business' work and will ensure we are still delivering quality outcomes, providing a better service for our customers and saving money."

In defining **transactional grant delivery**, this is a task which can be carried out by a person located in a central group or organisation to gather or process information. In practice this is mainly office based activities such as administering grants, providing customer service or supporting technical field experts.

For the Administrative Hubs in Forest Services (FS) England this will mean most of the posts coming within the definition of transactional grant delivery. There will be some posts elsewhere in FS that will be in scope and they are likely to be in the Sustainable Forest Management and Strategic Development Teams.

FCTU will discuss with the FC just which posts will be in scope for transfer and what other opportunities may exist for staff caught up in these changes. It is for management to manage change and for trade unions to support members through those changes to ensure that they suffer no detriment, that terms and conditions are protected and that benefits accrued are preserved.

Alongside this we also saw a definition relating to **technical grant delivery** which is a task involving technical expertise to apply subject specific or relevant contextual knowledge to a situation and reach a judgement based decision. In practice this means field, woodland or partnership based activity, or giving customers technical forestry advice in relation to grants, or supporting technical field experts.

For Woodland Officers this will mean a refreshed statement of what precisely the future role of these officers will be and how the relationships between FC, Natural England and RPA staff will be in relation to customers seeking grant application and payments, whilst still being able to access expert forestry advice from the FC.

Again we will be discussing with the FC how these changes will impact on our members and the roles they undertake and to ensure that they suffer no detriment as a result of these changes.

You should make contact with your local union representative or [contact us](#) to talk through what these changes mean for you and what support you need from your union. If you do not yet belong to a union you should now give it serious consideration – information on how to join can be found on [FCTU website](#).

FCTU are meeting with the FC on the 17<sup>th</sup> December in the first of many such meetings to discuss the way forward for you and your colleagues who are being affected by this announcement. We will keep you updated on those discussions and will arrange to hold meetings at your workplace to hear directly from you about those issues that would you wish us to pursue on your behalf.

FCTU Secretary  
11<sup>th</sup> December 2013