



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

Commissioners Meeting
4th February 2025, 9.30am, An Lochran, Inverness

A G E N D A

Item no	Item	Paper no	Action	Lead
	Welcome/Apologies			
	Declarations of Interest			
1.	Minutes of the previous meeting	1	For agreement	Chair
2.	Commissioners' updates & new Commissioner introductions	Verbal Briefing	For information	Commissioners
3.	Land Reform Bill update: Part 1 – large land holdings Part 2 – tenant farming	2 (updated advice on Part 2)	For discussion	Hamish Trench Rob Black
4.	Quarterly Progress Report - A: Delivery - B: Finance - C: Risk - D: Communications	3 Annexes A-D	For discussion	Hamish Trench
5.	Good Practice Casework – quarterly report	4	For discussion	Gemma Campbell
6.	Programme of Work	5	For agreement	Hamish Trench
7.	AOB			Chair

Following the board meeting there will be an informal discussion on communications plans for the year ahead.

A sandwich lunch will be provided and meetings will complete by 1.30pm.



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION
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PAPER 1

Minute of the meeting of the Scottish Land Commissioners held on Tuesday 3rd December 2024 at An Lochran, Inverness.

Commissioners Present: Michael Russell (Chair) Deb Roberts, Craig Mackenzie, Lorne MacLeod, Sally Reynolds (Land Commissioners), Bob McIntosh (Tenant Farming Commissioner)

In Attendance: Hamish Trench, Nikki Nagler, Gemma Campbell, Kathie Pollard (for item 4 only), James MacKessack-Leitch, Scarlett Macfarlane, (Scottish Land Commission);

Apologies: None

Declarations of interest: None

Minutes of previous meeting 5 November 2024

The minutes from the meeting held on 5 November 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record with no matters arising.

1. Commissioners Updates

The Chair noted this is the final board meeting for Sally, Lorne and Bob whose term as Commissioners ends on 18 December. The board expressed its thanks for the very significant contribution made by all three Commissioners over eight years in the role.

The Chair advised that the Parliamentary stage for new Commissioner appointments is now completed and we expect that Scottish Government will complete the appointments process shortly.

Commissioners provided updates on their key activities and events since the last meeting.

Commissioners also discussed recent changes in inheritance tax in relation to agriculture and noted that the Commission is obtaining a briefing from tax specialists to help understand the changes in respect of likely farming scenarios. The board noted in particular the potential issue of tenancies in scope discussed at the recent Tenant Farming Advisory Forum.

2. Land Reform Bill

Hamish provided an update on discussions with the Bill team on the Commission's advice, noting the annex provides more detailed advice on specific changes proposed. The board

agreed the proposed advice. The board agreed the Commission should proceed to publish the advice in January and ensure it is available to the parliamentary committee.

James provided examples of recent land transactions that would be in scope of the proposed transfer test measure in the Bill, to enable the board to consider the likely operation of the measure and inform our advice.

Key issues discussed included:

- The value in greater clarity on the criteria for lotting and where this will sit, in primary legislation, regulations or guidance;
- The potential role of public bodies as interim owners to enable community land ownership;
- The likely scale of capital funds required if public bodies were to play a more active role in acquisition;
- The need for both the transfer test and Land Management Plans to be able to take specific account of crofting land including township boundaries;
- The benefit of achieving a system in which land comes to the market in appropriate lots ahead of the transfer test;

The board also noted the uncertainty associated with different interpretations of how Land Management Plans will operate and their relationship to other plans, asking staff to continue to engage with stakeholders to develop a draft model that can inform discussions on the Bill and the following stages.

3. Good Practice Programme Refresh

Gemma introduced the paper and shared some examples of ways the Good Practice Programme has had an impact. She highlighted the value of being able to combine one-to-one casework with programmes of wider training and advice, noting that in many cases it is sustained contact over time that helps lead to changes in practice.

Commissioners welcomed the detailed review work undertaken by the team and reflected on the significant progress made since the board first took the decision to establish a good practice programme. The board agreed it continues to be an important function of the Commission that demonstrates impact on the ground and influences culture change.

The board agreed that a key focus for the coming year should be refreshing the LRRS Protocols which provide the underpinning of the programme.

Commissioners also identified the need to consider the longer term role of good practice in the context of planned work to look at the destination of land reform. It was suggested that the programme could have a key role to play in creating a framework for managing land in the public interest, helping articulate what this looks like.

Recognising current resource constraints, the board agreed with the focus proposed in the paper and that we should seek to maximise the role other sector bodies play, so that we can focus our own time where it has most impact.

The board asked staff to develop the review one stage further, to set out and cost how we would expand the good practice programme to be able not just to meet demand reactively, but to be proactive across Scotland in engaging those not currently engaged with LRRS, and those who appear unwilling to engage.

The board also noted that the relationship between good practice and statutory requirements continues to evolve with the Land Reform Bill, and that there continues to be value in looking at ways that the LRRS principles could be given more statutory weight.

Action 03122401	Staff to develop a proposal for expanding the Good Practice Programme, identifying the resource that would be required.
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4. Tax

Kathie provided an update on the project planning of joint work with Scottish Government on tax. She noted the expected commitments in the budget and tax strategy, setting out the two-phase approach agreed with government.

The board welcomed the progress and the structured approach. Commissioners sought assurance on resourcing, Hamish confirmed phase two remains subject to resource capacity, and that the proposed research would be funded directly by Scottish Government.

Commissioners also identified risks in relation to the potential wide scope of work and agreed that phase 1 should be used to develop some clear parameters and that we should be clear about what is outwith the scope. The risks in relation to communications and stakeholder engagement was also considered. The board agreed that the Commission should be proactive in communicating a carefully considered approach, open to recognising potential for unintended consequences and ensure that stakeholders are aware of how the Commission will be approaching this work.

Action 03122402	Circulate to board the communications and social media line to support consistent communications
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5. Budget Monitoring

Nikki provided an update on the 24/25 budget, noting the projected overspend which is being managed down by seeking savings. The board asked that future updates provide a clearer summary of the projected outturn position.

Action 0312243	Adjust presentation of budget report to include clear summary of projected year-end outturn
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6. Communications Update

Scarlett provided a summary of forthcoming publications including the Rural Land Market Data Report and planned work for Quarter 4. She also provided an overview of social media activity, noting the Commission now has a presence on BlueSky.

7. AOB

No other business was raised.

Date of next meeting:

4th February 2025

An Lochran, Inverness

Actions from Board Meetings - Update of actions to date

Action number	Date Raised	Context	Action Detail	Responsible	Date Required	Date Closed	Comments
05112401	05/11/2024	Rural Housing	David and Hamish to strengthen drafting and liaise with key partners ahead of publication.	David Stewart and Hamish Trench			Paper reworked and summary added addressing changes from board meeting. Shared with Ministers & due for publication 11th Feb.
05112402	05/11/2024	Finance	Financial reports to be provided to the board on a monthly basis	Hamish Trench			Included in agenda and schedule for future meetings
05112403	05/11/2024	Risk	Proposed revisions to risk register to be considered at ARC in February and Board in March	Hamish Trench			Revised risk register on agenda and for ARC consideration 13th Feb
03122401	03/12/2024	Good Practice	Staff to develop a proposal for expanding the Good Practice Programme, identifying the resource that would be required.	Good Practice team			Consideration of options underway, for further board discussion in summer
03122402	03/12/2024	Tax	Circulate to board the communications and social media line to support consistent communications	Kathie Pollard			Completed
03122403	03/12/2024	Finance	Adjust presentation of budget report to include clear summary of projected year-end outturn	Nikki Nagler			Completed



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**Commissioners' Meeting 4th February 2025
An Lochran, Inverness**

PAPER 3

Quarterly Progress Report

Purpose:	To review quarterly progress for Qtr. 3 (Oct-Dec)
Previous board papers:	November 2024 Quarterly Progress Report
Action required:	For discussion

The quarterly progress reports maintain oversight of progress against the Business Plan through the year. This report covers the third quarter of the 24/25 Business Plan. The table below shows current status against the Strategic Plan KPIs.

KPI MEASUREMENT	TARGET	Progress
DELIVERY		
% of planned outputs in annual business plans delivered	95%	On track: 91%
		Delayed/Changed: 6%
		Risk of non-delivery: 3%
		See ANNEX A
STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS		
Feedback as reported through perceptions audits	Maintain or increase perceived impact	Next review due 2025
STAFF SATISFACTION		
% reported staff satisfaction in staff surveys	Increase	Oct 24 survey: 80% satisfied with the Commission as a place to work (up from 71% April 24).
FINANCE		
End of year out-turn	Within 2% of total allocated budget	See ANNEX B

The report comprises four annexes:

- a) Delivery Progress:** Annex A sets out the RAG assessment and progress commentary for delivery against our 24/25 Business Plan. Highlights in Quarter 3 include:
- Successful programme of six online ‘Land Links’ webinars aiming to engage wider audience;
 - Publication of annual Rural Land Data Report showing trends in land sales;
 - Publication of research into international experience in natural resource governance;
 - Work plan for tax advice agreed with Scottish Government and commitment included in 2025/6 Draft Scottish Budget;
 - Completion of advice to strengthen and simplify the Land Reform Bill;
 - Successful recruitment for externally funded Cairngorms National Park post on community benefits from nature, and confirmation of external funding package for wider network to be employed by Community Land Scotland;
 - Good Practice training events and engagement;
- b) Finance Review:** Annex B provides a summary of our current budget position as we near the financial year-end. The previous overspend projection has been managed down to a position that is on track for an outturn within 2% underspend.
- c) Audit and Risk:** The Strategic Risk Register is provided at Annex C. Revisions to the risk register discussed at the November board meeting’s annual review of risk are to be considered at the next ARC meeting and will be updated for the next quarterly report.
- d) Communications:** Annex D provides a summary of communications activity over Quarter 3 and a look ahead.

Other Updates

Cyber Security

The Commission has completed its annual work to retain Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation, which provides externally verified assurance on steps to keep our cyber security up to date.

Staffing

Annabel Davidson Knight is joining the Commission from 3rd February in the Community Benefits from Nature Adviser post. This post is a 2-year fixed term post with external funding and is focused in the Cairngorms National Park.

Following unsuccessful recruitment in Qtr 3 for the Corporate Services Assistant, we are re-advertising this post reframed as a fixed term Modern Apprentice role.

Miranda Geelhoed is leaving the Commission in February to take up a new role at University of Glasgow. The Land Governance Adviser post is a fixed term post that

was due to run to October 2025. In line with our medium-term financial strategy and the need to manage staff costs, we will not be replacing this post.

Board recruitment

Scottish Government completed the board recruitment on time and new appointments began on 19th December 2024.

2023/24 Annual Report

The annual report and accounts were laid in Parliament on 17th December 2024 and have been published online.

Hamish Trench
Chief Executive

ANNEX A

PROGRESS REPORT ON 2024/25 BUSINESS PLAN DELIVERY				
RAG Rating:		Delivery on track	Delivery delayed or changed	Risk of non-delivery
Theme	Priority	Planned Activity	Progress Commentary	RAG
1. Advising on reforms to law, policy and practice				
1.1 Legislative Reforms	Provide advice, analysis and evidence as required to inform development and implementation of legislative reforms	Evidence and advice to inform Land Reform Bill	Submitted written evidence to NZET and FPAC committees; gave evidence to NZET committee 11 June; board considered further advice on 1 Oct & 3 Dec; Advice submitted to Cab Sec and ready for publication January.	
		Evidence and advice to inform other bills if introduced, including Community Wealth Building and Human Rights bills	No further action yet	
		Convene Land and Human Rights Advisory Forum	Meeting held in Qtr 1; Group’s role now concluded following board review; group closed.	
1.2 More diverse land governance	Advise and promote opportunities in policy and practice to support more diverse models of land governance	Complete scoping phase and subsequent research on international experience in natural resource governance	CLES research report and summary briefing published in November.	
		Provide advice and guidance on practical opportunities to develop different governance models including mixed governance and increasing availability of small-scale land holdings	Board paper 11 th June; conference workshops on opportunities; Land Focus paper and blog published; Governance guidance due for publication Qtr 4; Collaboration with Crofting Commission.	
		Develop recommendations for reforms to Common Good Land	Activity paused to reprioritise staff time for work on land reform bill.	
		Convene Community Land Leadership Group to further develop community land ownership	Meeting held in Qtr 3 focused on finance and large land acquisitions. Agreement on remit for Reference Group to support SG Review of CRTB. Michael taken on chairing of CLLG.	

ANNEX A

		Continue collaboration with Crown Estate Scotland on the community land accelerator initiative	Phase 1 signed off by Project Board and waiting for CES investment committee decision. Phase 2 intended to work with one or more pilot opportunities.	
		Support the KLTR Ownerless Property Transfer Scheme through panel membership and advice	Advice being provided through panel membership and through project to identify proactive opportunities for VDL reuse.	
1.3 Approaches to land valuation	Review and research bringing scrutiny to approaches to land valuation	Develop advice on ways land value can support community wealth building, drawing on previous work on land and taxation	Board agreed key messages for refreshed tax advice 1 st October; work plan agreed with SG; SG commitment in 25/26 Budget and Tax Strategy. Phase 1 engagement underway for Qtr 4.	
1.4 Land assembly for development	Support collaborative land assembly approaches and inform policy and practice enabling development	Advise on practical ways to increase land supply to help meet Scotland's housing challenge	Stakeholder roundtables held May & August; Research report completed; Draft proposal considered by board 5 Nov. Reworked and submitted to Ministers January, publication in February.	
		Inform Scottish Government's review of Compulsory Purchase Order powers	Initial discussion with review co-chairs; SG engagement on compensation issues expected early 2025.	
1.5 Vacant & derelict land	Review progress to maintain momentum in delivering on the recommendations of the Vacant and Derelict Land Taskforce	Complete and publish progress review against VDL taskforce recommendations	Research contract completed and report published October with summary briefing and series of guest blogs.	
2. Supporting practical implementation of Scotland's Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement				

ANNEX A

2.1 Good practice in land ownership, use and management	Develop and support implementation of practical Land Rights and Responsibilities Protocols with accompanying guidance and case studies	Champion and share good practice in implementing the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement	Land Links webinar series completed; 7 external engagements to promote LRRS	
		Refresh and update the Good Practice Programme and resources to improve accessibility and encourage uptake	Review completed with actions identified. Refresh of Protocols scheduled for 25/26.	
	Deliver an ongoing programme of engagement and CPD for land agents and other professionals in collaboration with partners	Deliver training for land agents and other professionals in collaboration with their representative bodies to promote high standards in land rights and responsibilities	Land agent training delivered for Savills; South of Scotland landowner training delivered; series of webinars for land agents agreed with steering group; 1 bespoke training session.	
	Provide advice for land owners and managers seeking to be proactive in implementing the LRRS	Provide individual advice and guidance to support the development of good practice	Ongoing	
		Consider how standards for leadership in good practice are further developed	Checklist for land professionals disseminated with positive feedback.	
	Provide advice to communities and land owners where concerns are raised about implementation of the LRRS to support good practice	Deliver casework to support good practice and promote good relations between landowners and communities	Ongoing. 31 cases in Q3.	
		Regularly review casework to identify learning for policy and practice	Monthly internal casework review meetings in place; quarterly reporting to board.	
	Convene the Good Practice Advisory Group as a regular means of stakeholder	Collaborate with core industry bodies to collectively promote and support good practice	Meeting in Q3 with focus on Land Reform Bill and refresh of Programme	

ANNEX A

	engagement and collaboration			
2.2 Community benefits and wealth building from land use change and natural capital	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	Convene the Community Benefit Advisory Group to provide leadership and coordination in delivering community benefits from land	Meeting programme in place with regular attendance from members	
		Provide advice and guidance to support the delivery of community benefits from land including a partnership post in the Cairngorms National Park	Successful recruitment to partnership post in Cairngorms National Park; first partnership meeting held; route map and advice for 6 pilots underway; recruitment for further Adviser posts to be employed by CLS underway; Scotonomics podcast published	
		Inform development of Scottish Government's nature market framework and UK market standards to embed the LRRS	Scottish Natural Capital Market Framework endorsed SLC guidance on community benefits; secured advisory role on development of UK community benefits standards	
3. Promoting good relations between agricultural landlords and tenants through the functions of the Tenant Farming Commissioner				
3.1 Codes of Practice, Guidance and Casework	Ensure Codes and Guidance address current and emerging issues to support good relations	Publish new Codes and Guidance as required	Ongoing.	
		Draw on experience to inform development of the agricultural tenure measures in the Land Reform Bill	Ongoing engagement through TFAF. Updated Part 2 Bill advice to be submitted Qtr 4.	
	Extend mediation scheme	One mediation application received, approved, and completed.		
	Respond to casework enquiries or alleged breaches of Codes of Practice		Ongoing.	
3.2 Relinquishment	Fulfil the statutory requirement to appoint	Ensure statutory requirements are fulfilled, update process and guidance as appropriate	Ongoing, timescales met to date.	

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and Assignment of Agricultural Tenancies	a valuer when required to enable relinquishment and assignation of agricultural tenancies			
3.3 Role of Agents – progress review	Review progress against the TFC’s recommendations in the 2018 review of the conduct of professional agents of agricultural landlords and tenants	Complete and engage on progress review	Review published 9 th October. No further action required.	
3.4 Tenant Farming Advisory Forum	Convene the Forum as a regular means of stakeholder engagement and collaboration	Convene regular Forum meetings to support leadership and collaboration	One TFAF meeting held in Qtr 3, next meeting scheduled Feb.	



The below balances are including any prepayments and accruals at year end.

GIA 1,615,000.00

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Categories	Dept Codes	Allocated Annual Budget	Committed	Predicted Spend	Total Spend (To date)	Year End Position	Variance (Based on Allocated)
1. Advising on reforms to law, policy and practice							
Reforming Land Rights							
Advice & Research to support Land Reform Bill	95	H	-	-	-	-	-
Diversifying the Pattern of Land Ownership	103	T	35,000	35,000.00	23,333.33	35,000.00	-
Reforming Land Markets							
Natural Capital, Land Market & Just Transition	96		28,030	27,987.83	18,037.20	27,987.83	42
Land Development & Rengeneration	97	H	1,433	1,433.17	1,433.17	1,433.17	0
Vacant and Derelict Land	101	T	-	-	-	-	-
Research Capacity Building	122		2,500	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,500
Strategic Plan Total			66,963	65,421.00	43,803.70	65,421.00	1,542
2. Supporting practical implementation of Scotland's Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement							
Responsible Land Ownership/Use							
Strengthening Land Rights & Responsibilities	94	EC	5,000	550.00	550.00	550.00	4,450
Strategic Plan Total			5,000	550.00	550.00	550.00	4,450
3. Promoting good relations between agricultural landlords and tenants through the functions of the Tenant Farming Commissioner							
Tenant Farming							
Tenant Farming - Mediation	99	EC	3,000	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,800
Tenant Farming - Agent Review etc.	93		-	-	-	-	-
Strategic Plan Total			3,000	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,800
4. Engaging people in why land matters and how they can be involved							
Communications							
Events	112		17,000	27,303.31	27,326.51	27,303.31	(10,303)
Communications Campaigns	113		-	-	-	-	0
Digital	114		2,000	100.00	100.00	100.00	1,900
Design & Printing	115	N	16,000	12,363.89	10,924.10	12,363.89	3,636
Communications, Monitoring & Review	116	N	7,362	6,715.24	5,290.61	7,215.24	147
Internal Communications	117		-	1,960.00	-	1,960.00	(1,960)
Communication Support	100		20,000	9,849.60	9,849.60	9,849.60	10,150
Dept Total			62,362	58,292.04	53,490.82	58,792.04	3,570
5. Underpinned by sound corporate governance and organisational development.							
Organisational Development							
HR Service	118		20,000	15,966.20	10,780.35	15,966.20	4,034
IT Services	119		75,000	73,250.49	83,907.83	73,250.49	1,750
Website Accessibility	139		20,000	-	-	-	20,000
Legal Advice	120		15,000	9,545.76	9,545.76	9,545.76	5,454
Organisational & Financial Performance	121		60,000	18,137.70	36,900.00	55,037.70	4,962
Climate Action	124	N	1,000	834.00	834.00	834.00	166
Office Accommodation	125	N	29,000	28,800.00	28,800.00	28,800.00	200
Office Supplies	126		200	-	150.00	165.65	34
External Meeting Costs	127		200	118.38	118.38	118.38	82
Insurance & Bank Charges	128		2,000	662.00	100.00	887.00	1,013
Subscriptions & Memberships	129		2,000	1,856.40	1,736.16	1,856.40	144
HSEQ	130		1,000	198.46	200.00	1,591.22	591
Dept Total			225,400	149,369.39	37,350.00	188,152.80	37,247
Staffing							
Staff Payroll/ On-Costs	131		1,141,105	1,134,904.82	834,555.37	1,134,904.82	6,200
Staff Travel & Subsistence	132	H	12,000	13,140.70	3,913.76	17,054.46	(5,054)
Staff Training & Development	133	T	18,000	12,628.86	1,000.00	13,628.86	4,371
Recruitment	134		2,000	1,745.48	500.00	2,245.48	(245)
FIRNS	140		-	14,749.85	17,000.00	31,749.85	(31,750)
Dept Total			1,173,105	1,177,169.71	22,413.76	1,199,583.47	(26,478)
Commissioners							
Commissioners Fees	135		62,000	62,627.43	45,472.97	62,627.43	(627)
Commissioners Travel & Subsistence	136	H	11,000	8,065.61	4,540.00	12,605.61	(1,606)
Commissioners Training & Development	137	T	4,000	2,898.00	900.00	3,798.00	202
Commissioners Meetings	138		1,500	1,011.14	250.00	1,261.14	239
Dept Total			78,500	74,602.18	5,690.00	80,292.18	(1,792)
			1,614,330	1,526,604.32	65,953.76	1,593,991.49	20,338.79

99% Balance before FIRNS income

(31,000) FIRNS expected income

20,000.00 Estimated Holiday & Flexi accruals

(2,628) Other prepayments to reduce the year

1,580,363.49

98%

Risk ID	Risk Description	GROSS RISK			Controls in Place	Control Effectiveness	NET RISK			Risk Movement	Risk Appetite	Action Taken/Planned	Target Risk	Target Review Date	Risk Owner	
		Untreated Impact	Untreated Likelihood	Untreated Risk Score			Current Impact	Current Likelihood	Current Risk Score							
VISION: Fair inclusive and productive system of ownership management and use of land that delivers greater benefit for all the people of Scotland																
RISK CATEGORY: DELIVERY																
1	Risk of catastrophic loss of systems resulting in the Commission not being able to operate as an organisation	5	4	20	Business continuity plan in place, cloud based IT system accessible outside of the office environment, cyber essentials plus accreditation, improved cyber security for log in to the network.	Effective	5	1	5	→	Stable	Averse	Cyber incident response plan approved by ARC. Achieved Cyber Essentials Plus for 2023. Multi factor authentication implemented for network access, updated antivirus software aligned to SG recommendations, cloud network tested. Cyber security requirements embedded in retender for IT service. Potential increase in cyber threats due to current political environment. IT re-tender completed	5	Apr-25	Head of Communications and Corporate services
NEW	Risk that Land Reform Bill creates increased obligations without sufficient resource leading to adverse impacts on delivery	4	4	16	Engagement with sponsor team on implications; anticipating resource requirements; maintaining flexibility in medium term financial planning	Partial	3	3	9	↑	Increasing	Minimalist	Initial estimates of financial implications of new measures as drafted provided to sponsor team Oct 24. To be reviewed as Bill firms up.	4	Sep-25	CEO
2	Risk that public finance constraints mean the Commission is unable to deliver planned work and/or is unable to react quickly to changes in priorities, reducing its effectiveness	3	4	12	Maintain team approach to delivery enabling staff to draw on capacity and expertise across the team as required; Quarterly progress reporting to Board	Effective	3	3	9	↑	Increasing	Cautious	Improved cross-team working and quarterly planning with delivery tracker monitoring. 23/24 Business plan refreshed resourcing to current priorities. Staff posts reviewed as vacancies arise in order to remain agile and refresh focus where necessary. Changes in corporate team structure to improve resilience. Tight 23/24 budget limits ability to react to new asks/opportunities.	4	Feb-25	CEO
RISK CATEGORY: REPUTATIONAL																
3	Changes in Board appointments or failure to recruit timeously result in disruption to effective governance or lack of clarity in strategic direction	4	3	12	Recruitment to start 12 months ahead (SG responsibility). Plan succession timescales; ensure effective Strategic Plan in place Sept 23; Board induction processes refreshed and in place.	Partial	2	1	2	→	Stable	Minimalist	2023 & 2024 appointments concluded, in place with induction and transition arrangements. Proposed risk now removed.	4	Dec-24	CEO
4	Emerging issues result in reactive policy making, and relationship management.	5	4	20	Proactive horizon scanning to anticipate future issues, work closely with stakeholders and put internal processes and measures in place for handling.	Partial	3	3	9	→	Stable	Minimalist	Working closely with stakeholders and sponsor team to identify potential issues in advance and take action. Clear case handling and internal communications procedures. Land Reform Bill publication creates new dynamics but clarity of SLC focus agreed with board and SG.	3	Mar-25	CEO
5	Inconsistent or incoherent narrative relating to our body of work leading to inaccurate discussions around the wider land reform agenda	4	3	12	Develop strong narrative between role of land in economic recovery and delivering wellbeing economy, climate action, and reducing inequalities. Implement strategic communications plan, including maintaining strong digital and media presence; regular performance monitoring	Effective	2	2	4	→	Stable	Minimalist	Comms planning & improved team quarterly planning providing more joined up approach. Strategic plan and programme of work launched. Summary of research and recommendations published. Early planning for new Programme of Work will help transition to refreshed narrative beyond the bill.	2	Mar-25	Head of Communications and Corporate services
6	Risk that failure to maintain effective relationships with key stakeholders impacts on our ability to deliver and constrains opportunities for collaboration.	5	4	20	All relevant stakeholders are identified and a clear engagement strategy put in place, Commission presence at key stakeholder events, regular liaison meetings with stakeholders and periodic review of stakeholder analysis	Effective	2	2	4	→	Stable	Open	Wide stakeholder engagement through policy development and communications. Ongoing and increasing LRR engagement. Structured engagement in Good Practice, Human Rights, Tenant Farming, Natural Capital & Strategic Plan. Relations and dynamics are changing with the LR bill and being actively managed.	4	Mar-25	CEO
7	Risk that insufficient relationships across Scottish Government and Parliament result in reduced impact and value from the Commission's work	5	4	20	Ensure regular engagement between the Commission Chair and the Land Reform Minister, and between the Tenant Farming Commissioner and the Cab Sec for Rural Affairs. Ensure regular engagement between the CEO and the SG Sponsor and Policy Teams.	Effective	2	2	4	→	Stable	Open	Regular sponsorship & land reform team liaison in place. Engagement in other formal SG structures eg NSET Programme, EELG, Planning Advisory Group. Meeting with sponsor team and board held in September 23 and with Cab Sec Feb 24, chair and CEO meetings with sponsor team and Cab Sec Sept/Oct 24.	4	Apr-25	CEO
RISK CATEGORY: COMPLIANCE																
8	Failure to have in place or adhere to statutory or non-statutory corporate governance policies or procedures.	4	4	16	Ensure internal control system in place; Work to the production timetable for completion of all documents, and disseminate widely to ensure maximum awareness.	Effective	2	1	2	→	Stable	Minimalist	Using checklist of assurance controls; Draft annual accounts and report completed on planned timeline. Internal governance refreshers delivered. 22/23 audit completed with clean audit report. Internal audit programme agreed, 23/24 annual report completed.	1	Mar-25	CEO
9	The Commission fails to deliver to its allocated budget, resulting in reputational, administrative and governance failures.	5	4	20	Corporate and Business plan set appropriate budget allocations. Work to specified monitoring cycles, reporting requirements, and guidelines set out in the SPFM. Ensure correct adherence to authorisation procedures and delegated limits. Close monitoring of spend and profiled spend.	Effective	2	2	4	→	Stable	Averse	Internal Scheme of delegation in place; Quarterly board monitoring in place. Monthly profiling to manage spend evenly through the financial year and to be kept under review. Peer review on budget management from NatureScot Mar 23 to support resilience improvements. Improvements to budget management & reporting identified Apr 23. New Finance officer role in place with reporting improvements implemented	1	Mar-25	CEO
RISK CATEGORY: STAFFING																
10	Staff turnover or absence due to illness etc resulting in loss of capacity for critical elements of business systems and delivery	5	4	20	Ensure good internal communication and provision of desk instructions for business critical functions. Resilience planning to ensure backup capability within staff team. Continuously seek to improve the working environment by monitoring and improving staff satisfaction and absence levels.	Partial	3	2	6	→	Stable	Cautious	Internal policies prepared and series of desk instructions for critical tasks prepared. Continued review of HR policies & staff engagement. Careful monitoring of priorities and capacity by MT and regular staff communication in place. Staff survey action plan in place. Ongoing absence monitoring in place. Resilience improvements in corporate and comms team implemented. Recruitment for replacement Finance & Business Systems post provides handover time.	4	Apr-25	Head of Communications and Corporate services
11	Risk that staff wellbeing is adversely impacted by hybrid pattern of working, changes in priorities or insufficient prioritisation.	5	4	20	Open and transparent - hold regular staff meetings, keep all staff informed of big picture direction, changes in priorities/focus. Overview through management team. Strong internal comms and leadership from managers to ensure wellbeing of staff and manage move to new ways of working.	Effective	2	4	8	→	Stable	Cautious	Improved monthly staff meeting format in place. Improved quarterly resource planning through Management Team. Monthly conversations, effective line management. Capacity reviewed through teams. Regular pulse staff surveys and action plan. Training and development plan in place. Business Plan prioritisation matched to resource capacity.	3	Apr-25	CEO

COMMUNICATIONS QUARTERLY REPORT

Q3: OCTOBER 2024 - DECEMBER 2024



This quarter showed steady progress across our communications efforts, with strong press coverage, social media, email marketing, and website performance. We secured 79 press placements, a 6% increase from the previous quarter. Key highlights were the successful release of the Rural Land Market Data Report, and Emma Cooper’s feature on the Scotonomics podcast.

Our social media presence exceeded expectations, with all engagement KPIs met and our LinkedIn follower goal surpassed by over 150, despite a seasonal dip in activity. We also joined Bluesky in late November, gaining over 500 followers and engaging with a growing audience.

Email marketing continues to be one of our most useful communication channels. The TFC newsletter maintained high click-through rates, boosting the reach of tenant farming blogs, while our December mailout achieved above average open and click-through rates. Subscriber growth has continued, thanks in part to signups from Land Links attendees and will remain a priority in coming months.

Website traffic increased by 30% compared to the previous period. Although average time on page dipped slightly, it remains above our KPI.

If you require further details or would like to discuss any aspect of the report, please contact Scarlett Macfarlane at scarlett.macfarlane@landcommission.gov.scot.

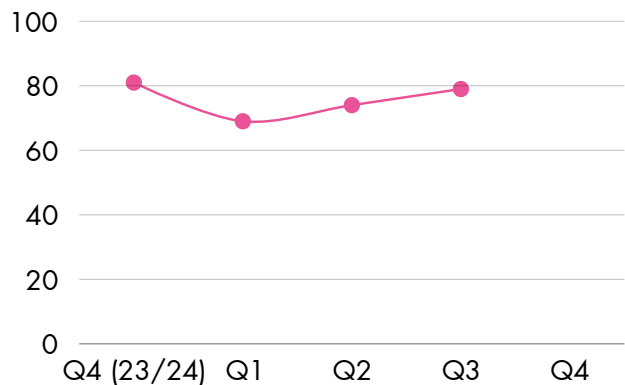
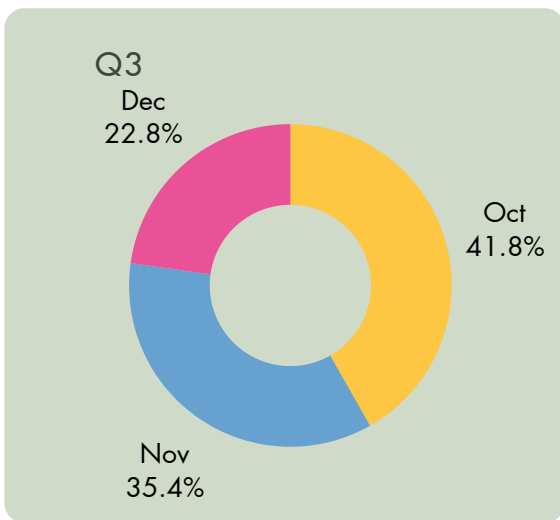
Month	Event/Activity
February	Soft launch of CLAN website
February	Land for Rural Housing Report
February	Scottish Housing News podcast
February	Brownfield Scotland Conference
February	Commission Newsletter (Issue 5)
February	TFC Newsletter
March	FIRNS Route Map
March	RICS Land Reform Bill articles

PRESS COVERAGE

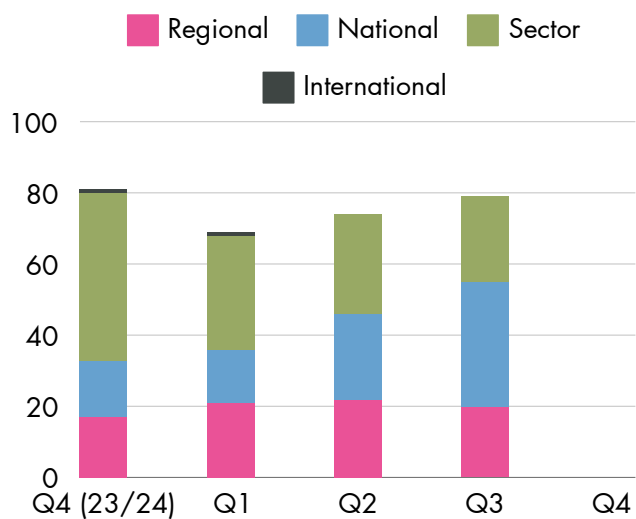
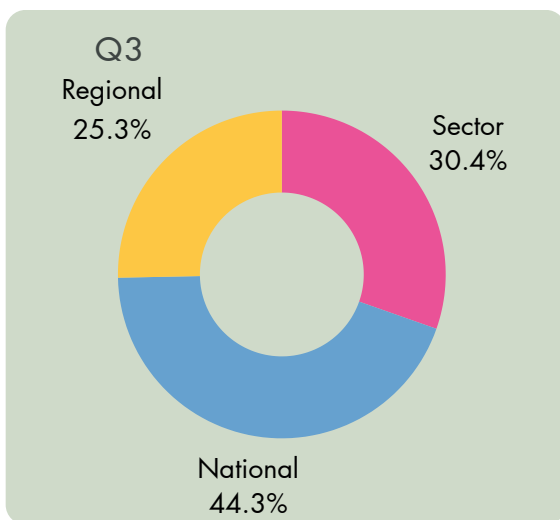
This quarter, we secured 79 press placements, a 6% increase from the previous quarter. A significant highlight was the release of the Rural Land Market Data Report, which generated excellent press coverage, particularly in print media. The report's findings captured the interest of a range of outlets, underlining its relevance and value in informing public and industry discussions.

We also featured on the Scotonomics podcast, discussing natural capital and community benefits. This was an opportunity to reach new audiences with our work. Additionally, collaborated with Community Land Scotland on a joint release announcing a new project focused on community benefits from natural capital. These activities are reflected in the increased coverage of natural capital and Good Practice.

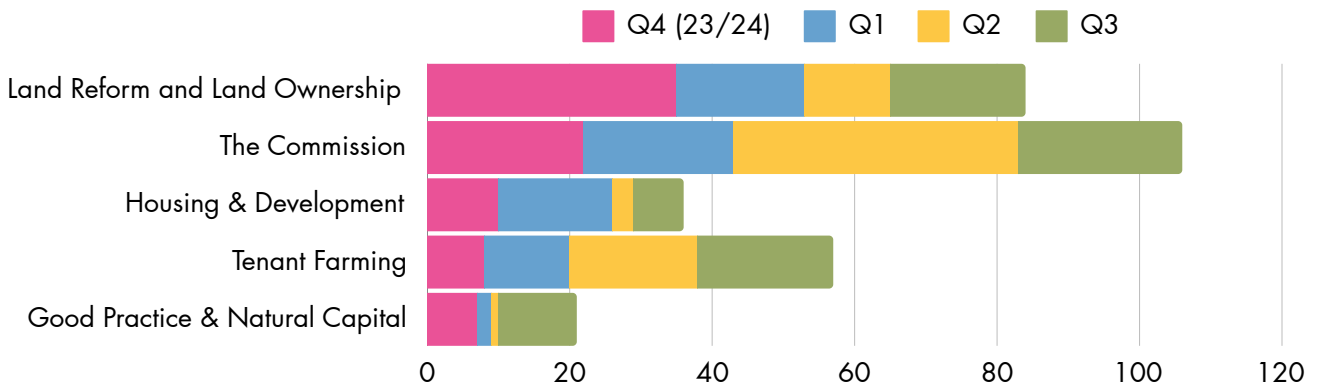
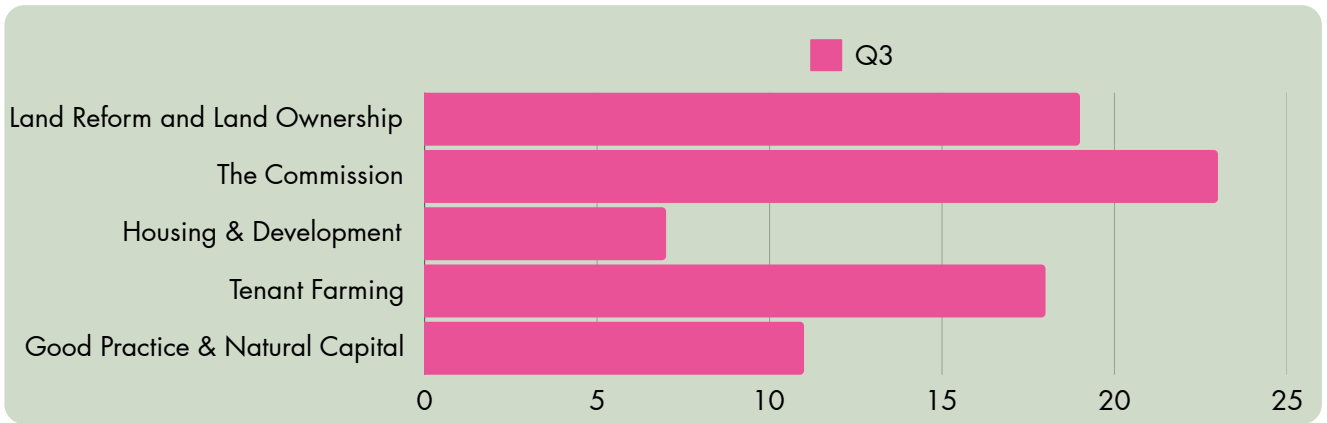
DATES OF COVERAGE



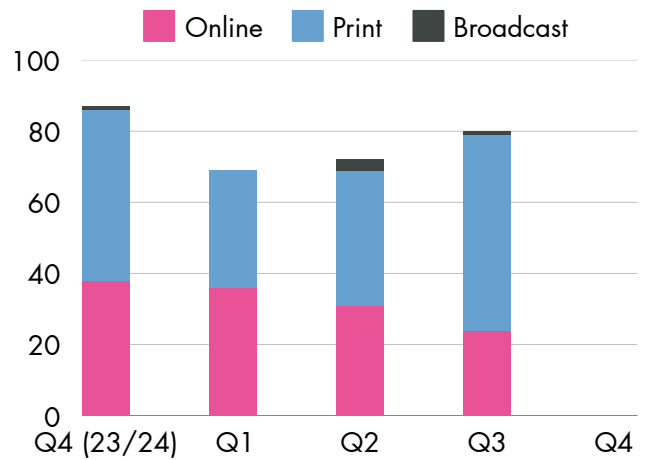
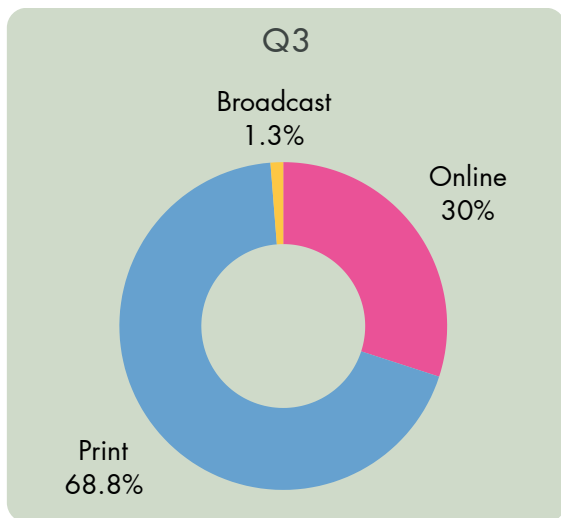
REGION OF COVERAGE



PRIORITY AREA COVERAGE



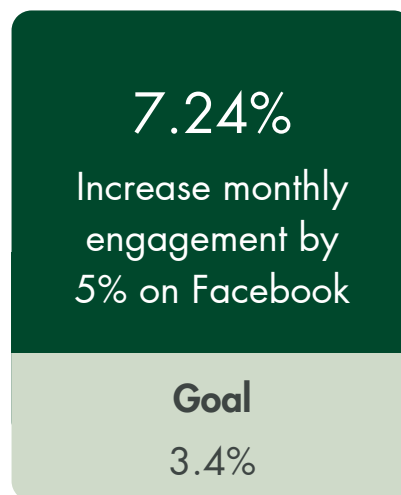
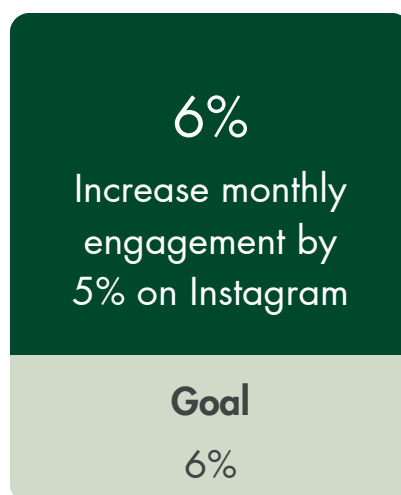
CHANNEL OF COVERAGE



SOCIAL MEDIA

Our social media presence continued to thrive this quarter, with all engagement KPIs met and our LinkedIn follower goal surpassed. By the end of December, we exceeded our target of 3,555 LinkedIn followers by over 150—a notable achievement given the typical dip in activity during December.

In late November, we expanded our reach by joining Bluesky, where we have already gained over 500 followers. While the platform currently lacks analytics, early indications suggest strong engagement, and its growing audience presents an exciting opportunity for further outreach and influence.



Platform	Avg. Engagement Rate
Instagram	4.1%
Facebook	3.2%
X	2.4%
LinkedIn	2% (Commission avg. 7%)

Source: Hootsuite

EMAIL MARKETING

Our email marketing efforts delivered strong results this quarter, effectively supporting key initiatives and driving engagement. We successfully used our mailing list to promote the Land Links webinar series, achieving strong sign-up rates and demonstrating the effectiveness of this channel for event promotion.

The TFC newsletter continues to perform exceptionally well, with its high click-through rate driving increased traffic to our tenant farming blogs. Our December mailout exceeded average open and click-through rates, reflecting strong audience interest during a typically quieter period. Subscriber growth remains steady, and will remain a focus through 2025.

Mailout	Open Rate	Click Through Rate
Land Links	55.2%	8.3%
TFC Newsletter	72.6%	18.1%
Issue 4 (December) Newsletter	61%	12%

WEBSITE

Website traffic saw a significant increase this quarter, rising by 30% compared to the previous period. While average time on page experienced a slight decline, it remains comfortably above our KPI. Our top performing pages this quarter were:

- Home
- Work for Us
- CLES report news post

These results highlight the relevance of our content to both job seekers and those interested in our thought leadership.

3,759

Avg. number of monthly users in Q3

Previous quarter

2,890

5,483

Avg. number of monthly sessions in Q3

Previous quarter

4,285

3m 1s

Avg. time on site

Previous quarter

3m 12s

GOOD PRACTICE CASEWORK Q3 2024-25



In Q3 we handled 31 good practice enquiries and cases. This is a slight increase from Q2, during which 29 cases were handled. Cases handled in Q3 include 10 ongoing cases from previous quarters.

NO OF CASES:

OCTOBER	10
NOVEMBER	12
DECEMBER	9
YEAR TO DATE	73



ISSUES RAISED

	Q3	YTD
Community Engagement	11	17
Good Stewardship	10	19
Diversification of Ownership & Tenure	5	15
Negotiated Transfer to Communities	1	2
Common Good	1	10
Legislative Routes to Ownership	1	1
Transparency	1	4
Vacant and Derelict Land	1	4
Charities	1	1



CONTACT FROM:

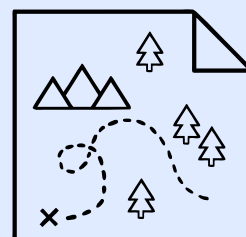
	Q3	YTD
Individual	10	38
Proactive (we made contact)	6	6
Community organisation	5	13
Public Body	3	4
Community Council	2	3
Charity	2	2
Private landowner	1	4
Church	1	1
Intermediary	1	2

CONTACT ABOUT:

	Q3	YTD
Private Landowner	11	27
Public Body	7	20
Charity	4	4
Unknown	2	10
Various	2	6
Church	2	2
Ownerless land	1	1
Community organisation	0	3

LOCATION

We received cases from:	Q3	YTD
Highlands	6	14
Argyll & Bute	4	8
Scotland-wide	4	6
Dumfries & Galloway	3	4
Fife	2	5
Moray	2	4
Perth & Kinross	2	2
West Lothian	2	6
Aberdeenshire	1	3
Not disclosed	0	4



In Q3 we also had single cases from : Angus, City of Edinburgh, Clackmannanshire, East Lothian and North Lanarkshire.

This year there have been 1 or 2 cases each from:

East Renfrewshire, Glasgow, Na h-Eileanan Siar, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, Stirling





SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

**Commissioners' Meeting 4th February 2025
An Lochran, Inverness**

PAPER 5

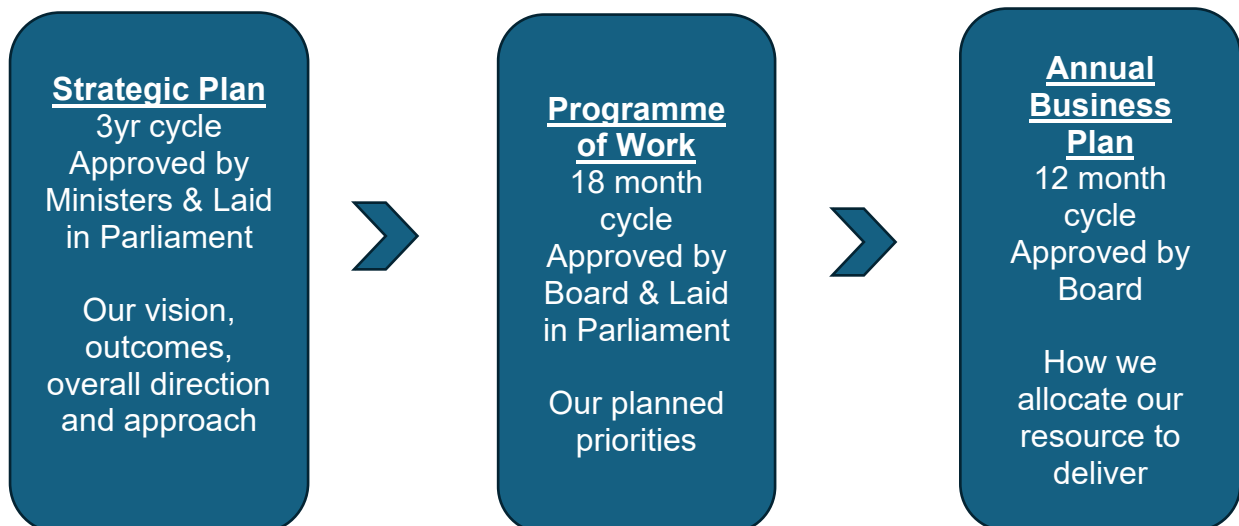
Programme of Work April 2025

Purpose:	To consider and agree a refreshed Programme of Work
Previous board papers:	Paper 4, 3 rd Dec 2024: 2025/26 priorities
Action required:	For decision

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016 requires the Commission to publish a Programme of Work as well as its Strategic Plan. We published our current Strategic Plan and Programme of Work in September 2023.

The Strategic Plan period runs to September 2026, after the next Scottish elections. We propose to publish a refreshed Programme of Work for the period April 2025 – September 2026. We usually update our Programme of Work every 18 months so that it remains relevant and allows us to refresh our focus within a strategic plan period.

Our Strategic Planning Cycle:



Programme of Work April 2025

This period will run through to beyond the next Scottish elections and beyond the expected timetable for completion of the Land Reform Bill (primary legislation stages). It is therefore an opportunity for us to look beyond the Bill, though its development and implementation will continue to be a key theme.

Annex A sets out a proposed Programme of Work for discussion and agreement. It is structured by the five key delivery themes set out in our Strategic Plan. These are also used to structure our annual business plan, showing how we deliver in each financial year.

The draft Business Plan for 2025/26 will be considered at the 4th March board meeting.

On publication, the Programme of Work is laid in Parliament.

Commissioners are asked to consider and agree a refreshed Programme of Work.

Hamish Trench
Chief Executive