



# Community Engagement in Decisions Relating to Land

## ROUTE MAP

This Route Map is to support those with responsibility for taking decisions about land to navigate and implement the reasonable expectations of engaging with local communities impacted by those decisions. These reasonable expectations are drawn from the [Land Rights and Responsibilities Protocol – Community Engagement in Decisions Relating to Land](#) and the [Scottish Government’s Guidance on Engaging Communities in Decisions Relating to Land](#).

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Communities can reasonably expect to be formally consulted in decisions about the use and management of land where the outcome is likely to have an impact on the community.
- Engagement should be a genuine exercise in collaboration, and community views should be considered to aim to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.
- Engagement and communication should be open-ended to encourage positive working relationships and communication between communities, land owners and managers.
- Engagement should be proportionate to the resources available to all parties and the impact that the decision may have on the community.

### LOCAL COMMUNITIES How to identify those who will be impacted?

- When we talk about community, we are generally meaning the individuals who live in a place. This can be an urban or rural area. It can include whole towns, single streets, large geographic areas or a small village or neighbourhood.
- Local communities are expected to work with land owners or their delegated managers through a representative organisation e.g. community council or other relevant constituted community organisations, who have an openly elected membership, and represent the area within which the land and/or a related community sits. This is not an instrument for addressing individual disputes.

### SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS

These are set out in the [Land Rights and Responsibilities Protocol – Community Engagement in Decisions Relating to Land](#).

Where the Protocol uses the word **should**, we will expect all parties to follow the approach described. Where the Protocol **recommends** a course of action it means this is good practice but recognises that other approaches may be equally effective.

Up to date contact information for people with local decision-making authority over the land and for the office bearers of community organisations should always be publicly available.

Where a community aspiration or concern about current or proposed land management emerges, this should be communicated promptly to the owner or manager of the land. Reasonable opportunity should be given for them to respond to issues raised and enter into constructive dialogue about it.

### START HERE

**?** Does the land-use change you are planning have **significant impact** on the community?

There is no fixed definition of significant impact, but it can be taken to mean a decision that might affect the social, economic or cultural development of a community. It could also involve a change or restriction of access to local services, a good quality environment or community viability. Useful examples are included in the [Scottish Government’s Guidance](#).

**YES**

**NO**

**?** Does my decision have a statutory requirement for community engagement, for example under planning or forestry regulations?

**YES**

**NO**

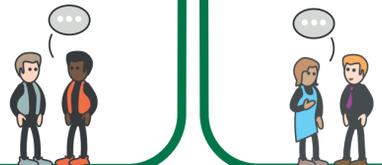
Some decisions on land involve a statutory requirement for community engagement. If there is a statutory requirement to engage then this must be complied with. However, you may wish to consider the benefits of supplementary engagement. It can be beneficial to engage with the local community at an early stage, prior to any formal decision-making process.

**Examples of routine land management activities with little impact include:**

- Most day to day decisions relating to land where the impact on the local community is small or non-existent e.g.
- Most deliveries
- Repairs and improvements
- Pesticide spraying and muck spreading

**Regular communication** – even when decisions being undertaken are not significant, can help to prevent problems arising and build good neighbourhood relationships.

**?** Is this land use change to have a **moderate or significant impact** on the local community?



**MODERATE IMPACT**

Short-term but disruptive activities  
Activities carried out in irregular circumstances  
Changes to regular activities

**Examples**

- Activities which disrupt transport or business activities
- Activities causing significant light, sound or smell pollution
- Activities carried out at unusual times, or causing more disruption than usual
- Other disruptive activities in both the urban and rural environments

**INFORMAL ENGAGEMENT RECOMMENDED**

**Engagement Methods**

- Sending a letter or an email
- A notice on a community notice board
- Posting on social media
- A phone call
- Visiting in person
- Putting up a sign

**PLEASE VIEW**

Where a relevant party makes a request for information, or for a meeting to discuss matters relevant to that organisation; and where the information is appropriate and proportionate, this should be accommodated.

**Within six weeks of a request**

Those who own land or have significant control over it should create an engagement plan that sets out what, how and when they will engage with the community on the decisions that affect them, particularly where a community organisation or elected representative proposes it or where it becomes clear that such a plan would be useful.

**Completed within twelve months**

**SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Long-term or permanent changes with significant impact  
Long-term disruptive activities  
Activities which impact significantly on the local economy, society and culture, or environment  
Decisions likely to alter the local population level or structure, including through intergenerational impact

**Examples**

- Significant long-term changes in land-use, for instance: changes between agricultural land, forestry, nature reserves, green spaces, industry, housing, regeneration and development
- Estate management, where a significant proportion of the land is controlled by one party
- A business or service that significantly contributes to local employment or provides vital services
- Decisions impacting on the viability of vital local institutions such as schools, doctors’ surgeries, sports centres and cultural centres

**FORMAL ENGAGEMENT REQUIRED**

**Engagement Methods**

Engagement about significant decisions is characterised by being planned and should include feedback to the community. Methods include:

- Publishing a written consultation or survey
- Holding local meetings
- Holding site visit (s)
- Carrying out workshop (s) perhaps with a facilitator
- Collaborating with the community to co-design a project

**PLEASE VIEW**

A range of tools and information can be found at: [landcommission.gov.scot/lrrs/communityengagement](http://landcommission.gov.scot/lrrs/communityengagement)

**Recommended timescale** – We recognise that these may not always be applicable in every circumstance, and that where necessary, alternative timescales may be appropriate and agreed by the relevant parties.

