

BUSINESS PLAN
PLANA GNOTHACH
2016-2017



CROFTING COMMISSION
COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD

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INTRODUCTION

2015-16 was a challenging year for the Commission with changes in leadership of the Board coming at an early stage. However this has ultimately resulted in more cohesion and a clear sense of purpose, which has been helpful for the organisation. The organisation has become much more closely focused on delivering the express will of parliament and doing so in the most effective way possible.

We continued to recruit into vacant posts throughout the year and work was done to complete the review of our policies and procedures. This allowed us to update our application forms to be sure we were asking the questions which would give us the information needed to make good regulatory decisions. Over and above this, we changed the way we administered some Commission decisions and that resulted in a 20% reduction in the time it takes to reach a decision in around 55% of cases. Towards the end of the year, we implemented a new case information system which provides the means to capture enhanced information about our processes. It is working and once staff come to terms with the change, we should see a reduction in processing times.

Looking ahead to 2016-17, we will continue to streamline the way cases are administered to reduce processing times in more types of cases. We want to see the Register of Croft going on-line to make it more accessible to all those with an interest, giving people direct access to the information. We have recently streamlined our re-letting process and we hope this will allow us to re-let crofts more quickly. We will test this out in the coming months, as we work with Scottish Minister's' Estates to resolve some long outstanding cases.

Finally, this year also brings the need to work toward the election of a number of new Commissioners in the early part of 2017, which will be both exciting and challenging.

Catriona Maclean – Chief Executive

OUR VISION

Crofting is known to have economic benefits for Scotland but over and above that, it is clear that where there are crofts, there are SSSIs, bird life, sympathetic land use, population retention in rural areas and so on, and the Commission plays an integral part in ensuring that crofting thrives. By thoughtful and effective regulation, the Commission can contribute in a variety of ways, enabling through its decision making support for individuals, creation/support of local businesses and population retention. In other circumstances, such as compliance with Duties for crofters and owner-occupier crofters, the Commission can actually make a direct difference over time by ensuring residency of crofts, therefore supporting population retention, and good land management, through cultivation and maintenance of croft land.

Our vision therefore is a simple one:

To be a guiding regulator that uses its powers to support the crofting system

OUR PURPOSE

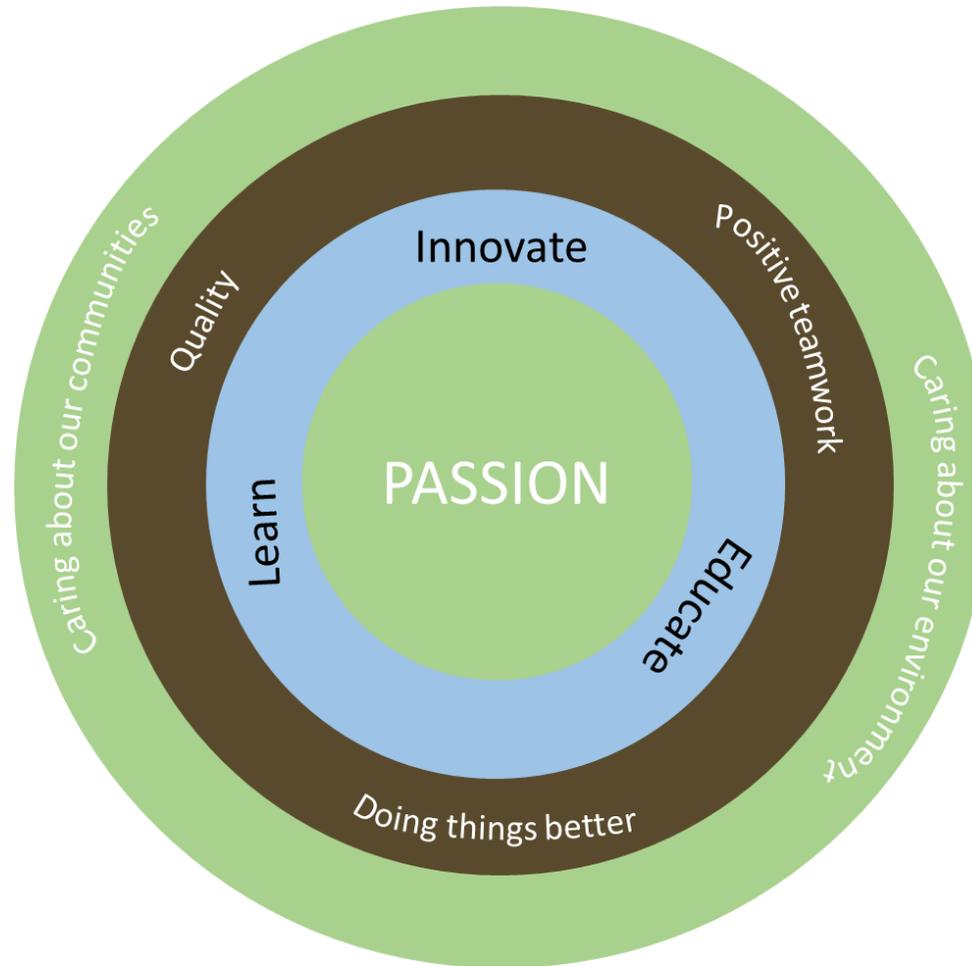
Whilst the Commission's functions are laid out in the 2010 Act, we do have control over how we carry out these functions and feel it is our responsibility to carry them out efficiently, accurately, consistently and wisely, in order to ensure that we provide not only a good support to the crofting system, but also a good service to the crofting communities that we serve.

Our purpose is therefore:

To regulate the crofting system fairly and reasonably to protect it for future generations

OUR VALUES

The Commission has developed corporate values which reflect what is important to us as an organisation and are at the heart of how we strive to operate on a day to day basis. They are therefore also integral to how we will address these priorities, and the wheel below depicts these values:



WHAT WE HAVE ALREADY ACHIEVED

In our Business Plan for 2015-2016, we identified various key milestones that we wanted to achieve that would help us work towards delivery of our Corporate Outcomes and we have made significant progress with these.

OUTCOME ONE	All crofts are occupied, well managed and cultivated or put to alternative suitable purposeful use	
	Crofting Census	The second Crofting Census was issued during December 2015, with a return deadline of 31 st March 2016. We used lessons learned from the issue of the first Census in 2014 to inform our preparation for the second one and made several improvements as a result. Notably, we streamlined the form even further and created a second form for crofts which consist of a grazings share only, to reduce confusion.
	Crofting Duties	We gave advice to crofters who became aware that they were not fulfilling their duties following the issue of the 2014 Census and we saw an increase in applications for Sublet, Assignment and Consent to be Absent from crofters trying to resolve their situation voluntarily.
OUTCOME TWO	All common grazings are regulated and shared management practices are the norm	
	Grazings Regulations	We finalised the new template Grazings Regulations and made these available on the website in November 2015 for use by any potential committee looking to either update their regulations or introduce new ones.
OUTCOME THREE	We have effective crofting legislation that is modern, relevant and aligned with the needs of crofting communities and long term National objectives	
	Crofting Stakeholder Forum	We worked with other stakeholders through the Crofting Stakeholder Forum to identify five priority areas for action, which was subsequently passed on to Scottish Ministers for consideration. Work is continuing on these through the formulation of an action plan for each area, with small working groups looking at each one.
OUTCOME FOUR	Crofting is regulated in a fair, efficient and effective way	
	Application Forms	We drew up new application forms in order to capture more information at the start of the process and therefore reduce the processing time. The new forms were launched between April and October 2015.
	New Business System	The new core business system, CIS, was launched in February 2016. This system is internal only and mainly caters for case processing of Regulatory applications. The system will provide better auditing of processes, improved information gathering and reporting and improved

		functionality, the full impact of which we should see reflected during the coming financial year.
	Delegated Decision Making	We initiated a pilot exercise in Delegated Decision Making in November 2015 for a number of functions which will empower Regulatory staff in decision making, and also involve crofters more directly in the decision making process.
	Carbon Emissions	We gathered some baseline information and defined the first steps of an action plan looking at reducing our carbon emissions. This work will continue in the new financial year.
	Updates to Register of Crofts	During this year, the Register of Crofts has undergone the biggest update during the last 60 years with several significant pieces of work taking place. These were the Crofting Census (9,000 croft records being checked and updated), the splitting of grazings shares where crofts had been purchased but the share remained in tenancy (3000 records) and a review of owner-occupier crofter statuses to ensure full compliance with the legislation (5500 records).

We also set ourselves some performance improvement targets in our 2015-2016 Business Plan and achieved the following results:

Result key: **target was not achieved**
 target achieved or exceeded

BUSINESS OBJECTIVE 1 – SYSTEM AND PROCESS REVIEW			
Measure	Target	Result	Comments
A reduction in turnaround times to reach a decision on regulatory applications for a registered croft	Decrofting (chsgg & feu) – ↓50% Apportionment – ↓25% All others – ↓20%	Decrofting chsgg ↓32%, feu ↓30% Apportionment ↑125% Others – Some did decrease: Decrofting Part Croft ↓16% Decrofting Whole Croft ↓30% Division ↓20% The rest stayed the same.	We have seen reductions in most turnaround times during the year, however, some were not as much as hoped. There have been some contributing factors to these such as long running legacy cases, and the complications that croft registration introduced but on the whole, the Commission have made good progress and will

			continue this work into the new year.
A reduction in turnaround times for croft registration applications	↓20%	↑45%	Although the overall figure here indicates a rise, this can be attributed to several community registrations which took a long time to get correct and towards the end of the year, a significant month on month reduction in time was seen. This measure will be further monitored in the new year.
A reduction in the number of upheld complaints made to the Commission	↓14%	↓35%	
An increase in the number of in-office grazings committees	↑5%	No change	The delayed launch of the new template Grazings Regulations impacted this figure.
A reduction in the time taken to resolve requests for investigations into the actions of grazings committees	↓25%	Not been possible to get figures due to lack of cases	
A reduction in the number of known unregulated grazings	↓5%	No change	The delayed launch of the new template Grazings Regulations impacted this figure.
BUSINESS OBJECTIVE 2 – IMPROVE OUR EVIDENCE BASE			
Measure	Target	Result	
A reduction in the processing time for completed census returns	↓30%	Census delayed so results not available, carry forward to next financial year.	
BUSINESS OBJECTIVE 3 – INFORM GOVERNMENT AND UTILISE EVIDENCE			
Measure	Target	Result	
15% of cases known to either have been initiated or resolved through action by the crofter for those who voluntarily informed us they were not complying with their duties	170	172	

5% of cases known to either have been initiated or resolved through action by the crofter for those who did not return a completed census form	169	59	Although this result was not achieved, on reflection this was always going to be difficult as the Commission has no control over who might respond, particularly where there has been a previous reluctance to engage.
BUSINESS OBJECTIVE 4 – CHANGE THE WAY WE WORK			
Measure	Target	Result	
A reduction in the cost of file storage	↓15%	↓17%	
A reduction to zero in the number of late FOI responses	0	2	Better monitoring has been put in place to improve this measure in the future.
Increase in overall staff satisfaction	No target set as baseline not carried out during this financial year		
A decrease in levels of staff absence through sickness	↓15%	Long term ↓70% Short term ↑3%	The long term figure underwent a significant adjustment by Scottish Government during the final quarter which saw a dramatic reduction reflected in the figures. This measure will be further monitored in the new year.
A reduction in staff turnover	↓4%	↓3%	

PURPOSE OF THE BUSINESS PLAN

In order to continue working towards the Corporate Outcomes identified in our Corporate Plan 2014-2017, and building on the work done during 2014 and 2015, our broad Business Objectives for this coming financial year remain the same as in 2015-2016 but we have set new milestone and performance targets accordingly. The four objectives are:

1 – SYSTEM AND PROCESS REVIEW

We deliver a business system and processes that are fit for purpose and deliver improved data management, case management and reporting

CORPORATE OUTCOMES: ONE, TWO & FOUR

The Crofting Commission believes that continuous improvement within the organisation is vital and that by investing in the people and systems that will deliver the regulatory processes of the Commission it will ensure that it is much better prepared to meet the challenges it faces as an organisation and deliver improved services to the crofting communities that we serve. We will, therefore, continue to implement improved business systems and review our business processes to ensure that they deliver the best performance and value that is achievable.

2 – IMPROVE OUR EVIDENCE BASE

We measure the impact of crofting and active land use by obtaining quality data from the Crofting and Grazings Censuses and use this to plan targeted actions

CORPORATE OUTCOMES: ONE, TWO & THREE

The Crofting Commission understands that robust evidence is essential in underpinning our strategic priorities, so it will obtain quality data from the Crofting and Grazings Censuses which will help measure the impact of crofting and active land use. This evidence will also aid the Commission in its work to ensure that all crofters and owner-occupier crofters are fulfilling their duties by, for the first time, providing a full picture and allowing the Commission to plan how best to address those who are not, for instance, by running geographical pilots, working with estates, crofters and landlords, to encourage local responsibility for addressing the key issues in their areas.

3 – WORKING WITH SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

We actively engage with the Scottish Government and other Crofting Stakeholders in any consideration of future changes to crofting legislation or policy

CORPORATE OUTCOMES: ONE, TWO & THREE

We know that there is a common understanding in the sector that crofting makes a valuable contribution to the economic and social development of Scotland but what has been missing in the past is evidence that backs this up. By using the information collated from the Crofting and Grazings Censuses and collating this alongside information from other sources, such as HIE, SCF and SGRPID, the Commission can build a detailed picture of the current state of crofting, which can then be monitored and utilised in the future to aid discussions and proposals for development. The Crofting Commission will continue to have a role in any consideration of future

changes to crofting legislation, working closely with key crofting stakeholders, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Ministers on a variety of issues, to identify and prioritise any areas where change is deemed necessary.

4 – CHANGE THE WAY WE WORK

We empower and support our people to be engaged, highly skilled and perform well. We respect our environment and work to reduce our impact on it

CORPORATE OUTCOMES: FOUR

We believe it is important to have a high performing workforce both now and in the future. We know that to achieve this, there needs to be investment in staff and in the organisational structure and systems so as to enhance the capability of the organisation. The Commission believes that this investment will result in finding new and better ways to achieve our outcomes, channelling the collective knowledge and energy of its staff to create lasting improvements in the service we provide. We also want to ensure that we keep our impact on our environment to a minimum by working to reduce our carbon emissions.

BUSINESS OBJECTIVE 1 – SYSTEM AND PROCESS REVIEW

We deliver a business system and processes that are fit for purpose and deliver improved data management, case management and reporting.

Narrative		<p>Having launched a new core business system (CIS) and new application forms during 2015-16, we will continue to improve turnaround times for regulatory applications and the information that we capture and base our decisions on as these new systems and processes bed in. We will also launch a new online version of the Register of Crofts which will allow crofters, solicitors, SG partners and other stakeholders to view the Register online.</p> <p>Having finalised a new set of draft Grazings Regulations which provide a template for grazings committees in the future from which to formulate their regulations, we will proactively work with crofters to adopt the new regulations and to encourage new grazings committees into office.</p>			
Key Milestones		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2016 – Complete data cleansing following launch of CIS • July 2016 – Review Registration, Assignment and Grazings functions • October 2016 – Launch the final Delegated Decision Making functions • December 2016 – Launch online Register of Crofts 			
		Baseline	Target	Comments	
Outcome Measures	1.1	<p>A reduction in turnaround times for the time taken to reach a decision on regulatory applications for registered crofts:</p> <p>Decrofting (chsgg & feu) – 50% and 30% respectively</p> <p>Apportionment – 60%</p> <p>All others – 40%</p> <p>Decrofting Whole Croft – 30%</p>	<p>Decrofting (chsgg & feu) – 13 and 9 weeks respectively</p> <p>Apportionment – 70 weeks</p> <p>Assignment – 24 weeks</p> <p>Letting – 24 weeks</p>	<p>Decrofting (chsgg & feu) – 6 weeks</p> <p>Apportionment – 28 weeks</p> <p>All others – 12 to 16 weeks</p>	Baseline – based on 2015-2016 results.

			Division – 24 weeks Decrofting Part Croft – 25 weeks		
			Decrofting Whole Croft – 30 weeks	Decrofting Whole Croft – 20 weeks	
1.2	A reduction of 45% in turnaround times for croft registration applications		42 weeks	23 weeks	Baseline – based on 2015-2016 results
1.3	A 4% reduction in the number of upheld complaints made to the Commission		29%	25%	Baseline – based on 2015-2016 results
1.4	An increase of 10% in the number of hits on the Grazings Regulation page on our website		4,536	4,989	Baseline – based on 2015-2016 hits
1.5	A 25% reduction in the number of general enquiries being handled by staff		1,232	924	Based on savings in last quarter of year only

BUSINESS OBJECTIVE 2 - IMPROVE OUR EVIDENCE BASE

We measure the impact of crofting and active land use by obtaining quality data from the Crofting and Grazings Censuses and use this to plan targeted action.

Narrative	<p>The analysis in the early part of 2016 of the results of the second Croft Census will strengthen our understanding of the occupancy and use of crofts and we will start working proactively with crofters and landlords to improve both these aspects in particular areas through our first geopilots. Geopilots are where we will address all the crofting issues in a local area, such as letting of vacant crofts, working with crofters to address any duties issues and registration of croft land to ensure that the maximum number of crofts in that area are occupied and in active use. Our first Geopilot will test the potential success of this approach and allow us to plan for more in the future.</p> <p>Towards the end of the year, we will be able to produce much stronger management information from our new core business system, CIS, to further inform our understanding and future decisions.</p>				
Key Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2016 – Complete analysis of second Crofting Census • June 2016 – Implement Commission Re-letting Process • November 2016 – Launch Grazings Census • September 2016 – Launch first Geopilot • January 2017 – Carry out first Assessor Local Reporting • March 2017 – Use new information collated from first year of CIS to provide improved management information 				
			Baseline	Target	Comments
Outcome Measures	2.1	A 30% reduction in the processing time for completed returns	17 weeks	12 weeks	Baseline – Based on 2014 Census processing time from closing date
	2.2	Work with Scottish Ministers Estates to reduce vacant crofts by 10%	No previous work in this area	10 crofts re-let	
	2.3	A 90% reduction in the number of vacant crofts where the Commission has terminated the tenancy	10	1	Baseline – current number of vacant

					crofts where the Commission terminated the tenancy at March 2016
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BUSINESS OBJECTIVE 3 – WORK WITH SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

We actively engage with the Scottish Government and other Crofting Stakeholders in any consideration of future changes to crofting legislation or policy.

Narrative		Continuing engagement in legal discussions with Crofting Law Group and other stakeholders			
Key Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 2016 – Provide supporting information to SG for planning of 2017 Crofting Elections • October 2016 – Elections roadshows • January 2017 – Provide Electoral Roll for 2017 Crofting Elections 				
			Baseline	Target	Comments
Outcome Measures	None applicable				

BUSINESS OBJECTIVE 4 – CHANGE THE WAY WE WORK

We empower and support our people to be engaged, highly skilled and perform well. We respect our environment and work to reduce our impact on it.

<p>Narrative Having now put in place the key building blocks of the organisation, a stronger focus is needed on staff development to ensure that we are empowering and motivating our staff appropriately. We will therefore work on new corporate training initiatives with a focus on talent development and continue our work on implementing delegated decision making.</p> <p>We will also continue the work that has been started on our Records Management policies and Greening policies, implementing changes that contribute to Government targets and initiatives related to Climate Change.</p>					
<p>Key Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2016 – Agree Corporate retention policies • June 2016 – Implement Tier 3 process of Delegated Decision Making • October 2016 - Conclude tablet trial for use with board papers • October 2016 – Implement Corporate Training Plan • November 2016 – Submit first Climate Change report 					
			Baseline	Target	Comments
Outcome Measures	4.1	5% reduction in the cost of file storage costs	£9,908	£9,413	Baseline – 2015-16 storage cost. There are additional costs associated with delivery and scanning. Target – based on initial approximation of records that could be disposed of.
	4.2	Reduction of 50% in the number of late FOI responses	2	1	2015-16 total

4.3	X% increase in overall staff satisfaction	–		Baseline – initial staff surveys in June 2016 and then target will be established
4.4	20% decrease in levels of short term staff absence through sickness	5.7 AWDL/FTE – short term	4.5 AWDL/FTE – short term	Baseline – 12 month rolling figure at March 2016 AWDL – Average Work Days Lost. Target – Scottish Government averages are 3.71 short term, calculated on a rolling 9 month period
4.5	Establish average target turnaround time to fill vacant posts	n/a	16 weeks	Target based on prompt actioning at each stage and on recruiting from SG or OGD.

NATIONAL OUTCOMES

The outcomes of our Corporate Plan are aligned with those of others in the public sector to bring about delivery of the Scottish Government National Outcomes contained in the Scottish Government Economic Strategy. We believe that we contribute to five of the National Outcomes as summarised below.

National Outcomes	CC Outcomes	How we contribute
We live in well designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services that we need	ONE TWO FOUR	We recognise the potential that lies within underused crofts and common grazings and we believe that by ensuring crofts are well managed and by facilitating development of crofts and common grazings through our decision making, we can enable an increase in productive use of croft land for a diverse range of activities.
We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others	ONE TWO	We understand that crofts without a resident crofter or crofter family can create holes in communities which can have far-reaching impacts and through the use of information from the crofting and grazings census, we will develop geo-pilot projects to take action on residency and make a contribution to maintaining sustainable communities. In addition, we will work with communities to help them understand the value of croft land as an asset and encourage more grazings committees into office to help fulfil the lands potential through better management of shared assets.
We value and enjoy our built or natural environment and protect it for future generations	ONE TWO	We acknowledge the detrimental impact that unworked crofts have on the well-being and productiveness of crofting communities and the land they occupy. By working with crofters to ensure they are fulfilling their duties in relation to cultivating and maintaining the land and working to increase the number of grazings committees in office, we can contribute to better land management across the crofting counties.
We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production	TWO FOUR	We recognise the potential within croft land to support local food and drink production, and also within common grazings to support renewable energy and carbon production and we will be mindful of this through our decision making, enabling use of crofting assets to support these industries. Within the organisation, we will ensure that our working practices are mindful of our carbon footprint and energy consumption and will progress changes to reduce these.
Our public services are high quality, efficient and responsive to local people's needs	THREE FOUR	By providing evidence based information to Scottish Ministers and working with other crofting stakeholders, the Commission has a vital role in ensuring that the

legislation and policies regarding crofting are fit for purpose both now and in the future. Further, by ensuring that our workforce are high performing and that the organisation operates in a straightforward and transparent way through process review and change, we can deliver significant improvements in service to the people of Scotland.

BUDGET INFORMATION

The Crofting Commission was allocated grant in aid of 2.447m for 2016/17, around 70% of which is directly allocated for staff salaries and the remainder covers costs associated with Board members and the standard running costs of the organisation. As the Commission has had a number of new responsibilities added to its functions with the introduction of all elements of the Crofting Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, it also has agreement for the drawdown of some additional pressure funding over its core budget if required.

In terms of the Business Objectives for 2016-2017, we can estimate the cost of delivery for each objective. The table below indicates the number of FTEs estimated as working on each objective and the Approximate Cost is based on the associated salaries for those FTE, plus any other associated costs. Fixed running costs (for instance for our occupation of Great Glen House) are incorporated on a pro-rata basis per FTE.

Business Objective	FTEs	Approximate Cost
1 – SYSTEM AND PROCESS REVIEW	22.4	£1,069,656
2 – IMPROVE OUR EVIDENCE BASE	13.1	£555,361
3 – INFORM GOVERNMENT AND UTILISE INFORMATION	1.0	£39,040
4 – CHANGE THE WAY WE WORK	17.9	£1,092,944
TOTALS	54.4	£2,757,000