



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

19 August 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
Tom Greenan, Director of Corporate Services & Transformation
Matthew Henderson, Secretariat Assistant (Minutes)

Others:

Michael Hymers, Head of Corporate Office
Rhondda Salmond, Change Manager

1. Review of Minutes

It was agreed that the minutes from the ELT meeting held on 22 and 24 July 2025 were a true and accurate reflection.

2. Summary of Action Points from Meeting

Ref.:	Action:	Owner:	Target Date:
1/08	Establish a centralised SharePoint system for Business Plan documents, with mechanism for version/change tracking.	Michael Hymers	25 August 2025
2/08	Organise Challenge Sessions for business plans, ensuring participation from all relevant directors and regional managers.	Michael Hymers/ Tom Greenan	5 November 2025
3/08	Reach out and invite Maf Smith (Non-Exec) to ELT Deep Dive on Renewables (27/08/25) and Estates and Renewables Gathering (24/09/25).	David Leven/ Rhondda Salmond	27 August 2025
4/08	Reach out and invite Gio D'Alessio (Non-Exec) to attend ELT re FIRS Update	Graeme Hutton/ Rhondda Salmond	16 September 2025
5/08	Incorporate Commercial Development KPI's into Regional Scorecards to ensure accountability for Renewables and Visitor Services	David Leven/ Graeme Prest	25 August 2025
6/08	Update Business Planning Mandate to include 2028/2029.	Tom Greenan	27 August 2025
7/08	Prepare and distribute new Non-Exec profiles for ELT review	Rhondda Salmond	27 August 2025

AP 7/02 due date revised to 27 August 2025.

AP 1/04 due date revised to 31 August 2025.

AP 2/04 due date revised to 31 October 2025.

AP 13/07 due date revised to 27 August 2025.

AP 18/07 due date revised to 2 September 2025.

AP 12/05 and 14/05 have been closed and moved to Programme Assurance Board (PAB) action tracker

AP 15/05, 1/07, 4/07, 23/07 and 31/07 have been closed.

3. Business Planning, incl Mandates, Commissions, Timetables, Templates etc

Tom Greenan facilitated discussion around three items which were brought to ELT since last meeting: timetable, templates (directorate and regional) and business plan mandate.

The business planning timeline was discussed, and to ensure all nine business plans (4 Directorates and 5 Regions) are consistent and sync up, David Leven suggested that a SharePoint repository should be created to store the business plan documents centrally, allowing access to facilitate cross-directorate collaboration. This was agreed by ELT but some thought is required around tracking changes/managing a version history. Amendments to the timeline were made to incorporate Land Management timeframes and reflect a centrally controlled business plan.

The mandate was updated to be titled 'Business Planning and Budget' rather than just 'Budget Mandate' to reflect that it covers both the business plan and the Annual Financial Plan (AFP).

Financial targets for sustainability were set, including increasing land management gross margin from 2.7% to 10%. Similar targets were set for renewables income and support activities costs. There was also a discussion around the ASL from Scottish Government. Tom Greenan explained why these have been set as they have been.

The ELT discussed how to handle Fit for the Future transformation programs costs and benefits, agreeing that the costs would be budgeted under Corporate Services while benefits would be attributed to the relevant areas as an overlay.

The ELT reflected on how specific the mandate should be versus how much the directors should take away to manage. The business plan assumes 3% annual inflation and there is an expectation for cost centres to realise efficiencies to compensate for this rather than adding inflation into their budgets.

The three-year business plan aims to achieve a surplus of £7.8 million by 2027/2028, with demonstrable progression required each year rather than back-loading all improvements to the final year. The ELT discussed the idea of holding Challenge Sessions in order to review regional and directorate business plans at length and while schedules are tight, it was agreed that the benefits outweighed the scheduling difficulty. These sessions are proposed to be held on 5-6 November 2025.

The importance of accountability and achieving sustainability together and was agreed and ELT decided to use the Week Ahead meeting on 26 August to launch the Business Plan Mandate. Kevin Quinlan advised it would be useful to make amendments by then to aid in the launch presentation.

There is an SLG meeting on 18 November 2025 which will have half a day spent on Fit for the Future and innovation. Kevin Quinlan prompted Michael Hymers to consider a half day spend on the Business plan also.

Michael presented both templates and discussed feedback received and iterations made. Some areas of the template have been retained, eg SWOT analysis as this would be useful for discussion within

Challenge Sessions. While not everything can be captured in the regional template or the scorecard, it is useful to capture some of the high level pieces. The templates are designed to be adapted and used as needed, as each directorate will have specific requirements.

The mandate currently only speaks to the point of reaching sustainability (2027/2028) rather than showing the full three years. 2028/2029 will be added to demonstrate what year three would look like.

Several new non-execs have joined and plans are underway to involve them in key discussions to enhance governance and provide external perspectives.

4. ELT Forward Look

The ELT reviewed and discussed the agendas for their next few meetings.

5. ELT Reflections

The ELT deferred reflections till 27 August 2025 in the interests of scheduling.

6. AOB

National Offices: Graeme Hutton advised that Scottish Enterprise are meeting today to discuss options they may wish to take moving forward re Apex and in regards to Great Glen House, he is awaiting some progress with SG Property Division. A further update can be given as more information comes available.

ASPEN: Go-live date agreed as by end of November 2025 with a view to be ready by end of October, with float time if needed.

The date of the next ELT meeting is 27 August 2025.