



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION  
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

**Commissioners' Meeting  
02 July 2024, Online.**

**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	Verbal Briefing	For information	Commissioners
3.	Land for Rural Housing	2	For agreement	David Stewart
4.	Advice on Natural Capital Market Framework	3	For agreement	Hamish Trench/Emma Cooper
5.	Quarterly Progress Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delivery</li><li>• Finance</li><li>• Risk</li><li>• Communications</li></ul>	4 Annex A Annex B Annex C Annex D	For discussion	Hamish Trench
6.	Confidential Item: Casework Update	Verbal Briefing	For discussion	Emma Cooper
7.	AOB			

Following on from the meeting agenda there will be an informal board discussion on the Land Management Plan proposal in the Land Reform Bill.

For ARC members: After the board discussion concludes we will hold the additional meeting for the Audit and Risk Committee to consider the draft annual report.



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION  
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**Minute of the meeting of the Scottish Land Commissioners held on Wednesday 12 June 2024 at Aviemore**

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

**In Attendance:** Hamish Trench, James MacKessack-Leitch, Kathie Pollard, David Stewart, Miranda Geelhoed.

**Apologies:** None

**Declarations of interest:** None

**1. Minutes of previous meeting 07 May 2024**

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting with the amendment that David Stewart was in attendance and correction to Lorne MacLeod's name. There were no matters arising.

**2. Minutes of the Staffing and Remuneration Meeting 05 March 2024**

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. The board sought an update on public pay policy and Hamish confirmed it had recently been published, enabling progress on the Commissioners pay award.

**3. Commissioners Updates**

Commissioners gave updates on key activities and events attended on behalf of the Commission since the last meeting.

**4. Audit & Risk Committee Chair's Report**

Lorne provided an update following the recent ARC meeting and his written report circulated to Commissioners in advance. Following the ARC recommendation on medium term planning the board agreed to schedule a discussion on strategic priorities and balance of spend for Qtr. 3. The board also agreed to revisit stakeholder analysis in early 2025.

## 5. Housing Land Supply

David Stewart introduced the paper and invited reflections on the board's roundtable discussion with stakeholders in May. The board discussed key issues in taking forward action including the need to be clear on the Commission's role and where we can add value; how we can help prompt action; recognising that land availability is not always the constraining factor but that where it is we should seek to prompt action.

The board also recognised the evolving context of the 'housing emergency' and the need for the outputs of this work to be set in this context.

The board noted the draft recommendations from the commissioned report from University of Glasgow will be available ahead of the next board meeting and agreed to consider these further at that meeting.

<b>Action 24061201</b>	<b>David to share University of Glasgow Report ahead of next board meeting</b>
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## 6. Small-scale land ownership and use

Miranda introduced the paper emphasising the context of this work within the governance workstream, the background in relation to scale and concentration of ownership and where we see opportunities to encourage action to improve availability of land.

The board noted the limited resource available and agreed with the need to prioritise and focus this work. In particular the board welcomed the proposed focus on public sector land ownership as a practical opportunity.

The board sought more information on the evidence of demand for small scale land holdings, which includes the experience of the Land Matching Service and stakeholder feedback. The board agreed it would be helpful to give more visibility to the scale and type of demand.

The board asked that as this work develops it retains a focus on practical outcomes and provides guidance on viable options.

## 7. Public land leadership

Hamish introduced the paper noting the context of the land reform bill and the opportunity for leadership among public land owners on issues including housing, natural capital, community involvement and governance.

The board agreed that public land owners should be providing leadership, that the Commission can help support this, and that it is timely now to seek to increase the visibility of leadership. Commissioners sought an update on the partnership with Crown Estate Scotland on community land ownership.

Commissioners noted previous work by the Commission showing mixed experience of implementing asset transfer policies, ongoing work with Crown Estate Scotland that is providing useful learning for others, and the wider context of net zero transition and reporting.

The board agreed that the Commission does not need to initiate new workstreams but has an opportunity to give more visibility to existing relevant work, convene others and provide advice to support greater delivery of change in practice through public land owners. The board agreed to seek opportunities to raise the profile of public land leadership and asked staff to consider how best to convene public land owners through existing groups or a specific event.

## **8. Land reform and taxation**

Kathie introduced the paper, summarising the Commission's existing recommendations and outlining the need to update and develop this work.

The board agreed that the Commission should seek to develop its work on tax in order to be in a position to advise Scottish Government, given expected work on carbon land tax and wider tax strategy. The board emphasised the need for careful consideration of the focus, given the potentially wide scope, as well as need to consider unintended consequences that can arise from individual tax changes.

The board therefore agreed that our work should where possible consider tax and fiscal changes together, noting that public finance and subsidy support is closely related to tax in the way it influences behaviours.

Commissioners also noted that the context has continued to evolve since our 2022 recommendations and that these would therefore benefit from a fresh review, and that capital taxation, though reserved, is a significant driver that may need further work.

The board agreed that the next steps should be to discuss our focus with Scottish Government colleagues, to ensure we can be prepared to advise when required, to review our existing recommendations in light of changes in context, and to scope internally the key drivers by which tax influences land reform policy.

<b>Action 24061202</b>	<b>Kathie and Hamish to discuss focus of further work on tax with Scottish Government colleagues.</b>
<b>Action 24061203</b>	<b>The Board to consider at a future meeting a review of previous recommendations in light of updated context.</b>

## **9. AOB**

The Chair noted the evidence on the land reform bill provided by the Commission to the NZET Committee earlier in the week.

A briefing on conference arrangements would follow the board meeting.

**Date of Next Meeting: 2 July 2024 (online)**  
**Scottish Land Commission**  
**June 2024**



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION  
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## Commissioners' Meeting 2 July 2024 Online

### PAPER 3

#### Advice on Natural Capital Market Framework

<b>Purpose:</b>	To agree the scope of advice the Commission will provide to Scottish Government on the Natural Capital Market Framework
<b>Business Plan context</b>	2.2 Community benefits and wealth building from land use change and natural capital
<b>Previous board papers:</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> March 2024 Paper 6 – Natural Capital Context
<b>Action required:</b>	For agreement

#### 1. Background

The Scottish Government is seeking advice from the Commission to inform development of a Natural Capital Market Framework.

The government has published an 'engagement paper' available publicly at [Natural capital - market framework: engagement paper - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/natural-capital-market-framework-engagement-paper-2024/pages/1-introduction.aspx). We are intending to provide advice by the end of August to inform their development of the Framework. Government intends the Framework to take forward its commitment on natural capital markets in the National Economic Strategy, by providing guidance, setting expectations for market governance, strengthening the interim principles for responsible investment and setting out policy alignment.

Our focus as a Commission is on two aspects:

- a) How it delivers on Ministers' ambition to ensure natural capital investment delivers benefits to local communities;
- b) The interaction of natural capital investment with Ministers' land reform objectives, including its influence on land value, land ownership and land use decision making.

The Commission helped develop the 'Interim Principles for Responsible Investment in Natural Capital' which have so far guided policy development. The Framework is intended to move these principles onto a more established footing.

The Commission has published policy advice on natural capital and a just transition in [2022](#) and [2023](#) that includes recommendations on market governance, land ownership, leadership, tax and fiscal policy, land use policy.

## **2. Scope of Advice**

### **2.1 Operationalising community benefits**

Government is now seeking our advice specifically on how expectations for community benefits can be embedded and operationalised in the way nature markets develop.

We have a clear starting point in the [Guidance](#) on Community Benefits from Land, published by the Commission in 2023. This sets out a definition of community benefits, for which there appears to be wide support, and it sets out three principal routes to delivery through:

- Ownership and governance of land
- Socially productive use of land and buildings
- Providing financial benefit to communities

We propose our advice to the Nature Market Framework should focus on what is needed to operationalise this through both public policy and market practice. Key elements we expect this to include are:

- a) Market standards and certification – ways in which community benefits are required and embedded in market standards, how delivery is certified and reported on, how Scotland's expectations are expressed in relation to UK market standards.
- b) Public policy, finance and conditionality – ways public policy, regulation and public funding can require and support delivery of community benefits, for example through conditionality.
- c) Advice and capacity building – we highlighted the need for this work in our 2023 recommendations. We are leading work this year to secure a network of advisers that can enable communities, land owners and project developers to implement community benefits. This kind of capacity and advice will need to be built into the Framework to ensure traction on the ground.

### **2.2 Wider policy advice on natural capital investment and land reform**

We propose the Commission should also advise on key policy issues that remain central to the interaction of natural capital investment with government's land reform objectives. These go beyond the specific question of community benefit, to address some of the other interim principles including:

- Investment that supports diverse and productive land ownership
- Investment that delivers public, private and community benefit
- Investment that delivers integrated land use

This is in the context of trends towards increasing concentration of land ownership, high land values influenced in part by public policy and significant land use change with implications for communities and others. The specific issues we propose our advice focuses on are:

- a) Setting the role of private finance in context

There has been a big focus on a need to secure private investment in natural capital and some significant concerns raised about the implications. There is a risk that too much focus is on creating private finance mechanisms without articulating when and why the use of

private finance is the most appropriate approach. We see a need for government to accompany its work on private finance with a clearer analysis of why and when it is an effective route, alongside changes in public investment and regulation.

b) Reforming public finance and securing public value

In context of the above, we have previously recommended reforms to the way public finance support for land use is targeted and the conditions applied to it (eg forestry grants and rural/agricultural payments). These impact on land values and can either reinforce or help diversify the pattern of land ownership. Reviewing how public finance is targeted in this way should accompany steps to attract more private finance.

c) Improving the integration and accountability of land use decision making at a regional scale

Effective delivery of natural capital investment requires better means of joining up land use planning and decision-making at a regional scale. We previously advised that Regional Land Use Partnerships could provide an accountable means to broker both land use change and multiple sources of public and private finance.

We see these as gaps in the current policy approach which are needed to address the 'policy alignment' ambition the government sets out in its engagement paper.

### **3. Recommendation**

**The board is asked to agree the scope for the Commission's advice, proposed in section 2 above.**

### **4. Next steps**

Staff will work with Scottish Government colleagues to provide initial advice in July and final advice by end of August.

***Hamish Trench & Emma Cooper***



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**Commissioners' Meeting 2 July 2024  
Online**

**PAPER 4**

**Quarterly Progress Report**

<b>Purpose:</b>	To review quarterly progress for Qtr. 1
<b>Previous board papers:</b>	May 2024 Quarterly Progress Report
<b>Action required:</b>	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 24/25 Business Plan. The table below shows current status against the Strategic Plan KPIs.

KPI MEASUREMENT	TARGET	Progress
<b>DELIVERY</b>		
% of planned outputs in annual business plans delivered	95%	On track: 78%
		Delayed/Changed: 19%
		Risk of non-delivery: 3%
		<b>See ANNEX A</b>
<b>STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS</b>		
Feedback as reported through perceptions audits	Maintain or increase perceived impact	Next audit due 2024
<b>STAFF SATISFACTION</b>		
% reported staff satisfaction in staff surveys	Increase	Apr 24: 71% satisfied with the Commission as a place to work (increase from 69% Nov 23)
<b>FINANCE</b>		
End of year out-turn	Within 2% of total allocated budget	<b>See ANNEX B</b>

The report comprises four annexes:

- a) **Delivery Progress:** Annex A sets out the RAG assessment and progress commentary for delivery against our 24/25 Business Plan. Highlights in Quarter 1 include:



- Providing evidence to support scrutiny of the Land Reform Bill;
- 2024 SLC Conference and other events attendance including SLE and CLS conferences and Royal Highland Show;
- Publication of Rural Land Markets Insights Report;
- Phase 1 of work on international experience in natural resource governance;
- LRRS training for land agents and good practice support through casework;
- Engagement on action to support rural housing land.

**b) Finance Review:** Annex B provides a summary of our current budget position as at 21<sup>st</sup> June. Please note this is not a full end of Quarter position. Through in-year savings we are managing down a 1% overspend projection.

**c) Audit and Risk:** 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.

## **Other Updates**

### **Staffing**

We have appointed Andrew Megson to the Finance and Business Systems Lead post, starting on 1<sup>st</sup> July to allow for a handover period before Claire Bremner finishes at the end of August.

### **Scottish Government**

The Chair and CEO have a sponsor team meeting scheduled for 31<sup>st</sup> July.

### **Board recruitment**

Scottish Government expect board recruitment to be advertised on schedule from start of July. The Commission will promote as widely as possible and hold an online information event in the same way as last year.



***Hamish Trench***  
***Chief Executive***

PROGRESS REPORT ON 2024/25 BUSINESS PLAN DELIVERY				
RAG Rating:		Delivery on track	Delivery delayed or changed	Risk of non-delivery
Theme	Priority	Planned Activity	Progress Commentary	RAG
<b>1. Advising on reforms to law, policy and practice</b>				
<b>1.1 Legislative Reforms</b>	Provide advice, analysis and evidence as required to inform development and implementation of legislative reforms	Evidence and advice to inform Land Reform Bill	Submitted written evidence to NZET and FPAC committees; gave evidence to NZET committee 11 <sup>th</sup> June; internal work on key elements of the bill agreed by board on 12 <sup>th</sup> June.	Green
		Evidence and advice to inform other bills if introduced, including Community Wealth Building and Human Rights bills	No further action yet	Yellow
		Convene Land and Human Rights Advisory Forum	Meeting held in Qtr 1; role of group being reviewed.	Green
<b>1.2 More diverse land governance</b>	Advise and promote opportunities in policy and practice to support more diverse models of land governance	Complete scoping phase and subsequent research on international experience in natural resource governance	Phase 1 report received and case studies published in June. Phase 2 underway, report expected July.	Green
		Provide advice and guidance on practical opportunities to develop different governance models including mixed governance and increasing availability of small-scale land holdings	Board paper 11 <sup>th</sup> June; conference workshops on opportunities; Land Focus paper to be published; collaboration opportunities identified; Guidance being drafted.	Green
		Develop recommendations for reforms to Common Good Land	Activity paused to reprioritise staff time for work on land reform bill.	Red
		Convene Community Land Leadership Group to further develop community land ownership	Meeting held in Qtr 1 focused on land reform bill and CRTB review.	Green
		Continue collaboration with Crown Estate Scotland on the community land accelerator initiative	Phase 1 close to completion (design of approach and strategic business case). Phase 2 will work with one or more pilot opportunities.	Yellow

		Support the KLTR Ownerless Property Transfer Scheme through panel membership and advice	Advice being provided through panel membership.	
<b>1.3 Approaches to land valuation</b>	Review and research bringing scrutiny to approaches to land valuation	Develop advice on ways land value can support community wealth building, drawing on previous work on land and taxation	Focus for year now on refreshing our advice on tax. Board discussion 12 <sup>th</sup> June; Engagement with SG tax team ongoing.	
<b>1.4 Land assembly for development</b>	Support collaborative land assembly approaches and inform policy and practice enabling development	Advise on practical ways to increase land supply to help meet Scotland's housing challenge	Stakeholder roundtable held May, Board discussions June & July Research contract completing on schedule July.	
		Inform Scottish Government's review of Compulsory Purchase Order powers	Initial contact made with review, timetable for advice not yet clear.	
<b>1.5 Vacant &amp; derelict land</b>	Review progress to maintain momentum in delivering on the recommendations of the Vacant and Derelict Land Taskforce	Complete and publish progress review against VDL taskforce recommendations	Research contract completed; stakeholder discussions ongoing; publication output including data and recommendations scheduled for autumn.	
<b>2. Supporting practical implementation of Scotland's Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement</b>				
<b>2.1 Good practice in land ownership, use and management</b>	Develop and support implementation of practical Land Rights and Responsibilities Protocols with accompanying guidance and case studies	Champion and share good practice in implementing the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement	Ongoing casework; team attendance at key events; publication of guidance for land owners on diversifying ownership	
		Refresh and update the Good Practice Programme and resources to improve accessibility and encourage uptake	Scheduled for second half of financial year and dependant on capacity	

	Deliver an ongoing programme of engagement and CPD for land agents and other professionals in collaboration with partners	Deliver training for land agents and other professionals in collaboration with their representative bodies to promote high standards in land rights and responsibilities	Training event delivered in partnership with RICS on 12 <sup>th</sup> June; further event scheduled for south of Scotland in autumn.	
	Provide advice for land owners and managers seeking to be proactive in implementing the LRRS	Provide individual advice and guidance to support the development of good practice	Ongoing	
		Consider how standards for leadership in good practice are further developed	Scheduled for second half of 24/25 and needs to be considered alongside direction of land reform bill.	
	Provide advice to communities and land owners where concerns are raised about implementation of the LRRS to support good practice	Deliver casework to support good practice and promote good relations between landowners and communities	Ongoing	
		Regularly review casework to identify learning for policy and practice	Monthly internal casework review meetings in place; quarterly reporting to board.	
	Convene the Good Practice Advisory Group as a regular means of stakeholder engagement and collaboration	Collaborate with core industry bodies to collectively promote and support good practice	Meeting held in Qtr 1 with agreement to refresh meeting schedule and format.	
<b>2.2 Community benefits and wealth building from land use change and natural capital</b>	Publish Guidance and support innovative practice to ensure land use change and nature finance create social and economic benefits for local	Convene the Community Benefit Advisory Group to provide leadership and coordination in delivering community benefits from land	Meeting programme in place; meeting held in Qtr 1;	
		Provide advice and guidance to support the delivery of community benefits from land	Partnership post for Cairngorms National Park secured with external funding; Convened partners and funders to	

	communities, including convening the Community Benefits Advisory Group	including a partnership post in the Cairngorms National Park	establish new advisory capacity (to be hosted by third party).	
		Inform development of Scottish Government's nature market framework and UK market standards to embed the LRRS	Convened engagement through Advisory Group; Preparing SLC advice to inform market framework; influenced UK BSI standard drafting on community engagement and benefits.	
<b>3. Promoting good relations between agricultural landlords and tenants through the functions of the Tenant Farming Commissioner</b>				
<b>3.1 Codes of Practice, Guidance and Casework</b>	Ensure Codes and Guidance address current and emerging issues to support good relations	Publish new Codes and Guidance as required	A new Guide has been drafted on presentation of comparables for rent reviews, to be considered at next TFAF.	
		Draw on experience to inform development of the agricultural tenure measures in the Land Reform Bill	Ongoing engagement through TFAF; TFC gave evidence to NZET committee on 11 <sup>th</sup> June.	
		Extend mediation scheme	Mediation scheme extended for 3 year period; two enquiries have been sent application forms, no formal uptake yet.	
	Respond to casework enquiries or alleged breaches of Codes of Practice		Ongoing casework. Communications plan in place to raise profile of the casework role.	
<b>3.2 Relinquishment and Assignment of Agricultural Tenancies</b>	Fulfil the statutory requirement to appoint a valuer when required to enable relinquishment and assignation of agricultural tenancies	Ensure statutory requirements are fulfilled, update process and guidance as appropriate	Ongoing, timescales met to date.	

<b>3.3 Role of Agents – progress review</b>	Review progress against the TFC’s recommendations in the 2018 review of the conduct of professional agents of agricultural landlords and tenants	Complete and engage on progress review	Review completed. Report due for publication July.	
<b>3.4 Tenant Farming Advisory Forum</b>	Convene the Forum as a regular means of stakeholder engagement and collaboration	Convene regular Forum meetings to support leadership and collaboration	Two meetings held in Qtr 1, focused on informing land reform bill. Meeting frequency increased while bill progresses through parliament.	



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**24/25 Budget**

	<b>Allocated Annual</b>	<b>Committed Costs *</b>	<b>Spend to Date (paid) *</b>	<b>Spend to Date %</b>	<b>Uncommitted Costs</b>	
<b>1. Advising on reforms to law, policy and practice</b>						
Reforming Land Markets	31,963	21,963	-	0%	10,000	
Reforming Land Rights	35,000	35,000	-	0%	0	
<b>2. Supporting practical implementation of Scotland's Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement</b>						
Responsible Land Ownership/Use	5,000	50	-	0%	4,950	
<b>3. Promoting good relations between agricultural landlords and tenants through the functions of the Tenant Farming Commissioner</b>						
Tenant Farming	3,000	-	-	0%	3,000	
<b>4. Engaging people in why land matters and how they can be involved</b>						
Communications	62,362	36,501	11,613	19%	25,861	
<b>5. Underpinned by sound corporate governance and organisational</b>						
<b>Organisational Development</b>						
Staffing	1,173,105	287,269	193,689	17%	885,836	Committed costs are added once payment is made (wages)
Commissioners	78,500	19,615	14,294	18%	58,885	Committed costs are added once payment is made (wages)
	<b>1,614,330</b>	<b>534,068</b>	<b>286,675</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>1,080,262</b>	

\* Costs are for the full year.

**GIA 24/25**

1,600,000

(14,330) Over-budget

**1%**

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							
<b>VISION: Fair inclusive and productive system of ownership management and use of land that delivers greater benefit for all the people of Scotland</b>																
<b>RISK CATEGORY: DELIVERY</b>																
1	Catastrophic loss of systems resulting in the Commission not being able to operate as an organisation	5	4	20	Business continuity plan in place, cloud based IT system accessible outside of the office environment, cyber essentials plus accreditation, improved cyber security for log in to the network.	Effective	5	1	5	→	Stable	Averse	Cyber incident response plan approved by ARC. Achieved Cyber Essentials Plus for 2023. Multi factor authentication implemented for network access, updated antivirus software aligned to SG recommendations. cloud network tested. Cyber security requirements embedded in retender for IT service. Potential increase in cyber threats due to current political environment. IT re-tender completed	5	Sep-24	Head of Communications and Corporate services
2	Ability to react quickly in matching resources to changes in priorities	3	3	8	Maintain team approach to delivery enabling staff to draw on capacity and expertise across the team as required; Quarterly progress reporting to Board	Effective	3	3	9	↑	Increasing	Cautious	Improved cross-team working and quarterly planning with delivery tracker monitoring. 23/24 Business plan refreshed resourcing to current priorities. Staff posts reviewed as vacancies arise in order to remain agile and refresh focus where necessary. Changes in corporate team structure to improve resilience. Tight 23/24 budget limits ability to react to new asks/opportunities.	4	Feb-25	CEO
<b>RISK CATEGORY: REPUTATIONAL</b>																
3	Changes in Board appointments or failure to recruit timeously result in disruption to effective governance or lack of clarity in strategic direction	4	3	12	Recruitment to start 12 months ahead (SG responsibility). Plan succession timescales; ensure effective Strategic Plan in place Sept 23; Board induction processes refreshed and in place.	Partial	3	3	9	→	Stable	Minimalist	2023 appointments concluded, in place with induction arrangements and successful transition. 2024 recruitment process begun by SG with timeline agreed.	4	Dec-24	CEO
4	Emerging issues result in reactive policy making, and relationship management.	5	4	20	Proactive horizon scanning to anticipate future issues, work closely with stakeholders and put internal processes and measures in place for handling.	Partial	3	3	9	→	Stable	Minimalist	Working closely with stakeholders and sponsor team to identify potential issues in advance and take action. Clear case handling and internal communications procedures. Land Reform Bill publication creates new dynamics but clarity of SLC focus agreed with board and SG.	3	Mar-25	CEO
5	Inconsistent or incoherent narrative relating to our body of work leading to inaccurate discussions around the wider land reform agenda	4	3	12	Develop strong narrative between role of land in economic recovery and delivering wellbeing economy, climate action, and reducing inequalities. Implement strategic communications plan, including maintaining strong digital and media presence; regular performance monitoring	Effective	2	1	2	→	Stable	Minimalist	Comms planning & improved team quarterly planning providing more joined up approach. Strategic plan and programme of work launched. Summary of research and recommendations published.	2	Mar-25	Head of Communications and Corporate services
6	Failure to maintain effective relationships with key stakeholders impacts on our ability to deliver and constrains opportunities for collaboration.	5	4	20	All relevant stakeholders are identified and a clear engagement strategy put in place, Commission presence at key stakeholder events, regular liaison meetings with stakeholders and periodic review of stakeholder analysis	Effective	2	2	4	→	Stable	Open	Wide stakeholder engagement through policy development and communications. Ongoing and increasing LRR engagement. Structured engagement in Good Practice, Human Rights, Tenant Farming, Natural Capital & Strategic Plan. Relations and dynamics are changing with the LR bill and being actively managed.	4	Mar-25	CEO
7	Manage relationship across Scottish Government so that Commission's work is understood and recommendations are well received.	5	4	20	Ensure regular engagement between the Commission Chair and the Land Reform Minister, and between the Tenant Farming Commissioner and the Cab Sec for Rural Affairs. Ensure regular engagement between the CEO and the SG Sponsor and Policy Teams.	Effective	2	2	4	→	Stable	Open	Regular sponsorship & land reform team liaison in place. Engagement in other formal SG structures eg NSET Programme, EELG, Planning Advisory Group. Meeting with sponsor team and board held in September 23 and with Cab Sec Feb 24.	4	Sep-24	CEO
<b>RISK CATEGORY: COMPLIANCE</b>																
8	Failure to have in place or adhere to statutory or non-statutory corporate governance policies or procedures.	4	4	16	Ensure internal control system in place; Work to the production timetable for completion of all documents, and disseminate widely to ensure maximum awareness.	Effective	2	1	2	→	Stable	Minimalist	Using checklist of assurance controls; Draft annual accounts and report completed on planned timeline. Internal governance refreshers delivered. 22/23 audit completed with clean audit report. Internal audit programme agreed, 23/24 annual report on track.	1	Mar-25	CEO
9	The Commission fails to deliver to its allocated budget, resulting in reputational, administrative and governance failures.	5	4	20	Corporate and Business plan set appropriate budget allocations. Work to specified monitoring cycles, reporting requirements, and guidelines set out in the SPFM. Ensure correct adherence to authorisation procedures and delegated limits. Close monitoring of spend and profiled spend.	Effective	2	2	4	→	Stable	Averse	Internal Scheme of delegation in place; Quarterly board monitoring in place. Monthly profiling to manage spend evenly through the financial year and to be kept under review. Peer review on budget management from NatureScot Mar 23 to support resilience improvements. Improvements to budget management & reporting identified Apr 23. New Finance officer role in place with reporting improvements implemented.	1	Mar-25	CEO
<b>RISK CATEGORY: STAFFING</b>																
10	Staff turnover or absence due to illness etc resulting in loss of capacity for critical elements of business systems and delivery	5	4	20	Ensure good internal communication and provision of desk instructions for business critical functions. Resilience planning to ensure backup capability within staff team. Continuously seek to improve the working environment by monitoring and improving staff satisfaction and absence levels.	Partial	3	3	9	→	Stable	Cautious	Internal policies prepared and series of desk instructions for critical tasks prepared. Continued review of HR policies & staff engagement. Careful monitoring of priorities and capacity by MT and regular staff communication in place. Staff survey action plan in place. Ongoing absence monitoring in place. Resilience improvements in corporate and comms team implemented. Recruitment for replacement Finance & Business Systems post provides handover time.	4	Sep-24	Head of Communications and Corporate services
11	Change in work priorities, competing expectations or insufficient prioritisation impacts on staff wellbeing	5	4	20	Open and transparent - hold regular staff meetings, keep all staff informed of big picture direction, changes in priorities/focus. Overview through management team. Strong internal comms and leadership from managers to ensure wellbeing of staff and manage move to new ways of working.	Effective	2	4	8	→	Stable	Cautious	Improved monthly staff meeting format in place. Improved quarterly resource planning through Management Team. Monthly conversations, effective line management. Capacity reviewed through teams. Regular pulse staff surveys and action plan. Training and development plan in place. Business Plan prioritisation matched to resource capacity.	3	Sep-24	CEO
12	Disruption to delivery and business systems as a result of some staff moving to more permanent options of home working	4	3	12	Preparing new policies, ways of working and adapting internal processes to ensure staff remain well connected across teams and the organisation. Organisational policy that no member of staff should be disadvantaged due to where they work.	Partial	1	1	1	↓	Decreasing	Cautious	Home working policy outlines expectations for home working and monthly all staff team meetings to take place face to face. Office has hot desking and flexible working patterns in place. Closely monitoring and reviewing working practices, and adapting where needed. Office move completed with staff encouraged to meet face to face, routine of monthly in person all staff meetings.	1	Sep-24	Head of Communications and Corporate services



# COMMUNICATIONS QUARTERLY REPORT

## Q1: APRIL 2024 - MARCH 2024



This quarterly report covers the communications output during the period of 1 April 2024 to 24 June 2024. The report includes details of recent publications and events as well as engagement on social media.

The communications KPIs are currently being revisited and will be presented to management team for agreement after which they will be incorporated into future communications quarterly reports.

If you would like any further detail, or to discuss the information in this report, please contact Scarlett Macfarlane - [scarlett.macfarlane@landcommission.gov.scot](mailto:scarlett.macfarlane@landcommission.gov.scot).

Month	Event/Activity
July	Small Scale Land Focus Paper
July	Board recruitment
July	Review of VDL publications
July	Woodland Crofts Paper
August	RICS wallchart
September	CLES Report - Phase 2
September	Public meeting
September	Rural Land Market Data Report
September	VDL Progress Review
September	Land for Rural Housing Report

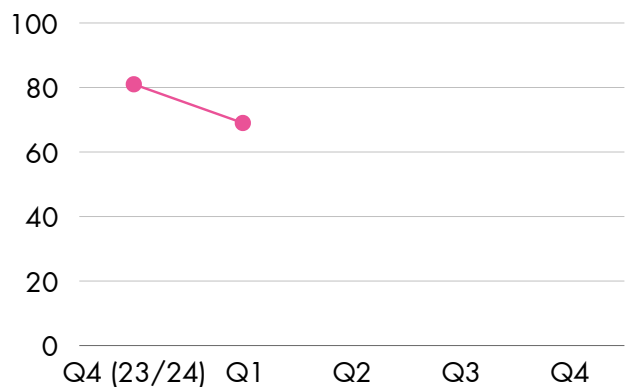
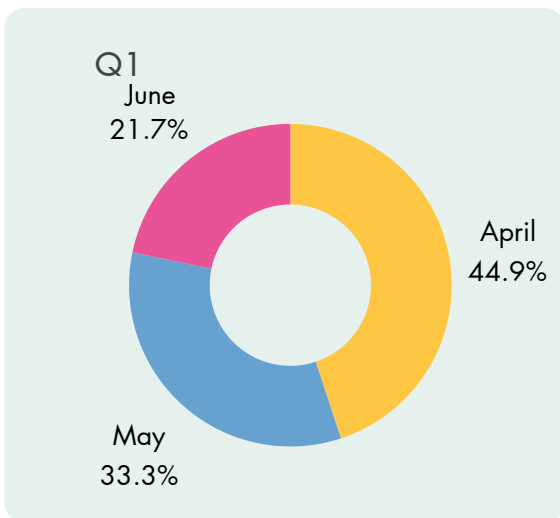
## PRESS COVERAGE

From the start of April to date we have achieved 69 press placements. The Land Reform Bill and corporate stories have had the most coverage, but what has been particularly encouraging is the uptick in coverage relating to housing. In Q1 we achieved 16 placements, an increase of 60% from the previous quarter. Town Centre Living (TCL) related posts accounted for the majority of coverage of this topic.

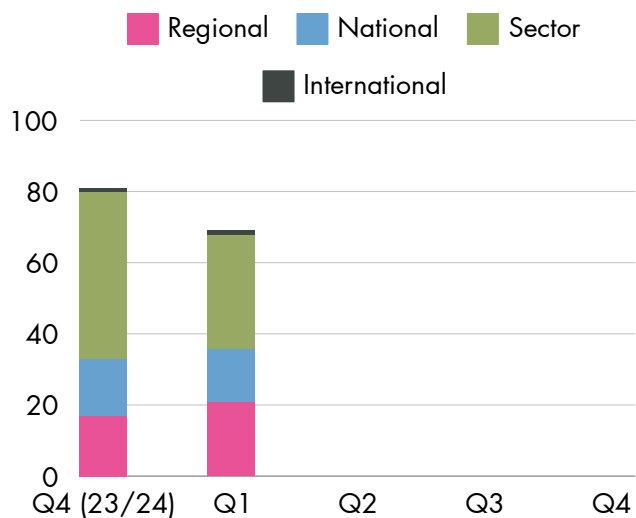
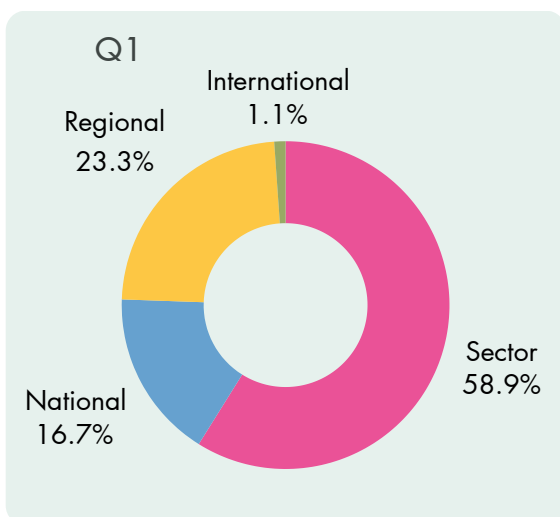
This quarter also saw a more even split than previous quarters between online and print coverage and the split between the region of coverage has remained consistent with previous quarters with the exception of a small increase in regional coverage as a result of TCL related post and the Communities and Green Finance Officer recruitment coverage.

Comparing coverage to last quarter there has been a slight decrease. However, last quarter saw higher than usual press attention due to the publication of the Land Reform Bill.

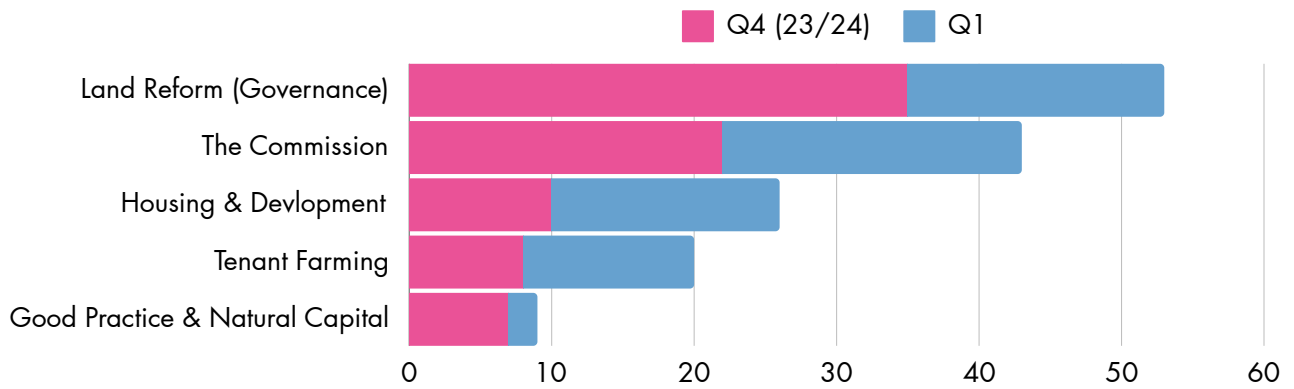
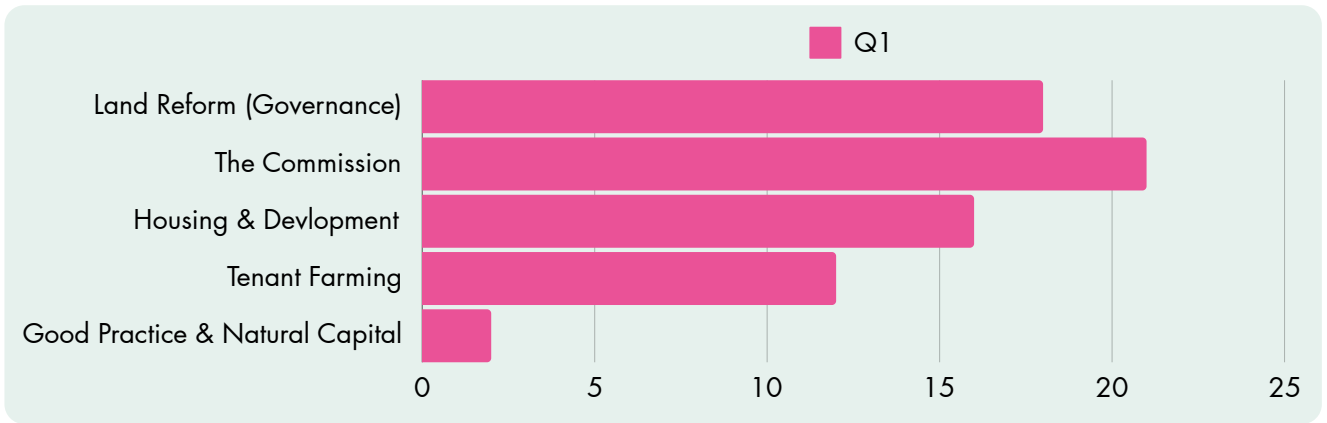
### DATES OF COVERAGE



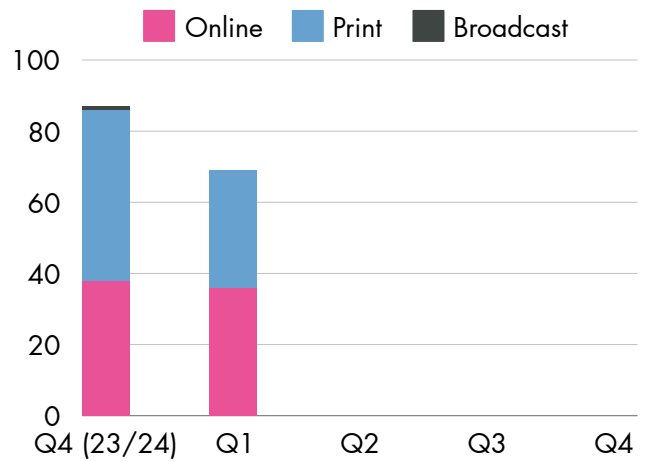
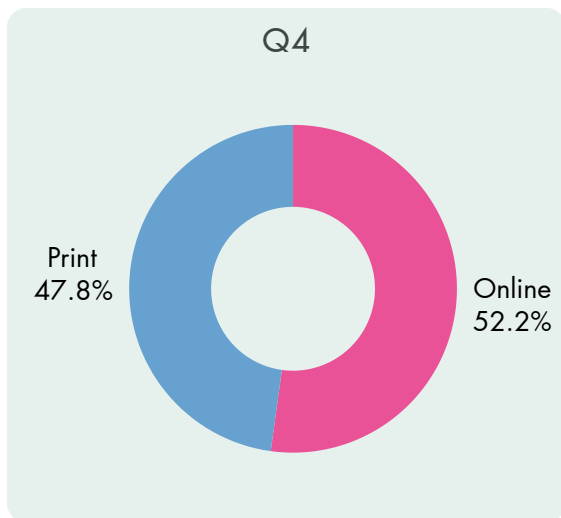
### REGION OF COVERAGE



## PRIORITY AREA COVERAGE



## CHANNEL OF COVERAGE



## SOCIAL MEDIA

Q1 social media activity has been positive with the conference content performing well on X. Content on X utilising the conference hashtag achieved the following visibility:

- Impressions – 47,005
- Likes – 544
- Reposts - 202

The Royal Highland Show posts also helped increase Commission visibility with reposts from the Cabinet Secretary, the Scot Gov Rural account and Andy Wightman that collectively received over 7k impressions.

Our refreshed social media KPIs will be included in future quarterly reports.

## EMAIL MARKETING

We have increased our email marketing activity this quarter including using email as the primary driver of conference registrations.

The following mailouts were sent:

Mailout	Open Rate	Click Through Rate
Research & Recommendations (MSP)	100%	99.2%
Conference registration	55.5%	11.4%
May Newsletter	64.1%	11.7%
CLES report	51.4%	11.3%

Both our click through rate and open rate are well above that of our peers where the average open rate is 35.6% and click through rate is 5.6%. Our mailing list also increased by 84 subscribers and we cleansed the list of over 300 defunct contacts that has helped us save on subscription costs and improve our open rates.

## WEBSITE

This quarter traffic on the website has been steady as has our top 3 pages:

1. Home
2. Work for Us
3. Conference

This quarter has also seen the VDL taskforce page enter the top 10 results, another encouraging sign that our work on housing is gaining more visibility.