



Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) Executive Leadership Team Meeting

05 December 2024

Attendees:

Kevin Quinlan, Chief Executive (Chair)
Graeme Prest, Director of Land Management and Regions
Michael Hymers, Director of Corporate Services
David Leven, Director of Commercial Development
Graeme Hutton, Director of Net Zero
Sophia Christopoulos, Secretariat Assistant (Minutes)

Others:

Julie Fitzpatrick, Head of People and Organisational Development
Jason Liggins, Head of Health, Safety & Wellbeing
Jonathan Frost, Coach

1. Minutes of last meeting

It was agreed that the minutes from the ELT meeting held on 21 November 2024 were a true and accurate reflection.

2. Action Points

Ref:	Action:	Who:	Target Date:
2/06	Director of Commercial Development to establish enhanced governance of procurement which provides oversight of the Procurement strategy, pipeline, policies, procedures and service improvement plans.	David Leven	18 December 2024
8/08	Head of Digital Services to integrate ELT's comments into FLS' Digital Strategy and Action Plan and provide and update to the ELT.	Dave Exeter	5 December 2024
11/09	Change Manager to incorporate feedback from the ELT regarding Risk Appetite.	Rhonda Salmond	19 November 2024
12/09	Director of Commercial Development and Head of People and Organisational Development to develop implementation plan and communications for Working Time.	David Leven / Julie Fitzpatrick	18 December 2024
17/09	Deputy Head of Finance and Head of Planning and Environment to examine unit cost performance and feedback to ELT ahead of the next BMR.	Jennie Smith / Jo Ellis	18 December 2024
5/10	Project Manager to provide assurance around future proofing ASPEN, particularly with regards to integrating coupe level data.	Paul Sutherland	5 November 2024
9/10	Director of Commercial Development to incorporate feedback from ELT regarding Asset Disposals:	David Leven / Graeme Prest	18 December 2024

Ref:	Action:	Who:	Target Date:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director of Land Management & Regions and Director of Commercial Development to reevaluate the Land Portfolio Management total figure. 		
10/10	ELT members to include comments on the Investment Pipeline Proposal spreadsheet.	All	5 November 2024
11/10	Chief Financial Officer to integrate feedback from ELT regarding the Investment Pipeline Proposals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider tailoring templates for each business case investment category. Design Stage 2 template. Consider the full life cycle costs for any investment. Create flowchart for business case categories in line with policy and framework. 	Donna Mortimer	26 November 2024
12/10	Chief Financial Officer to update Reserves, Investments & Disposal Policy to reflect conclusions on what investment decisions are made where (see blue below and categories of disposals).	Donna Mortimer	5 November 2024
13/10	Director of Net Zero and Director of Land Management & Regions to agree a standardised approach to generic operational assets, such as deer larders, in terms of investment proposals.	Graeme Prest / Graeme Hutton	26 November 2024
17/10	Directors to research ways to establish a 'bottom-up' workforce management system.	Directors	5 November 2024
18/10	Each Director to optimise and finalise their directorate's scorecard for trial by the end of December, with results to be reviewed by end of January.	Directors	31 January 2025
19/10	d) Head of Marketing and Sales to generate a one-page report on costs and potential income estimates of performance improvement plan.	Graeme Prest/Mick Bottomley	December 2024
1/11	Director of NetZero to revisit the Business Travel Review Project Plan accelerating consideration of the options for future delivery of mechanical engineering services to the organisation.	Graeme Hutton	November 2024
2/11	Chief Financial Officer to include timber sales vs forecast in year, in BMR to enable detailed business analysis and inform appropriate actions.	Donna Mortimer	5 December 2024
3/11	Chief Financial Officer and Director of Land Management and Regions to undertake a 'deep-dive' analysis of cost structure in Central.	Donna Mortimer/Graeme Prest	January 2025
5/11	Chief Financial Officer to analyse liquidity reserves to ensure adequate and appropriate levels in place.	Donna Mortimer	5 December 2024
6/11	Chief Financial Officer to incorporate the following into Version two of the Annual Financial Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Plant Seed Supply and Establishment Costs – explain drivers of cost increases and breakdown of increases in extra programme; input costs, extra labour costs and 	Donna Mortimer	5 December 2024

Ref:	Action:	Who:	Target Date:
	dependencies; cost comparison of Growing Own vs Buy-in in current market b) Fine tune MES reallocations across regions c) Direct Production - Budget for increase in productivity to 2000 hours per annum d) Interrogate "programme & targets" comparison across regions e) Include National Insurance increase in budgets f) Pay assumption should be greater g) FTE total remains at 1069 – Directors to continue interrogate and investigate pressures behind this. h) Investment process – approved decisions need to be communicated and including in budgets		
7/11	Director of Land Management and Regions to ensure inclusion of overheads from Peatland Restoration, Woodland Creation and Atlantic Rainforest Restoration are charged to correct projects.	Graeme Prest	5 December 2024
1/12	Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing to incorporate feedback from the ELT and present an action plan next quarter.	Jason Liggins	17 March 2025
2/12	Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing and Director of Commercial Development to ensure Health, Safety & Wellbeing systems and skills are integrated into contract management.	Jason Liggins David Leven	17 March 2025

Action points 2/10, 7/10, 8/10, 14/10, 16/10, 19/10c, 4/11, 8/11, 9/11, 10/11, 11/11 and 12/11/ have been discharged.

Action points 12/09, 17/09, 9/10 and 18/10 were reviewed and the deadlines revised to allow sufficient time for the work to be completed.

2. Reflections on Strategy / Governance, including Procurement Proposal

This agenda item was not minuted in its entirety, however the following closing points were summarised decisions captured.

David Leven presented a paper, a key function of which is driving the transformation of procurement. Kevin provided feedback, highlighting that the purpose needs to be clearer. He also requested that the Procurement 360 Steering Group be revisited so as to develop a rigorous procurement reform programme that rationalises and prioritises a list of actions. David responded that Dorothy Low, interim Deputy Head of Procurement, is currently developing this, noting that a Project Manager will be required to progress this. He sought ongoing involvement from Directors and reflected on how best to provide regular updates on progress to the ELT. The ELT approved the Procurement Proposal.

Kevin explained that further discussions will be held with Rhondda Salmond, Change Manager, regarding a scheme of delegation and spending authorities. He noted that procurement will be one aspect of the revision.

3. Transformation Programme – Impact/Effort Matrix

Kevin highlighted two key aspects of the Transformation Programme; overall framing and sequencing of programme priorities, and resourcing for the programme. He noted the challenges around this latter aspect and that support for the Transformation Programme Director is critical.; a contractor will be brought in to address this in the short term.

The ELT reviewed various key projects and initiatives, evaluating the effort (input) required to execute and the impact (outcome) anticipated. The projects were assessed relative to each other in order to establish a sequence of priorities. They considered the dependencies, benefits and risks for each project as well as recognising areas where further information is required.

The ELT agreed to continue this exercise at a later date and reflect on today's discussion.

4. Health, Safety & Wellbeing Update

Graeme Prest emphasised the importance of Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) within the organisation and the need for collaboration across all directorates to support the priorities outlined in the papers shared with the ELT.

Jason Liggins gave a presentation, providing an overview of the research that was conducted into HSW and highlighting key points from the papers. He explained the methodology behind the data collected and how this is used to support decision making. He identified four priorities:

- Safety zones for all work activities, but particularly for chainsaws.
- Plan-Do-Check-Act; new approach to risk assessments, support implementation of roles and responsibilities, and IT solutions to improve assurance.
- Wellbeing; improved occupational health support, revised wellbeing framework for chainsaw operators, and management of fatigue, stress and physical health to improve performance.
- Skills; 2-year pilot of Forestcraftperson with role mentoring, embed chainsaw cpd systems, and development of non-technical skills such as situational awareness and communication.

He explained how the above priorities align with the organisation's direction with regards to transformation and streamlining activities to improve consistency and efficiency. He highlighted future initiatives, such as analysis into sickness and absence at work. He added that a revised Health & Safety policy is due to be launched in the new year and that a new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion lead has recently started in post.

The ELT thanked Jason for the papers and presentation and considered the ways they can support the HSW priorities. Kevin requested that the risks outlined in the papers be segmented by setting (i.e. forest or office), by probability/consequence, and by trends, so as to inform where focus is required. In addition, he requested that an overall action plan be developed that articulates, segments and profiles risks, tying in statistical data.

The ELT agreed the following:

- The HSW Team to discuss with Digital Services the approach and timing to potentially adopting digital packages that could be used to support HSW priorities and incorporate these into business planning, ensuring expertise can be provided if and when new systems are implemented.

- David to identify gaps and issues regarding contract management, ensuring HSW legislation is upheld when procuring contractors. This includes verifying contractor competency, historical performance, and assurance.

Finally, Graeme Prest advised that more frequent HSW updates should be incorporated into future ELT meetings to improve visibility of issues and elevate the profile of discussion.

AP 1/12: Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing to incorporate feedback from the ELT and present an action plan next quarter.

AP 2/12: Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing and Director of Commercial Development to ensure Health, Safety & Wellbeing systems and skills are integrated into contract management.

5. ASPEN Overview

Michael Hymers provided an update on ASPEN, focusing on the challenges ahead of the 'go-live' date. An additional go-live health check was performed by an independent assurance team, who identified seven critical and essential recommendations for the project. The ELT discussed these, alongside other areas of concern and next steps.

Michael agreed to hold follow up one-to-one meetings with each Director to discuss how their directorates can support ASPEN and implement the aforementioned recommendations.

6. AOB & Reflections

There were no AOB items raised. The ELT provided their reflections on the meeting.

The date of the next ELT meeting is 18 December 2024.