



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION  
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

## Commissioners Meeting

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023, 9.30am**  
**An Lochran, Inverness**

# A G E N D A

Item no	Item	Paper no	Action	Lead
	Welcome/Apologies			Andrew Thin
	Declarations of Interest			Andrew Thin
1.	Minutes of the previous meeting: 7 <sup>th</sup> November 2023	1	For agreement	Andrew Thin
2.	Report from Chair of Audit & Risk Committee	2	For information	Lorne Macleod
3.	Good practice casework policy	3 Annex A	For agreement	Emma Cooper
4.	24/25 Outline business planning	4 Annex A	For discussion	Hamish Trench
5.	Communications update	-	For information	Nikki Nagler
6.	Tenant farming update: Briefing on agricultural tenure legislative proposals	-	For information	Bob Mcintosh
7.	AOB: Community land leadership group: Update from recent meeting	-	For information	Lorne Macleod

- Following the meeting the board will have a discussion on the forthcoming land reform bill.
- A sandwich lunch will be provided with staff invited to join Commissioners over lunchtime.



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**Minute of the meeting of the Scottish Land Commissioners held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at Fisher's Hotel, Pitlochry**

**Commissioners Present:** Andrew Thin (Chair), Sally Reynolds, Lorne MacLeod, Megan MacInnes (Land Commissioners),

**In Attendance:** Hamish Trench, Gemma Campbell, James MacKessack-Leitch, Miranda Geelhoed (Scottish Land Commission)

**Apologies:** David Adams (Land Commissioner), Bob McIntosh (Tenant Farming Commissioner)

**Declarations of interest:** None

**1. Minutes of previous meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023**

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate reflection of the discussion subject to the following amendment for accuracy:

Page 3: first sentence should refer to the *Scottish Graduate School of Social Science*.

Matters Arising: None

**2. Quarterly Progress Report**

Hamish introduced the progress report for Quarter 2, drawing the board's attention to reduced capacity during this period due to staff vacancies and the prioritisation made as a result. He noted that delivery of key outputs remains on track despite reduced capacity but some planned work had been rescheduled. He also set out a look ahead at key delivery outputs planned for the second half of the financial year.

**Delivery:** the board welcomed the good progress and momentum in delivery. They sought more information about the decision to postpone the intended refresh of the Good Practice Programme and agreed that given the context of the land reform bill it is sensible to do this at a time that can integrate with any wider changes in approach to LRRS implementation.

**Budget:** the board noted the current half year position and sought assurance that the risk of underspend is being actively managed. Hamish noted the savings against budget as a result of staff vacancies and confirmed that additional delivery spend is being brought forward. He noted the management team are working with staff to ensure that the capacity is available alongside project budget. The board asked about planning assumptions for the 24/25 budget. Hamish noted that although the Scottish Government budget proposals are not yet known, based on discussions with sponsor team the Commission is planning on a flat cash basis, ie anticipating the same level of grant-in-aid.

**Risk:** the board reviewed the strategic risk register and noted in particular the risks shown as rising, related to the ability to react quickly to changing priorities and stakeholder relationships. The board considered that risk 2 (ability to react quickly in matching resources to changing priorities) is likely to remain high in the

coming period given tighter financial resources and rising costs combined with a very dynamic political environment including the land reform bill. There is likely to be a need for the Commission to remain highly agile in prioritising its work and responding to emerging requests for advice.

The board also discussed whether there is an additional strategic risk that should be identified, reflecting risks to the long-term reputation of the Commission if its advice and recommendations are not seen to be impactful in influencing legislation and policy. The board asked the ARC to consider further with the Chief Executive whether a new specific risk should be included to reflect this.

**Communications:** Hamish noted the capacity challenge with the Communications and Engagement Manager post being vacant until January and thanked the team for working well to maintain our communications profile in the meantime. The board welcomed the continued profile and emphasised the importance of the Commission retaining its visibility and voice, particularly at a time when attention will focus on the land reform bill.

Hamish outlined the series of publications and events planned over the coming Quarter. In relation to the planned publication on the French SAFER system the board asked that we emphasise in communications the value of looking to international experience to learn from others. The board also noted planning for communications about new board appointments in due course.

### **3. Framework for reviewing vacant posts**

Hamish introduced the paper which responds to the board's request for more information about how the management team consider vacant posts in the context of our medium-term financial strategy.

Hamish outlined the key factors considered in relation to financial strategy and business planning. He noted the value of retaining flexibility to ensure that the skills and capacity mix of the staff team can evolve and adapt, within overall planning of our total FTE commitment to manage our medium-term financial position.

The board welcomed the paper and the approach to decision making it sets out.

### **AOB**

The board recorded their thanks to the John Muir Trust, Highland Perthshire Community Land Trust, Forestry and Land Scotland and neighbouring land owners who joined the board visit in the morning, noting the value of the visit and discussions.

Following the board meeting the board went on to have an informal discussion on emerging strategic issues looking ahead to the coming months.

**Date of Next Meeting: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

**Scottish Land Commission  
November 2023**



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## **Commissioners' Meeting 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

### **Report from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee – Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

- The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) met on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023 with full attendance from members, Deloitte (External Audit) and BDO (Internal Audit).
- A review was undertaken of the SLC complaints' procedures and disclosure reporting, following the receipt of a formal complaint in July 2023. Lessons learned were discussed.
- Budget review - Some concern was raised by the ARC at the level of uncommitted spend at this stage in the business cycle.
- The Accounts & Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2023 were lodged with the Scottish Parliament today.
- BDO presented a report on Financial Processes, with two medium level recommendations and two low level recommendations.
- A review of the Risk Register was undertaken following discussion at the board meeting in Pitlochry the previous week. A change to the Register was made to ensure the reputational risk associated with the Land Reform Bill provisions was covered.

Lorne MacLeod, Chair, ARC, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023

## Casework policy

### About the Scottish Land Commission

We are a non-departmental public body established on 1 April 2017 by the [Land Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) and wholly funded by the Scottish Government. Our [Board of Commissioners](#) set the strategic direction of the organisation, supported by a team of staff, who work across Communications and Corporate Services, Policy and Research, and Good Practice.

Our role at the Scottish Land Commission is to stimulate fresh thinking, support change on the ground and make recommendations to Scottish Ministers, where appropriate, for legislative and policy change in how we as a nation own and use land. We have delivered a substantial programme of research and public engagement, making recommendations for significant changes in law and policy, and promoting more immediate changes in culture and practice.

### Our work

Our work is informed by the Scottish Government's [Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement](#) (LRRS), which sets out principles for good practice in land ownership and use. The LRRS applies to everyone who owns or uses land in Scotland – whether they are a private individual, a company, a charity or community group, or a public body.

Our Strategic Plan 2023-26 sets our focus for the coming three years on 'people, power and prosperity'. The plan sets an agenda for the Commission's work that will help Scotland:

- Strengthen the ways people participate in and influence decisions about land;
- Diversify the power and control in land ownership and governance;
- Use the value and benefits of land to support national economic prosperity.

Supporting the practical implementation of the LRRS is an important aspect of our work. What constitutes good practice may vary for different contexts of land use and scale. Therefore, we are often asked for guidance and clarification relating to good practice. These requests come from a wide range of groups and individuals, including members of the public, community groups, landowners or managers, and tenant farmers. We are committed to responding to everyone who contacts us, in a way that is welcoming, transparent, and fair. We are committed to being clear about where we can help, and what is outside our remit.

### Enquiries vs cases

When people contact us for advice or to highlight an issue we consider it to be either an enquiry or a case:

**Enquiries** are defined as contact requesting general information, proactive advice on implementing the LRRS, or signposting to another organisation. Examples include:

- An email is received from a community that is interested in purchasing land and seeking advice about where to start. We would respond with information about where to start and where to best get advice.

- A landowner phones with a request for information about how to engage with their local community. We would arrange to discuss their situation with them and send them our Protocol on Community Engagement with other supporting documents.

**This policy does not apply to enquiries.**

**Cases** are defined as contacts where we are notified of, or identify (for example, through media reports), actions that do not align with the LRRS principles and our Protocol expectations. We may undertake further investigation or additional action, including speaking with landowners and other stakeholders. For example:

- A community organisation gets in touch to say that a local landowner is not engaging with them and is refusing to share information about their plans. We would speak to the community to get more information about the situation and may contact the landowner, if appropriate – and with the community’s consent – to make recommendations for good practice.

**How we approach casework**

When we are approached with a request for casework, we aim to find a way forward that works for all parties by improving understanding of the LRRS and our protocols and guidance. We provide advice based on established facts, informed by the LRRS and our LRRS Protocol expectations. We are not a mediator or arbitrator and we do not make decisions for those involved. Instead, we encourage all parties to communicate openly with each other.

Our aims in dealing with casework and enquiries are to:

- Build capacity and confidence in issues related to land ownership, use and management;
- Enable and empower landowners and communities to build, improve or mend relationships, so that they can identify solutions that suit them and resolve issues in ways that benefit everyone;
- Identify common and recurring issues that require further investigation and intervention; and to
- Gather evidence about the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement to enable us to provide useful feedback.

**Casework principles**

We are committed to providing a transparent, fair and constructive casework service. The following principles underpin our approach to cases:

- Constructive advice
  - We provide advice and support but do not take sides or apportion blame.
  - Our advice is based on the LRRS and on our Protocols, which have been consulted on and are supported by our Good Practice Advisory Group.
  - We seek to find a way forward that works for both parties by improving understanding of the LRRS and our protocols and guidance.
  - We are not a mediator or arbitrator, and we do not make decisions for those involved. Instead, we encourage all parties to communicate openly with each other.

- Active listening
  - We actively listen to all parties and endeavour to understand the range of perspectives on each situation.
  - We acknowledge and learn from the viewpoints shared with us.
- Modelling behaviours
  - We work to model the behaviours we expect of others. We are transparent in our work, seek to proactively engage and collaborate with others, practice effective communication, and act honestly and openly.
  - We work to uphold the organisational values of the Scottish Land Commission – Challenge, Empowerment, Integrity, and Innovation.
- Confidentiality
  - We will not share identifying information about cases with others, unless we must release the information in response to a Freedom of Information request, or we have the explicit permission of those involved. We may, however, use anonymised case studies to improve understanding of good practice.
  - We are transparent about the limitation of our ability to provide complete confidentiality due to the above constraints. You can find our [Privacy Policy](#) here.
- Focus on next steps.
  - We support others to find mutually acceptable solutions and move forward from the present situation.
  - We signpost to other sources of information and further support as appropriate.

## Responding to cases

People get in touch with us about cases in a variety of ways, including email, phone, text message and in person. There is no single way in which we expect people to get in touch. We will usually respond in the same way that people got in touch with us, but this can vary.

When someone gets in touch about a situation that they believe does not meet the expectations set out in our Protocols ('cases'), we take the following steps:

- The contact is assigned to a member of staff, usually in the Good Practice Team. This person becomes the lead contact for the case and is responsible for implementing this policy.
- Details of the case are recorded on our internal database system – see below for more information on what is recorded.
- The lead contact decides what the next steps should be. This may be signposting to other organisations, sending information or guidance, or speaking with the person who made contact with us.
- The lead contact sends a response to the person who got in touch with us within 10 working days of their initial contact.
- If appropriate, and with the permission of the person who got in touch with us, we will contact other parties who are involved. We will seek to understand other points of view and suggest appropriate ways forward in-line with the LRRS and Protocols.

- We will record how and when we have attempted to contact other parties, but we cannot compel people or organisations to respond to us.
- We will only share information from any party involved with any other parties involved if we have their permission to share this information; however, we strongly encourage all parties to be open and honest in their communications whenever possible.
- Where appropriate, we will make recommendations in-line with the LRRS and Protocols to any party involved. Recommendations can be made verbally and in writing. We will often follow-up on cases after an appropriate amount of time to understand if our recommendations have been implemented.

### **Proactive contact**

Most of the enquiries and cases we deal with come to us from individuals, community organisations, landowners, land managers or intermediaries who are aware of our work. However, we know that not everyone knows about us and the help we can offer or has capacity to seek us out.

#### ***When we approach organisations or people***

To support good practice when we can see there is a problem, we may make a proactive approach. We will do this in the following situations:

- If we think that our intervention could help the parties involved to better understand each other, work together, or reach a resolution to an issue.
- When we observe issues that are high-profile, long-running, or appear to have significant impact on a local community (including residents and businesses).
- If we believe that making contact will help us to understand an issue better.
- If the situation relates to a relevant policy area and could contribute to our learning and views on the subject.

We will identify possible contacts and their contact details and get in touch with them to highlight our role and the role of the LRRS and our Protocols. We will set out how the issue has come to our attention and what help or advice we can offer.

#### ***What happens if we do not get a response***

If we do not receive a response from the parties involved, we may send reminders, try different contact methods, or try contacting different people. If we still do not receive a response, we may escalate the issues to our management team or board. Where there are significant issues and no response after repeated attempts to make contact, we may make a public statement sharing our experience and views.

Where there are complex cases that would benefit from a co-ordinated and collaborative approach, we may work with and share information with other agencies, subject to our confidentiality obligations set out above.

### **Actions will we take**

There are several possible actions that we might undertake in response to enquiries and cases. These include but are not limited to:

- Signposting to suitable sources of information or other organisations who can provide further support or specialist advice.
- Making recommendations to some or all parties involved to resolve the situation, including following the expectations set out in our protocols.
- Writing and publishing the example as a case study or example of good practice.
- Inviting a landowner to take part in a self-evaluation process to understand where they are aligned with the LRRS, what examples of good practice they can share, and where there may be further actions for them to undertake.
- Reviewing and providing feedback on an action plan, policy or strategy to help alignment with the LRRS.
- Delivering training or workshops.
- Making contact with other parties involved in the issue to understand their perspectives.
- Recommending formal mediation.

### ***When we can't help***

There are situations that people get in touch with us about where we can't help. If this is the case, we make it clear that we are unable to assist with the situation and that we will record details to help inform our future work. This could be:

- When an issue raised is outside of our remit
- When the situation is between two individuals only (e.g. a neighbour dispute).
- When one or more parties do not respond or do not wish to engage with us – we do not have powers to compel any party to respond to or engage with us.
- Where we have spoken to the parties involved and made recommendations, but there are ongoing issues and we decide there is no further useful action we can take.
- Where we decide that our intervention would not be beneficial in helping the parties to reach a solution.

### **Data protection and confidentiality**

In our internal database system we record the following information:

- Contact name
- Organisation / type of organisation
- Contact details (phone number or email address)
- Local authority area
- The subject we have been contacted about
- The type of landowner we have been contacted about
- A short description of the issue.

### ***How we use information***

- We record information in our internal database system so that we can review and monitor casework.
- We may occasionally use contact details to follow-up on cases.
- We may use contact details to carry out evaluation work or seek feedback.
- We use information gathered to create summary reports, but will not identify individuals or organisations in these.
- We may analyse information to identify recurring issues or trends.

- We may use the information gathered to inform the future of the Good Practice Programme or the Commission's policy work.

***What information we publish:***

- We present a casework report to our Commissioners each quarter. This may include information about the where cases and enquiries have come from, the issues have been raised, whether the contact has come from an individual, a community, a landowner or an intermediary, and what kind of landowner the contact relates to.
- We will occasionally analyse the information we have gathered and use it to create reports or infographics, inform our policy work, and shape our good practice work.
- We may use information gathered from our casework to create anonymised case studies or examples to use in reports or in training and workshops. If doing so, we will not share any identifiable information and may change some details to ensure anonymity.

We will endeavour to not share identifiable information about cases. However, we may be required to share some information in response to Freedom of Information requests. We are transparent about this limitation of our ability to provide complete confidentiality due to the above constraints. You can find our Privacy Policy here [LINK].

**When and how this policy will be reviewed**

This policy will be kept under review by the Good Practice Team. We are always learning when we manage enquiries and casework and if our experience indicates that it is necessary to change our process or if there are changes to organisational priorities or capacity then this casework policy will be updated to reflect those changes.

We will undertake a formal policy review with the Scottish Land Commissioner's every five years.



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**Commissioners Meeting  
5<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

**PAPER X**

**Casework Policy**

<b>Purpose:</b>	To approve an external facing policy on casework.
<b>Business Plan context:</b>	Strengthening practical implementation of the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement (LRRS)
<b>Previous board papers:</b>	Discussion workshop on 3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2023; Casework report 2020-2023 on 6 <sup>th</sup> June 2023
<b>Action required:</b>	For Approval

**Context**

The Good Practice Programme has been providing advice to interested parties since 2020. Through the Programme we offer a casework service, where people contact us for advice in implementing the protocols, or to highlight an issue where they think the protocols are not being followed.

Our Good Practice Programme receives a steady number of requests for casework of between 20 – 25 per quarter and report on these to Commissioner’s every quarter. We will be publishing a report on our casework from 2020 – 2023 in the next couple of months.

As our casework service has evolved, more complex and high-profile cases are becoming more common. The public-facing role of Commissioners has meant they receive requests for casework as well as requests that come directly to the Good Practice Programme team. On occasion, Commissioner’s may be involved further in cases when appropriate.

**Casework policy**

It is important that we have clear guidance for Commissioner’s and employees to follow when dealing with casework to be transparent in our work and held accountable. We have previously published our [Principles for Handling Casework](#) to ensure that all involved parties understand how we engage through our casework service. We also have internal processes in place for delivering casework, but we have not yet agreed a formal casework policy with Commissioners.

The purpose of publishing a casework policy is to ensure that all parties understand the approach we will take and how employees and Commissioners will undertake and report on casework. A

casework policy will further enable us to be transparent in the ways we work and to be held to account for our approach to casework.

The policy includes:

- Background information
- Useful definitions
- Principles for handling casework
- Responding to casework requests
- Outcomes from cases and enquiries
- Data protection and confidentiality

A draft of the casework policy is attached for approval.

### **Recommendation**

Commissioners are asked to approve the casework policy.

***Emma Cooper and Gemma Campbell - Good Practice Programme***

## ANNEX A Proposed focus for 24/25 business planning

**1. Advising on reforms to law, policy and practice** – we will provide evidence, analysis and advice to Scottish Ministers, Parliament and stakeholders.

Programme of Work commitments		Proposed focus for 24/25
<b>1.1 Legislative reforms</b>	Provide advice, analysis and evidence as required to inform development and implementation of legislative reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence and advice to inform LR bill (internal analysis and publication of briefing as appropriate)</li> <li>- Evidence and advice to inform other bills if introduced, including Community Wealth Building and Human Rights</li> <li>- Convene Land and Human Rights Advisory Forum</li> </ul>
<b>1.2 More diverse land governance</b>	Advise and promote opportunities in policy and practice to support more diverse models of land governance, with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stimulating fresh thinking beyond current approaches to property rights;</li> <li>- Providing guidance and advice to support innovative practice;</li> <li>- Informing new approaches to land, housing and natural resource governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete phase 1 and progress phase 2 of research on international experience in natural resource governance</li> <li>- Support practical opportunities to develop different governance models</li> <li>- Develop guidance to support more diverse governance approaches</li> <li>- Convene Community Land Leadership Group</li> </ul>
<b>1.3 Approaches to land valuation</b>	Review and research bringing scrutiny to approaches to land valuation, with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Treatment of non-market value and public value;</li> <li>- Learning from international practice;</li> <li>- Considering land and its value as a national strategic resource</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop workplan informed by research on international experience of natural resource governance</li> <li>- 'Call for engagement' to scope key issues for investigation</li> <li>- Commission research and analysis</li> </ul>
<b>1.4 Land assembly for development</b>	Convene a community of practice to support collaborative land assembly approaches and inform policy and practice enabling development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete research on land supply for rural housing</li> <li>- Convene community of practice</li> <li>- Advise on review of CPO</li> </ul>
<b>1.5 Vacant &amp; derelict land</b>	Review progress to maintain momentum in delivering on the recommendations of the Vacant and Derelict Land Taskforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete and publish progress review</li> </ul>

**2. Supporting practical implementation of Scotland’s Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement** – we will provide advice and guidance to help people and organisations implement the LRRS principles.

<b>Programme of Work Commitments</b>		<b>Proposed focus for 24/25</b>
<b>2.1 Good practice in land ownership, use and management</b>	Develop and support implementation of practical Land Rights and Responsibilities Protocols with accompanying guidance and case studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review and refresh Protocols as required</li> <li>- Publish up to date case studies</li> </ul>
	Deliver an ongoing programme of engagement and CPD for land agents and other professionals in collaboration with partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop training programme in collaboration with stakeholders</li> </ul>
	Provide advice for land owners and managers seeking to be proactive in implementing the LRRS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing casework and proactive development of guidance</li> </ul>
	Provide advice to communities and land owners where concerns are raised about implementation of the LRRS to support good practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing casework and proactive development of guidance</li> </ul>
	Convene the Good Practice Advisory Group as a regular means of stakeholder engagement and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convene Good Practice Advisory Group</li> </ul>
<b>2.2 Community benefits and wealth building from land use change and natural capital</b>	Publish Guidance and support innovative practice to ensure land use change and nature finance create social and economic benefits for local communities, including convening the Community Benefits Advisory Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support implementation of Guidance on community benefits and development of further topic specific guidance</li> <li>- Convene Community Benefit Advisory Group</li> <li>- Inform development of Scottish Government’s market framework</li> </ul>

**3. Promoting good relations between agricultural landlords and tenants through the functions of the Tenant Farming Commissioner** – we will support delivery of the statutory functions of the Tenant Farming Commissioner, seeking synergies with our wider work programme.

Programme of Work Commitments		Proposed focus for 24/25
<b>3.1 Codes of Practice, Guidance and Casework</b>	Ensure Codes and Guidance address current and emerging issues to support good relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Publish new Codes and Guidance as required</li> <li>- Draw on experience to inform development of the agricultural tenure measures in the Land Reform Bill</li> </ul>
	Respond to casework enquiries or alleged breaches of Codes of Practice	
<b>3.2 Relinquishment and Assignment of Agricultural Tenancies</b>	Fulfil the statutory requirement to appoint a valuer when required to enable relinquishment and assignation of agricultural tenancies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure statutory requirements are fulfilled</li> <li>- Update process and guidance as appropriate</li> </ul>
<b>3.3 Role of Agents – progress review</b>	Review progress against the TFC’s recommendations in the 2018 review of the conduct of professional agents of agricultural landlords and tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete and engage on progress review</li> </ul>
<b>3.4 Tenant Farming Advisory Forum</b>	Convene the Forum as a regular means of stakeholder engagement and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convene regular Forum meetings</li> </ul>

**4. Engaging people in why land matters and how they can be involved** – we will involve the public and stakeholders in our work, build collaboration and use our convening role to bring different expertise and perspectives together with a shared focus.

Programme of Work Commitments	Proposed focus for 24/25
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<b>4.1 Public engagement</b>	Stimulating and informing the public conversation on land and land reform through publications, blogs, media and communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refreshed programme of public engagement to be developed</li> </ul>
<b>4.2 Communications and events</b>	Running a programme of online and in-person events to help develop understanding and involvement in issues involving land in Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing programme of events to support programme of work</li> <li>- External communications audit and review, including website structure</li> <li>- Updating key messages in line with land reform bill</li> <li>- Focus on digital marketing to drive engagement and conversation amongst stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>4.3 Convening Stakeholders</b>	Convening discussions to promote collaboration and insights across sectors related to land as required and through standing groups including the Community Land Leadership Group, Land and Human Rights Advisory Forum, Tenant Farming Advisory Forum, Good Practice Advisory Forum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convening established groups and keeping under review opportunities to convene others to support leadership and collaboration</li> </ul>

## 5. Being an effective organisation – we will invest in our systems and staff to ensure that we are able to deliver our core objectives

<b>Programme of Work Commitments</b>		<b>Proposed focus for 24/25</b>
<b>5.1 Business and financial planning</b>	Ensure effective business and financial planning to support effective delivery of our programme of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- External financial audit</li> <li>- Delivery reporting improvements</li> <li>- Monthly budget review &amp; Quarterly financial planning</li> <li>- Keeping under review potential organisational implications of land reform bill</li> </ul>
<b>5.2 Organisational development</b>	Invest in our workforce by undertaking a programme of organisational development to ensure the Commission is an attractive place to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training and development plan</li> <li>- Introducing additional KPI focused on tracking staff health and wellbeing</li> <li>- Review of key HR policies and new HR portal</li> </ul>
<b>5.3 Climate action</b>	Ensure progress towards meeting our climate action goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Updated climate action audit and plan</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regular reporting to Management Team, ARC and Board</li> </ul>
<b>5.4 Risk management</b>	Ensure the Commission is aware and responsive to issues which may affect our ability to deliver on our programme of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regular strategic and organisational risk reviews</li> <li>- ARC risk interrogation</li> <li>- Cyber essentials plus accreditation</li> <li>- Business continuity plan testing</li> </ul>



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## Commissioners' Meeting 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023 An Lochran, Inverness

### Paper 2 Outline Business Planning 2024/25

<b>Purpose:</b>	To discuss the key areas of focus for developing the 2024/25 Business Plan
<b>Previous board papers:</b>	n/a
<b>Action required:</b>	For discussion

Staff are beginning work on development of the 2024/25 annual business plan. The business plan sets out how we allocate our staff and financial resource to deliver against our Programme of Work and Strategic Plan for the financial year.

At this stage we do not have a confirmed budget for 2024/25 but based on discussions with our sponsor team we are working with a planning assumption of a flat grant-in-aid budget of £1.56M.

Financial considerations will be set out in full for the board when considering a draft business plan in February. At this stage the board is asked to discuss the key areas we expect to be the focus for our work in 2024/25.

Having recently published our new Strategic Plan and Programme of Work we have a clear framework and priorities set out which the business plan should progress. Given the expected introduction of the land reform bill, we will also need to retain a degree of flexibility in our business planning so that the Commission is able to adapt and advise on key issues as they arise, as well as consider the implications for the Commission of measures that may be proposed.

Our work in 2023/24 has already pivoted to start delivering on our new Strategic Plan and Programme of Work. We therefore expect our work next year to build on current delivery. In particular we anticipate:

- Providing information, evidence and advice to support consideration of the Land Reform Bill;
- Continuing delivery of the Tenant Farming Commissioner functions, including informing the tenant farming measures proposed for the Land Reform Bill;
- Continuing to deliver and develop further our Land Rights and Responsibilities Good Practice Programme;
- A significant focus on land governance through research, policy and practice advice, building on work begun in 2022/23;
- Developing work on land value through research and an open approach to engaging on key issues for investigation;

- Delivering a refreshed programme of public and stakeholder engagement including meetings and events;
- Delivering improvements in business systems and reporting.

Annex A sets out key areas of proposed focus against the commitments made in our Programme of Work.

**The board is asked to discuss the proposed areas of focus and the key considerations to inform development of the 2024/25 business plan.**

A draft business plan including the financial considerations, key outputs and resource allocation will be developed for discussion by the board in February, before seeking to finalise an agreed business plan in March.

***Hamish Trench***

***Chief Executive***