



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

Minutes of the meeting of the Scottish Land Commissioners held on Tuesday 3rd December 2019, Longman House, Inverness

Commissioners Present: Bob McIntosh (Tenant Farming Commissioner) Sally Reynolds, Lorne MacLeod, Megan MacInnes, David Adams (Land Commissioners)

In Attendance: Hamish Trench, Sarah Allen, Posy MacRae, Shona Glenn, David Stewart, Caron Munro (Scottish Land Commission)

Apologies: Andrew Thin (Chair) gave his apologies for the meeting

Andrew Thin declared his interest in item 4 prior to the meeting as he is chair of Scottish Canals.

The Meeting was chaired by Sally Reynolds, Land Commissioner.

1. Minutes of previous meeting 5th November 2019

The Commissioners agreed the minute of the previous meeting as an accurate record of the discussion. All outstanding actions can now be discharged.

2. Audit and Risk Committee Update

The board received a written report from the Chair of the Committee. The Chair of the Committee advised that they received the audit report on workforce planning from internal audit. They recommended that the Commission undertake a skills matrix.

He advised that the Committee considered and approved the Commission's draft set of KPIs which will come to the board in due course.

He also advised that the Committee undertook an annual self-assessment as a matter of good practice.

3. Budget Management Update

Hamish advised the Commissioners that he is pleased with the progress that has been made on commitment of spend from the budget. He advised the Commissioners that the management team review the budget monthly.

The Commissioners were advised that the Commission has allocated some budget to developing a climate action plan for the Commission.

The Commissioners expressed their thanks to the staff for their work on the budget and committing expenditure through contracts. The Commissioners will look at the budget again in the usual progress review at their meeting in February 2020.

4. Office Relocation Business Case

The Commissioners discussed the business case and options appraisal for the Commission's potential move to a new-build office built by Scottish Canals in the Carse industrial estate.

They were advised that the options appraisal looked at a number of options for office space in Inverness which included staying in Longman House. The proposal for the new office is expected to improve staff wellbeing, help meet zero carbon emissions target and bring vacant and derelict land back into use. The annual costs associated with the proposed lease for the Scottish Canals building are similar to the costs the Commission currently pays for Longman House.

The Commissioners were advised that to allow the Commission to move forward with this proposal, the business case requires approval from Commissioners and will then be sent to Scottish Government for Ministerial approval.

It was advised that Scottish Canals have received planning permission for the Muirtown Basin site. It was agreed that Posy would confirm the planning status with Scottish Canals.

Posy advised that the Commission would expect to move into the office 18 months after the building work starts. The Commission's current lease with Scottish Government is on a rolling 1-year agreement.

Commissioners raised and considered the following points in discussion:

- The implications for Scottish Government of the Commission leaving the current site at Longman House;
- Whether space at An Lochran is now available due to changes since the options appraisal was carried out;
- Whether the proposed facility will have sufficient meeting space;
- Concerns over the industrial location and implications for staff wellbeing and safety;
- The cost, climate change and practical implications for travel for staff and visitors to the proposed location;
- The partner support and plans behind the wider regeneration of Muirtown envisaged;

Commissioners concluded that in order to make a decision on the proposal, the business case would need to be developed with additional information on the wider regeneration and public value envisaged, the degree of confidence that these wider benefits would be realised, and the risks identified during discussion. These should be

presented in a clear comparison to the current office provision. Commissioners also asked that a site visit for Commissioners be incorporated prior to considering the proposal again.

Action 19120301	Posy to check the planning status with Scottish Canals.
Action 19120302	Check for an update on office availability at An Lochran
Action 19120303	The Commissioners' Meeting in February to include a site visit to the proposed location for Commissioners and the Senior Management Team and an updated business case to be considered.

5. Regional Land Use Partnerships – scope and next steps

Hamish advised that the Commission has held discussions with stakeholders since the last meeting which indicate strong support for the work on Regional Land Use Partnerships. The Commission has also advertised a role for a Project Manager for this area of work. Interviews for this role will be held later in December.

Hamish clarified that the Commission's role is to provide advice to Ministers, with a proposal for how best to establish partnerships and their role. The responsibility for implementation and establishing partnerships lies with Scottish Government.

Hamish advised that he recently met with the Just Transition Commission to discuss this area of work, which is directly relevant to their remit.

Commissioners considered the following issues:

- The intention for regional partnerships and plans to bridge the gap between national policy and local priorities and delivery;
- The need to consider issues of compliance and ensuring impact on decisions;
- Whether partnerships and plans may need a statutory basis;
- The existing experience in Scotland, previous work on land use strategy pilots and lessons learned;
- The role of local authorities and links with the planning system;
- The balance of national consistency and flexibility;

Commissioners agreed the proposed scope of the work and the wide stakeholder engagement required.

6. Leadership on Climate Emergency – letter from Cabinet Secretary

Commissioners consider the Cabinet Secretary's letter and the action the Commission can take. Hamish advised that the expectation for public bodies is to meet actual zero direct emissions. The Chair will send a response to Ms Cunningham by 16th December.

The Commission has a tendered a contract to support development of a climate action plan for the Commission by the end of March 2020 which will be presented to the Scottish Government by April 2020. It was suggested that the Commission can move to hiring only electric vehicles and increase the use of video conferencing. It was also

suggested that the use of video conferencing may be useful for some Commissioners' Meetings.

The Commissioners agreed that leadership in climate action is a strategic priority for the Commission and committed to being proactive, providing leadership and using our influence in the land sectors to support the changes needed to meet Scotland's targets.

7. Any Other Business

Good Practice Programme

The Commissioners were advised that the Good Practice Programme went live that day. The advisory group meeting recently met and agreed two protocols on transparency and private trusts which are due to be launched soon. It was agreed that the protocols will be circulated to the Commissioners for information before they are published.

There is currently a tender out to pilot the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement review process.

Action 19120304	Good practice protocols to be circulated to Commissioners prior to publication.
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Date of Next Meeting: 4th February 2020

**Scottish Land Commission
December 2019**