



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

Commissioners Meeting
3 July 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	-	For information	Commissioners
3.	Quarterly Report: Delivery Finance Risk Communications Casework	2	For discussion	Hamish Trench
4.	ScotLand Futures update	-	For information	Scarlett Macfarlane
5.	Good Practice Programme – future options	3	For discussion	Emma Cooper
6.	AOB			Chair

- The board meeting will be followed by a board discussion.
- The Audit and Risk Committee meeting is scheduled for 2pm on 3rd July (An Lochran/hybrid)



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

Minute of the meeting of the Scottish Land Commissioners held on Thursday 5th June 2025 online.

Commissioners Present: Michael Russell (Chair), Craig Mackenzie, Calum MacLeod, Lucy Beattie (Land Commissioners)

In Attendance: Hamish Trench, Emma Cooper, Kathie Pollard, James MacKessack-Leitch (Scottish Land Commission); Luke Driscoll, Orsolya Keri (Observers, Scottish Government)

Apologies: Deb Roberts (Land Commissioner), Rob Black (Tenant Farming Commissioner)

Declarations of interest: None

Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes from the meeting held on 5 May 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record with no matters arising.

1. Commissioners Updates

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

The Chair noted a recent estate visit, meeting with NFUS, the Scottish Land and Estates Conference and the Reference Group for Review of Community Right to Buy. Other updates included participation in the Community Land Scotland Conference, future events and engagement.

2. Land Reform Bill

Hamish and James provided an update on the progress of the Bill at Stage 2. Commissioners noted the range of amendments the Committee will be considering and the expected timetable.

3. Tax workstream – phase 1 update

(Lucy Beattie joined the meeting during this item)

Kathie introduced the paper, giving an update on our work with Scottish Government to begin reviewing options for the role of tax in relation to land reform and net zero ambitions.

The board welcomed progress and the engagement undertaken during phase 1. Commissioners sought more information on the consideration to date of the potential role for

a carbon land tax and the range of issues involved, as well as the links to the Commission's previous recommendations made in 2022.

Key points raised in discussion were:

- That the Commission should be direct in its advice to Government on the potential role of tax;
- That in relation to carbon land emissions, large estates are key to delivery and the potential of tax as an effective lever should be considered, noting this needs to be developed in context of other possible levers as well;
- The balance of motivation between behaviour change and revenue raising is a key question to be considered by government;
- That it would be helpful to review the learning and outcomes from the reintroduction of shooting rates in relation to both behaviour change and revenue raising;
- If a carbon land tax has a role to play then the timescale and sequencing of tax reforms in relation to other mechanisms to support delivery is important – eg signalling the future introduction at a predictable point.
- The recommendations of 2022 in relation to the data and information systems needed to underpin better taxation of land remain very relevant and should inform phase 2.

The board agreed the proposed focus for phase 2 of the work, noting the importance of ensuring the output focuses on the wider potential role of tax in delivering land reform and climate outcomes. Government has asked the Commission to explore the carbon land tax proposal specifically, but our advice should set this in a wider context of the range of possible reforms, building on the Commission's previous advice.

4. Landowner Voluntary Commitment to Land Rights and Responsibilities

Emma introduced the paper which proposes a development phase to explore the potential operation of a voluntary public commitment that land owners could make to deliver on the LRRS.

The board focused on the opportunity and the key risks involved. Commissioners welcomed the principle of the approach, noting the value in being able to publicly recognise good practice, alongside having more statutory means to address poor practice.

In particular, Commissioners discussed the balance between an accreditation approach and a lighter-touch means of providing recognition. It was agreed the Commission should not seek to develop an accreditation approach given the operating and resource implications, but should develop a form of recognition. Commissioners sought more information about how the potential reputational risks to the Commission could be mitigated, and the scope of what might be included in providing recognition.

The breadth of scope of the LRRS principles was raised as a challenge, particularly in being able to have sufficient quality assurance.

The board supported the approach proposed and agreed to progress a development phase in this financial year, which should include specific consideration of:

- Sufficiently clear and focused requirements for recognition that address the risks of a potentially wide scope;

- Careful consideration of the way recognition is articulated so it is not conveyed as an overall accreditation;
- The connections to the proposed Land Management Plans;
- The wider context of ScotLand Futures and the potential future directions that emerge
- Retaining flexibility in the approach to respond to feedback and experience.

AOB

No other business was raised.

Date of next meeting: 3rd July, Inverness

Actions from Board Meetings - Update of actions to date							
Action number	Date Raised	Context	Action Detail	Responsible	Date Required	Date Closed	Comments

25050801	08/05/2025	Communications	Nikki to keep presence on X under review for discussion at next quarter	Nikki Nagler			In hand, for review next quarter
25050802	08/05/2025	Research Strategy	James to amend research strategy as agreed for sign off by Hamish	James MacKessack-Leitch			Completed and circulated



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION
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Commissioners' Meeting 3rd July 2025
An Lochran, Inverness

PAPER

Quarterly Progress Report

Purpose:	To review quarterly progress for Qtr. 1 (Apr-Jun)
Previous board papers:	May 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 first quarter of the 25/26 Business Plan. The table below shows current status against the Business Plan KPIs.

KPI MEASUREMENT	TARGET	Progress
DELIVERY		
% of planned outputs in annual business plans delivered	90%	On track: 75%
		Not yet started:19%
		Risk of delay or changed: 6%
		See ANNEX A
STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS		
Feedback as reported through perceptions audits	Maintain or increase perceived impact	Feedback via survey to be sought during 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). Next survey held June 25, results pending.
FINANCE		
End of year out-turn	Within 2% of total allocated budget	See ANNEX B

The report comprises five 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 1 include:
- Launch of ScotLand Futures initiative;
 - Publication of route map to support community benefit from nature restoration;
 - Reference Group providing advice to inform Review of Community Rights to Buy;
 - Engagement on phase 1 of tax workstream completed;
 - Two panel discussions held at Royal Highland Show – on ScotLand Futures and on the Rural Land Market Report;
 - Tenant Farming Advisory Forum discussions advising on changes to Part 2 of the Land Reform Bill.
- b) **Finance Review:** Annex B provides a summary of our current budget position. At this early stage of the financial year projections remain on track.
- c) **Risk management:** The Strategic Risk Register is provided at Annex C.
- d) **Communications:** Annex D provides a summary of communications activity over Quarter 1 and a look ahead.
- e) **Casework:** Annex E provides a summary of Good Practice casework for Quarter 1.

Other Updates

Staffing

Kayleigh Watson joined the Commission on 9 June as a Modern Apprentice Business Support Assistant. This role includes support for board and committee meetings.

Recruitment for the Research Officer post has also completed, with a new member of staff due to start in post on 4 August.

Recruitment will shortly start for the Head of Practice & Advice post. We are also taking forward the proposed restructure of the policy team, with a two-week formal consultation period with the staff directly affected.

Hamish Trench
CEO

PROGRESS REPORT ON 2025/26 BUSINESS PLAN DELIVERY			
RAG Rating:	Delivery on track	Not yet started	Risk of delay or changed
Priority	2025/26 Planned Activity	Progress Commentary	RAG
1. Advising on reforms to law, policy & practice			
1.1 Land Reform Bill	- Provide advice and evidence as required to inform Stages 2 and 3 of Parliamentary consideration	Regular liaison with Bill team during Stage 2; monitoring amendments and likely implications.	
	- Develop advice to inform plans for secondary legislation and implementation	Initial scoping underway. Pending clarity following Stage 2.	
	- Plan for the financial, governance and delivery implications of anticipated new functions for the Commission	Initial board discussion on planning for implementation scheduled July 25.	
1.2 A Land Reformed Scotland	- Engage a wide range of voices on what a land reformed Scotland looks like	ScotLand Futures launched May; Public online survey in progress; Invited contributions sought by end June; RHS panel event and other stakeholder engagement;	
	- Advise on the key components for a future programme of reforms	Planning for phase 2 (Sept onwards)	
1.3 Diverse Ownership and Governance	- Develop policy advice drawing together recommendations to support more diverse land governance approaches	Policy advice scheduled for Qtr 3	
	- Collaborate with the Crofting Commission in its work on the future of crofting	Regular liaison with Crofting Commission and engagement in partnership project on possible role for crofting in South of Scotland;	

1.4 Community Land Ownership	- Convene the Community Land Leadership Group to further develop community land ownership	CLLG meetings scheduled;	
	- Convene a Reference Group to support and inform Scottish Government's Review of Community Rights to Buy	CTRB Reference Group in place – considered draft consultation document in May;	
	- Advise on Community Rights to Buy, financing community land acquisitions and the Scottish Land Fund	SLC to respond to CRTB consultation Qtr 2. Wider policy advice scheduled Qtr 3.	
	- Continue collaboration with Crown Estate Scotland on the community land accelerator initiative and share learning	CES collaboration ended following CES investment committee decision, lessons learned report to be provided.	
	- Support the KLTR Ownerless Property Transfer Scheme through panel membership and advice	Supporting KLTR OPTS panel and proactive approach to ownerless VDL. Engaging with pilot local authorities to identify ownerless land that may have potential for productive re-use.	
1.5 Tax Reforms	- Complete Phase 1 research and initial advice on the role of tax in relation to land	Phase 1 engagement completed and phase 1 report being prepared. Research commissioned on international practice in land values in the tax system.	
	- Complete Phase 2 providing more detailed advice on options for reforms	Phase 2 plan being developed in collaboration with SG.	
1.6 Public Land Leadership	- Respond to opportunities to collaborate with public land-owning bodies	Collating information on the powers, constraints and opportunities across rural public bodies in relation to transfer of land below market value.	
	- Advise on the longer-term strategic opportunity of public land ownership	Policy advice to be considered in conjunction with community ownership advice and ScotLand Futures.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide advice to inform Scottish Government's Review of Compulsory Purchase Orders 	Participated in SG workshop on valuation issues in CPO Review, consultation to come.	
1.7 Research and Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement a refreshed research strategy that builds collaboration and seeks to maximise value for money, including co-ordination with the Scottish Government Strategic Research Programme 	Research strategy agreed. Engagement on research collaboration with RESAS, SRUC, UHI. RESAS consultation on 2027-32 Strategic Research programme expected in the autumn.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyse and publish the annual insights and data reports on the rural land market 	Rural Land Market Insights Report published June. Panel at RHS. Research Officer to lead on Data Report once in post.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborate with research institutions on advice to improve and integrate data on land ownership, use and value 	Engagement on research collaboration with RESAS, SRUC, UHI.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support joint PhD opportunities with university partners 	University of Edinburgh PhD partnership ongoing.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offer the annual student award 	Scheduled for Q4	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participate in the Community Land Academic Network 	Ongoing.	
2. Supporting practical implementation of LRRS			
2.1 Good practice in land ownership, use and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Champion and share good practice in implementing the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement 	Attended events to promote good practice.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refresh and update the Land Rights and Responsibilities Protocols 	Two protocols completed with stakeholder engagement; further protocols drafted and awaiting input from stakeholders but behind schedule due to staff capacity.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build relationships and collaborate with industry bodies to deliver training for land agents and other 	3 webinars delivered in Q1 on tenant farming, housing, and managing change. Now paused due to staff absence.	

	professionals to promote high standards in land rights and responsibilities.		
	- Provide individual advice and guidance to support the development of good practice	25 cases delivered in Q1.	
	- Consider how standards for leadership in good practice are further developed	Approach developed and agreed with Commissioners.	
	- Deliver casework to support good practice and promote good relations between landowners and communities	25 cases delivered in Q1.	
	- Regularly review casework to identify learning for policy and practice		
	- Collaborate with core industry bodies to collectively promote and support good practice		
	- Building on the evaluation of the Good Practice Programme, consider how the programme could be expanded to extend impact	Approach developed and options paper presented to Commissioners.	
2.2 Community benefits from land and natural capital	- Convene the Community Benefit Advisory Group to provide leadership and coordination in delivering community benefits from land	Regular meetings held.	
	- Participate in the steering group for the Natural Capital and Community Benefits Partnership Group	Chairing Partnership and holding regular meetings.	
	- Support development of community benefits from nature finance in the Cairngorms National Park through project post	Three projects being supported.	
3. Tenant Farming			
3.1 Codes of Practice, Guidance and Casework	- Publish new Codes and Guidance as required	New Codes and Guidance will be required by the Land Reform bill	
	- Extend and promote the mediation scheme	This has been undertaken but further opportunities have been highlighted through the LRB with a consultation proposed for binding	

		arbitration which may allow the inclusion of other dispute resolution measures.	
	- Respond to casework and report on patterns in advice	Ongoing	
3.2 Relinquishment and Assignment of Agricultural Tenancies	- Ensure statutory requirements to appoint a valuer are fulfilled	Ongoing	
	- Update process and guidance as appropriate	There is a requirement to update the guidance to address issues with legislative gaps. This has been drafted and needs to be considered by TFAF before progressing further.	
3.3 Tenant Farming Advisory Forum	- Convene regular Forum meetings to support leadership and collaboration	TFAF has been meeting regularly, with a particular focus on Part 2 of the Land Reform bill.	
3.4 Land Reform Bill Part 2	- Provide advice on the development and implementation of tenant farming reforms in Part 2 of the Land Reform Bill	Ongoing, a number of issues remain to be addressed at Stage 3.	
4. Communications and Engagement			
4.1 Public Engagement	- Deliver a refreshed programme of public engagement	Scotland Futures session held at Royal Highland Show, attendance at other key stakeholder events and public meeting planned in September for Wick/Thurso.	
	- Implement our Gaelic Language Plan	Discussion underway to deliver a Gaelic awareness session to staff in 25/26/	
	- Renew our website to improve accessibility and functionality	New website supplier identified, work to begin in Q2.	
4.2 Communications & Events	- Deliver a programme of events to support our key priorities	On track, see comms report for full details.	
	- Maximise use of our existing body of research and recommendations	Publication of SRUC Insights Report in Q1.	
	- Use digital marketing to drive engagement and inform conversation amongst stakeholders	Delivery of SLC bi-monthly newsletter and TFC newsletter.	

4.3 Convening Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convene established groups and keep under review opportunities to convene others to support leadership and collaboration 	CLLG, CRTB Reference Group, GP Advisory Group, TFAF and Community Benefits Advisory Group in regular meeting cycles	
5. Being an effective organisation			
5.1 Business and financial planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver improved financial and project reporting 	Implementation of new financial software to improve financial reporting. New project management process in place.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support effective audit scrutiny and assurance 	External audit to take place in Q2, internal audit process ongoing.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver information and data management obligations including development of a new Records Management Scheme 	In progress.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep under review potential organisational implications of land reform bill 	Ongoing – tracking Stage 2 amendments, board discussion on implementation planning in July.	
5.2 Organisational development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver a training and development plan 	Development for annual plan underway	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep HR policies under rolling review 	Ongoing.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Run bi-annual staff surveys and regular engagement through Staff Engagement Forum 	Q1 survey completed.	
5.3 Climate action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver against a refreshed climate action plan 	Ongoing.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve climate action reporting to Management Team and Board 	Ongoing.	
5.4 Risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake regular strategic and organisational risk reviews 	Ongoing, quarterly corporate risk reviews and strategic risk review with ARC and Board.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support effective risk scrutiny and interrogation by Audit and Risk Committee 	Ongoing.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure cyber security including maintaining Cyber essentials plus accreditation 	In progress, accreditation due to be renewed in Q3.	



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GIA	1,680,000.00
Expected Other Income	-
Allocated	1,674,852.96
Under / (Over) Budget	5,147.04

Categories	Nominal	Allocated Annual Budget	Proposals to 25/26	Accruals to 24/26	Committed	Predicted Spend	Total Spend /To date	Proposals to 26/27	Accruals to 24/26	Year End Position	Notes
1. Advising on reforms to law, policy and practice - HT											
Land Reform Bill	Land Reform Bill Costs	4,000.00			-		-		-		
A Land Reformed Scotland	Collaboration & Partnership Working	15,833.33	(2,916.67)	8,750.00	10,000.00	8,750.00		-	-	15,833.33	CES -End QE May 25. 1 month cost accrued to 24/25 accounts.
Priorities for Policy Advice	Policy Advice	17,000.00					-	-	-		
	Research	-		3.60	3.60		-	-	-	3.60	
	Student Agreements	1,000.00		1,000.00			-	-	-	1,000.00	
Subscriptions & Memberships	Subscriptions & Memberships	1,250.00	52.88	1,150.00		1,150.00	(191.67)	-	-	1,011.21	
	Strategic Plan total	39,083.33	52.88	(2,916.67)	10,903.60	10,000.00	9,903.60	(191.67)	-	17,848.15	
2. Supporting practical implementation of Scotland's Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement - EC											
Good practice in land ownership, use and management	Digital Publications (Blogs)	-			-		-	-	-		
	Events (Speaker Hire/ Tickets/ Hall Hire)	6,500.00		195.00		195.00		-	-	195.00	CLS event - GC attended.
	Catering	-					-	-	-		
Community benefits from land and natural capital	Salaries Staff	10,000.00	(172.29)	10,000.00		20,988.18	-	-	-	9,827.71	CBO cost will sit within this area including travel expenses (to be re-imbursed).
	Strategic Plan total	16,500.00	-	(172.29)	10,195.00	-	21,183.18	-	-	10,022.71	
3. Promoting good relations between agricultural landlords and tenants through the functions of the Tenant Farming Commissioner, EC											
Codes of Practice, Guidance and Casework	TFC Mediation	5,000			-	-	-	-	-	-	
Relinquishment and Assignment of Agricultural Tenancies		-			-	-	-	-	-	-	
Subscriptions & Memberships	Subscriptions & Memberships	100.00			-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Strategic Plan total	5,100.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
4. Engaging people in why land matters and how they can be involved, NN											
Communications & Events	Events (Speaker Hire/ Tickets/ Hall Hire/Catering)	10,000.00	(204.00)	3,881.74		1,616.83		-	-	3,677.74	
	Conference Costs	10,000.00					-	-	-		
	Catering (Internal Meetings)	150.00					-	-	-		
	Public Relations (PR)	15,000.00					-	-	-		
	Design Costs	8,000.00		3,250.00		1,730.00		-	-	3,250.00	
	Printing Costs	6,500.00		1,273.51		1,273.51		-	-	1,273.51	
	Website Hosting	3,000.00					-	-	-		
	Subscriptions & Memberships	4,356.50	1,112.80	(1,229.89)	2,106.45	2,106.45		-	-	1,989.36	
	Media Licenses	4,356.50	2,198.23	(56.16)	656.16	95.48		-	-	2,798.23	
	Translations	1,500.00		165.40		165.40		-	-	165.40	
	Accessibility	-					-	-	-		
	Digital Publications (Blogs)	-					-	-	-		
	Photographs	-					-	-	-		
	Dept Total	62,863.00	3,911.03	(1,490.05)	11,333.26	-	6,987.67	-	-	13,154.24	
5. Underpinning by sound corporate governance and organisational development, NN											
Organisational development	HR Incl Licenses	33,232.00	396.87	7,220.16	30,000.00	3,695.04	(391.68)			37,225.35	Estimated CNPA Payroll & HR costs at £30k.
	IT	60,000.00	11,877.60	62,393.47	41,391.17	(4,387.65)				69,883.42	Unexpected costs in year - extra licenses, laptop/server charges & decommissioning (£6.9k)
	Mobile Costs	1,100.00		960.00		158.70		-	-	960.00	
	Website Development	-					-	-	-		
	Legal	14,000.00		14,400.00			-	-	-	14,400.00	This relates to TFC legal fees (Gillespie Macandrew)
	Audit & Accountancy fees	69,200.00	(31,560.00)	61,907.60		22,218.00		34,500.00		64,847.60	Estimated Audit Scotland fees of £34.5k
	Finance Software Costs	700.00			700.00		-	-	-	700.00	Xero - this will be paid quarterly.
	Climate Reporting	1,000.00			900.00		-	-	-	900.00	RSK.
	Office Accommodation	28,800.00		28,800.00		28,800.00		-	-	28,800.00	
	Office Costs	200.00		18.64		18.64		-	-	18.64	
	Bank Charges	400.00		50.10		50.10		-	-	50.10	
	Event Insurance	800.00	377.25				-	-	-	377.25	
	Subscriptions & Memberships	343.00	78.00				-	-	-	78.00	
	IT Equipment (B/F, additions, disposal)	250.00					-	-	-		DSE for staff
	Fixtures & Fittings (B/F, additions, disposal)	250.00			1,200.00	23.68		-	-	1,223.68	DSE for staff, KW/PM & new research officer requiring DSE set up.
Training & Development	Training & Development (Commissioners)	4,000.00	1,416.00	708.00		708.00		-	-	2,124.00	
	Training & Development (Staff)	12,000.00	(252.00)	511.00		511.00		-	-	259.00	
Recruitment	Recruitment	5,000.00		1,144.07		1,144.07		-	-	964.07	
	Dept Total	231,275.00	14,145.72	(31,992.00)	178,113.04	32,800.00	98,718.40	(4,779.33)	34,500.00	222,811.11	
Staffing & Commissioners											
Payroll/ On-Costs	Salaries Staff	1,221,383.36	1,788.41	51,221,383.36		183,600.17		-	-	1,223,173.77	We have fully committed wages
	Salaries Comm	62,648.27		162,648.27		10,400.14		-	-	62,648.27	We have fully committed wages
Travel & Subsistence (Staff)	Travel - Air	-						-	-		
	Travel - Rail	4,500.00	(504.40)	1,164.80		1,128.60		-	-	660.40	
	Travel - Car Hire	500.00		569.67		254.67		-	-	569.67	
	Travel - Bus/Taxi/Bike/Ferry	1,000.00		71.90		71.90		-	-	71.90	
	Travel - Mileage	4,000.00		840.20		840.20		-	-	840.20	
	Travel - Hotels	8,000.00	(475.56)	2,742.95		2,456.37		-	-	2,267.39	
	Subsistence	4,000.00		433.80		408.80		-	-	433.80	
Travel & Subsistence (Commissioners)	Travel - Air	-						-	-		
	Travel - Rail	2,500.00		101.19		101.19		-	-	101.19	
	Travel - Car Hire	-						-	-		
	Travel - Bus/Taxi/Bike/Ferry	1,000.00		73.51		73.51		-	-	73.51	
	Travel - Mileage	4,000.00		421.20		421.20		-	-	421.20	
	Travel - Hotels	3,000.00	(447.59)	981.59		981.59		-	-	534.00	
	Subsistence	2,000.00		45.80		45.80		-	-	45.80	
Commissioners Meetings	Catering (Internal Meetings)	1,500.00		49.25				-	-	49.25	
	Dept Total	1,320,031.63	1,788.41	(1,427.55)	1,291,927.49	-	200,784.14	-	-	1,291,888.35	
		1,674,852.96	19,298.04	(37,998.56)	1,602,072.39	42,800.00	337,576.99	(4,971.00)	34,500.00	1,655,724.56	

1,680,000.00 GIA
(510,000.00) Drawdown
1,170,000.00 Remaining

1,555,724.56 Expected Year End Position

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		Averse	Multi factor authentication implemented for network access. Cyber security requirements embedded in retendered IT service. Potential increase in cyber threats due to current political environment. Secured continued Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation for 2024. Transfer of finance and accounting software completed April 25 with back-up in place.	5	Sep-25	Head of Communications and Corporate services
2	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	4	12		Minimalist	Initial estimates of financial implications of new measures as drafted provided to sponsor team Oct 24. To be reviewed as Bill progresses. Regular engagement with sponsor team. Significant uncertainty at this point pending completion of bill and resource discussions.	4	Sep-25	CEO
3	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		Cautious	25/26 Business Plan sets focused priorities matched with staff resource. Additional asks would require additional resource. Staff posts reviewed as vacancies arise in order to remain agile and refresh focus where necessary.	4	Sep-25	CEO
RISK CATEGORY: REPUTATIONAL															
4	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		Minimalist	2023 & 2024 appointments concluded, in place with induction and transition arrangements completed. Opportunities for board stakeholder engagement to be built into programme for year.	4	Sep-25	CEO
5	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		Minimalist	Close engagement with stakeholders and sponsor team to identify potential issues in advance and take action. Clear case handling and internal communications procedures. Land Reform Bill creates new dynamics but clarity of SLC focus agreed with board. ScotLand Futures creates framing for future policy priorities.	3	Mar-26	CEO
6	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		Minimalist	Refreshed Programme of Work published April 25. Launch of Scotland Futures initiative May 25 provides platform for coherent narrative beyond individual legislative steps. Improved regular e-newsletters provide regular overview of Commission's work.	2	Mar-26	Head of Communications and Corporate services
7	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		Open	Wide stakeholder engagement across policy, good practice and tenant farming work. Structured engagement through standing advisory groups, bilateral stakeholder engagement via Commissioners and staff. Dynamics of land reform bill actively managed via open advice and engagement.	4	Mar-26	CEO
8	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		Open	Regular sponsorship & land reform team liaison in place. Chair & CEO liaison with DG. Engagement in other formal SG structures eg NSET Programme, EELG, Planning Advisory Group. Annual board meeting with Cab Sec due.	4	Sep-25	CEO
RISK CATEGORY: COMPLIANCE															
9	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		Minimalist	Using checklist of assurance controls; 25/26 internal audit plan agreed; 24/25 year-end and annual report preparation on schedule; staff responsibilities for data, information, climate reporting and other duties identified.	1	Mar-26	CEO
10	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		Averse	Improvements to budget monitoring and reporting made in 24/25. Monthly MT and board monitoring in place. Transfer to new finance software from 1st April completed to reduce manual data input and further improve consistency and format of reporting. Internal audit review of financial process undertaken 24/25. Year end outturn approx 0.5% underspend.	1	Mar-26	CEO
RISK CATEGORY: STAFFING															
11	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		Cautious	Ongoing absence monitoring in place. Resilience improvements in corporate team implemented. Desk instructions for critical tasks in place. Policy to review all vacancies at board level. Recruitment for vacancies in business support and research successfully completed.	4	Sep-25	Head of Communications and Corporate services
12	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 responsive ways of working.	Effective	2	3	6		Cautious	Regular staff surveys and action plan in place. Training and development plan in place. Business Plan prioritisation matched to resource capacity. Monthly all staff meetings and individual line management meetings in place. Mental health awareness training undertaken by all line managers March 25.	3	Sep-25	CEO

COMMUNICATIONS QUARTERLY REPORT

Q1: APRIL 2025 - JUNE 2025



This quarter saw steady progress across our communications and engagement work, with improvements in key areas and positive indicators for the year ahead.

Website engagement remained strong, with an increase in average session time of nearly a minute. ScotLand Futures was one of our top performing pages, reinforcing the value of campaign-specific landing pages and a more proactive approach to website use. A key milestone was the appointment of an agency to deliver our new website, marking the beginning of an exciting new phase.

Email marketing also performed well, with all four mailouts achieving our open rate target of over 40%. We added more than 100 new subscribers this quarter, primarily through the ScotLand Futures survey, showing the benefits of linking sign-up to wider engagement activity.

On social media, LinkedIn continues to be our strongest platform, with us already halfway towards our annual growth target. We saw a modest increase in followers on X (the first in several months) suggesting a potential stabilisation of the platform's audience. Instagram engagement also improved and is just shy of our goal, helped by the integration of more video content.

Press coverage was down 16% this quarter. Nonetheless, there were some key highlights, including an op-ed in The National for the ScotLand Futures launch and a podcast appearance on EDAS, maintaining visibility across key channels.

If you'd like to discuss any aspect of this report further, please contact Scarlett Macfarlane at scarlett.macfarlane@landcommission.gov.scot.

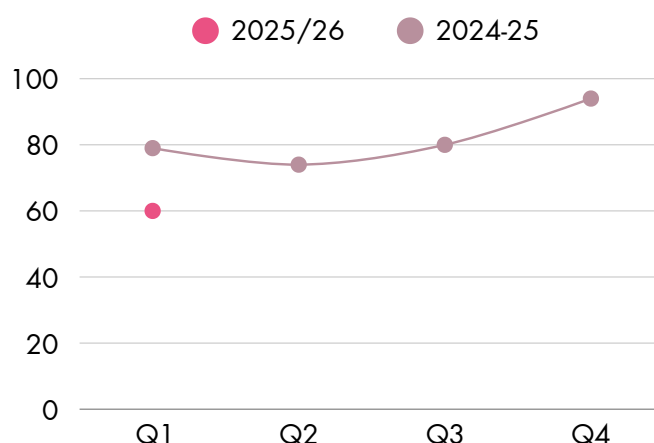
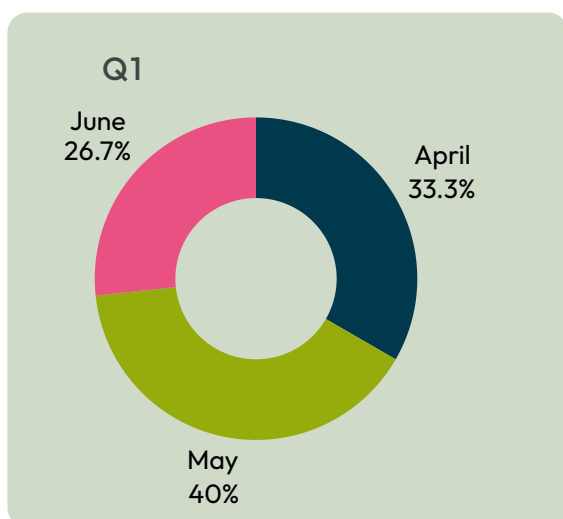
Month	Event/Activity
July	Website project commences
August	ScotLand Futures survey closes
August	CNPA Board Meeting (ScotLand Futures)
August	CMPA Land Management Forum
September	Phase 1 of Good Practice Programme refresh publications launched
September	Public Meeting Caithness

PRESS COVERAGE

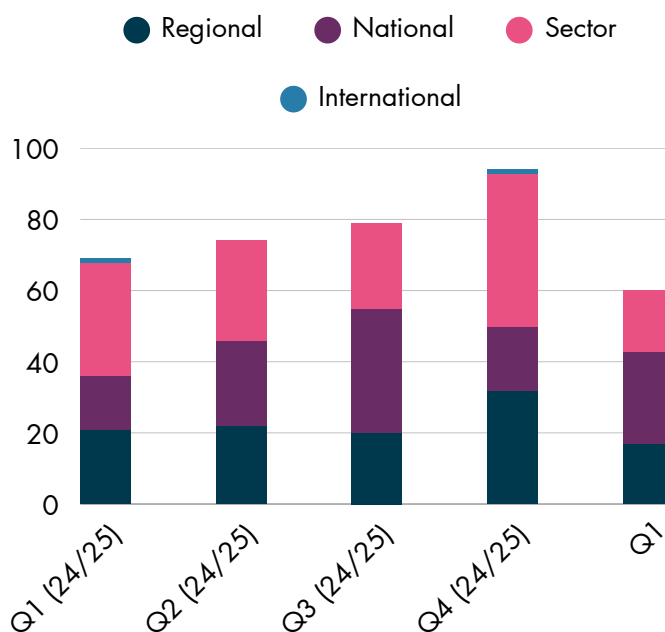
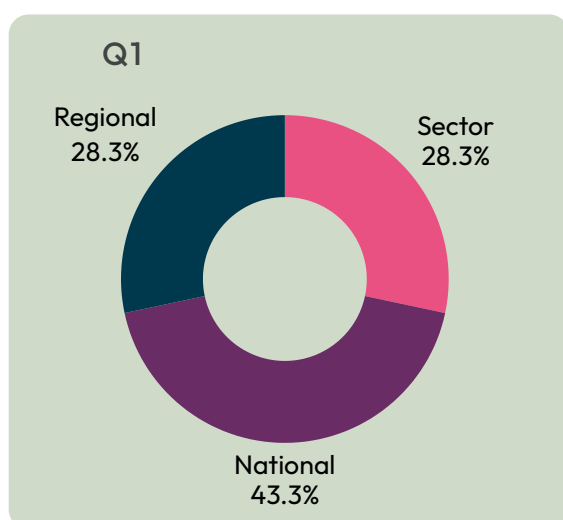
Press coverage dipped slightly this quarter, but despite the overall decrease, we secured some strong moments of coverage, including an op-ed in The National tied to the launch of the ScotLand Futures, and another podcast appearance (Hamish appeared on a recent episode of the EDAS podcast to discuss Community Wealth Building), helping to maintain our presence in key conversations.

We continue to focus on identifying timely opportunities to support media engagement and ensure visibility for our work, even during quieter periods in the wider news cycle.

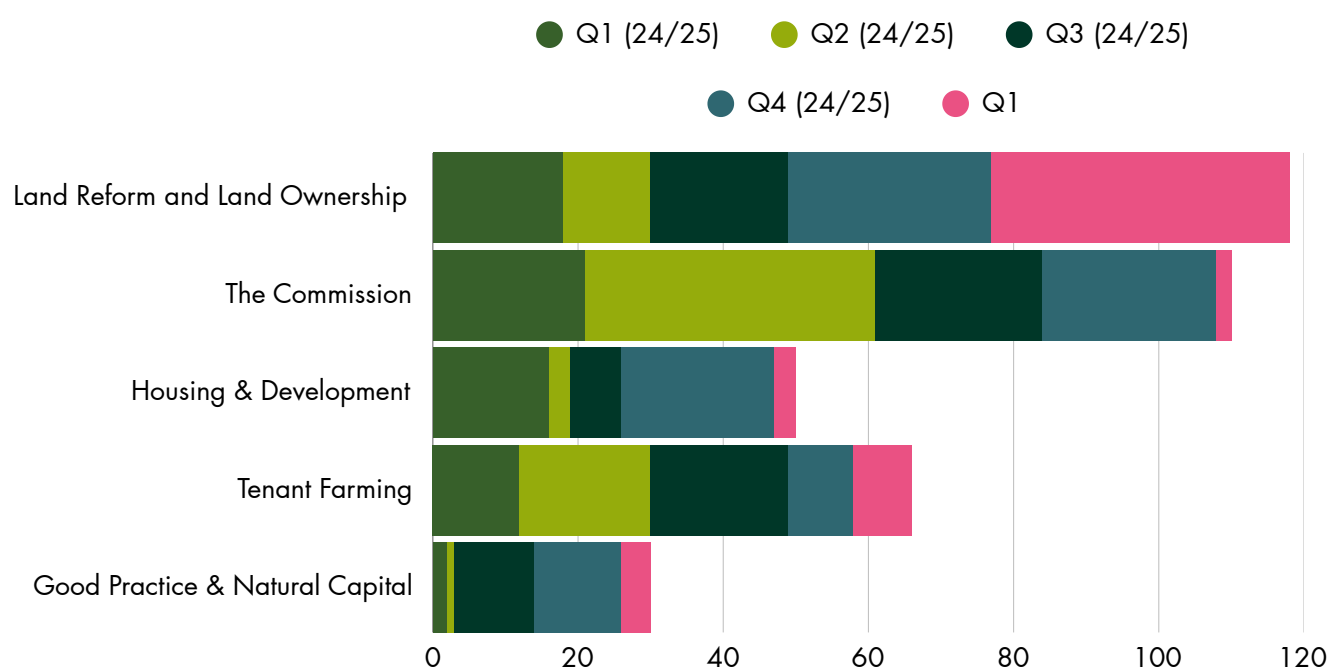
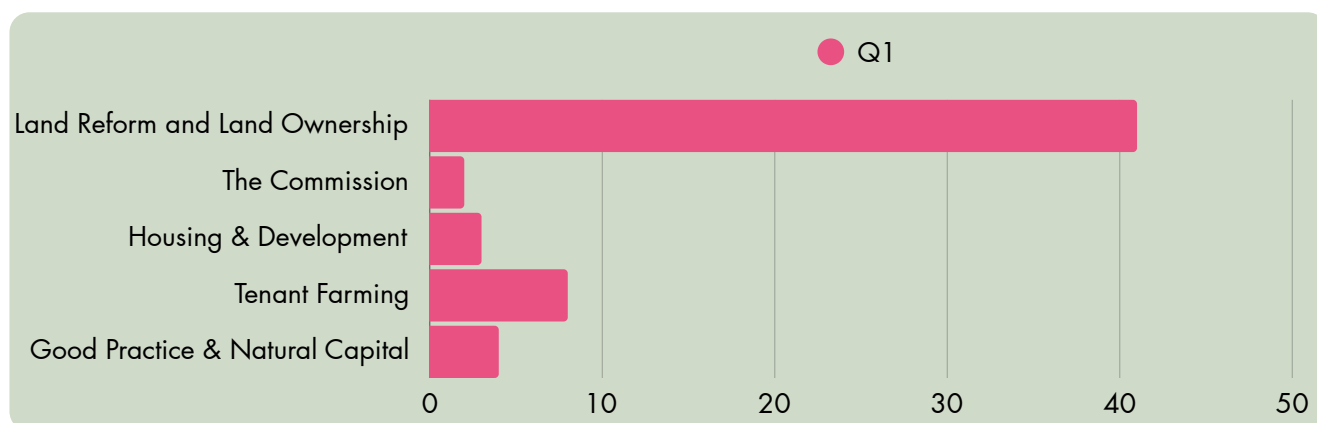
DATES OF COVERAGE



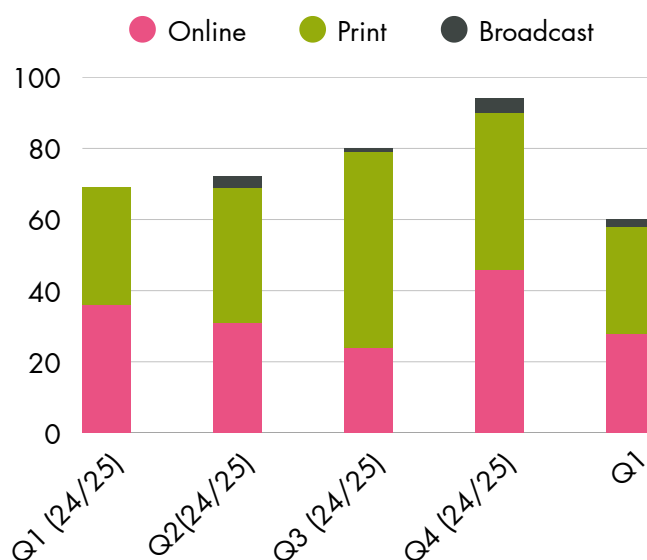
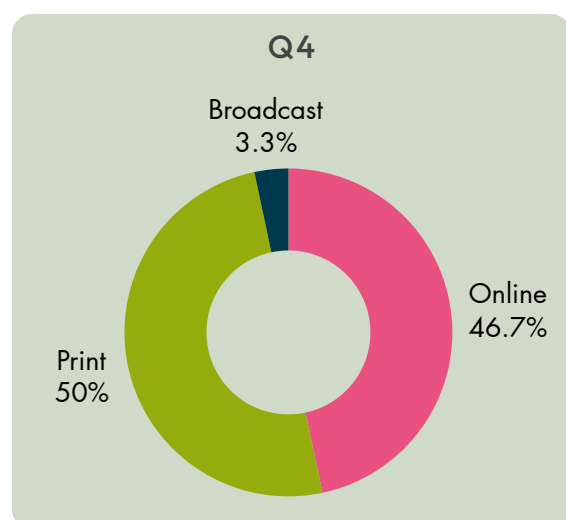
REGION OF COVERAGE



PRIORITY AREA COVERAGE



CHANNEL OF COVERAGE

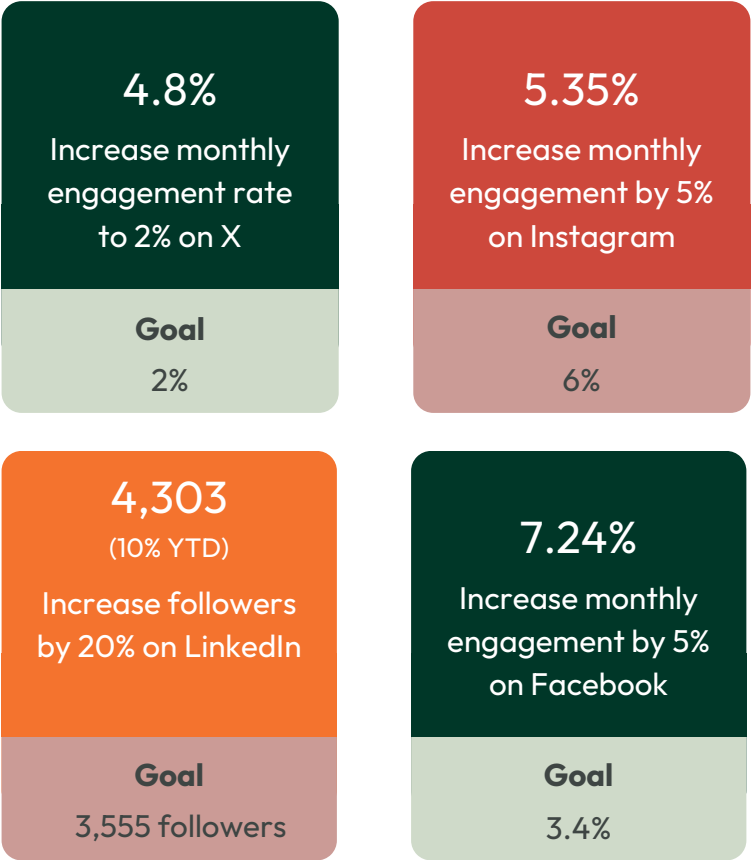


SOCIAL MEDIA

This quarter saw encouraging progress across our social media channels, with improved engagement and steady audience growth.

Engagement on X remained strong, and for the first time in several months, we saw a modest increase in followers – a possible sign that the platform’s recent decline is beginning to stabilise. On Instagram, engagement improved and we are just short of our quarterly target, with increased use of video playing a key role in driving this uplift.

LinkedIn continues to perform well as our leading platform for professional engagement. We're already halfway towards achieving our annual growth target of 20%, demonstrating the effectiveness of our content strategy and the platform’s relevance to our audiences.



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

Source: Hootsuite

EMAIL MARKETING

We sent four mailouts this quarter, all of which met our target open rate of over 40%, maintaining strong engagement across our subscriber base. This continues to demonstrate the value of email as a direct and effective channel for sharing updates and insights.

We added over 100 new subscribers this quarter, largely through contact gathering as part of the ScotLand Futures survey. Growing our mailing list remains a priority, and this approach shows the benefit of integrating sign-up opportunities into wider engagement activity.

Mailout	Open Rate	Click Through Rate
Issue 6 (April) Newsletter	45.9%	11.1%
TFC Newsletter	50.4%	13%
SLF Launch	48.6%	8.3%
RHS events	45.6%	NA

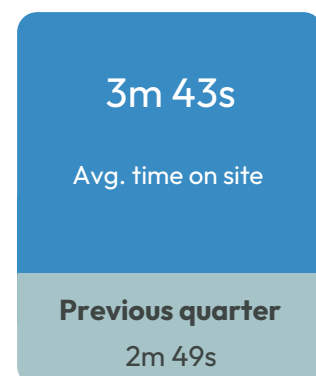
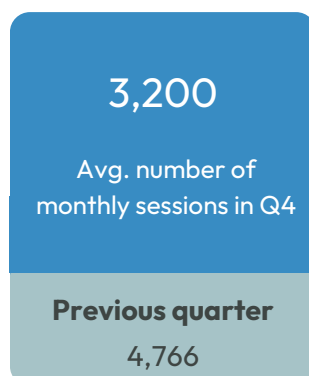
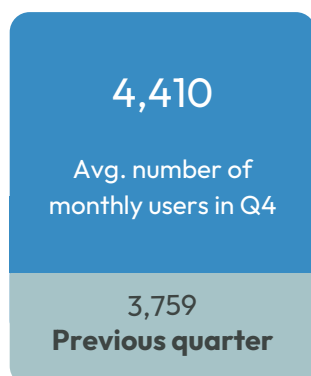
WEBSITE

Website traffic held steady this quarter, with a notable improvement in average session time (up by nearly a minute). ScotLand Futures featured in our top three most visited pages, highlighting the value of campaign-specific landing pages and the importance of using the website proactively to support engagement.

A major development this quarter was the appointment of an agency to deliver our new website. This follows the successful launch of the procurement process and marks the start of a key phase in our work to create a more accessible, user-friendly and intuitive online presence.

Our top performing pages this quarter were:

- Work for Us
- Home
- ScotLand Futures



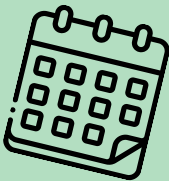
GOOD PRACTICE CASEWORK Q1 2025-26



In Q1 we handled 25 good practice enquiries and cases. This is the same number of cases as in Q1 2024-25. Cases handled in Q1 include 15 ongoing cases from previous quarters (6 of which were FIRNS projects).

NO OF CASES:

APRIL	13
MAY	7
JUNE	5
YEAR TO DATE	25



ISSUES RAISED

	Q1
Good Stewardship	10
Community Engagement	9
Diversification of Ownership & Tenure	3
Charities	2
Common Good	1



CONTACT FROM:

	Q1
FIRNS	6
Individual	5
Charity	4
Private landowner	3
Intermediary	2
Public body	2
Community body	1
Community Council	1
Church	1

CONTACT ABOUT:

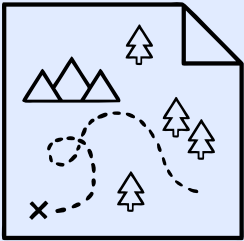
	Q1
FIRNS	6
Private Landowner	5
Public Body	5
Charity	4
Unknown	1
Various	1
Church	1
Community landowner	1
Individual (neighbour)	1

15 of these contacts relate to advice and support to landowners about how they own and manage their own land, covering engagement, community benefits, and disposals of land.

LOCATION

This quarter we handled cases and enquiries from:

Highlands	8	Perth & Kinross	1
Scotland-wide	5	Clackmannanshire	1
Moray	3	Argyll and Bute	1
Angus	2	Dumfries & Galloway	1
Fife	2	Not disclosed	1





Commissioners' Meeting

An Lochran

Paper No. 3

Good Practice Programme – Expansion Options

Purpose	To consider the high-level options for the expansion of the Good Practice Programme.
Previous board papers	N/A
Action required	For discussion

1. Background

The Good Practice Programme was established in 2019 to support implementation of the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement (LRRS). The team provides training (online and in-person), advice and support for landowners in all sectors, written guidance and route maps, and deals with over 80 cases each year. The LRRS Protocols published by the Commission are a core reference point, and these are being refreshed this year.

The team includes Gemma Campbell (Land Rights & Responsibilities Manager), Uwe Stoneman & Karen Grant (Good Practice Advisors), Annabel Davidson-Knight (Community Benefits from Nature Advisor) and Emma Cooper (Head of Land Rights and Responsibilities). The Commission also collaborates with the recently established network of advisers on community benefits employed by Community Land Scotland.

Each member of the team has developed specialist knowledge but is also able to provide more generalised advice and support. We also advise on embedding land rights and responsibilities within wider policy based on our experiences.

The board has recognised the significant capacity constraints limiting the impact and reach of the Good Practice Programme and has asked the team to consider how – if resources were secured – the Programme would most effectively and efficiently be expanded.

This paper sets out an analysis of high-level options for consideration.

2. Need

Evidence of impact

- An [independent evaluation](#) of the Good Practice Programme completed in 2022 concluded that the programme was having a positive impact and that there was interest in the Programme delivering further content, more in-depth support, better follow-up, and different approaches. It also recognised the role of stakeholder organisations in promoting the Programme and in providing related advice and support, either directly or by working in partnership with the Commission.
- A [review of casework](#) concluded that there is “a sustained demand for support and advice in putting the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement principles into practice and valuable learning to inform policy and practice”.

Existing limitations

- Our staff are all based in the Highlands and we do not have the capacity to travel often to sites for in-person discussions. This limits our ability to build relationships and be proactive in providing support and advice to landowners across Scotland.
- Capacity has limited our ability to follow up on cases after the initial engagement, which both limits the impact we have, and reduces our ability to understand outcomes, barriers and need.
- There are cases where we have not been able to make progress despite clear evidence that there is a significant impact on the local community. The Land Reform (Scotland) Bill may result in some of these cases being dealt with under legislation. However, not all cases would be in scope of the legislation. In these cases, there is the opportunity for the Commission to take a more in-depth look at the issues.

Interest and opportunities

- We do not actively promote our casework service, but interest has nonetheless grown. In the early years we sometimes made proactive approaches to high profile cases but capacity limitations mean we no longer do this unless in exceptional circumstances.
- There is a demand for, and interest in, the Commission providing more in-depth advice and support on issues. The new advisors on community benefits from nature, who are able to provide more hands-on and in-depth support, have been well received and have had more requests for support than they have capacity to deliver.

- As the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill progresses through Parliament, land management plans (as defined by the Bill) have become of more interest. If the Bill does include mandatory expectations for landholdings over a particular size, we anticipate not only will the Commission need to provide advice for those who are within the scope of the legislation, but interest will increase from those not within the scope of the legislation.

3. Approaches for consideration

If further resource were secured, there are different approaches we could take to increasing the provision of support and promotion of good practice. We have outlined some of the approaches we could take and received feedback from the GPAG on these options and on other approaches we could take. These approaches are not necessarily either/or, but could be combined.

3.1 Maintain the current approach and increase the number of advisers.

We could make no changes beyond expanding the team with more advisers. This would help us to meet the capacity challenges whilst retaining the flexibility to deploy people as needed, as well as maintaining the connectedness the team gains by working in-person every week. It ensures our approach and ethos remains consistent and based on our learning to date. Although this approach has limited our ability to build relationships and understanding across Scotland, which is reflected in the geographic distribution of casework, increased time and travel budget would help to address this.

3.2 Advisers in different regions.

We could provide advice on a regional basis and locate advisers across Scotland. This would mirror the approach taken by members of the Good Practice Advisory Group, who predominantly also provide support on a regional basis.

This would help us to develop closer working relationships with land owners, communities and partner organisations, as well as developing expertise on locally relevant issues. This would raise our profile in parts of Scotland where the Commission is less well known and which is reflected in the current geographic imbalance in casework. It could also help us to better understand and address the land reform issues across areas of Scotland, including urban Scotland, which are currently underrepresented in our work.

It is more challenging to manage a dispersed team, but the Commission as a whole is experienced in this.

3.3 Advisers embedded in different organisations

Organisations such as the members of the Good Practice Advisory Group have a significant reach within their sectors. We could embed advisers in different organisations to maximise this reach, and to build specialist knowledge and relationships within a particular sector. We would need to retain some general advisers to pick up issues that are not related to the organisations they are embedded in.

There is a value in advisers being well connected to each other and the wider team at the Commission, however, which supports learning and innovation. In addition, this option was not popular with Advisory Group members who would need to support the approach. It also raises reputational risks and issues of accountability in managing the approach.

3.4 Specialist support vs generalised support

Whilst our team have developed specialisms, in general each person provides advice on a wide range of issues in all sectors which supports learning and innovation (e.g. applying approaches from one sector to another). We could employ advisers to work only in specific sectors (as in 3 above), but within the Commission, or on specific topics, such as housing or natural capital.

This would enable advisors to develop relationships and expertise on specific subjects, rather than seeking to maintain up-to-date knowledge over a wide range of subjects. This approach has been effective for the Tenant Farming Manager who has specialised expertise, but is well connected to other advisers, benefiting all parties.

This approach would make us less resilient to staffing changes, although we have supported cross-learning within the team between the Tenant Farming Manager and Good Practice Advisers to manage this risk. This approach would limit our flexibility to respond as demand fluctuates and as needs and interests in land reform change.

A balanced approach could be for advisers to continue providing generalised advice as well as developing specialisms, but be more proactive in recruiting for more specialised expertise.

3.5 Deliver through others to promote and advise on good practice

An alternative option is for the team to stop delivering casework and guidance ourselves. Instead, we could work with relevant organisations to support them in

providing suitable support and advice on good practice. For example, delivering training to the regional advisers employed by Good Practice Advisory Group members to empower them in their role.

This approach would be heavily dependent on other organisations and would likely reduce the reach and impact of the Programme and reduce the profile of the Commission. These opportunities would potentially be limited and biased towards those organisations and sectors with better established networks and advice. It would lead to more tailored and specific advice that is well embedded in the relevant culture and constraints, but as a result, create inconsistencies in advice. It may also be difficult to ensure that our advice is grounded in the realities experienced by all parties impacted by the advice.

4. Delivery opportunities

There are many ways in which we can increase our impact (see annex 1). We see the strategic opportunities as:

- Proactive working with significant landowners - We have been successful in engaging with some of Scotland's most significant landowners, but more in-depth support is needed by some, and we would need more capacity to reach others consistently.
- Public sector leadership – We see significant opportunities to support and advise the public sector to show leadership in good practice. This includes further piloting of different approaches to tackle key challenges such as vacant and derelict land, land management planning, common good and housing.
- Availability of land – This is a key issue across Scotland and we have identified some solutions that could unlock land for multiple uses, working with willing land owners. There are a number of potential pilot projects which could have a significant impact when combined with policy solutions.
- Urban issues – We have found it more difficult to gain traction with urban landowners and issues and need dedicated resource for this context.

5. Recommendation

Our recommendation is to develop further a business case for increasing the impact of the programme that includes:

- an increased regional presence for Good Practice Advisers;
- retaining a core general set of adviser skills while seeking to develop specialisms relating to location and focus;
- continuing to support other organisations in promoting and supporting good practice, expanding impact through other organisations and networks.

In considering the resource requirements, it will be important to consider all aspects that enable effective working. For example, in addition to staff capacity, the allocation of sufficient travel budget is a significant factor in effective reach and impact; and an expanded programme would require sufficient corporate and communications support.

6. Next steps

Informed by the board's consideration of the options, we propose to develop a business case including resource implications and likely impact of different resourcing scenarios.

The Board is asked to consider the preferred approach and next steps

Emma Cooper

Head of Land Rights & Responsibilities