



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

4 February 2026

Attendees:

Kevin Quinlan, CEO (Chair)
 Graeme Prest, Director of Land Management and Regions
 Graeme Hutton, Director of Net Zero
 Nicola McBain, Director of Corporate Services and Transformation
 David Leven, Director of Commercial Development
 Matthew Henderson, Secretariat Assistant (Minutes)

Others:

Michael Hymers, Head of Corporate Office (items 4, 6)
 Adam Dearnley, Head of Finance (item 6)
 Callum Macinnes, Head of Human Resources (items 6, 8)
 Fiona Dundas, Senior HR Manager (item 8)
 Rhondda Salmond, Change Manager (item 3)

Summary of Action Points from Meeting

Ref.:	Action:	Owner:	Target Date:
01/02	Review and close all red and amber consultation items, updating spreadsheet and taking action as needed.	Graeme Prest & David Leven	10 th February 2026
02/02	Issue a staff-wide call for suitable imagery and add contextual captions to visuals.	Michael Hymers	13 th February 2026
03/02	Directors to review their plans and ensure deliverables for the coming year are clearly time-scaled, to support aggregation and reporting.	Directors	10 th February 2026
04/02	Resolve FTE / Headcount inconsistencies and ensure updated figures are included in upcoming union brief.	Callum Macinnes	10 th February 2026
05/02	Produce and deliver a draft Performance Framework for ELT review.	Nicola McBain	1 April 2026
06/02	Agree the overall structure and consolidation approach for the 3-year plan.	Michael Hymers, Nicola McBain, Kevin Quinlan	09 th February 2026
07/02	Deliver a concise SLG update on current financial reporting status, including next steps outline, and responsibilities for managers.	Adam Dearnley	10 th February 2026

08/02	Refine WFM terminology across documents to ensure clear and consistent staff-facing language.	Nicola McBain & Fiona Dundas	Ongoing
09/02	Prepare slide pack for Trade Union engagement.	Nicola McBain	10 th February 2026

1. ELT Reflections

The ELT provided their reflections on the meeting.

2. Review of Minutes

It was agreed that the minutes from the ELT meeting held on 20th January 2026 were a true and accurate reflection.

3. ELT Forward Look

The ELT reviewed and discussed the agenda for their upcoming meetings.

4. Corporate Plan 2026-2030 – Progress Update

Michael Hymers provided a detailed update on the status of the Corporate Plan and the consultation process. Approximately 367 consultation comments were logged for review. The outstanding actions were determined to largely relate to Land Management and Commercial Development directorates. Directors were reminded to review and update the spreadsheet once action is taken, ensuring that a proportionate response is provided where relevant.

MH emphasised that design and translation work cannot begin until the written content is finalised. To meet the publication window ahead of the mid-March pre-election period, all consultation actions must be closed before the next ELT meeting.

The ELT reviewed both strategic and tactical themes emerging from consultation feedback. Further discussion identified the need for improved visual representation. Directors agreed to review the current graphics and photographs and ensure images better reflect the diversity of work and people across the organisation.

AP 01/02: Graeme Prest and David Leven to review and close all red and amber consultation items, updating spreadsheet and taking action as needed.

AP 02/02: Michael Hymers to issue a staff-wide call for suitable imagery and add contextual captions to visuals.

5. Break

6. FLS Rolling Three-Year Business Plan

The ELT reviewed progress on the Directorate Business Plans and the evolving three-year organisational business plan. Directors acknowledged that the current drafts represent a “*stake in the ground*”, with further refinement needed in several areas, including income assumptions, milestone consistency, and clarity on deliverables.

The use of FTE versus headcount was discussed, and the importance for consistency across directorates and in submissions to the Strategic Advisory Board. Callum Macinnes is working with the Finance Team to identify discrepancies and ensure the SLG and Trade Union slide packs contain accurate, consistent figures, with a commitment to use FTE as the standard metric in business planning.

The ELT noted inconsistencies in the inclusion of milestones and quarter-by-quarter timing across directorate business plans. This is essential for aggregation into a single, coherent organisational plan.

Part of the next Land Management Leadership Team Meeting will be spent on workforce planning alignment by supporting regional managers in updating workforce elements of their regional business plans, with a target for consolidated regional updates by end of February.

Nicola McBain is producing an organisational Performance Framework, which will define reporting responsibilities, data flows (including the mix of Aspen, SRP, and spatial systems), and the cadence for organisational performance review.

Adam Dearnley briefed the ELT on the continuing challenges associated with the transition from EFIN to Aspen. Local managers have adequate visibility of spend, but directorate-level reporting remains constrained by delays in period-end processes and the need for manual consolidation across cost centres. To address this, the ELT agreed that a short, focus update should be provided at the next weekly SLG meeting.

Aspen remains on course to transition from project mode to Business-As-Usual (BAU) by 31 March 2026, pending completion of gateway checks and a benefits realisation assessment scheduled for mid-March. Programme and performance data will continue to come from multiple systems, not exclusively Aspen. The forthcoming Performance Framework will clarify how these datasets will be integrated into organisational reporting.

Graeme Prest updated the ELT on positive discussions regarding funding for FLS's core rainforest programme, to allow this to proceed without interruption, supplemented by carry-over where required. Clear documentation will be maintained to demonstrate the link between expenditure and deliverables for audit purposes.

AP 03/02: Directors to review their plans and ensure deliverables for the coming year are clearly time-scaled, to support aggregation and reporting.

AP 04/02: Callum Macinnes to resolve FTE / Headcount inconsistencies and ensure updated figures are included in upcoming union brief.

AP 05/02: Nicola McBain to produce and deliver a draft Performance Framework for ELT review.

AP 06/02: Michael Hymers, Nicola McBain and Kevin Quinlan to meet and agree the overall structure and consolidation approach for the 3-year plan.

AP 07/02: Adam Dearnley to deliver a concise SLG update on current financial reporting status, including next steps outline, and responsibilities for managers.

7. Lunch

8. Workforce Planning – Framing Next Steps

The ELT held a detailed discussion on Workforce Management (WFM), reaffirming the need for an agile, dynamic approach instead of a one-time workforce plan. Kevin Quinlan set the financial context, and the need for proactive headcount management while ensuring fairness and transparency for staff.

Fiona Dundas and Callum Macinnes reiterated the need to simplify staff-movement mechanisms, and emphasised that redeployment pathways must be clear, fair, and compliant with policy and employment law. A revised Change Management Framework is being prepared to support this.

NM and FD will lead engagement with trade union colleagues, supported by a concise set of 4-6 slides summarising headcount, priorities, and the overall Workforce Management approach.

AP 08/02: Nicola McBain and Fiona Dundas to refine WFM terminology across documents to ensure clear and consistent staff-facing language.

AP 09/02: Nicola McBain to prepare slide pack for Trade Union engagement.

9. AOB

The next ELT meeting will be held on 11th February 2026.