



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION  
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

**Minutes of the meeting of the Scottish Land Commissioners held on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018, Longman House, Inverness**

**Present:** Andrew Thin (Chair), Lorne MacLeod, Prof David Adams, Megan MacInnes, Dr Sally Reynolds (Land Commissioners), Bob McIntosh (Tenant Farming Commissioner), Hamish Trench, Posy MacRae, Caron Munro, Shona Glenn, Sarah Allen, Kathie Pollard, Helen Barton (Scottish Land Commission).

The Chair welcomed Helen to the meeting as she has recently started with the Land Commission as a Community Engagement Adviser.

**1. Minutes of meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

The Commissioners agreed the minutes as a true and accurate record. All actions have been completed or are in progress.

The Chair advised he has spoken with Changing the Chemistry in regards to getting a new board observer however there is currently no update on getting an observer so this action will remain open.

**2. Discussion on Land Value Taxation with University of Reading**

The Chair welcomed Edward Shepherd, Cathy Hughes and Pete Wyatt from the University of Reading to the meeting.

The contract team presented the Commissioners with an interim report and an overview of the current research.

Commissioners discussed the policy questions emerging including:

- The purpose of potential LVT in relation to revenue generation and/or influencing land use choices;
- That the primary focus for the Commission's current work is the potential to influence the strategic objectives for land reform, but that the revenue potential will be an important consideration for Government and we should consider the revenue potential;
- Whether LVT could be introduced as a replacement or additional tax and the implications for wider consideration with Government and Revenue Scotland;
- The extent of the potential tax base and the potential use of reliefs and exemptions in designing and targeting a tax;

- The relationship with other taxes and the interaction of recurring and one-off taxes;
- The potential for either or both national and local responsibility for setting the tax base and rates;
- Consideration of the initial findings in the interim report and case studies.

Commissioners provided guidance on the issues which the case studies in the research could usefully address.

Commissioners agreed that our work on this is focused on bringing forward evidence and understanding on the potential for land value taxation to play a useful role in Scotland, identifying potentially deliverable options for further consideration.

### **3. Housing Land Market and Land Value Capture**

Commissioners agreed the direction of our work set out in the paper and the next steps, and asked that this be set within a clear articulation of the overall approach and purpose of our wider work. This should relate to the rationale for interventions in an ineffective market and the underlying rationale for securing a public share of land value increases.

Discussion on the purpose of LVC agreed that the focus is on securing and using a public share of the land value in order to unlock and deliver development, and there is a strong connection to the proactive role of the state in public interest-led development.

Hamish advised that he and Shona have held conversations with a wide range of stakeholders which reveal a common interest and enthusiasm for developing realistic approaches to land value capture. It is clear that the Commission has a leadership role to play in this work which is about influencing practice as well as legislative/policy options.

Posy advised the Commissioners that Shona has received several requests to speak at events about Land Value Capture.

<b>Action 01051801</b>	<b>Shona to progress this workstream as set out in the paper.</b>
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### **4. Briefing on Partnership with SEPA**

The Chair welcomed Martin Valenti from SEPA to the meeting. Martin will be working in partnership with the Land Commission on a 12 month secondment.

Martin briefed Commissioners on the proposed vacant and derelict land initiative including the proposed taskforce and associated research and analysis. Discussion noted the need for early and consistent engagement with local authorities and the need to identify clear outputs.

The Chair advised that there is a requirement to set milestones and outcomes for this project. Overall Commissioners welcomed the ambitious approach and partnership with SEPA.

<b>Action 01051802</b>	<b>Martin and Shona to prepare outcomes and milestones in developing the project plan.</b>
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## 5. Quarterly Business Update

### Delivery

Hamish advised the Commissioners that item 2.2 has an amber rating as it requires further discussion. The Land Commission's legal advisor is currently providing background briefing on Trusts.

The Commissioners discussed the level of response there has been to the call for evidence. Shona advised that the deadline has been extended as she has written to community councils and community bodies, who may not have been aware of the call for evidence online, to invite them to give evidence.

It was suggested that it would be useful to have a future Commissioners discussion on the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement, Community Involvement Guidance and the Land Use Strategy in relation to land use decision-making.

<b>Action 01051803</b>	<b>Hamish to schedule a discussion on Trusts for the next Commissioners' Meeting.</b>
<b>Action 01051804</b>	<b>Hamish to schedule a discussion on land use decision making with reference to the LRRS, Community Engagement and Land Use Strategy for a future Commissioners' Meeting.</b>

### Finance

Hamish advised that the budget update is not a finalised year end accounts. He advised that the end of year accounts will be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee at their meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> June.

### Audit and Risk

The Commissioners discussed the risk of taking on too much work. Shona advised that there is a project management system in place which outlines how much time and resources are to be spent on each project which reduces this risk and the overall workload is kept under review by Management Team.

### Communications

Posy advised the Commissioners that the communications surrounding the first anniversary of the Commission were well received.

It was suggested that the blog links on the website could be more prominent as currently it is difficult to find the links.

Posy advised the Pagoda are currently drafting some localised press releases to be sent out in association with the public meetings.

<b>Action 01051805</b>	<b>Posy to send an updated events planner to the Commissioners.</b>
<b>Action 01051806</b>	<b>Management Team to consider improvements to the website.</b>

## **6. Annual Report from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)**

Lorne provided an update on the work of the ARC over 2017/18.

The Commissioners were also advised that it has been agreed that the Commission are going to change their internal audit provider in order to seek better value for money and the current Audit Manager working with the Commission would be changing anyway.

The Chair of the ARC advised that going forward there may be sections of the ARC meetings that are held specifically with internal audit, external audit or the Accountable Officer.

## **7. Tenant Farming Commissioners' update**

The Tenant Farming Commissioner (TFC) advised that he will be providing Ministers with a report on the Review of Agents by 2 May 2018. Discussion on the draft report focused on the need to ensure a sustained effort by stakeholders to address the issues emerging.

It was suggested that it may be beneficial for the Land Commission to present to students in colleges to make them aware of the work of the Commission with the aim of changing the culture over time.

The Chair requested that the Land Commissioners should be supporting and promoting the messages emerging from the report when the opportunity arises alongside the TFC.

## **8. Any Other Business**

Hamish advised that the next Commissioners' Meeting will be an away day with a focus on community ownership, the location to be advised shortly.

The Commissioners discussed a number of current consultations and groups such as the SCDI Rural Commission and the National Council of Rural Advisers and asked Hamish to ensure we are raising awareness of the land reform opportunities relevant to these groups.

**Date of next Meeting: Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

**Scottish Land Commission  
May 2018**