



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

Minutes of the meeting of the Scottish Land Commissioners held on Tuesday 5th November 2019, MacDonald Holyrood Hotel, Edinburgh

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

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

Apologies: Bob McIntosh (Tenant Farming Commissioner) gave his apologies for this meeting.

No declarations of interest were made.

1. Minutes of previous meeting 3rd September 2019

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of discussion subject to the following change:

- Remove 'There were no declarations of interest made' from the first paragraph.

Action 19090305 has been discharged as this will be incorporated into the schedule of Commissioners' Meetings for 2020.

Andrew noted his thanks from the Commissioners to all staff for the land reform conference, it was a successful event and there has been excellent feedback.

Andrew noted the forthcoming general election and the implications for public bodies and asked that the pre-election guidance for public bodies be circulated to Commissioners.

2. Quarterly Progress Report

Delivery

Hamish provided an update on the progress report. The Commissioners discussed the activities that have amber status. Shona advised that 'Establish a review of options to recommend to Ministers measures that encourage a more diverse pattern of private ownership - Undertake review leading to recommendations in 2020/21.' Can now be marked as green as tenders for this piece of work have now been issued.

Shona advised that the Vacant and Derelict Land Taskforce are meeting on 6th November to agree a programme of work to deliver the statement of intent. Commissioners discussed how the work can be structured to achieve impact and

influence in culture and practice, and asked that staff consider strengthening key communications messages to demonstrate progress.

Finance

Hamish talked the Commissioners through the half year budget review. The current budget is showing a projected underspend of £91,000. The Chair stated that the Commissioners would like to see the projected out-turn get to within 5% of the total budget and asked for an update on budget management at the next meeting. Hamish agreed to provide the Commissioners with a budget update at their December meeting. Lorne also advised that the Audit and Risk Committee will discuss the budget in more detail at their meeting in December.

Strategic Risk Register

Commissioners discussed the risks currently showing as amber and no changes to risk status were proposed. It was queried if the Commission's work on land use partnerships should be added to the risk register as a reputational risk due to high profile of this work. Hamish agreed that the management team will discuss and reflect on whether to add this to the register.

Communications

Posy provided an update on the quarterly communications activity report and asked for feedback on the updated layout. Commissioners agreed that they preferred the updated format. Andrew requested that where possible impact as well as activity is reflected in the reports. Posy advised that a perceptions audit is planned at the end of the year which will contribute to demonstrating impact.

3. Communications Mid-Year Report

Posy provided the Commissioners with an overview of communications activity over the first six months of the year. It was suggested that the Commission could publish short summaries of each research report to increase accessibility and readership.

Action 19110501	Posy to look into publishing short summaries of research reports.
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It was queried if the Commission's new website would include Gaelic. Posy advised that the Commission's Gaelic Language Plan is currently being developed and the website content will be reviewed with the implementation of the plan. It was suggested that consideration is given to targeting disadvantaged groups in future campaigns.

4. Land Use Strategy: role of the Commission

Commissioners considered the strategic issues involved in the proposed work on regional land use partnerships, including:

- The need for clarity of purpose and outputs for the Commission's role;
- The strategic context of inclusive growth and democratising land use;
- The fit with existing work, wider land reform and governance of land ownership and use;

- The need for an inclusive approach that widens the range of voices involved;
- The need to consider governance and remit, including whether a statutory footing for partnerships may be required;
- The connections with planning and development, and wider regional spatial planning;
- The connections to our existing work on community engagement, land use decision-making and governance.

Commissioners agreed the role of the Commission, and that in taking forward this work the Commission should set out clear communications about why it is engaged in this work and the relevance to wider reform of land ownership and use; and that in doing so we seek to move forward a topic which has wide stakeholder support but on which implementation has stalled over recent years.

The Chair agreed that the direction of this work will be discussed again at the Commissioners' Meeting in December.

Action 19110502	Discussion on implementation of work on regional land use partnerships to be added to agenda for December Commissioners' Meeting.
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5. Scottish Land Commission climate change action plan

The paper was agreed. Commissioners welcomed the proactive approach and the need for the Commission to be taking action and demonstrating leadership. Commissioners noted that commitment to delivering against the plan will need leadership amongst both Commissioners and staff.

6. Next Strategic Plan

Commissioners welcomed the opportunity to begin early work on the next Strategic Plan. In response to a question on resourcing Hamish confirmed the intention is to undertake this work in-house given it is central to the Commission's purpose. He also confirmed that the long-term performance monitoring work and an updated perceptions audit will be available to feed into the consideration.

Commissioners agreed the need to consider potential themes and new opportunities, as well as build on existing work. The wider issues of repopulation and population change, as well as governance of land ownership and use were suggested as potential areas to explore.

Commissioners agreed that stakeholder engagement should come early in the process, rather than first preparing a 'draft plan'. It was agreed to use time in some Commissioners meetings early in 2020 for this purpose. Commissioners also agreed that public meetings should highlight the opportunity to contribute and record views on the direction for the next strategic plan.

Action 19110503	Hamish to consider the structure of the strategic plan discussion for the December Commissioners' Meeting
Action 19110504	Posy to incorporate this into promoting public meetings in the New Year.

7. Any Other Business

No further business was discussed.

Date of Next Meeting: 3rd December 2019

**Scottish Land Commission
November 2019**