



Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) Executive Leadership Team Meeting

3 April 2025

Attendees:

Kevin Quinlan, CEO (Chair)
Graeme Hutton, Director of Net Zero
David Leven, Director of Commercial Development
Tom Greenan, Director of Corporate Services & Transformation
Andy Hunt, Regional Manager (West)

Others:

Tommy Groat, Head of Mechanical Engineering Policy and Projects
Mark Wilcock, Head of Fleet and Buildings
Michael Hymers, Head of Corporate Office
David Craig, Transformation Programme and Planning Manager
Colin Buchanan, Acting Head of Finance
Rebecca McDowall, Project Manager
Derek Thornton, CMC Ltd.

Apologies:

Graeme Prest, Director of Land Management & Regions

1. Review of Minutes

It was agreed that the minutes from the ELT meeting held on 17 March 2025 were a true and accurate reflection.

Summary of Action Points from Meeting

Ref.:	Action:	Owner:	Target Date:
01/04	Provide update on Direct Production Productivity Review.	Graeme Prest	30 April 2025
02/04	Further explore Business Travel Review recommendations	Graeme Hutton	30 September 2025
03/04	Develop governance framework for the FFF Programme.	David Craig	30 May 2025

AP 06/03: The ELT requested that the updated draft Communications Strategy be circulated via email and Tom Greenan will tie this into the Corporate Plan.

AP 08/03: The due date for this action was changed from end of March to end of April 2025.

2. Business Travel Review

Graeme Hutton introduced the agenda item, outlining the need for the ELT to agree a strategic direction for the Business Travel Review.

Derek Thornton, who is advising on the review, gave a presentation providing an overview of the short-, medium- and long-term options for MES (Mechanical Engineering Services) vehicle maintenance; strategic analysis on in-house versus outsourced delivery; how MES fits within wider Land Management operations and projects, particularly the Direct Production Productivity Review; and balancing cost, health & safety and business delivery objectives.

The ELT recognised the sensitive nature of the review, with further engagement required with Trade Unions and the wider MES workforce on options to improve efficiency. They noted that there is no ready-made outsourced solution for Scotland-wide coverage and that management information generated by the recently installed Telematics system will provide insight into current and potential efficiency measures.

The ELT provided a steer on the review, agreeing to explore recommendations but stressing that no final decisions can be made until further data has been collected. A further review will be conducted in 18 months' time.

AP 01/04: Director of Land Management and Regions to provide update on Direct Production Productivity Review.

AP 02/04: Director of Net Zero to further explore Business Travel Review recommendations.

3. FLS Business Plan 2025-2026

The ELT reviewed the Business Plan, discussing the approval process for this document, timelines and audience. Kevin Quinlan requested that further amendments be made to strengthen references to the 'Fit for our Future' (FFF) programme and ensure appropriate language.

Tom Greenan provided an update on the balanced scorecard for the organisation, agreeing to complete this by the end of April 2025 (AP 08/03). The ELT focused discussion on how best to develop this scorecard so that it aligns with the Business Plan Actions, as well as on the appropriate structure and use of metrics. Other Directors are to continue developing their respective directorate-level scorecards.

4. "Fit for our Future" Programme Update

David Craig provided an update on the FFF programme, introducing Rebecca McDowall, Project Manager. He gave a presentation on roadmap progress, upcoming milestones, engagement activities, and the impact of recruitment on pace. He also outlined the process by which the Portfolio Office will support and engage with the wider organisation.

The ELT agreed that the Programme's narrative must be clearly communicated across the organisation, with current feedback indicating that messaging is clear and helpful in identifying gaps and supporting culture change. Recruitment is underway to fill key roles in the Portfolio Office and the ELT provided comments on the organisational chart and vacancies.

Governance will be strengthened through a formal bi-monthly Transformation Board meeting, with SLT signing off projects before ELT review, though further work on this framework is needed.

AP 03/04: Transformation Programme and Planning Manager to develop governance framework for the FFF Programme.

5. Financial Reporting / Finance Update (P11)

Tom introduced the paper, highlighting a reduced deficit and positive gross timber product. Colin Buchanan summarised key figures, with Tom noting the need to strip out one-off items to better reflect the underlying trading position. Kevin stressed the focus must remain on moving from a cash deficit to a cash-positive position, including capital spend.

The ELT discussed the predictability and reporting of windfall payments in regions, agreeing that better forecasting and accuracy is needed.

6. ELT Forward Look

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

They noted that a revised approach is being considered for the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meetings and that these will decrease in frequency.

7. ELT Reflections

The ELT provided their reflections on the meeting.

8. AOB

Draft Mainstreaming Report

The ELT agreed to discuss this via correspondence, with Directors to provide feedback to Tom by the end of this week. DL stressed the importance of this, particularly as it relates to the wider piece around gender equality and how this relates to the People Survey.

The date of the next ELT meeting is 17th April 2025.