



Minute of the meeting of the Scottish Land Commissioners held on 22nd January 2026 Online

- **Commissioners present:** Michael Russell (Chair), Calum MacLeod, Craig MacKenzie, Deb Roberts, Lucy Beattie, Rob Black
- **In attendance:** Hamish Trench, Nikki Nagler, Sarah Madden, Kayleigh Wilson, James MacKessack-Leitch, Scarlett Macfarlane (Scottish Land Commission), Sian Ledger (Scottish Government)
- **Apologies:** Katherine Pollard
- **Declarations of interest:** None

1. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 4th December were agreed as true and accurate.

2. ScotLand Futures: Draft Output for Publication

Michael welcomed Sian from SG land reform policy team to the meeting as an observer as well as all SLC staff and commissioners.

Michael asked for commissioner feedback on the ScotLand Futures document. He highlighted feedback received from sponsor team which had been circulated for the board to consider. The discussion sought first to cover overall views on the draft before moving into comments on specific sections.

Commissioners agreed that the document is strong and coherent and articulates the right direction of travel. The board agreed the three key priorities provide a good structure.

The board considered carefully the way the evidence base is presented, noting that the combination of qualitative information from the public survey and the Commission's existing body of research and analysis provides a sound basis for what is set out, but that this should be expressed more clearly.

Commissioners agreed the response level of 1200 to the public survey provides a strong qualitative insight, but that it is also important to acknowledge that responses were not fully representative across the demography of Scotland.

Commissioners asked that greater reference to the role of the new Land Reform Act is made in relevant sections, and stronger reference to the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement would be helpful.

The board discussed how best the question of residency should be addressed in the document. Commissioners support the drafting that proposes the role of residency

requirements should be considered but note the question of tax residency would not address the underlying rationale for looking at residency, which is based on local presence, access to decision making and connection to place. The board asked that this section be reviewed.

Commissioners agreed that the document should not try to provide a detailed blueprint, but it should offer the direction of travel for a coherent and integrated programme of land reform. In doing so, it can acknowledge where there is nuance and uncertainty, where further work is needed, and act as a call for others to engage in further development.

Hamish briefed the board on feedback from sponsor team, noting that the key issues raised had been discussed through Commissioners comments and discussion so far. He also provided further context to consider on human rights. The board discussed the interaction of property rights with economic, social and cultural rights, noting the current difference in legal standing, and government's intention through a new human rights bill to strengthen the standing of economic, social and cultural rights.

Commissioners offered further comments on specific sections where minor changes to provide greater clarity would be helpful. They asked that the overall message on the need for leadership and a co-ordinated programme is emphasised in the conclusion, and supported a strong message on the basic need to reform the land data system as a foundation for much of what is needed.

Subject to changes being made to reflect the key issues discussed, the board agreed to proceed to publication. It was agreed that the chair and CEO will agree a revised version which will be provided to Commissioners for any final feedback. Hamish confirmed this will be provided by the end of the month and will require a short turn around for any final comments.

Action 260122.01	Hamish to co-ordinate final draft, to be agreed with Michael and circulated to Commissioners by end of January
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Action 260122.02	Commissioners to provide any final comments or feedback on revised draft by return
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Michael asked Scarlett to provide an update on the ScotLand Futures event due to take place in Perth on Wed 25th Feb. Scarlett noted we have good participation with confirmed replies from 38 stakeholder contacts. Scarlett will share the agenda and attendee list with commissioners in advance of the event. Scarlett asked commissioners to arrive for 12pm with the event due to commence at 12:30pm.

Action 260122.03	Scarlett to send agenda and attendee list in advance of the ScotLand Futures event on Wed 25 th Feb
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3. AOB

Michael confirmed professional development reviews are arranged with commissioners.

Michael reminded commissioners to read over the email Hamish circulated this week regarding the pre-election period guidance.

Hamish spoke about the March board meeting, seeking confirmation that Commissioners are available for a potential visit with overnight.

Date of next meeting:

Thursday 5th February 9:30am

An Lochran, Inverness