



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

2nd September 2025

Attendees:

Kevin Quinlan, CEO (Chair)
David Leven, Director of Commercial Development
Graeme Prest, Director of Land Management & Regions
Graeme Hutton, Director of Net Zero
Calum McNicol, Corporate Development Assistant (Minutes)

Others:

Michael Hymers, Head of Corporate Office
Julie Fitzpatrick, Head of People & Organisational Development
Fiona Dundas, Senior HR Manager

Apologies:

Tom Greenan, Director of Corporate Services & Transformation

1. Review of Minutes

With minor amendment, it was agreed that the minutes from the ELT meeting held on 27th August 2025 were a true and accurate reflection.

2. Summary of Action Points from Meeting

Ref.:	Action:	Owner:	Target Date:
1/09	Ensure directorates actively engage in discussions relating to their respective Risk Registers on a quarterly basis.	Directors	25 November 2025
2/09	Update and clearly define risks prior to the ARC.	Risk Owners	8 September 2025
3/09	Gather feedback from directors on assurance frameworks & balanced scorecards, and convene a mid-year stocktake with the Senior Leadership Group.	Rhondda Salmond	16 October 2025
4/09	Work with Senior HR Manager to establish figures for Workforce Planning baselines.	Tom Greenan	8 September 2025
5/09	Provide detail on the Workforce Planning aspect of the in-draft Business Plan Mandate to stakeholders to support FLS' planned business trajectory.	Julie Fitzpatrick	18 September 2025

3. Quarterly Risk Review

The ELT reviewed FLS' Corporate Risk Register in advance of the Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) and assessed risks, their impact, likelihood, horizons and scorings, in addition to the template itself. The discussion factored both internal and external guidance to promote improvement of the document, with particular focus on impact scoring.

It was also agreed that directorates should continue to engage in active discussions on risk at minimum quarterly.

AP 1/09: Directors to ensure that directorates actively engage in discussions relating to their respective Risk Registers on a quarterly basis.

AP 2/09: Risk owners to update and clearly define risks prior to the ARC.

4. Quarterly Audit Review

The ELT took time to examine each audit reports' agreed and outstanding actions. It was noted that there was a declining trend of outstanding actions overdue, and an increasing trend in completed actions.

5. Assurance Framework Lessons Learned

Kevin Quinlan led the ELT in discussion on lessons learned during the development of FLS' assurance framework, with each member offering their thoughts on the process. There was consensus that there should be mid-year stocktakes on balanced scorecards.

AP 3/09: Change Manager to gather feedback from directors on assurance frameworks & balanced scorecards, and convene a mid-year stocktake at the next Senior Leadership Group meeting.

6. Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) Preparation

Michael Hymers updated the ELT on the actions required in the lead up to the ARC, outlining themes due for discussion and providing an opportunity for the ELT to prepare for the next committee meeting on 23rd September. Board members considered in depth the ARC's agenda, the structure thereof, and recognised responsibilities per item.

7. Three-Year Business Plan Mandate

The ELT discussed the current business plan and budget mandate draft, which sets out the mandate for the multi-year FLS business plan and financial planning process across the next three financial years. (FY26/27–FY28/29)

There was elaboration on actions taken between meetings to develop and add depth to the mandate, clarifying aspects in order to improve the efficacy of the document.

Following this, the ELT reviewed timeline dates and activities to ensure accuracy and suitability. The intent is to have a completed draft of FLS' three-year business plan by the beginning of December this year, with agreement on the final draft for ministerial submission of its FY26/27 portion to follow shortly afterwards.

The ELT then turned to workforce planning and relevant factors.

It was acknowledged that focus on FLS' priorities and growth areas remains important; leadership should be encouraging staff to be agile and move into priority positions. The workforce plan was also considered in the context of external constraints – the ELT recognised that the organisation will need to move with flexibility, and with the support of its partners. It was also noted that it is important for the agency to identify areas of the business which require nurturing, and which require stabilisation.

AP 4/09: Director of Corporate Services & Transformation to work with Senior HR Manager to establish figures for Workforce Planning baselines.

AP 5/09: Head of People & Organisational Development to provide detail on Workforce Planning aspect of the Business Plan Mandate to stakeholders to support business trajectory of the business plan.

8. ELT Forward Look

The ELT reviewed and discussed the agenda for their upcoming meeting.

9. ELT Reflections

The ELT provided their reflections on the meeting.

10. AOB

There were no areas of outstanding business raised.

The date of the next ELT meeting is 16th September 2025.