

**8 DECEMBER 2025****COVER PAPER – AI WORKING GROUP UPDATE TO FC EXECUTIVE BOARD****Issue**

1. The AI Working Group (AIWG), established on 11 November with representation from across the Forestry Commission, is driving a coordinated approach to AI adoption. Building on independent work undertaken by Forestry England, Forest Services, and Forest Research over the past year, the group has refined its Terms of Reference (TOR) and developed initial outputs for Executive Board consideration: a draft Communications Plan, proposed Checklist for generative AI Use in FC, and a prioritised forward work plan.

**Recommendations**

2. The FC Executive Board are invited to approve the revised Terms of Reference (Appendix A), provide comments on the draft Communications Plan and Checklist for generative AI Use in FC (Appendix B), and steer the prioritised forward work plan (Appendix C).

**Background**

3. The Forestry Commission has seen a growing interest in the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve efficiency, enhance decision-making, and support delivery across its organisations. Over the past year, Forestry England, Forest Services, and Forest Research have each explored AI independently, generating valuable insights and early use cases. These efforts highlighted both the opportunities and the need for a coordinated, organisation-wide approach to ensure consistency, responsible adoption, and alignment with government standards.
4. In response, the AI Working Group (AIWG) was established on 11 November with strong representation from across the FC. Its purpose is to provide strategic oversight, share best practice, and act as a bridge between policy, delivery, and technical teams. The group has made immediate progress by refining its Terms of Reference (TOR), developing a draft Communications Plan, proposing a Checklist for generative AI Use in FC and drafting a forward workplan. These outputs are presented for early engagement to the FC Executive Board to ensure strategic alignment.
5. The Checklist for generative AI use in FC was developed in response to comments on Roots items promoting the use of AI, and engagement and feedback from the AI pilot run by Forestry England IT. There were examples of colleagues using generative AI in a way which risked exposing our data to third parties. It was also apparent that while many colleagues are keen to adopt the

use of AI, they want to ensure they do so safely and inline with recommended practice.

**Name and Title:** Head of Organisational Change, CO

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