Commissioners Board Meeting

Thursday 2nd October 2025 15:30

Rooms 0.01, 0.02, 0.03 An Lochran, Inverness

Agenda

Item no.	Item	Paper no.	Action	Lead
	Welcome/Apologies	-		Chair
	Declarations of Interest	-		All
1.	Minutes of the previous meeting	-	For Agreement	Chair
2.	Commissioners Updates	-	For Information	Commissioners
3.	Quarterly Report: • Delivery • Finance • Risk • Communications • Casework	1	For Discussion	Hamish Trench
4.	Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25	2	For Decision	Nikki Nagler
5.	ScotLand Futures next steps	3	For Decision	Hamish Trench
	AOB		For Discussion	All

Minute of the meeting of the Scottish Land Commissioners held on Friday 5 September at The Norseman Hotel, Wick

- **Commissioners Present:** Michael Russell (Chair), Lucy Beattie, Deb Roberts, Craig Mackenzie, Calum MacLeod (Land Commissioners), Rob Black (Tenant Farming Commissioner)
- **In Attendance:** Hamish Trench, Nikki Nagler, Emma Cooper, Kathie Pollard, Scarlett MacFarlane, James MacKessack-Leitch, Gemma Campbell (Land Commission)
- **Apologies:** None
- **Declarations of interest:** Calum MacLeod indicated an indirect interest for item 6 in relation to the Scottish Land Fund, as a consultant that works with communities applying to the fund.

1. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes from the meeting held on 3 July 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record with no matters arising subject to one amendment:

- Item 4 Good Practice Programme: amend first bullet point to read 'the potential for regionally based *or focused* advisers'.

2. Commissioners Updates

Commissioners provided updates on key activities and recent events they had attended. This included a report from the Chair following the board's meeting with the Cabinet Secretary RALRI on 16 July and an online meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Housing on 25 August. Commissioners drew attention to the government's consultation on the RESAS research strategy and the Tenant Farming Commissioner reported on recent sector engagement focused on Part 2 of the Land Reform Bill.

Commissioners also reflected on the themes raised in the successful public meeting held the previous evening.

3. CEO Update

Hamish provided an update on recent staffing changes and engagement with sponsor team on financial planning in relation to implementation of the land reform bill and on the case to increase TFC resourcing.

4. Good Practice Protocols Refresh

Emma and Gemma introduced the paper which summarises changes made to refresh and update the suite of Protocols.

The board welcomed the progress and rationalisation. Commissioners sought further information and assurance on changes made, specifically why an additional reference to community engagement is not being included within the Good Stewardship protocol. Emma confirmed that the expectation for engagement remains with a cross reference to the engagement protocol, but to include more specific expectations here risks being disproportionate if the protocol is to be relevant to all land holdings.

The board sought more information about the distinction between a protocol and guidance – it was agreed that the protocols seek to establish high level expectations while guidance allows more detailed advice and reference to specific contexts to be provided.

The board discussed the interaction of the protocols refresh with new statutory measures set out in the bill. It was agreed that the refresh of protocols is necessary in advance of the bill measures, firstly to ensure the voluntary good practice approach continues and is up to date, and secondly to ensure experience of using the protocols can in due course inform the expected secondary legislation. The board noted the importance of clear communication about the context of the protocols as the refreshed versions are rolled out.

The board supported the changes made, noted the stakeholder engagement undertaken and agreed the revisions to the suite of protocols.

5. Review of Community Rights to Buy – consultation response

The board agreed the key messages set out in the paper as the basis for the Commission’s consultation response. In doing so the board noted our response should be clear in stating that in their current form, the rights to buy are not sufficiently effective and that improvements are needed. The Chair noted the stakeholder engagement so far through the CRTB Review Reference Group.

The board agreed that the Commission’s response should be published when submitted and communications team will consider options for an associated blog.

Action 25090501	Submit consultation response by deadline and consider associated communications opportunities.

6. Community Land Ownership Advice – scoping

The board noted the declaration of interest made by Calum MacLeod and he remained to participate in the discussion.

The board supported the proposed scope for this advice as set out in the paper, noting that the specific issue raised at (4) in relation to public finance mechanisms supporting transfers below market value can be considered as part of the wider role of public bodies raised in (1).

Commissioners raised considerations on whether research is available or needed on ways to calculate the net effects of best value, accounting for impact beyond immediate financial return. Staff noted relevant work already published by the Commission on socio-economic appraisal for vacant and derelict land sites which holds some parallel learning. The potential for new approaches to loan finance as a result of changes in UK fiscal rules was identified as an opportunity to explore.

The board agreed that this work should seek to deliver headline advice for Qtr 4 within this financial year, recognising that significant changes to the Land Fund would likely take time to be considered by a government in the next parliament, and would likely need follow up work if taken forward.

The board agreed the priorities within the scope are to address the role of public bodies in enabling community land ownership and potential changes in the way the Scottish Land Fund could operate.

Action 25090502	Staff to develop advice with a draft report to be considered at a future board meeting.

7. Land Reform Bill update and implementation planning

Hamish updated the board on bill progress and associated Commission work, noting a recent meeting with the bill team which looked ahead to implementation planning.

Emma introduced the paper which uses experience from our good practice and TFC work to begin consideration of the new Land and Communities Commissioner role.

The board identified several key considerations which will need to be carefully worked through to inform implementation including:

- Learning from TFC experience in relation to the capacity and functioning of the new Commissioner role;
- The need to develop clear and transparent processes to manage delegation, delivery and escalation of cases;
- The interaction with our continuing good practice advice;
- The staffing resource needed to support the Commissioner and flexibility to be able to draw on advice from all parts of the Commission staff team as needed;

- The internal governance arrangements to ensure effective collaboration between the new Commissioner, Land Commissioners and the Tenant Farming Commissioner.

The board noted that while the implementation timetable is expected to provide good time to develop these aspects step by step, this work should be built into our business planning for the remainder of this financial year and next.

The board agreed that the Chair and CEO will maintain regular dialogue with sponsor team on the expected costs of implementation, including the costs ahead of formal implementation, noting the Commission will need to secure commensurate grant-in-aid to be able to undertake this work effectively.

8. Budget Update

Nikki provided a budget update noting the spend to date and planned spend at this point in Quarter 2.

9. AOB

Scarlett provided a brief update on progress in ScotLand Futures engagement and planned next steps. The board asked that planning for final outputs should include a summary available in Gaelic.

Action 25090503	Provision for a Gaelic output to be included in ScotLand Futures project planning.

Date of next meeting: 2 October 2025, Inverness – note change in timing: board/staff workshop at 13:00 followed by board meeting at 15:30.

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
25090501	05/09/2025	CRTB Review	Submit consultation response by deadline and consider associated communications opportunities	Gemma Campbell			Response in hand for submission by 5 October
25090502	05/09/2025	Community land ownwership	Staff to develop advice with a draft report to be considered at a future board meeting	Kathie Pollard			Scheduled for Dec meeting
25090503	05/09/2025	ScotLand Futures	Provision for a Gaelic output to be included in ScotLand Futures project planning	Scarlett MacFarlane/Calum MacLeod			Incorporated in project planning

Commissioners Meeting 2 October 2025

Inverness
Paper No. 1
Quarterly Report

Purpose	To review progress over Quarter 2
Previous board papers	Quarterly Report 3 July 2025
Action required	For discussion

1. Background

The quarterly reports provide oversight of progress against the business plan over the year. This report covers the second quarter of the 25/26 business plan.

2. KPI assessment

KPI MEASUREMENT	TARGET	Progress
DELIVERY		
% of planned outputs in annual business plans delivered	90%	On track: 84% Not started/work pending: 14% Risk of delay or changed: 2% **See ANNEX A**
STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS		
Feedback as reported through perceptions audits	Maintain or increase perceived impact	Method to be confirmed
STAFF SATISFACTION		
% reported staff satisfaction in staff surveys	Increase	June 25: 64% extremely or relatively satisfied with the Commission as a place to work (cf 80% Oct 24);
FINANCE		
End of year out-turn	Within 2% of total allocated budget	**See ANNEX B**

3. Progress Reports

The report comprises five annexes:

A: Delivery Progress

Annex A sets out the RAG assessment and progress commentary against the Business Plan. Highlights in Quarter 2 include:

- ScotLand Futures public survey, public meetings and engagement;
- Completion of phase 1 report on tax;
- Completion of Good Practice Protocols refresh ready for publication;
- Preparation of Draft Annual Report and Accounts;
- Significant tenant farming engagement.

B: Finance

Annex B provides a summary of our current budget position. At this mid-year point our spending plans are on track, with some in-year saving on staffing as a result of an outward secondment. Based on the mid-year position, the management team are reviewing planned spend for Quarters 3 and 4 to ensure priority spend is committed and manage uncertainties associated with 25/26 pay award.

C: Risk Management

Annex C provides the strategic risk register. Risks 2 & 3 are identified as increasing. The ARC undertook a risk interrogation on risk 3 at its recent meeting.

D: Communications

Annex D provides an overview of communications in Quarter 2 and a look ahead.

E: Good Practice Casework

Annex E summarises casework undertaken during Quarter 2.

4. Staffing

During this quarter Julie Rostan joined as Research Officer on 4th August. We also completed the planned changes to the management team, with the appointment of Kathie Pollard to the new Head of Policy role with effect from 18 August and recruitment of Sarah Madden as Head of Practice and Advice. Sarah will start on 6th October, providing a good handover period before Emma leaves post on 31st October.

David Stewart has begun a 12-month secondment to the KLTR from 1 September. This post is not being backfilled and delivery priorities are being adjusted within the policy team.

Hamish Trench

Chief Executive

PROGRESS REPORT ON 2025/26 BUSINESS PLAN DELIVERY			
RAG Rating:	Delivery on track	Not started/work pending	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 & 3; monitoring amendments and likely implications.	
	- Develop advice to inform plans for secondary legislation and implementation	Initial scoping underway. Pending clarity following Stage 3 and implementation timetable. Project planning for model lease to begin Qtr 3.	
	- Plan for the financial, governance and delivery implications of anticipated new functions for the Commission	Initial board discussion and team discussions held to scope programme. Pending clarity on timetable.	
1.2 A Land Reformed Scotland	- Engage a wide range of voices on what a land reformed Scotland looks like	ScotLand Futures launched May; Phase 1 engagement now completed: public survey, invited contributions, stakeholder discussions. Public meetings programme underway.	
	- Advise on the key components for a future programme of reforms	Phase 2 underway – analysis of engagement responses, 'what we heard' publication Nov; development of policy agenda for Feb.	
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 & 4 – reviewing what output appropriate in context of ScotLand Futures	
	- 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 & 4.	
	- 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. DS now on secondment to KLTR for 12 months	
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 report published Oct. 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 research and engagement underway.	
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.	

	- Provide advice to inform Scottish Government's Review of Compulsory Purchase Orders	Participated in SG workshop on valuation issues in CPO Review. Respond to SG consultation Qtr3	
1.7 Research and Data	- 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 open	
	- Analyse and publish the annual insights and data reports on the rural land market	Rural Land Market Insights Report published June. Panel at RHS. Rural Land Market Data Report in progress for publication Qtr 3.	
	- 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.	
	- Support joint PhD opportunities with university partners	University of Edinburgh PhD partnership ongoing.	
	- Offer the annual student award	Scheduled for Q4	
	- Participate in the Community Land Academic Network	Ongoing.	
2. Supporting practical implementation of LRRS			
2.1 Good practice in land ownership, use and management	- Champion and share good practice in implementing the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement	Attended events to promote good practice.	
	- Refresh and update the Land Rights and Responsibilities Protocols	Protocols updated with stakeholder engagement. Awaiting input from designer ahead of publication.	
	- Build relationships and collaborate with industry bodies to deliver training for land agents and other professionals to promote high standards in land rights and responsibilities.	Programme was paused due to staff absence but has restarted with events planned from September onwards.	

	- Provide individual advice and guidance to support the development of good practice	32 cases delivered in Q2.	
	- Consider how standards for leadership in good practice are further developed	Commitment to Responsible Land Ownership pilot phase now commencing.	
	- Deliver casework to support good practice and promote good relations between landowners and communities	32 cases delivered in Q2.	
	- Regularly review casework to identify learning for policy and practice	Casework review meetings scheduled regularly.	
	- Collaborate with core industry bodies to collectively promote and support good practice	Partnership working on community benefits and promotion of wider good practice in place. Good Practice Advisory Group meeting in November.	
	- Building on the evaluation of the Good Practice Programme, consider how the programme could be expanded to extend impact	Approach agreed with Commissioners. Further development to tie in with business and financial planning.	
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 and scheduled.	
	- 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 actively being supported as well as wider advice being delivered.	
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 – timetable tbc	
	- 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. High volume of casework demands continuing.	
3.2 Relinquishment and Assignation 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. Now seeking to shift agenda to forward focus on strengthening sector.	
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 outstanding to be addressed by SG 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 meetings held in Wick and Dumfries, scheduled for Stornoway and Aberdeen.	
	- 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	Work on website underway, with website to be launched in Q4.	
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	Land market data report to be published in Q3.	

	- Use digital marketing to drive engagement and inform conversation amongst stakeholders	Delivery of SLC bi-monthly newsletter and TFC newsletter.	
4.3 Convening Stakeholders	- 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	- Deliver improved financial and project reporting	Implementation of new financial software to improve financial reporting. New project management process in place.	
	- Support effective audit scrutiny and assurance	External audit completed, no material issues raised.	
	- Deliver information and data management obligations including development of a new Records Management Scheme	In progress.	
	- Keep under review potential organisational implications of land reform bill	Ongoing – tracking amendments, board discussion on implementation planning in July.	
5.2 Organisational development	- Deliver a training and development plan	Development for annual plan underway	
	- Keep HR policies under rolling review	Ongoing.	
	- Run bi-annual staff surveys and regular engagement through Staff Engagement Forum	Surveys completed. Next survey to run in Q4 25/26.	
5.3 Climate action	- Deliver against a refreshed climate action plan	Ongoing.	
	- Improve climate action reporting to Management Team and Board	Ongoing.	
5.4 Risk management	- Undertake regular strategic and organisational risk reviews	Ongoing, quarterly corporate risk reviews and strategic risk review with ARC and Board.	
	- Support effective risk scrutiny and interrogation by Audit and Risk Committee	Ongoing.	
	- Ensure cyber security including maintaining Cyber essentials plus accreditation	In progress, accreditation due to be renewed in Q3.	

Scottish Land Commission
Coimisean Fearainn na h-Alba

GIA	1,680,000.00	**Expected Other Income (already committed)**	
Expected Other Income	134,411.00	23,100.00	SG recharge for tax research
Allocated	1,799,954.16	58,512.00	Expected CNPA recharge for CBO *(cost sits in salaries)*
Under / (Over) Budget	14,456.84	52,799.00	DS salary recharge *(cost sits in salaries)*
		134,411.00	

	Allocated Budget	Committed	Spent	
1. Advising on reforms to law, policy and practice	62,183.33	41,181.73	18,649.81	
2. Supporting practical implementation of Scotland's Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement	16,500.00	11,686.69	11,409.79	*CBO T&S sit here - to be recharged*
3. Promoting good relations between agricultural landlords and tenants through the functions of the Tenant Farming Commissioner	5,100.00	30.00	30.00	
4. Engaging people in why land matters and how they can be involved	101,852.20	64,042.54	23,977.08	
5. Underpinned by sound corporate governance and organisational development	241,275.00	196,669.23	116,792.01	*Includes TFC legal*
Staffing	1,269,895.36	1,269,207.31	489,605.25	
Staffing Travel & Subsistence	22,000.00	10,626.28	10,506.28	*CBO Salary costs sit here - to be recharged*
Commissioners	67,148.27	70,657.27	26,000.35	
Commissioners Travel & Subsistence	14,000.00	4,924.47	4,924.47	
	1,799,954.16	1,669,025.52	701,895.04	
			42%	

Scottish Land Commission
Coimisean Fearainn na h-Alba

GIA	1,680,000.00
Expected Other Income	134,411.00
Allocated	1,799,954.16
Under / (Over) Budget	14,456.84

Categories	Nominal	Allocated Annual Budget	Committed	Predicted Spend	Total Spend (To date)	Prepayments to 26/27	Accruals to 25/26	Year End Position	Notes
1. Advising on reforms to law, policy and practice - HT									
Land Reform Bill	Land Reform Bill Costs	4,000.00	-	4,000.00	-			4,000.00	
A Land Reformed Scotland	Collaboration & Partnership Working	15,833.33	15,815.25	-	5,833.33	-	-	15,815.25	CES -End QE May 25. 1 month cost accrued to 24/25 accounts. SRUC awaiting on req from JML.
Priorities for Policy Advice	Policy Advice	17,000.00	-	17,000.00	-	-	-	17,000.00	Q3 onwards.
	Research	23,100.00	23,103.60	-	11,553.60	-	-	23,103.60	Tax research (Aug/Sept 25)
	Student Agreements	1,000.00	1,000.00	-	-	-	-	1,000.00	Nov-25
	Events (Speaker Hire/ Tickets/ Hall Hire)		60.00		60.00			60.00	
Subscriptions & Memberships	Subscriptions & Memberships	1,250.00	1,202.88	100.00	1,202.88	(191.67)	-	1,111.21	
Strategic Plan total		62,183.33	41,181.73	21,100.00	18,649.81	(191.67)	-	62,090.06	
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	517.90	6,000.00	241.00	-	-	6,517.90	CLS event - GC attended. *Assumed full spend in line.*
	Catering		-	-	-	-	-	-	
Community benefits from land and natural capital	Salaries Staff	10,000.00	11,168.79	-	11,168.79	-	-	11,168.79	CBO £10k incl plus T&S (to be re-charged T&S)
								-	
Strategic Plan total		16,500.00	11,686.69	6,000.00	11,409.79	-	-	17,686.69	
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	-	5,000.00	-	-	-	5,000.00	Possible investigations, money ring fenced.
Relinquishment and Assignation of Agricultural Tenancies		-			-	-	-	-	
Subscriptions & Memberships	Subscriptions & Memberships	100.00	-	100.00	-	-	-	100.00	
	Events (Speaker Hire/ Tickets/ Hall Hire/Catering)	-	30.00		30.00				
Strategic Plan total		5,100.00	30.00	5,100.00	30.00	-	-	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	3,533.24	-	3,533.24	-	-	3,533.24	RHS
	Conference Costs	10,000.00	3,629.82	10,000.00	1,478.02	-	-	13,629.82	Wick Board & public meeting (incls accommodation). Includes further public meetings (SLF)
	Catering (Internal Meetings)	150.00	149.58	-	-	-	-	149.58	
	Public Relations (PR)	15,000.00	847.11	3,000.00	847.11	-	-	3,847.11	ScotLand advertising costs.
	Design Costs	8,000.00	3,610.00	10,000.00	3,210.00	-	-	13,610.00	
	Printing Costs	6,500.00	2,637.55	4,500.00	1,678.75	-	-	7,137.55	
	Website Hosting	3,000.00	2,160.00	3,000.00	470.99	-	-	5,160.00	Estimated costs.
	Subscriptions & Memberships	4,356.50	2,152.66	2,000.00	2,152.66	-	-	4,152.66	
	Media Licenses	4,356.50	5,804.38	3,000.00	2,410.31	(1,250.00)	-	7,554.38	
	Translations	1,500.00	2,449.00	3,000.00	165.40	-	-	5,449.00	
	Accessibility	-		-	-	-	-	-	
	Digital Publications (Blogs)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Website Development	38,989.20	36,829.20	-	8,030.60	-	-	36,829.20	To be paid via TPE
	Photographs	-	240.00	-	-	-	-	240.00	
Dept Total		101,852.20	64,042.54	38,500.00	23,977.08	(1,250.00)	-	101,292.54	
5. Underpinned by sound corporate governance and organisational development. NN									
Organisational development	HR incl licenses	33,232.00	27,470.15	-	5,300.07	(391.68)	-	27,078.47	
	IT	70,000.00	74,917.92	5,000.00	61,711.64	(3,763.75)	-	76,154.17	Unexpected costs in year - extra licenses, laptop/server changes & decommissioning (£6.8k)
	Mobile Costs	1,100.00	960.00	-	392.46		-	960.00	
	Legal	14,000.00	14,400.00	-	2,400.00		-	14,400.00	This relates to TFC legal fees (Gillespie Macandrew)
	Audit & Accountancy fees	69,200.00	31,547.60	3,000.00	8,977.20		34,500.00	69,047.60	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	930.00	-	930.00		-	930.00	RSK.
	Office Accommodation	28,800.00	28,800.00	-	28,800.00		-	28,800.00	
	Office Costs	200.00	31.38	-	47.81		-	31.38	
	Bank Charges	400.00	125.27	325.00	125.27		-	450.27	
	Event Insurance	800.00	377.25	600.00	377.25		-	977.25	
	Subscriptions & Memberships	343.00	78.00	250.00	78.00		-	328.00	
	ASCL Mini Charge	-	16.43	119.00	16.43		-	135.43	
	IT Equipment (B/F, additions, disposal)	250.00	-	300.00	866.66		-	1,166.66	DSE for staff
	Fixtures & Fittings (B/F, additions, disposal)	250.00	-	300.00	745.99		-	1,045.99	DSE for staff
Training & Development	Training & Development (Commissioners)	4,000.00	2,124.00	-	2,124.00		-	2,124.00	
	Training & Development (Staff)	12,000.00	13,268.60	-	2,276.60		-	13,268.60	
Recruitment	Recruitment	5,000.00	1,622.63	3,000.00	1,622.63		-	4,622.63	
Dept Total		241,275.00	196,669.23	13,594.00	116,792.01	(4,155.43)	34,500.00	242,220.45	
Staffing & Commissioners									
Payroll/ On-Costs	Salaries Staff (incl ADK & DS Salary)	1,269,895.36	1,269,207.31	-	489,605.25	-	-	1,269,207.31	We have fully committed wages. CBO & DS salary sits here but will be re-charged.
	Salaries Comm	67,148.27	70,657.27	-	26,000.35	-	-	70,657.27	We have fully committed wages. *(Q4 TFC increase-TBC)*
Travel & Subsistence (Staff)	Travel - Air	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Travel - Rail	4,500.00	1,846.95	2,500.00	1,846.95	-	-	4,346.95	
	Travel - Car Hire	500.00	1,337.52	500.00	1,217.52	-	-	1,837.52	
	Travel - Bus/Taxi/Bike/Ferry	1,000.00	245.00	500.00	245.00	-	-	745.00	
	Travel - Mileage	4,000.00	2,131.91	3,000.00	2,131.91	-	-	5,131.91	
	Travel - Hotels	8,000.00	3,693.56	4,000.00	3,693.56	-	-	7,693.56	
	Subsistence	4,000.00	1,371.34	2,000.00	1,371.34	-	-	3,371.34	
Travel & Subsistence (Commissioners)	Travel - Air	-	349.94	-	349.94	-	-	349.94	*est spend*
	Travel - Rail	2,500.00	615.12	1,500.00	615.12	-	-	2,115.12	
	Travel - Car Hire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Travel - Bus/Taxi/Bike/Ferry	1,000.00	170.28	600.00	170.28	-	-	770.28	
	Travel - Mileage	4,000.00	1,426.05	2,000.00	1,426.05	-	-	3,426.05	
	Travel - Hotels	3,000.00	1,837.63	2,000.00	1,837.63	-	-	3,837.63	
	Subsistence	2,000.00	119.40	1,000.00	119.40	-	-	1,119.40	
Commissioners Meetings	Catering (Internal Meetings)	1,500.00	165.05	500.00	165.05		-	665.05	
	Events (Speaker Hire/ Tickets/ Hall Hire/Catering)	-	241.00	-	241.00	-	-	241.00	
Dept Total		1,373,043.63	1,355,415.33	20,100.00	531,036.35	-	-	1,375,515.33	
		1,799,954.16	1,669,025.52	104,394.00	701,895.04	(5,597.10)	34,500.00	1,803,905.07	

1,680,000.00	GIA
(800,000.00)	Drawdown
880,000.00	*Remaining*

(14,909.41)	CNPA ADK Salary/expenses recharge
(43,602.59)	Remaining ADK salary recharge (est)
(36,829.20)	TPE to pay for website
(11,550.00)	Recharge tax work to SG received
(11,550.00)	Recharge tax work to SG remaining
(52,799.00)	Remaining DS Salary recharge (est)
-	DS Salary recharge
6,104.70	RHS hotel costs to be added back in.
1,638,769.57	Expected Year End Position
98%	
41,230.43	Estimated GIA remaining

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 ownerhsip 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 accrediation, improved cyber security for log in to the network.	Effective	5	1	5	Stable	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; aniticipating resource requirements; maintaining flexibility in medium term financial planning	Partial	3	4	12	Increasing	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	4	4	16	Maintain team approach to delivery enabling staff to draw on capacity and expertise across the team as required; Quarterly progress reporting to Board	Effective	4	3	12	Increasing	Cautious	25/26 Business Plan sets focused priorities matched with staff resource. 26/27 planning shows additional resource needs on specific business areas and risk of LRB implementation being insufficiently funded.	6	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	Decreasing	Minimalist	2023 & 2024 appointments concluded, in place with induction and transition arrangements completed. Opporutnities 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	Stable	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	Decreasing	Minimalist	Refeshed Programme of Work published April 25. Launch of ScotLand Futures initiative May 25 provides platform for coherent narrative beyond individfual 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	Stable	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 activly 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	Stable	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	Stable	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	Stable	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. Reslience planning to ensure backup capacbility 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	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	Stable	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
Q2: JULY 2025 - SEPTEMBER 2025

This quarter saw mixed results across our communications and engagement activity, with strong performance in some areas and clear opportunities to build momentum in the months ahead.

Press coverage was lower compared with both the previous quarter and the same time last year, reflecting fewer outputs likely to attract media attention and a wider dip in external coverage of land reform. Nonetheless, we secured some valuable placements, particularly around ScotLand Futures, and expect planned publications and engagement later this year to lift overall coverage
.
Social media had a strong quarter, supported by Meta advertising on Facebook and Instagram to promote ScotLand Futures. This not only drove campaign engagement but also boosted reach across other content. On LinkedIn, we are well ahead of target, achieving 15% follower growth towards our annual 20% goal with six months remaining.

Email engagement remained consistently high, with all four mailings achieving open rates between 51.6% and 59.1%. Subscriber numbers grew significantly, with 459 new sign-ups (most through the ScotLand Futures survey) expanding our audience and strengthening the impact of future campaigns.

Website traffic dipped, which is typical over the summer holiday period, but ScotLand Futures again featured in our top three pages, alongside the homepage and ‘Work for us’. Development of the new website has progressed, with design and content taking shape. Aspect will provide a fuller update to the Board in December.

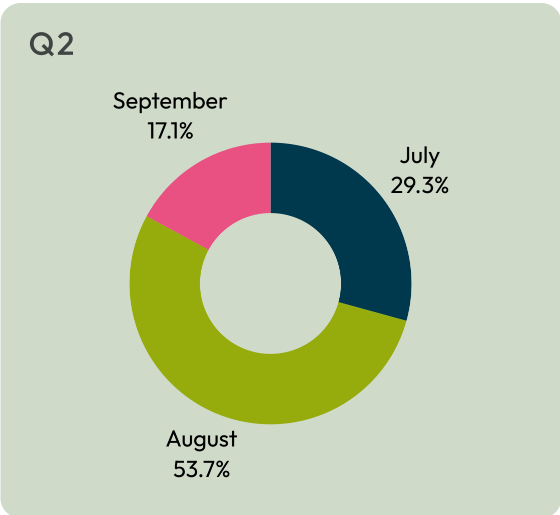
Month	Event/Activity
October	Public meetings in Stornoway and Aberdeen
October	Staff and Commissioners joint session on Scotland Futures
October	Annual Report
November	Rural Land Market Report
November	Refreshed protocols
December	Aspect presentation of website progress

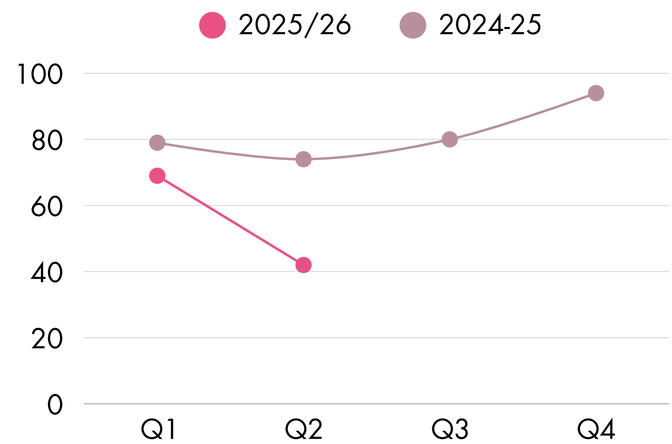
PRESS COVERAGE

Press coverage was lower this quarter compared with both the previous period and the same time last year. This reflects fewer outputs likely to generate media interest, alongside a wider dip in external coverage of land reform topics.

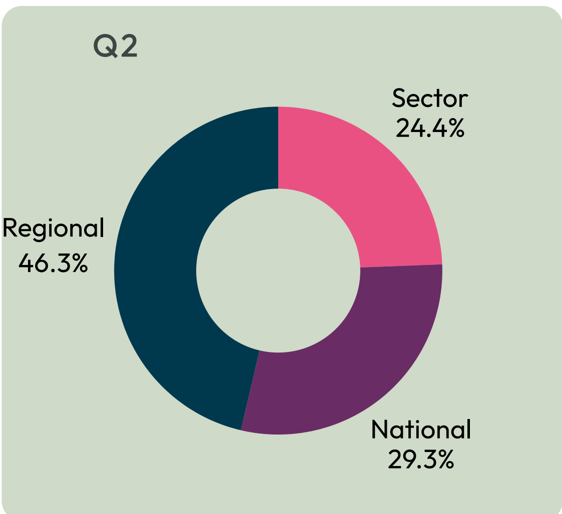
Nonetheless, we secured some strong placements, ensuring continued visibility for the Commission's work, particularly ScotLand Futures. With a series of publications and engagement planned for the remainder of the year, we expect coverage levels to increase in the months ahead.

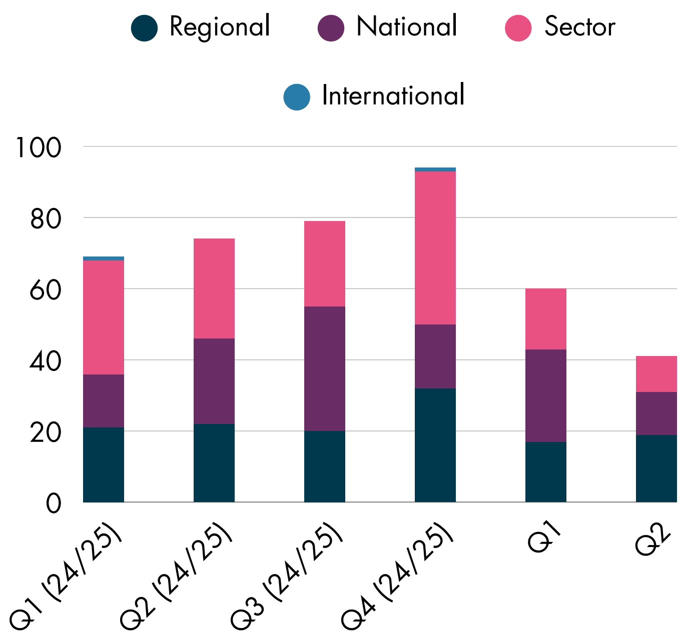
DATES OF COVERAGE



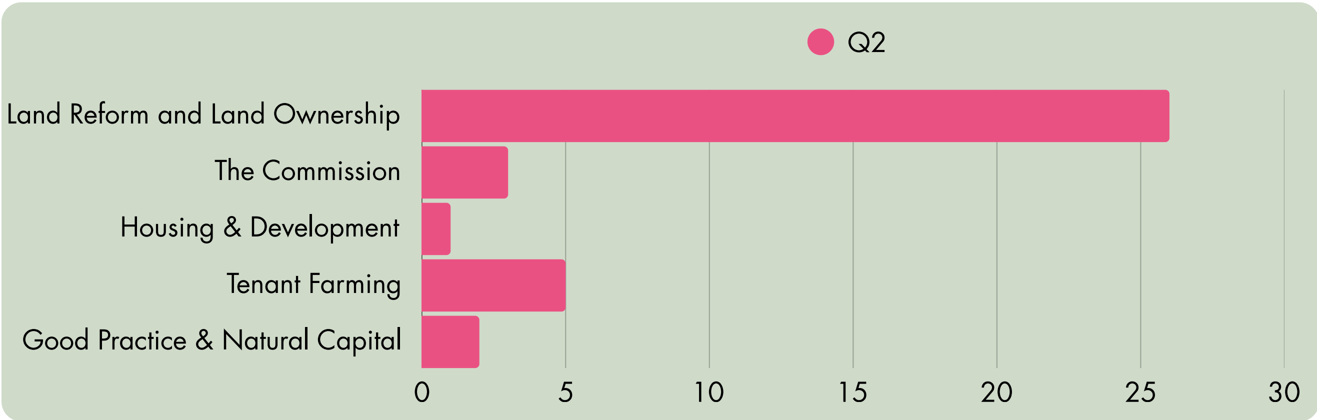


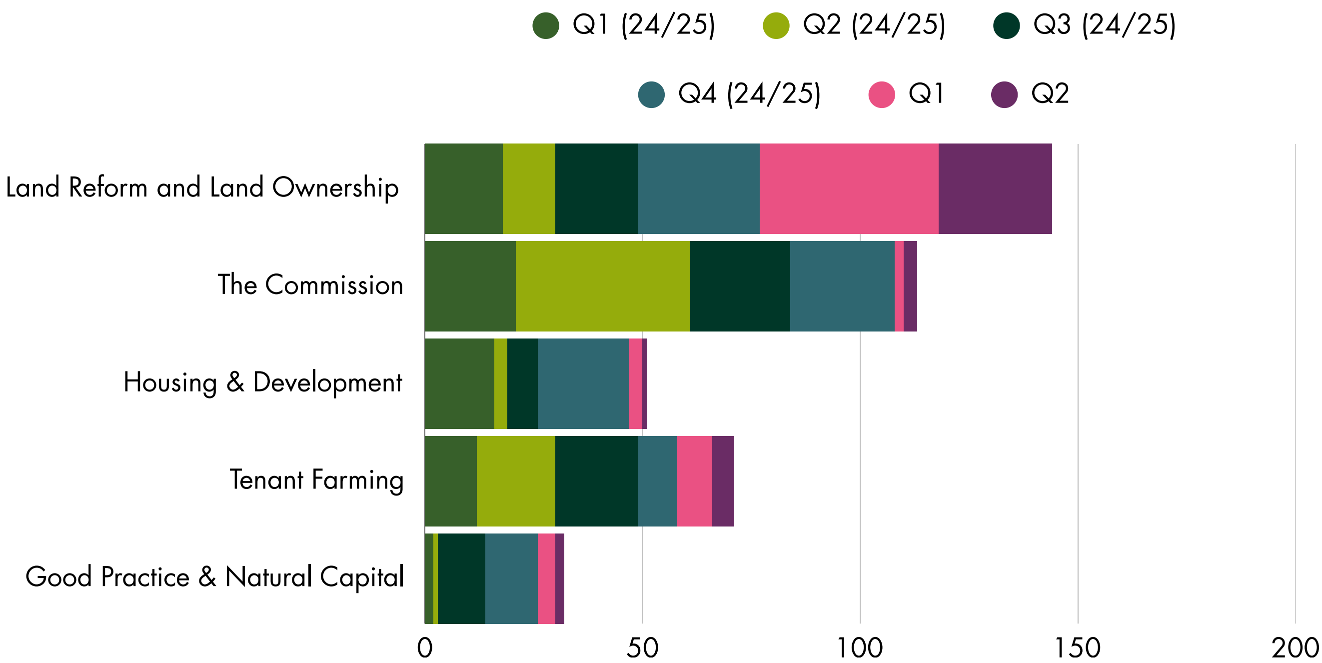
REGION OF COVERAGE



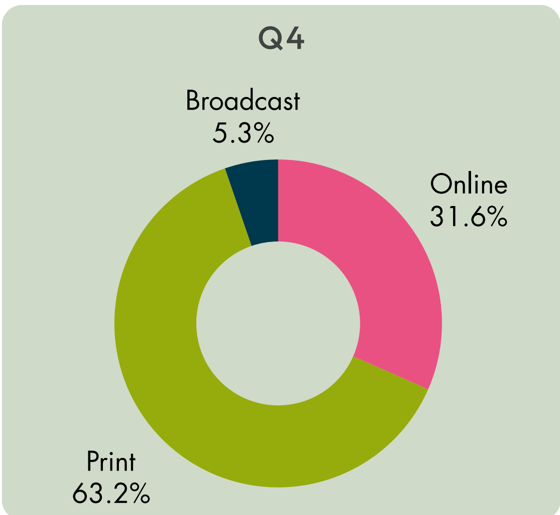


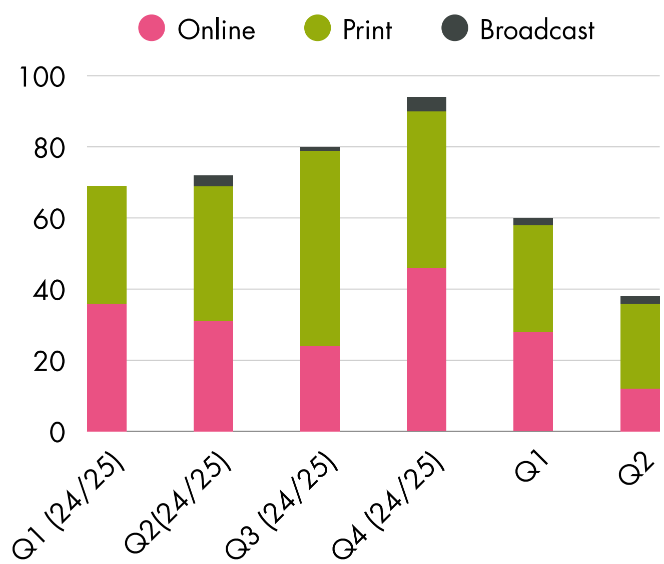
PRIORITY AREA COVERAGE





CHANNEL OF COVERAGE





SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media performance was strong this quarter, supported by Meta advertising on Facebook and Instagram to promote ScotLand Futures. This not only drove traffic to the campaign but also boosted engagement with our wider content.

We are also on track to exceed our annual LinkedIn growth target, having already achieved a 15% increase in followers towards our 20% goal with six months remaining.

4.9%

Increase monthly engagement rate to 2% on X

Goal

2%

16.26%

Increase monthly engagement by 5% on Instagram

Goal

6%

4,551

(15% YTD)

Increase followers by 20% on LinkedIn

Goal

4,725 followers

23.11%

Increase monthly engagement by 5% on Facebook

Goal

3.4%

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

Source: Hootsuite

EMAIL MARKETING

This quarter we sent four mailings, achieving open rates between 51.6% and 59.1%, all well above our 40% benchmark. These results highlight consistently strong audience engagement.

We also grew our subscriber base by 459, largely through the ScotLand Futures survey. This substantial increase expands our reach and strengthens the impact of future campaigns.

Mailout	Open Rate	Click Through Rate
Newsletter (issue 7)	51.6%	11%
TFC Newsletter	59.1%	13%
SLF events	54.9%	9.8%
Newsletter (issue 8)	53.7%	11.6%

WEBSITE

Website traffic was lower this quarter, which is typical during the summer holiday period. Despite this seasonal dip, the ScotLand Futures campaign page remained one of the top three most visited pages, reflecting ongoing interest in the project.

Work has also continued on developing the new website, with the design and content beginning to take shape. We plan to invite Aspect to the December Board meeting to provide a fuller progress update.

Our top performing pages this quarter were:

- Home
- ScotLand Futures
- Work for us

1,250

Avg. number of monthly users in Q2

4,410
Previous quarter

2,276

Avg. number of monthly sessions in Q2

3,200
Previous quarter

3m 03s

Avg. time on site

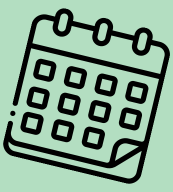
3m 43s
Previous quarter

GOOD PRACTICE CASEWORK Q2 2025-26

In Q2 we handled 32 good practice enquiries and cases, an increase from Q1 when we dealt with 25 cases . Cases and enquiries handled in Q2 include 13 ongoing cases from previous quarter.

NO OF CASES:

July	13
August	12
September	7
Year to Date	57



Issues Raised

	Q2	Q1
Good Stewardship	15	10
Community Engagement	10	9
Diversification of Ownership & Tenure	6	3
Charities	0	2
Common Good	1	1

Contact From:

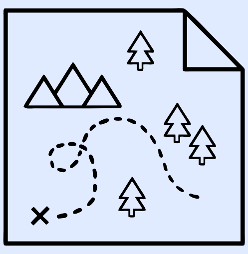
	Q2	Q1
FIRNS	1	6
Individual	15	5
Charity	4	4
Private landowner	5	3
Intermediary	1	2
Public body	1	2
Community body	4	1
Community Council	1	1
Church	0	1

CONTACT ABOUT:

	Q2	Q1
FIRNS	1	6
Private Landowner	9	5
Public Body	7	5
Charity	4	4
Unknown	4	1
Various	2	1
Church	0	1
Community landowner	4	1
Individual	1	1
	1	1

11 contacts this quarter relate to advice and support to landowners about how they own and manage their own land, covering engagement and good stewardship.

LOCATION



This quarter we handled cases and enquiries from:

Highlands	7	**City of Edinburgh**	2
Argyll & Bute	3	**South Lanarkshire**	2
Scotland-wide	3	**Angus**	2
Midlothian	2	**Glasgow City**	1
Fife	2	**Stirling**	1
Moray	2	**Perth & Kinross**	1
Na h-Eileanan Siar	2	**Not disclosed**	2

SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

Scottish Land Commission
Coimisean Fearainn na h-Alba

BOARD PAPER

Commissioners Meeting 2 October 2025

Inverness

Paper no. 2

Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25

Purpose	To approve the annual report and accounts for 2024/25
Previous board papers	N/A
Action required	For decision

Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25

The Audit and Risk Committee is considering prior to the board meeting the draft annual report and accounts for the financial year 2024/25 and the external auditors report. Subject to a recommendation from the committee, the board is asked to approve the annual report and accounts.

In doing so Commissioners are asked to consider the annual audit report and opinion provided by our external auditors, Deloitte, in particular the key messages set out in section 1.

The accompanying papers include:

- Annex A: External Auditors Annual Audit Report
- Annex B: Draft SLC Annual Report and Accounts

If approved by the board, the annual report will be signed on behalf of the Commission and our external auditor, before being submitted to Parliament ahead of our required deadline in December.

Nikki Nagler

Head of Communications & Corporate Services

Scottish Land Commission
Coimisean Fearainn na h-Alba

BOARD PAPER

Commissioners Meeting 2 October 2025

Inverness

Paper No. 3

ScotLand Futures: Next Steps

Purpose	To agree next steps for Phase 2 of ScotLand Futures
Previous board papers	4 March 2025 Paper 5
Action required	For agreement

1. Delivery of Phase 1: engagement

Following the launch of the initiative in May, phase 1 of ScotLand Futures sought to open up the public conversation and invite views. During this phase we have delivered:

- Online public survey which closed in October with a total of 1,236 responses;
- Invited contributions from individuals – we have received 20 contributions which are being published in groups on our website and will be published in a collated document;
- Stakeholder engagement – we have held discussions and raised awareness of the survey through targeted stakeholder engagement;
- Public meetings – the first two of our public meetings programme have been held, in Wick and Dumfries, with a further two scheduled in Stornoway and Aberdeen.

The responses to the public survey are currently being analysed to identify the key themes emerging.

2. Next Steps

Proposed next steps are:

- Publish in November a 'what we heard' report that summarises the public survey and public meeting feedback accompanied by the collection of invited contributions;
- Develop the policy agenda identifying the key steps that the Commission proposes be addressed, to be published in February.

Following the board/staff workshop on 2 October, we expect to develop a draft output for discussion at the December board meeting, with an additional online meeting in January to consider a final output. Final publication is scheduled for mid-February.

The Board is asked to agree the next steps for phase 2.

Hamish Trench

Chief Executive