



Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) Executive Leadership Team Meeting

28 October 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
Calum McNicol, Corporate Development Assistant (Minutes)

Others:

Donna Mortimer, Chief Financial Officer
Julie Fitzpatrick, Head of People and Organisational Development
Rob Pengilley, Transformation Programme Director
Mick Bottomley, Head of Marketing and Sales
Gwen Hamilton, Head of Communications
Natalie Hamilton, Senior Digital Manager

1. Minutes of last meeting

It was agreed that the minutes from the ELT meeting held on 10 October 2024 were a true and accurate reflection.

2. Action Points

Ref:	Action:	Who:	Target Date:
4/05	Director of Land Management and Regions and Head of Planning and Environment to provide forecasting on coupe readiness and to incorporate this into the balanced scorecard.	Graeme Prest Jo Ellis	29 November 2024
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
4/08	Director of NetZero to provide a brief summary visualisation of the Business Travel Review and Implementation Plan and present at a future Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meeting for consideration. Paper to be submitted to ELT for review ahead of SLT	Graeme Hutton	5 November 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
13/08	Directors to provide directorate objectives to be published on Saltire.	Directors	5 November 2024

Ref:	Action:	Who:	Target Date:
11/09	Change Manager to incorporate feedback from the ELT regarding Risk Appetite.	Rhondda 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	29 November 2024
13/09	Head of People and Organisational Development to incorporate feedback from the ELT regarding Mobility Clauses.	Julie Fitzpatrick	31 October 2024
14/09	Head of People and Organisational Development to integrate the Management Postings paper and Temporary Responsibilities Allowance paper and return to ELT.	Julie Fitzpatrick	31 October 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	5 November 2024
2/10	Change Manager to review the governance structures for Executive Leadership Team meetings and Senior Leadership Team meetings.	Rhondda Salmond	19 December 2024
4/10	Project Manager and Director of Commercial Development to ensure resilience around procurement representation within the ASPEN Project Board.	Paul Sutherland / David Leven	5 November 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
7/10	Director of Corporate Services and Director of Land Management & Regions to set out tactics to resolve issue concerning Direct Purchasing Order roles.	Michael Hymers / Graeme Prest	5 November 2024
8/10	Director of Land Management & Regions to share stocktake update on progress with the FLS woodland creation programme and next steps.	Graeme Prest	18 December 2024
9/10	Director of Commercial Development to incorporate feedback from ELT regarding Asset Disposals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director of Land Management & Regions and Director of Commercial Development to reevaluate the Land Portfolio Management total figure. 	David Leven / Graeme Prest	26 November 2024
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	Donna Mortimer	5 November 2024

Ref:	Action:	Who:	Target Date:
	decisions are made where (see blue below and categories of disposals.		
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
14/10	Senior Digital Manager & Head of Communications to present project plan for minimum viable product and circulate by 1 November.	Gwen Hamilton/Natalie Hammond	1 November 2024
15/10	Directors to provide breakdowns of significant cost variances within their respective areas/cost centres.	Directors	5 November 2024
16/10	Directors to look critically at vacancies in their respective areas; where these can most effectively be combined, reallocated, outsourced, et cetera.	Directors	5 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	a) Director of Land Management and Regions to instruct delivery of quarterly reports to the Land Management leadership team to inform six-monthly reports on the Performance Improvement Plan. b) Head of Marketing and Sales to recruit four additional machine operators on a yearly contract basis for two years, for the purposes of benchmarking within the Performance Improvement Plan. c)) Head of Marketing and Sales to test if two Komatsu operators can be redeployed with a stop on further recruitment if redeployment is possible, dependant on the relevant Service Level Agreement(s). 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
20/10	Transformation Programme Director to create visualisation of material as referred to in Action Point 3/10.	Rob Pengilley	5 November 2024
21/10	Directors to collect remaining outstanding templates to submit for board review.	Directors	5 November 2024
22/10	Transformation Programme Director to take forward the creation of a 'Fit for the Future' Subgroup from the Senior Leadership Team.	Rob Pengilley	5 November 2024

Action point 16/06, 3/07, 1/09, 7/09, 1/10, 3/10, 6/10 was discharged.

Action point 13/08 had its deadline amended to accommodate the ongoing work.

3. Website Re-Platforming

Gwen Hamilton and Natalie Hamilton presented a paper which requested an investment decision from the ELT for the modernisation of FLS' external website. They stated that rebuilding the website from the foundations upwards would contribute across all corporate outcomes to some degree, however would primarily contribute to FLS being recognised as a high-performing, efficient and effective, sustainable organisation that continues to transform and adapt.

Both noted that the website is a key communications channel and asset with 7.7 million page views per year and that, in its current state, requires modernisation to remain compliant with legislation in addition to potential future business expectations.

Kevin Quinlan thanked both Gwen and Natalie for their presentation and opened the discussion. The ELT discussed the merits and ways to mitigate possible risks of the business case, including costs and locating the resources required to bring the program to completion. David Exeter observed that it may be useful for the board to consider the business' wants and needs from the website going forward.

AP 14/10: Senior Digital Manager & Head of Communications to present project plan for minimum viable product and circulate by 1 November.

4. Financial Management Information and Performance

Donna Mortimer presented a paper to inform the ELT of FLS' forecast financial position and performance which focused mainly on the forecast outturn.

The ELT received updates from the directors on activities in timber operations, renewables, land management, commercial and corporate.

Michael Hymers posited that forecasts may improve through picking up transformation posts, and Julie Fitzpatrick suggested that developing an end plan for future structure prior to identifying core and critical posts where training and succession is required would benefit FLS. David Leven noted that further strategic direction is likely be required to achieve this.

AP 15/10: Directors to provide breakdowns of significant cost variances within their respective areas/cost centres.

AP 16/10: Directors to look critically at vacancies in their respective areas; where these can most effectively be combined, reallocated, outsourced, et cetera.

AP 17/10: Directors to research ways to establish a 'bottom-up' workforce management.

5. MI/FLS Balanced Scorecard

Donna invited the ELT to take part in a 'gallery walk' to reflect on the contents of each directorate's scorecard. It was noted that there is little comparability between directorates, and that a standardisation of scorecards is required.

Kevin observed that the directorates could be placed into either a 'services' category or an 'income-producing' category.

AP 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.

6. Direct Production Improvement Plan

Mick Bottomley presented a two-part paper which outlined the Performance Improvement Plan for the FLS harvesting fleet and indicated potential areas for savings in machine repair costs, in addition to offering opportunities to increase productivity. It is hoped that the plan will funnel data into a single management group, the Fleet Management Panel, and improve the performance of Direct Production operations.

The ELT, after discussing the potential costs, challenges and logistics of its implementation, welcomed the Performance Improvement Plan and requested that Mick take this forward.

AP 19/10a) Director of Land Management and Regions to instruct delivery of quarterly reports to the Land Management leadership team to inform six-monthly reports on the Performance Improvement Plan.

19/10b) Head of Marketing and Sales to recruit four additional machine operators on a yearly contract basis for two years, for the purposes of benchmarking within the Performance Improvement Plan.

19/10c) Head of Marketing and Sales to test if two Komatsu operators can be redeployed with a stop on further recruitment if redeployment is possible, dependant on the relevant Service Level Agreement(s).

19/10d) Head of Marketing and Sales to generate a one-page report on costs and potential income estimates of performance improvement plan.

7. Transformation Programme Update

Rob Pengilley updated the ELT regarding the Transformation Programme and his reflections. He highlighted that six to twelve projects generally define a busy programme, that FLS has twenty-four, and asked that the board review the scope of each programme, its benefit potential, achievability, and the level of support required.

The ELT discussed common barriers to bringing a project to completion, including the use of corporate language, differing levels of skill, expertise and knowledge across colleagues, and resource implications.

Rob proposed that the ELT may wish to seek more involvement by creating a Senior Leadership Team 'Fit for the Future' Subgroup to offer progress by way of design, oversight and issue resolution, among other benefits. The ELT welcomed this proposal.

AP 20/10: Transformation Programme Director to create visualisation of material as referred to in Action Point 3/10.

AP 21/10: Directors to collect remaining outstanding templates to submit for board review.

AP 22/10: Transformation Programme Director to take forward the creation of a 'Fit for the Future' Subgroup from the Senior Leadership Team.

5. AOB & Reflections

Attendees provided brief feedback and reflections on the meeting.

There were no AOBs.

The date of the next ELT meeting is 5th November 2024.