



GOOD PRACTICE



Protocol on community engagement

Everyone has a right to know about changes which might impact their lives and the chance to have their views heard.

The purpose of this protocol is to set out reasonable expectations for how landowners, land managers and communities can engage with one another in decisions relating to land and buildings.

This protocol supports the practical implementation of the Scottish Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement (LRRS) and the Scottish Government's Guidance on Engaging Communities in Decisions Relating to Land.

How this protocol should be followed

- ✓ Where we use the word must, this means the action is required by law and failing to comply would be a breach of legislation.
- ✓ Where we use the word should, we expect everyone involved to follow the approach described, unless it conflicts with their legal duties.
- ✓ Where we use the word recommend, it means this is good practice, but we recognise that other approaches may be equally effective and necessary.

Expectations

Build relationships through ongoing communication

Land owners and managers should establish channels of communication, maintain regular contact with communities, and build strong relationships to foster mutual engagement and collaboration.

Engage early on significant changes

Where plans to significantly alter an aspect of land management or use which could impact communities can be reasonably anticipated in advance, land owners and managers should make information about the proposed change publicly available. This should be done when there is opportunity for the decision to be influenced. It is recommended that this be at least six months in advance of the planned change.

Create a proactive engagement plan for significant changes

Land owners and managers who are making decisions that may have significant impact on communities should work with the community and other relevant parties to create a proactive engagement plan. This plan should set out agreed expectations on what, how and when the community will be involved in significant decisions about land and buildings.

Deal with significant changes to management and use sensitively

Where there are plans to make significant long-term or permanent changes to land management or use that will impact a local community, land owners and managers should engage firstly and at an early stage with those directly impacted, and with consideration for all.

Communicate promptly and with consideration

Where a community aspiration or concern about current or proposed management of land or buildings emerges, this should be communicated promptly to the owner or manager. Reasonable opportunity should be given for the land owner or manager to respond to issues raised and enter into constructive dialogue. Land owners and managers should make best efforts to accommodate reasonably made and proportionate requests for information, or for discussions about ideas or issues, relating to land or buildings. This should be done within a reasonable timeframe, taking into account the urgency of the issues raised.

Record and share notes from engagement meetings

Organisers should record and share key feedback from meetings, including actions allocated and decisions made within a reasonable timeframe.

Provide feedback on how views shared have influenced decisions

Following engagement, land owners and managers should share feedback on how views shared by the community have been taken into account in decision-making. This should include the impact engagement has had on the outcome and any changes or mitigations to address concerns raised. Where land owners and managers are unable to act on community suggestions or agree to requests they should explain clearly why this is the case.



Who this protocol is relevant for

- ✓ Owners of land and buildings including individuals, companies, trusts, public bodies, non-governmental organisations, charities and community owners, but excluding individual home owners;
- ✓ Land managers including tenants of land and agents or other people employed or contracted by the owner to look after land or buildings on their behalf;
- ✓ The community comprising of:
 - Community Councils representing any area(s) which may be impacted by the landholding;
 - Constituted community organisations, who have an open membership, demonstrate community control, and who represent a defined geographic area, which may be impacted by the landholding, and;
 - Residents who live in and businesses that are based in the local area.

Definitions

You can find definitions of terms used in our protocols in our Protocols Definitions document.

[Protocols Definitions →](#)

How to use this protocol

If you own or manage land, you can use the expectations set out in this protocol as a guide to assess the actions you are taking in relation to community engagement.



If you have an example of good practice to share:

Consider writing a case study to share your positive example with others. We may be able to help with this.



If you are experiencing a situation that differs significantly from the expectations we have set out:

Speak to the relevant landowner or community organisation to try to find a resolution.



If the situation relates to a regulated issue (like the environment or planning) then approach the relevant regulator.



If you have not been able to resolve the issue, then contact us with details and any supporting evidence. Where appropriate we will provide advice and work with you and the other parties involved, if applicable, to deal with any difficulties and help improve practice.

If you would like support to assess or improve your practice or have any questions about this protocol:

We may be able to provide advice or support about your situation.

Contact the Good Practice Team:

[goodpractice@landcommission.gov.scot](mailto:@ goodpractice@landcommission.gov.scot)  01463 423 300.