



Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) Executive Leadership Team Meeting

29 May 2025

Attendees:

Kevin Quinlan, CEO (Chair)
Jo Ellis, Head of Planning & Environment
David Leven, Director of Commercial Development
Tom Greenan, Director of Corporate Services & Transformation
Graeme Hutton, Director of Net Zero

Others:

David Craig, Transformation Programme & Planning Manager (item 4)
Dave Exeter, Head of Digital Services (item 5)
Nick Mahlitz, Senior Digital Infrastructure Manager (item 5)

Apologies:

Graeme Prest, Director of Land Management & Regions

1. Review of Minutes

It was agreed that the minutes from the ELT meeting held on 13 May 2025 were a true and accurate reflection.

2. Summary of Action Points from Meeting

Ref.:	Action:	Owner:	Target Date:
10/05	Each director to provide update on People's Survey Action Plan progress.	Directors	10 June 2025
11/05	Prepare a ppt with stocktake on Operation and Financial Performance Sheet, including an overview of actual vs. budget 24/25 and comparison to 25/26, in advance of Townhall.	Tom Greenan	10 June 2025
12/05	Pursue all avenues to fill outstanding project management and support roles, liaising with HR regarding deadline for 3 roles blocked in discussions.	Tom Greenan & David Craig	30 June 2025
13/05	Revise and amend governance structure in line with terms of reference.	David Craig & Graeme Hutton	10 June 2025

14/05	Put in place training sessions and formal letters on roles and responsibilities of SRO, Sponsor etc.	David Craig	24 June 2025
15/05	Present dashboard to ELT on progress so far with Fit for our Future portfolio.	David Craig	10 June 2025
16/05	Digital Team to revert with proposal for awareness session for SLG and later simulation exercise.	Dave Exeter & Nick Mahlitz	31 August 2025

Action Points (AP) 01/04 and 5/05 have been closed.

AP 13/10 has had its due date revised to 10 June 2025.

AP's 05a/04, 05b/04 and 07/04 have had their due date revised to 10 June with a view to consolidate actions.

AP 4/05 and 9/05 have had their due dates revised to 8 July 2025.

3. Financial P12 Report FY 24/25

Tom Greenan presented the Financial P12 Report FY 24/25, highlighting key points, covering financial performance and forecasting, as well as operational features. The ELT commended the work done on the report, discussing the data and resulting analyses. It was understood that there is a reported £2.3M operating surplus, which is positive. However, when adjusting for a £4.8M under-accrual from the previous year, the actual position is closer to a £2.5M deficit. An agreed feature of this year's report was unplanned income, which helped the bottom line, but ELT agreed a need for better forecasting and business planning.

Operationally there were 3 key take aways highlighted in the report:

- **Renewables:** Strong performance in renewables and a major success story.
- **Timber:** Timber results are volatile, due to windblow, fires and market prices with compensation payments fluctuating. These are now being treated as part of the underlying business, not exceptional items to provide a more consistent and realistic view moving forward.
- **Civils:** Positive pricing trends and better than expected delivery prices were noted, with volume price variance analysis improving.

It was agreed that it would be important to explain these key parts of the report in upcoming Townhall, with a discussion around messaging to make the findings of the report more accessible to staff.

Regarding the metrics, there was a suggestion that last year's numbers could be input into the balanced scorecard, to identify trends. The gross/net margin for renewables is very high (~98%) but this may mask the disruption and effort involved. All regions show as profitable if renewables income is included. However, there is some concern about how the renewables income is managed and reported.

There was a discussion around staffing and resourcing, with current headcount sitting under target (1059 vs. 1070). There is a push to justify new hires, and Transformation may need to be separated in the pool, as MES has been. There was also an agreed need for better tracking of staff time across business areas (e.g., time spent on renewables vs. timber), possibly using upcoming tools like Aspen.

Discussed budget discrepancies around SG funded programmes and external contractors. Tom Greenan agreed to look into this so that the two areas can be explained during upcoming Townhall. Chief Executive Officer praised directors for their respective work and advised we

AP 11/05: Prepare a ppt with stocktake on Operation and Financial Performance Sheet, including an overview of actual vs. budget 24/25 and comparison to 25/26, in advance of Townhall.

4. “Fit for our Future” Programme Update

David Craig presented a programme update to the ELT, highlighting a dual focus on recruitment and project engagement, noting challenges in resource acquisition and project management. There has been progress with recruitment, including securing start dates for several new team members but project management roles are remaining unfilled due to limited interest from external sources.

There was a discussion around the governance model, where the recommendation is a proportionate approach based on the Risk Potential Assessment, with emphasis on avoiding additional governance meetings unless necessary. It was agreed that the governance structure should have SRO’s accountable to a sponsoring director rather than ELT, aiming to ensure alignment and effective delivery of projects.

ELT was identified as the appropriate level to manage portfolio-wide alignment and oversee potential project collisions, emphasising the need for a structured approach to project management.

There was a discussion around FIRS, which suggested that maintaining it serves as a useful wrapper for various projects, acknowledging the complexity and long-term nature of its implementation.

The importance of SRO competency and empowerment was highlighted, with a proposal for formal training and clearer role definitions to enhance project delivery. ELT invited David to the next meeting to present an updated roadmap and progress so far of the “Fit for our Future” portfolio.

AP 12/05: Pursue all avenues to fill outstanding project management and support roles, liaising with HR regarding deadline for 3 roles blocked in discussions.

AP 13/05: Revise and amend governance structure in line with terms of reference.

AP 14/05: Put in place training sessions and formal letters on roles and responsibilities of SRO, Sponsor etc.

AP 15/05: Present dashboard to ELT on progress so far with “Fit for our Future” portfolio.

5. Cyber Security Update

The ELT reviewed and discussed the latest cyber security and status update with Dave Exeter and Nick Mahlitz and actions were agreed.

AP 16/05: Digital Team to revert with proposal for awareness session for SLG and later simulation exercise.

6. ELT Forward Look

The ELT reviewed and discussed the agendas for their next meeting.

7. Reflections

The ELT shared their reflections on this meeting.

8. AOB

Chief Executive Officer advised that he is looking to organise a visit to Coillte's head office South of Dublin for the ELT and selected staff members to learn about their commercial operations in late Summer / Autumn.

The date of the next ELT meeting is 10 June 2025.