Minute of the meeting of the Scottish Land Commissioners held on Thursday 4th June at Langholm

- **Commissioners present:** Michael Russell (Chair), Lucy Beattie, Deb Roberts, Rob Black
- **In attendance:** Hamish Trench, Nikki Nagler, Kathie Pollard, Uwe Stoneman, Scarlett Macfarlane (Scottish Land Commission); Emma Ash (Scottish Government, observer)
- **Apologies:** Craig Mackenzie
- **Declarations of interest:** None

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 May 2026 were agreed as true and accurate.

2. Commissioners Updates

Commissioners provided an update on recent activity representing the Commission and other external matters relevant to our work. One Commissioner reported an approach received about a recently announced estate sale in which members of the community had asked whether new lotting measures would apply, an indication of the expectations on implementation of the 2025 Act and the need for clear public information about the timescales. The Chair provided a brief update following an introductory meeting with the Cabinet Secretary. The board also highlighted the value of the morning visit to Tarras Valley Nature Reserve and the useful insights from their experience as a community landowner.

3. Strategic Plan

The board considered the working draft of the strategic plan.

Commissioners asked that as the plan is developed further, drafting considers:

- More emphasis on what success looks like in terms of the impact against priorities over the three-year period;
- Clearer articulation of the way the three Commissioner functions interact and greater emphasis on the way the Commissioners work together;
- Clearer reference to the specific delivery of the 2025 Act functions, including the obligation to review the impact of Part 1;
- More developed and outcome-focused KPIs;
- Specific commitment to contributing to public service reform.

The board supported the proposed outcomes and priorities and the overall structure proposed for the plan.

The board agreed that a further working draft should be circulated in a month's time, providing an opportunity for further feedback by correspondence, before a final draft is brought to the August board meeting.

Hamish noted that further staff discussions on the plan and development of the associated Programme of Work will continue throughout this period.

4. Tax reforms route map

The board considered the paper summarising the findings of the recent tax research reports and the proposed direction for the next stage of our advice.

Commissioners welcomed the insights from the research reports, noting these will be published shortly. Commissioners also noted that our advice on the next steps should reference clearly the full body of work we have undertaken and published on tax reforms, as it provides a substantial base of evidence and analysis.

Commissioners agreed that data emerges as the key priority which will underpin the other steps required, and that this should be the priority focus for the Commission's continuing role in supporting government on land tax reforms.

The board agreed the direction proposed in the paper for the advice, emphasising that this should focus on practical, achievable steps for delivery.

Kathie confirmed that a final draft of the advice will be provided to the board at or before the next board meeting.

5. AOB

Dates and locations of future meetings were confirmed.

The board held a closed session on an additional confidential additional item of business.

Date of next meeting:

Thursday 6th August

Inverness