



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

10 February 2026

Attendees:

Kevin Quinlan, CEO (Chair)
Graeme Prest, Director of Land Management and Regions
Graeme Hutton, Director of Net Zero
Nicola McBain, Director of Corporate Services and Transformation
David Leven, Director of Commercial Development

Others:

Alison Forbes, EDI Advisor (item 5)
Adam Dearnley, Head of Finance (item 6)

Summary of Action Points (AP) from Meeting

Ref.:	Action:	Owner:	Target Date:
10/02	Send the updated Staff Engagement slide deck to the trade union; coordinate with Calum to develop Case Studies and FAQs for staff, and prepare these materials for road testing with Graeme's team.	Nicola McBain	18 Feb 2026
11/02	Review and update the ELT Action Tracker, ensuring all actions under each director's name are current and not left blank.	Graeme Prest/Graeme Hutton/Nicola McBain/David Leven	03 March 2026
12/02	Review and confirm Agenda Items in the ELT Forward Look for upcoming meetings, including enabling services review and records management options appraisal, ensuring all necessary documents are prepared in advance.	Nicola McBain/Rhondda Salmond	20 Feb 2026
13/02	Develop and propose a regular timetable for Business Management Reporting (BMR) production and distribution, ensuring timely sharing with cost centre managers and the ELT.	Adam Dearnley	31 May 2026
14/02	Review strategies for managing rising unit costs across harvesting, restocking, and roads. This session will also focus on enhancing forecast accuracy and strengthening communication with regional managers.	Adam Dearnley/Graeme Prest	30 April 2026

1. ELT Reflections

ELT members provided their reflections.

AP 10/02: Nicola McBain to send the updated Staff Engagement slide deck to the trade union; coordinate with Calum to develop Case Studies and FAQs for staff and prepare these materials for road testing with Graeme's team on the 18th.

2. Review of Minutes

It was agreed that the minutes from the ELT meeting held on 4 February 2026 were a true and accurate reflection.

3. Stocktake on Action Tracker

The ELT reviewed the progress of previous ELT Actions.

AP 11/02: All Directors to review and update the action tracker, ensuring all actions under each Director's name are current and not left blank.

4. ELT Forward Look

The ELT reviewed the Forward Look for upcoming meetings, discussed agenda items, and addressed scheduling logistics for the Executive Leadership Team, Programme Assurance Board, and related governance sessions.

Agenda Planning and Item Prioritisation: The ELT reviewed upcoming agenda items, including financial updates, risk and audit reviews, business plan submissions, and deep dives on strategy and performance, ensuring key topics are allocated sufficient time and prominence.

Meeting Logistics and Scheduling: Discussions covered the separation of the ELT and Programme Assurance Board (PAB) meetings to give each appropriate focus, with adjustments made to accommodate external participants and ensure effective governance.

AP 12/02: Nicola McBain and Rhondda Salmond to review and confirm agenda items in the ELT Forward Look document for upcoming meetings, including enabling services review and records management options appraisal, ensuring all necessary documents are prepared in advance.

5. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Update

Alison Forbes provided an update on EDI actions, including progress on women's forums, bullying and harassment reporting, and the introduction of the Tell Jane service, followed by a discussion on mainstreaming EDI and cultural challenges within the organisation.

EDI Action Updates: Alison reported on six key EDI actions, including rescheduling leadership sessions, ongoing lunch-and-learn events, setting KPIs for gender representation, and the roll-out of the Tell Jane confidential reporting service.

Women's Forum and Survey Insights: The women's forum report was completed and shared, highlighting cultural issues and increased willingness to report bullying and harassment, with plans to use the findings as a basis for further discussion at the Townhall Meeting.

Mainstreaming EDI Initiatives: The team discussed the importance of embedding EDI responsibilities across the organisation rather than relying on a single individual, and the need for empowered staff networks and visible leadership support.

Cultural and Structural Challenges: Participants reflected on challenges such as regional versus national dynamics, perceptions of corporate services, the need for transparent action on inappropriate behaviour, and the importance of respect and inclusive values in driving cultural change.

6. Finance Update (Q3)

Adam Dearnley presented the financial update, highlighting a projected operating loss, sources of variability, and the need for improved forecasting and timely financial reporting, with Kevin and Nicola emphasising the importance of regular communication with budget holders.

Current Financial Position and Variability: Adam reported a projected £22 million operating loss, noting that significant changes often occur in the final quarter due to increased business activity, with key areas of variability including external contractor costs, timber volumes, and grant income.

Forecasting and Reporting Timelines: Kevin stressed the need for a regular, disciplined timetable for financial reporting, aiming for financial information to be available to managers within two weeks of month-end to support effective decision-making. It was suggested that Business Management Reporting (BMR) reporting to the ELT could become a separate one-hour meeting within one week of issue.

Cost Management and Performance: The discussion identified rising unit costs in harvesting, restocking, and roads, with action points for Adam to work with Graeme on understanding and managing these costs, and to improve the accuracy of forecasts and communication with regional managers.

Use of Financial Data for Management: The team agreed on the importance of using financial reports not just for information, but as tools to drive performance management, support delivery of plans, and inform strategic decisions.

AP 13/02: Adam Dearnley to develop and propose a regular timetable for Business Management Reporting (BMR) production and distribution, ensuring timely sharing with cost centre managers and the ELT.

AP 14/02: Adam Dearley and Graeme Prest to meet to review strategies for managing rising unit costs across harvesting, restocking, and roads. This session will also focus on enhancing forecast accuracy and strengthening communication with regional managers.

7. Monthly Balance Scorecard

Nicola McBain reviewed and led a discussion on performance in the Monthly Balanced Scorecard.

8. Townhall Preparation

Kevin Quinlan led a discussion on the content of planned Townhall Meeting on 4 March 2026.

9. Close

The next ELT meeting will be held on 3 March 2026.