



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION  
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

# Business Plan 2020-2021



## INTRODUCTION

Land is at the heart of Scotland's identity, economy and communities. Land reform is key to unlocking opportunities in big public policy priorities, from climate action to regeneration and a fair economy. The Scottish Land Commission's role is to stimulate fresh thinking so that the way we own and use land in Scotland helps people to realise opportunities and ambitions. This annual business plan sets out what we will deliver in the third year of our current Strategic Plan 'Making More of Scotland's Land'. During this year we will engage on and publish our next Strategic Plan, looking to the three years ahead.

## VISION

**Our vision is a fair, inclusive and productive system of ownership, management and use of land that delivers greater benefit for all the people of Scotland.**

## OBJECTIVES

Our work is guided by three strategic objectives set out in our Strategic Plan:

- **Productivity** – to drive increased economic, environmental, social and cultural value from our land
- **Diversity** – to encourage a more diverse pattern of land ownership with the benefits of land spread more inclusively
- **Accountability** – to ensure decision-making takes account of those affected and responsibilities are met.

## CORE VALUES

Our core values underpin what we do and how we work:



## PRIORITIES FOR 2020-21

Our [Strategic Plan 'Making More of Scotland's Land'](#) sets out the outcomes, strategic objectives and priorities we are working towards over three years to 2020-21. Our [Programme of Work](#) sets out the workstreams which will deliver against the Strategic Plan over three years. This Annual Business Plan sets out the priorities, activities and resource allocations for the work we will do in 2020-21 to deliver against these outcomes and objectives.

Our priorities continue to respond to the wider drivers setting the context for land reform, including:

***Climate action and land use*** – Land use is a key sector in achieving Scotland's ambitious climate targets. A more integrated and accountable framework for land use decisions is needed to help achieve the net zero transition in a fair and productive way.

***Land Rights and Responsibilities*** – Scotland's Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement sets out a clear human rights-based framework for the rights and responsibilities associated with land ownership and use.

***Community empowerment*** – community ownership of land and assets is integral to empowered and resilient communities, and should be much more normal across Scotland. The ability for communities to influence and benefit from decisions about land use is also essential to realising Scotland's ambitions and potential.

***Inclusive growth*** – the ability to access, use, acquire and assemble land effectively is fundamental to a dynamic and productive economy that supports all parts of Scotland in delivering the infrastructure, high quality places and opportunities people need.

This annual business plan builds on the substantial programme of engagement, research, recommendations and guidance delivered by the Commission over the previous two years. It will see through to completion the commitments in our current strategic plan, as we already look ahead to the strategic priorities that will shape our work over the next three years. Our work is focused on reforms to land ownership and use, in the four strategic priorities set out in our Strategic Plan.

### ***Land for housing and development***

In 20-21 we will develop our work on housing land supply and report on options for reform that will help support Scotland's Housing 2040 vision. We will deliver the next phase in the major programme of strategic work to stimulate fresh approaches to bringing Scotland's vacant and derelict sites back into use, supporting others to mainstream these changes into delivery.

### ***Modernising land ownership***

We will continue our work to modernise land ownership by following through our recommendations to address concentration of ownership, working with Scottish Government to consider options for the operation of legislative and policy measures to promote more diverse land ownership. We will also make recommendations to Ministers on the potential to modernise governance of Common Good land, to deliver greater community and public benefit.

### ***Land use decision-making***

We will engage widely and advise Ministers on the establishment of regional land use partnerships and plans. This work supports the government's commitment to establishing partnerships in 2021, to enable delivery of Scotland's climate change targets. We will also continue to build capacity and confidence in land rights and responsibilities, through a proactive programme of good practice protocols, guidance and support.

### ***Agricultural Holdings***

We will continue to support the Tenant Farming Commissioner in publishing and promoting Codes of Practice and Guidance, and promoting a mediatory approach to dispute resolution. We will support the newly established Land Matching Service and work with partners to develop farm business incubator support, supporting opportunities for succession and new entrants.

The following sections set out the key areas of activity and outputs for 2020-21.

## LAND FOR HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

Through these workstreams we will support the Scottish Government’s vision for Housing 2040, the place principle, town centre regeneration, infrastructure delivery and rural population growth. Over the last two years we have established a major focus on vacant and derelict land including a cross-sector taskforce to challenge current approaches and stimulate change. In the coming year we will support partners to embed these changes in bringing vacant and derelict sites back into productive use. We will bring together our work to date on land assembly, land values and land banking, developing options for reform on housing land supply.

Workstream	20-21 Activity	Outputs
<b>Vacant and Derelict Land</b>  Aim: To embed a strategic approach to addressing persistent land vacancy and dereliction that tackles Scotland’s legacy of existing sites and prevents new sites from being created.	Support local and national government to embed strategic approach to prioritising the reuse of long-term derelict sites	Task Force recommendations published Report and engagement to focus effort on ‘stuck’ sites
	Support development of effective approaches to community-led regeneration for small sites	Strategic partnership with DTAS established and new community-led land reuse officer in post
	Support public agencies to embed focus on productive land reuse within corporate decision-making processes	Develop practice guidance on assessing benefits of productive reuse and series of CPD events to support take up
<b>Land Assembly and Place-making</b>  Aim: To establish a more collaborative approach to place-making which aligns land value, planning and development interests	Undertake research on ownership and market factors constraining the availability of land for housing in remote and rural areas and alternative models of ownership and control that could help to overcome these barriers	Publish research evidence and options to improve future delivery
	Draw together outputs and findings from work to date on the housing and development land market	Report setting out key areas of change needed to deliver reform of housing land market Protocol on sharing information on land prices

## MODERNISING LAND OWNERSHIP

Over the last two years we have provided substantial evidence and recommendations to Ministers on modernising land ownership. These include recommendations on what is needed to make community ownership a normal option across Scotland, planned and proactive as an integral part of community development and regeneration. We have published significant evidence on the issues associated with scale and concentration in ownership and recommendations to address these. In 2020-21 we will develop further the proposed operation of legislative measures including a public interest test and consider changes in policy and practice to support more diverse ownership. We will also engage and make recommendations on potential reforms to the governance of Common Good land.

Workstream	20-21 Activity	Outputs
<b>Diversifying the pattern of land ownership</b>  Aim: To stimulate a less concentrated pattern of land ownership.	Support the Scottish Government in developing legislative options to address the risks and adverse consequences of concentrated power in land ownership	Proposal and rationale for legislative measures including a public interest test
	Support non-statutory action to diversify land ownership through a programme of review and engagement with the land ownership sectors	Discussion paper and associated events on non-statutory interventions Published practice guidance on non-statutory interventions
<b>Public Interest governance and models</b>  Aim: To develop, promote and normalise models for managing and owning land that better serve the public interest.	Review options to modernise governance and practice in Common Good land	Recommendations for modernising governance
	Investigation and promotion of alternative models of governance in land ownership and use	Develop models, associated guidance and case studies on alternative models of ownership and governance
	Support the normalisation of community land ownership and implementation of the Commission's recommendations agreed by Ministers	Continued participation in community ownership leadership and implementation groups to progress delivery of recommendations

## LAND USE DECISION-MAKING

In 2019-20 we began a major programme to support improved realisation of land rights and responsibilities, to help land owners, managers and communities meet the expectations of Scotland’s Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement and the Guidance on Engaging Communities in Decisions Relating to Land. In 2020-21 we will deliver an ongoing programme of protocols, guidance, support and training to build confidence, capacity and change on the ground. We will also engage widely and develop advice for Ministers on how best to establish regional land use partnerships, to support delivery of Scotland’s climate targets and an integrated approach to land use decisions.

Workstream	20-21 Activity	Outputs
<b>Land Rights and Responsibilities Good Practice</b>  Aim: To support practical implementation of land rights and responsibilities.	Deliver the Good Practice programme, building confidence and capacity in land rights and responsibilities	Programme of publications, training events and sector support Report on pilot self-assessment against Land Rights and Responsibilities Biannual meetings of good practice advisory group
	Publication of Land Rights and Responsibilities Protocols	Publish Protocols and supporting guidance Route maps signposting communities and landowners where to access information on landowners and community groups
	Casework to support effective delivery of community engagement and wider land rights and responsibilities	Ongoing casework and case studies
<b>Regional Land Use Partnerships</b>  Aim: To advise Ministers on establishing effective regional land use partnerships and plans.	Develop proposals and advice that will enable Scottish Government to establish effective regional land use partnerships delivering on climate action and improving the quality and accountability of land use decision-making	Stakeholder engagement workshops; Report and advice to Ministers

<p><b>Tax and Fiscal Policy</b></p> <p>Aim: To develop options for using tax and fiscal policy to stimulate a more productive, diverse and accountable pattern of landownership and use.</p>	<p>Undertake research to explore the potential scope of tax as a means to achieving land reform objectives</p>	<p>Scoping report to inform longer term investigation</p>
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## AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS

In 2020-21 we will continue to support improved relationships within the tenanted sector through Tenant Farming Commissioner (TFC) Codes of Practice and associated casework, taking into account the review of the TFC functions carried out by Scottish Government in early 2020. We will continue to focus on opportunities to improve the availability of land to support succession, new entrants into agriculture and a realistic 'ladder' of next steps to enable developing farming businesses to grow. Given the importance of climate targets, we will also investigate how tenancy law, policy and practice can be improved to encourage tenants to contribute to and benefit from woodland expansion targets.

Workstream	20-21 Activity	Outputs
<b>Good Practice</b> Aim: To support successful relationships between agricultural landlords and tenants.	Promote Tenant Farming Commissioner Codes of Practice and publish new Codes and Guides as required	Publish new codes/guides on rent review and relinquishment & assignation once enacted
	Casework associated with Codes of Practice	Review of pilot mediation service
	Review changes in legislation, policy and practice that will enable farm tenants to contribute to and benefit from Scottish Government woodland expansion targets	Report on options
<b>Improving land availability</b> Aim: To promote more flexible models for making land available to new and developing farmers.	Promotion of advice and guidance on joint venture options and farm business incubator models	Investigate pilot demonstration project for incubators
	Support development of the land matching service (LMS)	Joint workshops/support for LMS on new entrants and succession
<b>Stakeholder Engagement</b> Aim: Identification and discussion of issues relevant to the development of the tenant farming sector in Scotland.	Facilitate the Tenant Farming Advisory Forum	Biannual meetings

## COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

We will maintain our focus on being an open and accountable public body, engaging widely to stimulate awareness, debate and change. We will work to engage specific audiences, in both a rural and urban context in the work of the Commission to:

- Strengthen the role of the Commission in stimulating fresh thinking and raising awareness of the opportunities of land reform
- Deliver communications campaigns associated with our workstreams to engage and connect more people
- Continue to develop effective relationships with stakeholders to support change and delivery in practice.

Workstream	20-21 Activity	Outputs
<b>Communications</b>  Aim: to increase engagement with land reform and the work of the Commission through a targeted approach.	Strengthen the Commission’s narrative and organisational USP	Increase in key message pick up through media channels
	Increase and improve engagement and debate with communities on key areas of work	Hold a series of public meetings across rural and urban Scotland
	Communications campaigns to support workstreams with sector specific engagement and with clear link to overall contribution of land reform to achieve climate action and reduce inequality	Communications campaign plans  Launch of new Strategic Plan
<b>Stakeholder engagement</b>  Aim: to build strong and collaborative relationships with stakeholders.	Targeted engagement with stakeholders	Increase in use of stakeholder channels to promote Land Commission work
	Relationship development with key stakeholders	Structured and tailored stakeholder communications with clear paths of engagement
<b>Internal Communications</b>  Aim: to support an effective and productive team.	Develop strong internal communications contributing to informed staff and cross team working	Internal communications plan detailed in the Communications Strategy
	Maintain an effective working environment for staff	Effective internal communication channels and improve functionality and use of the intranet

## ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We will continue to proactively shape our culture, review our processes and systems to ensure they continue to be effective, responsive, and provide value for money. We will look ahead to identify the skills, capacity and ways of working we will need to support delivery of our next strategic plan.

Workstream	20-21 Activity	Outputs
<b>Corporate Systems</b> Aim: to ensure effective and proportionate corporate systems.	Review current systems to ensure they are working as effectively as possible in delivering the Commission's functions	Internal audit reviews of new systems operation
<b>Human resources</b> Aim: to support a motivated, productive and empowered team.	Carry out a workforce planning review to consider the skills, capacity and organisational structure needed to deliver our next strategic plan	Fit for purpose structure and ways of working Team development programme
	Continue to review and tailor HR policies to support our organisational culture	HR policies and procedures implemented following discussion at staff engagement forum.
<b>Organisational performance</b> Aim: to communicate a transparent and consistent assessment of performance.	Performance monitoring and evaluation framework effectively used to assess ongoing performance	Framework is embedded within organisational processes and regularly reported on
<b>Climate Action</b> Aim: to show leadership in meeting Scotland's ambitious net zero climate targets.	Establish a route map with targets for achieving zero direct emissions in the operation of the organisation	Climate Action Plan agreed with target dates for zero direct emissions

## PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Our work is intended to deliver the long-term outcomes (10-year +) set out in our Strategic Plan. Our monitoring comprises long-term monitoring against outcomes over the strategic plan cycle, and annual key performance indicators.

### Long-term Outcomes

The long-term outcomes are aligned with the Scottish Government's purpose and national outcomes as set out in the National Performance Framework. Our performance monitoring framework identifies the medium-term outcomes and indicators that will allow us to track our progress and we will report against these across strategic plan cycles.

	Scottish Land Commission Outcome:	Contributes to National Outcomes:	Links to UN Sustainable Development Goals:
1	Fewer land constraints to effective public interest-led development and place making	Economy Communities	Sustainable Cities & Communities
2	Supply of land for housing less constrained by land tenure and land values	Economy Communities	Sustainable Cities & Communities
3	Net area of vacant and derelict land falling	Economy Communities Environment	Sustainable Cities & Communities Climate Action
4	Levels of concentration in land ownership pattern falling	Economy Communities Human Rights	Reduced Inequalities
5	Number of communities exercising ownership or control of land rising	Communities Human Rights	Sustainable Cities & Communities
6	Level of community involvement in decisions about land rising	Communities Human Rights Environment	Sustainable Cities & Communities Life on Land
7	Number of agricultural units managed through lease or joint venture rising	Economy	Fair Work & Economic Growth
8	Relationships between agricultural landlords and tenants is improving	Economy	Life on Land

## Annual Key Performance Indicators

Delivery of our Business Plan will be monitored and reported throughout the year in our quarterly progress reports to the Board, and against a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reported in the Annual Report.

Key Performance Indicators		
Business area	Key performance indicator	Measurement
<b>Finance</b>	End of year out-turn to be within 5% underspend of total allocated budget	Percentage level of year end spend against budget allocated
<b>Staff wellbeing</b>	Level of staff absence to be below national average (6.3 days)	Average number of days of sickness absence per employee
<b>Delivery</b>	Delivered 90% of outputs identified in the annual business plan	Percentage number of outputs delivered and completed as detailed in the annual business plan
	Increased effectiveness of the TFC role in rating TFC in encouraging good relations between landlords and tenants of agricultural holdings.	Achieve over 40% for very effective and extremely effective in annual TFAF survey
<b>Communications</b>	Increased profile of the Commission across workstreams	Increased year on year quality media coverage by 5%, social media follower by 25% and interactions by 10% Newsletter subscription to increase by 20%

## 2020-21 BUDGET

<b>OVERALL BUDGET ALLOCATION</b>	
<b>Income:</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Grant-in-aid	1,526
<b>Expenditure*</b>	
Commissioners costs	89.5
Staffing costs	951.8
Corporate Services	199.6
Communications & Events	146.8
Research & Project costs	258.4
<i>*Includes 8% planned over-programming</i>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>1,646</b>

<b>BUDGET ALLOCATION BY PRIORITY*</b>	
<b>Income:</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Grant-in-aid	1,526
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Commissioners costs	89.5
Staffing costs*	467
Corporate Services	199.6
Communications & Events	146.8
Research & Project costs:	
<i>Land for Housing &amp; Development</i>	192
<i>Land Ownership</i>	144
<i>Land Use Decision Making</i>	337.1
<i>Agricultural Holdings</i>	70
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>1,646</b>
<i>*Relevant staffing and project costs allocated against Programme of Work priorities</i>	