



Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) Executive Leadership Team Meeting

6 August 2024

Attendees:

Kevin Quinlan, Chief Executive (Chair)
Graeme Prest, Director of Land Management and Regions
Michael Hymers, Director of Corporate Services
John Mair, Director of Commercial Development
Graeme Hutton, Director of Net Zero
Celyn Paton, Secretariat Assistant, Minute Taker

Others:

Donna Mortimer, Chief Financial Officer
Julie Fitzpatrick, Head of People and Organisational Development
Mick Bottomley, Head of Marketing and Sales
Doug Knox, Head of Technical Services Group
David Exeter, Head of Digital Services
Andy Pearce, Head of Digital Technologies
Derek Thornton, Commercial Management Consulting Ltd
Howie Laurie, Commercial Management Consulting Ltd

1. Minutes of last meeting

Due to staff absence, the minutes from the ELT held on 24 July 2024 had not been finalised – these will be submitted for approval at a future ELT meeting. The actions have been incorporated into the table below.

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
3/06	Directors to reflect on the KPIs presented in the Procurement Strategy draft and provide feedback to Deputy Head of Procurement.	All Directors	26 July 2024
11/06	Head of Planning and Environment to create agenda for the next Strategic Advisory Board meeting in September 2024.	Jo Ellis	19 August 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

Ref:	Action:	Who:	Target Date:
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
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	31 July 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 / Donna Mortimer / Julie Fitzpatrick	10 October 2024
8/07	Chief Financial Officer to incorporate feedback from the ELT into the Business Planning Mandate/Timeline for Financial Year 25/26.	Donna Mortimer	July 2024
9/07	Secretariat Assistant to provide a proposed timetable for the location of future ELT meetings.	Sophia Christopoulos	July 2024
10/07	Director of Corporate Services to update and circulate the Senior Leadership Team Meeting agenda following feedback from the ELT.	Michael Hymers	July 2024
1/08	Directors to ensure opportunities are created for the relevant person(s)/team to be engaged in reviewing any paper being brought to ELT.	Directors	19 August 2024
2/08	Director of Corporate Services to circulate ELT papers no later than the Friday noon, ahead of the next scheduled ELT, to allow time for review.	Michael Hymers	19 August 2024
3/08	Director of NetZero to incorporate ELT feedback into Business Travel Review.	Graeme Hutton	September 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	October 2024
5/08	Director of Land Management and Regions and Head of Sales and Marketing to present a DP Productivity	Graeme Prest / Mick Bottomley	September 2024

Ref:	Action:	Who:	Target Date:
	Improvement Programme, including implementation of a new governance and accountability framework to benchmark and improve performance, at a future ELT meeting.		
6/08	Director of Land Management and Regions and Head of Sales & Marketing to further explore servicing options of FLS's DP fleet and update at future ELT.	Graeme Prest / Mick Bottomley	September 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	October 2024
9/08	Director of Corporate Services to schedule additional ELT on 26 August 2024.	Michael Hymers	19 August 2024

Action points 14/05, 4/06, 15/06a, 15/06c, 18/06, 19/06, 1/07, 2/07 and 5/07 were discharged.

Action point 7/07 was reviewed and the deadline revised to allow sufficient time for the work to be completed.

AP 1/08: Directors to ensure opportunities are created for the relevant person(s)/team to be engaged in reviewing papers being brought to ELT.

AP 2/08: Director of Corporate Services to circulate ELT papers no later than Friday noon, ahead of the next scheduled ELT, to allow time for review.

Julie Fitzpatrick gave a brief update on current resourcing movements across the organisation, advising expectant timescales.

3. Business Travel Review

Graeme Hutton provided an update to the ELT on the recent Business Travel Review and welcomed Derek Thornton and Howie Laurie from Commercial Management Consulting (CMC) to the meeting, the independent consultants appointed to undertake the review.

Derek and Howie thanked the ELT for their time and presented a summary of the review, highlighting the key recommendations made for ELT's consideration, advising that all recommendations made have been considered in line with Scottish Government's (SG) overall objectives.

The ELT discussed the review, recognising areas for additional consideration including clear encouragement for Public Transport where appropriate; establishing criteria around the provision of job based allocated vehicles; due thought given to the implementation of a car salary sacrifice scheme regarding resource and charging infrastructure; and analysing potential impacts of centralising fleet management.

The ELT thanked CMC for this comprehensive piece of work and endorsed the recommendations made, provided further work is undertaken to develop recommendations into firm proposals and the implementation of specific items discussed are captured.

AP 3/08: Director of NetZero to incorporate ELT feedback into Business Travel Review.

AP 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.

4. Direct Production Review

Graeme Prest and Mick Bottomley presented an update on the Direct Production (DP) Review, as requested after the previous discussion at the ELT meeting held on 26 June 2024.

The ELT reflected on the paper, identifying areas for further consideration including; possible impacts on resourcing and existing staff; productivity versus utilisation levels; and continued work to ensure best practice for service and maintenance of machinery.

The ELT agreed the following key points:

- Recognised the critical importance of FLS's in house DP harvesting fleet to the organisation and forestry nationally.
- Maintain the size of the current fleet for the next 12 months subject to:
 - Setting out a clear plan to improve productivity and demonstrate added value.
 - A Productivity Improvement Programme to be presented at the Senior Leadership Team meeting in September, which will include implementation of a new governance and accountability framework to benchmark and improve performance.
 - Aim to fill vacant posts through short term contracts to restore efficient working on a three operator, two machine shift pattern to ensure productivity can be assessed based on full production capacity.
 - Review fleet performance and market situation in 12 months.
- Focus DP fleet on thinning and difficult sites.
- People team to support and provide assistance as requested.

The ELT requested further exploration of options for servicing the DP fleet with an update to be provided at a future ELT meeting.

AP 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.

AP 6/08: Director of Land Management and Regions and Head of Sales & Marketing to further explore servicing options of FLS's DP fleet and update at future ELT.

5. FLS Deer Management

Doug Knox provided a paper outlining FLS's rationale for deer management and proposal for investment in deer ladders across regions.

The ELT discussed the paper and various aspects for consideration. They noted the recommendations made, endorsing FLS's rationale for deer management and the proposal to explore the use of contractors along with evolving the role of FLS Wildlife Rangers, as part of in-region workforce planning. They agreed in principle to the investment, subject to the provision of:

- A detailed business case for the two priority larders in Daviot and Blairadam.
- Assessing the building specifications essential for larders whilst maintaining Food Standards Scotland's requirements.
- Exploring the potential of cross-partnership working to build larger capacity larders for other SG bodies to use, provided SG funding contributions could be obtained.

AP 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.

6. FLS Digital Strategy

Dave Exeter and Andy Pearce presented FLS's Digital and IT Strategy 2024 – 2029, seeking endorsement from the ELT for the strategy and proposed Action Plan. Dave highlighted key areas for the ELT's consideration, recognising opportunities and potential challenges. He also highlighted how the strategy aligns with FLS and SG objectives.

The ELT thanked the team for their work and engagement with relevant stakeholders across the organisation. They welcomed the strategy and action plan and look forward to future updates.

AP 08/08: Head of Digital Services to integrate ELT's comments into FLS' Digital Strategy and Action Plan and provide and update at October ELT.

7. FLS Forward Look

The ELT discussed the agendas for upcoming ELT meetings, recognising areas for future discussion, timeframes for these and the ongoing work surrounding this.

AP 09/08: Director of Corporate Services to schedule additional ELT on 26 August 2024.

8. ELT Reflections

All attendees provided their brief feedback and reflections on the meeting.

9. AOB

Graeme Hutton updated the ELT on plans to undertake a card payment compliance review, to ensure FLS meets all regulatory requirements.

The date of the next ELT meeting is 19 August 2024.