



Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) Executive Leadership Team Meeting

26 August 2024

Attendees:

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

Others:

Donna Mortimer, Chief Financial Officer
Julie Fitzpatrick, Head of People and Organisational Development
Doug Knox, Head of Technical Services Group
Jo Ellis, Head of Planning and Environment

1. Minutes of last meeting

Due to staff absence, the ELT meeting held on 19 August 2024 was not minuted.

2. Action Points and Matters Arising

Ref:	Action:	Who:	Target Date:
4/05	Director of Land Management and Regions to provide forecasting on coupe readiness.	Graeme Prest	October 2024
2/06	Director of Commercial Development to reinvigorate the 360 Steering Group and establish ownership of actions from the Procurement Action Plan.	John Mair	26 July 2024
14/06	Director of Land Management and Regions, Head of Communications and National Visitor Services Manager to start work on external communications for the Transformation Programme.	Graeme Prest Gwen Hamilton Stuart Chalmers	30 July 2024
15/06	Chief Financial Officer and Director of Corporate Services to develop clear governance on the management of investments, disposals, and reserves.	Donna Mortimer / Michael Hymers	August 2024
15/06b	Director of Commercial Development to revisit the proposed asset sales. This includes the appropriate segmentation into business streamlining and other categories such as ease of sale and the PESTLE criteria.	John Mair	August 2024
15/06d	Chief Financial Officer to create a Financial Plan for investments, disposals, and reserves.	Donna Mortimer	August 2024
16/06	Head of Communications to provide further information on website re-platforming and the options available at future ELT meeting.	Gwen Hamilton	September 2024

Ref:	Action:	Who:	Target Date:
17/06	Director of Land Management & Director of Net Zero to revisit and reduce the number of potential investments.	Graeme Prest / Graeme Hutton	August 2024
3/07	Chief Financial Officer to present a Project Plan for the Management Information Dashboard at a future ELT meeting.	Donna Mortimer	28 October 2024
4/07	Directors to nominate a member of staff from their respective directorates to contribute to the Management Information Dashboard Project Plan.	Directors	31 July 2024
6/07	Chief Financial Officer to incorporate feedback from the ELT into the Finance Information report.	Donna Mortimer	31 July 2024
7/07	Directors, Head of People and Organisational Development and Chief Financial Officer to establish number of agency Full Time Equivalents and present paper to ELT which reconciles this with the staff budget.	Directors/Julie Fitzpatrick/Donna Mortimer	10 October 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.	Graeme Hutton	31 October 2024
5/08	Director of Land Management and Regions and Head of Sales and Marketing to present a DP Productivity Improvement Programme, including implementation of a new governance and accountability framework to benchmark and improve performance, at a future ELT meeting.	Graeme Prest / Mick Bottomley	10 October 2024
6/08	Director of Land Management and Regions and Head of Sales and Marketing to further explore servicing options of FLS's DP fleet and update at future ELT.	Graeme Prest / Mick Bottomley	10 October 2024
7/08	Director of Land Management and Regions and Head of Technical Services to explore ELT feedback for requested investment and present at a future ELT meeting.	Graeme Prest / Doug Knox	September 2024
8/08	Head of Digital Services to integrate ELT's comments into FLS' Digital Strategy and Action Plan and provide and update at October ELT.	David Exeter	28 October 2024
10/08	Chief Financial Officer to incorporate feedback from ELT into Financial Management Information and Performance report.	Donna Mortimer	October 2024
11/08	Director of Land Management and Regions to examine the viability of contracts.	Graeme Prest	October 2024
12/08	Director of Net Zero to discern whether any potential savings can be applied to the capital budget for Vehicles, Machinery and Equipment in Financial Year 25/26.	Graeme Hutton	October 2024
13/08	Directors to provide directorate objectives to be published on Saltire.	Directors	September 2024

Action points 3/06, 11/06, 8/07, 9/07, 10/07, 1/08, 2/08, 3/08, 9/08 were discharged.

Action points 3/07, 7/07, 5/08 and 6/08 were reviewed and the deadlines revised to allow sufficient time for the work to be completed.

3. Financial Management Information and Performance

Donna Mortimer presented a report, outlining key figures and the deficit position for Period 4. She highlighted areas that require further investigation, namely restocking, timber profitability and renewables.

The ELT agreed the following:

- Cost centre managers to engage with their respective Finance Business Partners on quantifying the benefits of the transformation process in order to generate further insights.
- As the income from renewables can be unpredictable, further data is needed to improve the reliability of forecasting.
- Capture total Profit & Lost position across all regions in subsequent reports.
- Ensure figures are updated around staffing, specifically budget targets and Full Time Equivalents (FTEs).

Kevin Quinlan noted that the Transformation Programme Director, Rob Pengilley, will be starting on 2 September 2024.

AP 10/08: Chief Financial Officer to incorporate feedback from ELT into Financial Management Information and Performance report.

4. Strategic Budgeting Mandate Timeline FY 25/26

The ELT discussed the budget for the upcoming financial year, acknowledging the challenges around funding from Scottish Government (SG) and the effect this will have on various programmes.

AP 11/08: Director of Land Management and Regions to examine the viability of contracts.

5. Strategic Advisory Board (SAB) Meeting

Jo Ellis presented a paper, identifying the purpose and audience of the SAB and how this should inform the agenda for the meeting. She stressed the importance of utilising the time effectively as well as the SAB's expertise.

The ELT discussed the desired outcomes of the SAB meeting, namely informing the Corporate Plan 25/28 planning process. They shortlisted topics for the agenda from those suggested by Jo and Doug Knox in the paper and agreed that a facilitator was not required.

6. Preparation for Cabinet Secretary Meeting

The ELT discussed the upcoming meeting with the Cabinet Secretary, Mairi Gougeon, which will be held on 4 September 2024. They considered which matters to raise with the Cabinet Secretary and reviewed the presentation they will give.

7. FLS Forward Look & Reflections

The ELT provided their reflections on the meeting.

8. AOB

The ELT discussed SG's recent announcement on spending controls and the subsequent impact this has had on FLS events. They agreed that all meetings should be held online where possible so as to reduce expenditure.

Kevin raised the upcoming meeting between FLS and Forestry England, which will be held on 18/19 November 2024, discussing the proposed agenda and possible attendees. He also indicated that a meeting with Coillte would be beneficial, recommending this take place in Spring 2025.

Kevin requested that the objectives for each directorate be published on Saltire, FLS's internal website, so as to ensure accountability and to provide greater transparency and engagement with staff in the wider organisation.

AP 13/08: Directors to provide directorate objectives to be published on Saltire.

The date of the next ELT meeting is 4 September 2024.