



## Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) Executive Leadership Team (ELT) Meeting

8 July 2025

### Attendees:

Kevin Quinlan, CEO (Chair)  
Graeme Prest, Director of Land Management & Regions  
Tom Greenan, Director of Corporate Services & Transformation  
Matthew Henderson, Secretariat Assistant, Minutes

### Others:

Rhondda Salmond, Change Manager (item 8, 9)  
Gwen Hamilton, Head of Communications (item 3)  
Amy Balloch, Senior Digital Manager (item 3)  
Eddie Saunders, Health & Safety Manager (item 4)  
Julie Fitzpatrick, Head of People & Organisational Development (item 4, 5)  
Alison Forbes, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Advisor (item 5)  
Colin Buchanan, Acting Head of Finance (item 7)  
Ian Considine, Head of Procurement  
Mark Wilcock, Head of Fleet & Buildings

### Apologies:

David Leven, Director of Commercial Development  
Graeme Hutton, Director of Net Zero

#### 1. Review of Minutes

It was agreed that the minutes from the ELT meeting held on 24 June 2025 were a true and accurate reflection.

#### 2. Summary of Action Points from Meeting

Ref.:	Action:	Owner:	Target Date:
01/07	To share list of content owners with ELT to pre-plan resource allocation	Gwen Hamilton	30 August 2025
02/07	To arrange for Bright Signals to present to ELT at next project update.	Gwen Hamilton	14 October 2025
03/07	To provide ELT with a concise report on completion of Discovery phase ahead of next project update	Gwen Hamilton / Amy Balloch	14 October 2025
04/07	To look at ways to increase incident/accident reporting numbers	Directors	31 July 2025

05/07	To identify a consultant and arrange two half-day workshops for ELT before end of 2025.	Alison Forbes	1 December 2025
06/07	To gather feedback from ELT after first half-day workshop regarding SLG workshop.	Alison Forbes	TBC – After first workshop
07/07	To liaise with L+D to create a streamlined refresher Bystander training.	Alison Forbes	16 September 2025
08/07	To review and confirm finalised go-live date of either 5 November 2025 or end of November 2025.	Tom Greenan	22 July 2025
09/07	To engage with Renewables Team regarding billing processes in Aspen to address concerns	Tom Greenan	22 July 2025
10/07	Plan and schedule Townhall in September to highlight EDI and Aspen ahead go-live and next People's Survey.	Rhondda Salmond	1 August 2025
11/07	Conduct a detailed run rate analysis using P3 data to validate FY 2025-2026 forecasts.	Colin Buchanan	22 July 2025
12/07	Rationalise reserves and explore opportunities to accelerate capital disposals.	Colin Buchanan	2 September 2025
13/07	Engage with Cost Centre managers to take a better grip and understanding of cost profile of 24/25 to 25/26.	Directors	31 July 2025
14/07	Commission brief reports from directors on key lessons learned from the assurance framework process.	Rhondda Salmond	22 July 2025
15/07	Prepare paper on the scheme of delegation clarifying people's delegated responsibilities across the organisation.	Rhondda Salmond	22 July 2025
16/07	Liaise and confirm with David Leven re moving deep dive session to 19 August 2025.	Ian Considine	22 July 2025
17/07	Move Fleet & Business Travel Initiatives deep dive to 28 October 2025 to allow time for project board review	Rhonda Salmond / Tom Greenan	22 July 2025
18/07	Follow up with SE regarding Apex and prepare detailed paper on options for both Edinburgh and Inverness	Mark Wilcock	19 August 2025

Action Points (AP) 16/05, 5/06 and 6/06 were closed.

### 3. Website Re-platform Project Update

Gwen Hamilton and Amy Balloch presented the ELT with an update on the FLS website re-platforming. They have completed the Discovery phase, on time and on budget. The project is on target to deliver a user-centric website that is more secure, intuitive and accessible by March 2026.

It was highlighted that a big part of the work this phase has been identifying content owners, which in some areas has been a challenge. This is so that there is specific ownership on maintaining and updating all content on the website.

There was a discussion around governance moving into the next phase of the project, which focuses on wireframe development with the digital agency Bright Signals. Governance is based on user research and evidence-based decision making. Following launch, there will continue to be user testing, analytics driven improvement and the potential for Phase 2 developments, e.g. e-commerce integration.

**AP 01/07: Gwen Hamilton to share list of content owners with ELT to pre-plan resource allocation.**

**AP 02/07: Gwen Hamilton to arrange for Bright Signals to present to ELT at next project update.**

**AP 03/07: Gwen/Amy to provide ELT with a concise report on completion of Discovery phase ahead of next project update.**

#### **4. Quarterly Health, Safety & Wellbeing Update**

Eddie Saunders presented the ELT with a quarterly HS&W update for discussion. Reporting of H+S incidents has increased compared to last year, with a focus on near misses and hazards in order to improve safety culture. Only 38% of reported incidents/accidents have been assigned a severity level by managers within 10 days, falling short of the 80% target. This metric is critical for improving incident management processes.

Speeding incidents have decreased significantly, with a 78% reduction within less than a month, attributed to the implementation of driver fobs. Fire incidents have significantly increased this quarter, (18 compared to 2 in Q1 last year) highlighting the need for enhanced fire safety measures. Wildfires are due to be discussed at LMLT on 15 July 2025.

ELT discussed the SAWS priorities update, with a focus on the benefits of the Forest Craftperson Technical Lead role which will be recruited for in July.

**AP 04/07: Eddie Saunders to look at ways to increase incident/accident reporting numbers.**

#### **5. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan / Women in Leadership**

Alison Forbes presented the ELT with a revised action plan for review and approval. The action plan addresses three priority challenges: reducing and preventing bullying and harassment, increasing the proportion of women in the workforce, and increasing the proportion of women in leadership. The next People's Survey is scheduled for October 2025 and there is upcoming legislation related to the Worker Protection Act 2025.

The ELT thanked Alison for her work and approved the action plan. Regarding action 4, they agreed that the Bystander training would be mandatory with a gradual drive to reach 100% completion and additionally a slimmed down refresher training to be developed and implemented, which will be mandatory for those that have completed the training a few years ago but received nothing since.

The action plan proposes a day long session (split into two half-days), focusing on inclusive leadership, self-reflection, understanding blind spots, and action planning. ELT discussed the benefits of this and what would create the most effective safe space for reflection and discussion. Alison and ELT agreed that inclusive leaderships sessions with SLG can be planned after ELT's first session, to ensure one feeds into the other. Accessibility of documentation and communication about EDI was considered, with a focus on reaching lower pay bands, regional staff, and those in small remote offices.

**AP 05/07: Alison Forbes to identify a consultant and arrange two half-day workshops for ELT before end of 2025.**

**AP 06/07: Alison Forbes to gather feedback from ELT after first half-day workshop regarding SLG workshop.**

**AP 07/07: Alison Forbes to liaise with L+D to create a streamlined refresher Bystander training.**

## **6. Aspen Project Update (Timeline and Budget)**

Tom Greenan presented the ELT with an Aspen project update, focusing on approval for a budget increase and revised implementation date.

Discussion was had around ensuring the revised date being realistic and achievable and confidence in the new date, as the project has already been delayed several times. Positive feedback of the project and the new implementation plan given by the Technical Assurance Review, rating it as amber.

ELT also discussed the validation of renewables income and a need for better engagement with the Renewables Team. Forward looking, the next Townhall is scheduled for October, but the ELT agreed that moving this to September may be useful so that Aspen and EDI can be showcased.

ELT approved the request for additional allocation of reserves as outlined in points 13 and 14 of ELT 50/25 and endorsed a November date for go-live, with a preference for end of November if feasible.

**AP 08/07: Tom Greenan to review and confirm finalised go-live date of either 5 November 2025 or end of November 2025.**

**AP 09/07: Tom Greenan to engage with Renewables Team regarding billing processes in Aspen to address concerns.**

**AP 10/07: Rhondda Salmond to plan and schedule Townhall for September 2025 to highlight EDI and Aspen ahead go-live and next People's Survey.**

## **7. Finance Update (P2)**

Colin Buchanan brought a P2 financial update report to the ELT for discussion. While it shows a sobering direction of travel, P3 will be available by 11 July 2025 and will be more detailed.

There is a need for better understanding and categorisation of reserves, as well as cost profiles compared to last year. Costs have increased since last year and investigation of these is required for P3. It was agreed that we should be able to complete a revalidation of our forecasts at this point in the year.

**AP 11/07: Colin Buchanan to conduct a detailed run rate analysis using P3 data to validate FY 2025-2026 forecasts.**

**AP 12/07: Colin Buchanan to rationalise reserves and explore opportunities to accelerate capital disposals.**

**AP 13/07: Directors to engage with Cost Centre managers to take a better grip and understanding of cost profile of 24/25 to 25/26.**

## **8. Assurance Framework Lessons Learned**

Directors were asked to review their assurance frameworks and identify any lessons learned. There was a discussion on assurance frameworks, including the need for a consistent approach and transparency in red-flagged items.

ELT agreed to revisit Lessons Learned once directors have prepared further for this.

**AP 14/07: Rhondda Salmond to commission brief reports from directors on key lessons learned from the assurance framework process.**

**AP 15/07: Rhondda Salmond to prepare paper on the scheme of delegation clarifying people's delegated responsibilities across the organisation.**

**AP 16/07: Ian Considine to liaise and confirm with David Leven re moving deep dive session to 19 August 2025.**

**AP 17/07: Tom/Rhondda to move Fleet & Business Travel Initiatives deep dive to 28 October 2025 to allow time for project board review.**

**AP 18/07: Mark Wilcock to follow up with SE regarding Apex and prepare detailed paper on options for both Edinburgh and Inverness.**

#### **9. ELT Forward Look**

The ELT reviewed and discussed the agendas for their next meeting.

#### **10. ELT Reflections**

The ELT shared their reflections on this meeting.

#### **11. AOB**

##### **Coillte Visit**

Lynne Marsh (PA) is engaging with Coillte around potential dates for a visit, with a two-day trip in November/December 2025 as potential option. While the objective is to learn from their commercial strategy and sustainability approach, Coillte are also keen to learn from FLS on key areas, e.g. Peatland restoration. Brief discussion around potential learning opportunities.

The date of the next ELT meeting is 22 July 2025.