



Forestry and
Land Scotland
Coilltearachd agus
Fearann Alba

Forestry and Land Scotland

Business Plan

April 2024 – March 2025

1. Introduction

This Business Plan sets out the main actions we will take over the period 1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025 to deliver the commitments and outcomes identified in our Corporate Plan, published in April 2022.

It covers Forestry and Land Scotland's sixth year since being established as a Scottish Government agency. FLS has risen to some big challenges since then. Scotland's people, nature and economy have all faced increased pressures. As an organisation that strives to achieve positive outcomes for all three, it has meant having to adapt and at times deal with the unexpected.

Despite a challenging operational and financial environment, FLS has remained resilient thanks to the efforts of our teams working together across the country.

FLS has a continued role to provide positive outcomes for people, nature and economy and will do so in a way that is workable, affordable, and sustainable for future generations. We have set an ambitious Business Plan for the year with key activities that will help deliver against our five corporate outcomes. Some of the actions we will take include:

- Providing 3.3 million m³ of timber to the market.
- Creating 600 ha of new woodland.
- Putting a further 1500 ha of peatland on the road to recovery.
- Continuing to develop and implement the Net Zero Strategy and Climate Change Plan.
- Transformation of our Target Operating Model to ensure the organisations financial sustainability.

We will strive to deliver all our commitments set out in this plan but are mindful of the need to be ready to change plans to respond to local and global concerns. We will also play our role in responding to other challenges including addressing the Climate Emergency and move closer to our vision of forests and land that Scotland can be proud of.

2. Purpose of the Business Plan

This Business Plan is a strategic document which details the actions required for the delivery of key work areas across the organisation to support the delivery of our Corporate Outcomes. It has been developed in accordance with our Corporate Planning Framework. Business plans are developed on an annual basis by each Directorate and Region and set out the high-level actions to be taken to ensure delivery of the areas for action set out in the Corporate Plan. This FLS Business Plan consolidates the main high-level actions from the Directorates and Regions into a single framework of key work areas.

Oversight is provided by our Executive Leadership Team to ensure effective coordination and delivery of the key work areas and corresponding high-level actions set out in each Directorate/Regional Business Plan.

The plan is an active document and will be subject to revision on an annual basis with a report to the FLS Executive Leadership Team for consideration. Reviews will consider internal and external influences and actions arising from monitoring activity throughout the year. In addition, the plan will be monitored on a quarterly basis through Corporate Performance Reports which are reported to the Executive Leadership Team. Information will also be reported in our Annual Report and Accounts.

3. Who we are

Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) was established as an executive agency of the Scottish Government on 1st April 2019. We are responsible for managing Scotland's national forests and land, an area that in total covers 640,000 hectares, 9% of Scotland's land area, in a way that supports and enables economically sustainable forestry; conserves and enhances the environment and delivers benefits for people and nature. FLS is also classed as a Public Corporation under the definition set by the Office of National Statistics due to being an operationally focused organisation involved in commercial trading activities (e.g. sale of timber).

Our mission is **'to look after Scotland's forests and land, for the benefit of all, now and for the future.'** This leads to our vision of **'forests and Land that Scotland can be proud of.'**

FLS employs over 1084 FTE staff in a variety of occupations across Scotland. There are also volunteers who help us to manage the national forests and land. Staff are organised into four Directorates and five Regions, with support from national offices in Edinburgh and Inverness.

4. Our Contribution to the National Performance Framework

As an executive agency of Scottish Government, we will continue to contribute to the delivery of the national outcomes set out within the National Performance Framework. We will help deliver across all eleven national outcomes and will make a particular contribution to the following:



Economy

We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy



Environment

We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment



Health

We are healthy and active



Communities

We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe



Fair Work and Business

We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone



Education

We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society

5. Our Corporate Plan and Outcomes

The FLS Corporate Plan sets out the direction for the organisation over the period 2022-2025 and defines our contribution to the delivery of the National Outcomes as set out in Scotland’s National Performance Framework. It also sets out how we contribute to the delivery of other national strategies and plans including Scotland’s Forestry Strategy 2019-2029. This Business Plan sets out the specific actions we will take over the second year of the Corporate Plan.



We have developed five Corporate Outcomes, all of which are aligned to one or more of the National Outcomes.

FLS Corporate Outcome		National Performance Framework National Outcome
FLS supports a sustainable, low-carbon economy by managing the national forests and land in a way that encourages sustainable business growth, development opportunities, jobs, tourism, and investments.	⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive, and sustainable economy. We value, enjoy, protect, and enhance our environment.
Scotland’s national forests and land are looked after, playing their part in tackling climate change, and their biodiversity is protected and enhanced.	⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We value, enjoy, protect, and enhance our environment. We are healthy and active.
Everyone can visit and enjoy Scotland’s national forests and land to connect with nature, have fun, benefit their health and wellbeing, and have the opportunity to engage in our community decision making.	⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are healthy and active. We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe. We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society.
Forestry and Land Scotland is a supportive, safe, and inclusive organisation that provides exciting careers, professional development and strives to be an employer of choice.	⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society. We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone.
Forestry and Land Scotland is recognised as a high performing, efficient and effective, sustainable organisation that continues to transform and adapt.	⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone.

Our Corporate Outcomes describe what we aim to achieve from our programme of activity over the three-year period. For each Corporate Outcome we have developed actions, delivery of which are crucial to achieving our Outcomes, Vision, and Mission for the organisation.



6. Responding to the Climate Emergency

Our mission is to look after Scotland's forests and land for the benefit of all, now and for the future. Together, the twin emergencies of climate change and biodiversity loss will see us living in a very different future. By managing the national forests and land, FLS has a unique opportunity to act on a large scale to make a real difference to Scotland's response to the Climate Emergency. Our aim is to adapt how we manage our land, reduce our emissions, and capture more carbon, leading the way for the landbased sector.

Scotland's climate change legislation and National Performance Framework set a target date for net-zero emissions of all greenhouse gases by 2045. We are already major contributors to efforts to capture carbon and reduce emissions: leading the way in creating new woodlands; balancing timber production and replanting programmes; improving the condition of peatlands and other degraded soils; and working with the wind and hydro sectors to realise the renewable energy potential of the national forests and land. Alongside this we have been identifying ways to reduce our own emissions and have been working with our suppliers to better understand our contract emissions.

In recent years we have been increasing our response to the climate challenge, assessing the risks this presents us, and future-proofing our forests and open land to adapt and build resilience in the changing climate. But we must go further in adapting our natural and built environments to ensure they remain reliable, resilient, and sustainable now and in the years ahead. There are more opportunities to tackle climate change and in 2024/25 we are taking some big steps to ensure that adaptation, emissions reduction, and carbon capture are embedded in our policies, processes, and the culture of the whole organisation. These actions are set out in section 12 of this Business Plan.

7. Ensuring Best Value

As an executive agency of Scottish Government, FLS is required to demonstrate compliance around the duty of 'Best Value' as set out within the Scottish Public Finance Manual. FLS takes a mainstreaming approach to the implementation of Best Value requirements, and as such, key actions have been included within this Business Plan to ensure continuous improvement in performance whilst having regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equal opportunities, and sustainable development.

8. Key Performance Indicators

The following are our agreed Key Performance Indicators for 2024/25: These are supported by other indicators of performance that we are monitoring through a Balanced Scorecard:

Corporate Outcome	Key Performance Indicator	Target (2024/25)
Supporting a Sustainable Economy	Volume of Timber Brought to the Market	3.3 million m ³ obs
Looking after Scotland's National Forests and Land	Area of Woodland Creation	600 ha
	Area of high conservation value forests and land	257,969 ha
	Total area of peatland put on the road to recovery (ha)	1500 ha
	Percentage of Notified Features on Designated sites in favorable (or unfavorable recovering) Condition	94 %
	Maintain UKWAS Certification	Maintain
Scotland's National Forests and Land for Visitors and Communities	Number of community groups engaged in recognised partnerships and agreements	90
A Supporting, Safe and Inclusive Organisation	Percentage of women in senior roles (SCS –PB2).	40 %
	Ratio of near miss reporting to total accidents and incidents reported.	20 %
	Average number of working days lost per Full Time Employee (FTE)	9 days
	Number of RIDDOR ¹ reportable accidents and injuries	5
A High Performing Organisation	Percentage of complaints responded to within statutory timescales.	80%
	Percentage of FOIs responded to within statutory timescales.	95%

¹ Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013

9. Financial Resources

FLS is different from most other public bodies in Scotland in that we earn a substantial proportion of our income to support the management and development of Scotland’s national forests and land. This is primarily through commercial trading activities such as the sale of timber, renewables, recreation, venison, and leases. We use this revenue to invest in activities such as woodland expansion but to also build a sustainable financial model to protect the national forests and land for the long term. In addition, we receive Scottish Government funding. As a public corporation, FLS is required through the FLS Framework Document to retain a financial reserve to enable essential investment to protect against trading cash flow variances and enable essential investment. Our anticipated income and expenditure for 2024/25 is as follows:

Income (£000)	Provisional Outturn ²	Budget
	FY 23/24	FY 24/25
Timber	82,072	93,796
Renewables	24,155	21,908
Estates	4,011	5,428
Deer	1,698	1,698
Visitor Services	4,782	2,528
Other	2,517	1,560
SG project funding	10,693	25,832
Total	129,928	152,751

Expenditure (£000)	Provisional Outturn	Budget
	FY 23/24	FY 24/25
Timber Harvesting	29,206	34,235
Other Maintenance & Protection	9,108	7,550
Forest Planning	10,340	10,078
Restocking	23,510	28,399

² Provisional out-turn based on unaudited end-of-year financial information.

Wildlife Management	12,125	13,919
Civil Engineering	26,968	26,946
Total Timber Operations	111,257	121,126
Renewables	1,319	1,309
Property Management and Land Agency	3,382	3,853
Visitor Services and Communities	15,721	12,179
Historic Environment	334	348
Total Other Activities	20,755	17,869
Biodiversity	5,320	5,531
Woodland Creation	3,293	9,534
Carbon Capture	1,481	599
Peatland Restoration	4,739	15,931
Rainforest Restoration	1,930	5,345
Total Natural Capital	16,762	36,401
Total Expenditure	148,774	175,216

Deficit Funded by (£000)	Provisional Outturn	Budget
	FY 23/24	FY 24/25
Annual Subsidy Limit (ASL)	7,769	17,249
Earmarked Reserves	11,077	5,216
Total	18,846	22,465

10. Transformation

External economic factors remain a challenge for the organisation and maintaining financial stability continues to be the key focus for FLS in FY 24/25.

Whilst we continue to hold reserves at the end of FY 23-24, these are forecast to be fully utilised over the next two years. The completion of restricted projects, the funding of forecast trading deficits (because of the challenging economic conditions) combined with the wider challenges of public sector funding means that FLS must become more effective and efficient in delivering its outputs to ensure that we become financially sustainable.

The Executive Leadership Team is establishing a Transformation Programme to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of FLS's key priorities and outputs, and to develop an operationally and financially sustainable business model. This will be designed to boost financial performance and improve productivity, which will help deliver key operational outputs.

The Transformation Programme will be a process of continuous improvement, exploring new sources of income, external benchmarking, and profitability analysis. It will implement changes in a timely manner to maximise efficiencies in our delivery. The implementation of 'leading' KPIs and scorecard measurements is already taking place, giving the senior team earlier access to information and tools to improve the timeliness of decision making.

The actions taken through the Transformation Programme will mitigate the impact on FLS's operations and will allow us to continue to grow the estate and its outputs.

We are confident that FLS is financially sustainable in the short-term and will be able to deliver longer-term viability through the Transformation Programme.

11. Monitoring Performance

Performance on the implementation of the Business Plan is managed by the Corporate Services Directorate and monitored by the FLS Executive Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Team. A performance overview and analysis are published as part of our Annual Report and Accounts.

12. Further Information

Further information on this Business Plan and our approach to business planning across the organisation can be requested by contacting the Corporate Services Team on the following details:

Forestry and Land Scotland
Great Glen House
Leachkin Road
Inverness
IV3 8NW

Telephone: 0131 370 5541

Email: enquiries@forestryandland.gov.scot

Website: forestryandland.gov.scot

13. Business Plan Actions and Key Work Areas (April 2024 – March 2025)



Supporting a Sustainable Economy

Outcome: FLS supports a sustainable, low-carbon economy by managing the national forests and land in a way that encourages sustainable business growth, development opportunities, jobs, tourism and investments.

Corporate Plan Actions	Key Work Areas	Timescales	Responsibility	Related KPI
Bringing a sustainable supply of timber to market through the Timber Marketing Framework.	Bring 3.3 million m ³ obs of timber to the market via targeted long-term contract offers, open market sales, linking availability with emerging developments in the sector.	By end of Q4	Land Management and Regions Directorate	Volume of Timber Brought to the Market
Bringing opportunities for further renewable energy projects to the market and helping to facilitate the development of projects which achieved planning consent.	Take forward the renewable energy developments identified in 2020/21 through the Energy Offering to full option and thereafter facilitate the developers to progress to full planning applications.	Ongoing - by end of Q4	Commercial Development Directorate	n/a
Release value from rural development opportunities in areas of Scotland where this is needed, for reinvestment in the national forests and land e.g. rural housing.	Work with regional teams to identify and progress commercial and residential development opportunities over short, medium, and long-term to deliver income and other FLS objectives.	Q1 and then ongoing	Commercial Development Directorate	n/a
Engaging commercially with network operators to facilitate the delivery of priority power grid infrastructure and digital and mobile connectivity projects.	Coordinate project engagement across Scotland, leading the negotiation of terms and legal documentation and directly supporting regional teams.	Ongoing	Commercial Development Directorate	n/a
	Identify the pipeline of Transmission Network and grid connection development proposals; agree FLS wide policy and principles and directly supporting regional teams at a project level.	Q1 and then ongoing	Commercial Development Directorate	



Looking after Scotland's National Forests and Land

Outcome: Scotland's national forests and land are looked after; playing their part in tackling climate change, and their biodiversity is protected and enhanced.

Corporate Plan Actions	Key Work Areas	Timescales	Responsibility	Related KPI
Helping the Scottish Government to meet forest and woodland creation targets.	Create 600 ha of new woodland.	By end of Q4	Land Management and Regions Directorate	Area of Woodland Creation
Increasing our contribution to the Peatland Action programme.	Continue to increase our peatland restoration programme by taking a further 1500 ha of peatland put on the road to recovery.	By end of Q4	Land Management and Regions Directorate	Cumulative total area of peatland with initial restoration action (ha)
Managing the national forests and land to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity .	Maintain the area of high conservation value forests and land.	By end of Q4	Land Management and Regions Directorate	Area of high conservation value forests and land
Taking targeted action to maintain and bring designated sites into favorable condition – and working beyond designated sites at the landscape scale with partners where we can – for example in Scotland's rainforests.	Continue to work with partners to identify potential landscape-scale habit management and restoration project opportunities centered on FLS priority areas.	Ongoing- by end of Q4	Land Management and Regions Directorate	Percentage of Notified Features on Designated sites in favorable (or unfavorable recovering) Condition
Implementing a programme to improve the resilience of the national forests and land to the impacts of climate change and tree health threats.	Ensure effective implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan.	Ongoing- by end of Q4	Land Management and Regions Directorate and Net Zero Directorate	n/a

Corporate Plan Actions	Key Work Areas	Timescales	Responsibility	Related KPI
	Develop and publish an Adaptation Plan	End of Q4	Net Zero Directorate	n/a
	Carry our Phase II of our Climate Change Risk Assessment process: Biogeographical Climate Change Risk Assessments to enable adaptation and resilience building in our land management.	End of Q4	Net Zero Directorate	n/a
	Support the Scottish Government Scottish National Adaptation Plan 3	Ongoing – by end of Q4	Net Zero Directorate and Land Management and Regions Directorate	n/a



Scotland's National Forests and Land for Visitors and Communities

Outcome: Everyone can visit and enjoy Scotland's national forests and land to connect with nature, have fun, benefit their health and wellbeing and have the opportunity to engage in our community decision making.

Corporate Plan Actions	Key Work Areas	Timescales	Responsibility	Related KPI
Developing a strategic approach to wider participation in the management of the national forests and land.	Engage with our partners in relation to strategic projects such as the Borderlands, Glentress and Nevis Masterplan.	Ongoing – by end of Q4	Commercial Development Directorate and Land Management and Regions Directorate	n/a
Facilitating renewable energy opportunities to encourage community benefits / wealth building .	Work with developers on new renewable projects to ensure delivery of community benefit and investment opportunities.	Ongoing – by end of Q4	Commercial Development Directorate	n/a

Corporate Plan Actions	Key Work Areas	Timescales	Responsibility	Related KPI
Empower communities to make innovative use of the national forests and land including for social and economic recovery after the Covid19 pandemic, contributing to a just transition to a new green economy.	Facilitate the acquisition and use of land through sales, transfer requests leases and permissions. Work with the Scottish Land Commission to explore ways in which community land use and involvement in decisions relating to land can be more proactively supported/managed. This will be aligned with the principles set out in our Communities Strategy	Ongoing – by end of Q4	Commercial Development Directorate	n/a



A Supportive, Safe and Inclusive Organisation

Outcome: Forestry and Land Scotland is a supportive, safe and inclusive organisation that provides exciting careers, professional development and strives to be an employer of choice.

Corporate Plan Actions	Key Work Areas	Timescales	Responsibility	Related KPI
Using targeted positive action measures to try to increase the diversity of our workforce	Take positive action measures in relation to gender and age.	By end of Q4	Corporate Services Directorate	Percentage of women in senior roles.
Considering where we can adapt our processes to meet and exceed our Corporate Parenting obligations.	Coordinate and oversee the implementation of the FLS Corporate Parenting Plan.	Ongoing – by end of Q4	Corporate Services Directorate	
Supporting the Apprenticeship and Student Programme in all parts of the business.	Continue to identify opportunities to recruit and support apprentices and students across the organisation.	Ongoing - by end of Q4	Corporate Services Directorate	n/a
Strengthening the professionalism of our staff through increasing their membership of accredited institutions and providing new opportunities for continued professional development.	Continue to offer targeted professional training and promote membership of accredited institutions.	Ongoing - by end of Q4	All Directorates	n/a

Corporate Plan Actions	Key Work Areas	Timescales	Responsibility	Related KPI
Continuing to treat risks to our mental health and wellbeing with the same priority as physical risks.	Undertake regular reviews of work programmes and priorities, supported by regular bilateral and team check-ins.	Ongoing – by end of Q4	All Directorates	Average number of working days lost per FTE.
Providing ongoing support on health, safety, and wellbeing across FLS including reactive support, site visits, meetings, and webinars.	Provide an effective and high-quality Health, safety, and Wellbeing (HS&W) support service through a team of regional and national HS&W advisors, considering the Forest Industry Accord.	Ongoing - by end of Q4	Corporate Services Directorate	Number of RIDDOR reportable accidents and injuries



A High Performing Organisation

Outcome: Forestry and Land Scotland is recognised as a high performing, efficient and effective, sustainable organisation that continues to transform and adapt.

Corporate Plan Actions	Key Work Areas	Timescales	Responsibility	Related KPI
Maintaining the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) certification.	Undertake work across the organisation to ensure UKWAS certification is maintained.	By end of Q4	Land Management and Regions Directorate	Maintain UKWAS Certification
Developing and implementing a strategic programme of built asset rationalisation and investment including the rollout of smarter working practices across the organisation.	Progress the Building Rationalisation Programme identifying further reductions in the building portfolio by 2025 disposing, transferring, or demolishing surplus assets as appropriate.	By end of Q4	Net Zero Directorate	n/a
	Continue to explore opportunities with partners/public bodies to share assets and services.	By end of Q4	Net Zero Directorate	n/a
Developing and implementing the digital transformation programme to enable business process improvements.	Complete the discovery phase to develop and implement a Transformation Programme to modernise Forestry and Land Management Systems including Timber Sales, Wildlife Management and Plant & Seed Supply.	By end of Q4	Land Management Directorate and Net Zero Directorate	n/a

Corporate Plan Actions	Key Work Areas	Timescales	Responsibility	Related KPI
	Intelligence, Robotic Process Automation (RPA) etc. on a rolling programme.	By end of Q2	Net Zero Directorate	n/a
Reviewing, developing, and implementing strategies and plans in relation to business improvement and Best Value.	Continue to develop and implement the new Management Information Platform (ASPEN).	Ongoing milestones to be delivered throughout 2024/5.	Corporate Services Directorate	n/a
	Replace the fleet management system, and introduce telematics and mobile data capture, improving our knowledge, priorities and decision making, and the safety of our colleagues	By end of Q2	Net Zero Directorate	n/a
	Review and develop our current business travel policies, guidance and working practices on business travel, benchmarking against other large national organisations	By end of Q3	Net Zero Directorate	n/a
Implementing our new Gaelic Language Plan.	Continue to implement key actions within year one and year two of the Gaelic Language Plan.	Ongoing milestones to be delivered throughout 2024/5.	Land Management and Regions Directorate	n/a
Implementing and reviewing actions to enhance our approach to complaints and customer satisfaction.	Oversee the implementation of the FLS Complaints Handling Procedure and produce quarterly and annual reports.	Quarterly and Annually (Q1)	Corporate Services Directorate	Percentage of complaints responded to within statutory timescales.

Corporate Plan Actions	Key Work Areas	Timescales	Responsibility	Related KPI
Supporting effective governance arrangements including the FLS Executive and Strategic Leadership Teams, Strategic Advisory Board and its Audit & Risk Committee and Resource Management Board.	Maintain a Corporate Governance Framework, including appropriate schemes of delegation that support and embed assurance across the organisation.	Ongoing - By end of Q4	Corporate Services Directorate	n/a
Responding to Ministerial enquiries and Freedom of Information requests.	Ensure consistent approach to responding to Ministerial enquiries and Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests across the organisation.	Ongoing – by end of Q4	Corporate Services Directorate	Percentage of FOIs responded to within statutory timescales.
Taking the corporate actions set out in our Climate Change Plan, including those to reduce emissions, and to move along the maturity scale of the Public Sector Capability Framework for Adaptation.	Continue to develop and implement the Net Zero Strategy and Climate Change Plan.	Ongoing – by end of Q4	Net Zero Directorate	n/a
	Develop and publish a national Adaptation Strategy.	By end of Q2	Net Zero Directorate	n/a
	Continue assessment of climate change risk and ensure identified national Climate Change Risks are considered in business planning and decisions.	Ongoing by end of Q4	Net Zero Directorate	n/a
	Support the development of organisational capacity requirements for delivery of our Climate Change Plan	Ongoing – by end of Q4	Net Zero Directorate	n/a
	Review our annual emissions report to prioritise areas and opportunities for reduction.	By end of Q4	Net Zero Directorate	n/a
	Support Regions to produce Carbon Credits for FLS through the delivery of validated schemes for the Woodland Carbon Code and Peatland Code.	Q1 and then ongoing	Commercial Development Directorate	n/a

Corporate Plan Actions	Key Work Areas	Timescales	Responsibility	Related KPI
	Monitor options to maximise public value through natural capital partnerships and support regions to generate income through the delivery of carbon/biodiversity enhancement projects for external parties, such as through NPF4 requirements.	Q1 and then ongoing	Commercial Development Directorate	n/a
Using the Public Bodies Reporting duties under the Climate Change Act as a focus for continuous improvement in our climate change contribution.	Complete the annual mandatory Climate Change reporting requirements.	Q3	Net Zero Directorate	n/a