



CROFTING COMMISSION
COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD

Crofting Commission

Corporate Plan 2017-2022

Contents

Introduction	3	Outcome three	7
Who we are, what we do	4	Outcome four	7
Our vision	5	Outcome five	8
Our purpose	5	Outcome six	8
Our values	5	Measuring our success	9
Outcome one	6	National outcomes	10
Outcome two	6	Budget information	11



Introduction

The first five years of the Crofting Commission saw times of significant change, with the bedding in of new legislation bringing new functions and responsibilities to the Commission. As a result, we have spent considerable effort in ensuring that these changes were introduced, revising or creating new business processes where necessary, and working with our partners in Registers of Scotland to ensure that the introduction of the Crofting Register was successful.

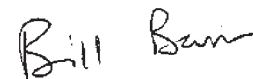
Other significant areas of work for us have been the launch of the annual Crofting Census in 2014 and the introduction of a new core business system in February 2016. All of these projects will, in their own way, contribute to the future of crofting by safeguarding and indeed improving the information and evidence that we hold about crofts, the land they occupy and the people that sustain these rural communities.

Looking ahead to the next five years, we will build on these changes by continuing to improve the way we work, ensuring that we are able to provide the best possible service to our customers. We also look forward to the introduction of new legislation and the change and challenges that it may bring.

This Corporate Plan lays out where we will concentrate our work over the next five years, where we see our focus shifting away from the implementation of new processes and systems, towards continuous improvement in all areas of our work. As well as continued process improvement in our handling of regulation and registration business, and in our governance, this will see us:

- Working proactively with crofting communities to ensure that crofts are lived on and managed
- Working with our stakeholders to develop best practice guidelines for the management of common grazings
- Advancing the Scottish Government's digital agenda by introducing online provision of our services.

To that end, we have laid out six Outcomes in this plan which we feel will support our aspirations over the coming five years and enable us to continue to support the unique system of crofting and the people and communities that it defines.



Bill Barron
Chief Executive

Who we are, what we do

The Crofting Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 created the Crofting Commission, which came into being on 1 April 2012, taking over from the Crofters Commission.

It is a Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) which operates on a day-to-day basis independently of the Government, but for which Scottish Ministers are ultimately responsible. The Commission comprises of six Crofting Commissioners elected from six geographical areas in the crofting counties, and three Commissioners appointed by the Scottish Government, and is led by a Convener. The Commission is supported by a staff of some 60, led by a Chief Executive (who is appointed by Scottish Ministers in consultation with the Convener of the Commission). The Commission's Headquarters is in Great Glen House, Inverness.

The Crofting Commission's principal functions are regulating crofting, re-organising crofting, promoting the interests of crofting and keeping under review matters relating to crofting. The Act also places a duty on the Commission to investigate reports of breaches of duty by tenants and owner-occupier crofters. It can advise the Minister on matters relating to crofting and it can also collaborate with other bodies for the economic development and social improvement of the crofting counties. However, it cannot act as a lobbying body. As a public body, the Commission is subject to, and has duties under, a range of other legislation, but this Plan focuses on the Commission's duties and powers under the Crofting Acts.

There are currently in the region of 20,000 crofts in the crofting counties, which encompass Argyll & Bute, The Western Isles, Highland, Moray, Orkney and Shetland. Around 75% of crofts are tenanted and the remaining 25% are owned by the crofter. In addition to this, there are in the region of 1,000 common grazings with around 50% of them having a grazings committee. In total, the land in crofting tenure equates to around 1.7 million acres, or 700,000 hectares.

The Commission receives around 1,000 regulatory applications each year, as well as processing thousands of requests for information from crofters, solicitors and other stakeholders acting on behalf of crofters. We also receive and process around 1,000 applications for croft registration per year prior to them being submitted to Registers of Scotland for inclusion on the Crofting Register. The Commission is responsible for first registration of common grazings.

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 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), bird life, sympathetic land use, population retention in rural areas, and so on and we believe that the Commission plays an integral part in ensuring that the crofting system and the communities supported by it thrives. 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 Crofters (Scotland) Act 1993 (as amended), 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. By thoughtful and effective regulation, the Commission can contribute in a variety of ways, through its decision making, support for individuals and the creation and support of local businesses. In other circumstances, such as compliance with duties for crofters and owner-occupier crofters, the Commission can 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 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.



**Passion
for our work**



**Caring about our
communities and
our environment**



**Positive
teamwork**



**Commitment to
quality and doing
things better**



**Learn
Educate
Innovate**

Outcome one

Crofts are occupied and managed.

We will use our powers to regulate and encourage the active use of crofts and where possible, we will work with others to increase the understanding of the value of croft land as an asset which can contribute to the sustainable development of crofting communities and the financial viability of croft households.

Key objectives:

- Continuing high return rates for the Crofting Census
- Action taken on suspected breaches of duty
- Targeted regulation that ensures crofts are occupied and managed, working with local crofting communities, stakeholders, partners and landlords to facilitate the process

What will success look like?

- We see a high return rate on the annual Crofting Census
- We see reported breaches of duty being resolved successfully with a positive outcome
- We see a reduction in the number of vacant crofts
- We see higher rates of residency and cultivation of crofts

Outcome two

Common grazings are regulated and shared management practices are the norm.

Shared management and productive use of the common grazings is considered to be essential for the sustainability of crofting. In order to help support this, the Commission can work with grazings committees to agree grazings regulations in order to promote effective management of common grazings.

Key objectives:

- Deliver a new set of guidance for use by grazings committees in conjunction with new template grazings regulations
- Collate information through the grazings committees duty to report every 5 years on the condition of crofts and the grazings in their township
- Increase the number of regulated common grazings by working with crofting communities
- Increase awareness of the importance of regulated grazings, using routes like the Assessors network

What will success look like?

- We see an increase in adoption of the new grazings regulations
- We see an increase in the number of regulated common grazings
- We see an increased number of common grazings registered on the Crofting Register

Outcome three

Crofting is regulated in a fair, efficient and effective way.

The Crofting Commission believes that continuous improvement within the organisation is vital. By investing in the people and systems that deliver the Regulatory processes of the Commission, it will ensure it is better prepared to meet the challenges faced as an organisation and deliver improved services to crofting communities.

Key objectives:

- Ensure that our policies offer full compliance with the Crofting Acts
- Improve our decision making processes, working with communities and partners
- Improve performance in customer service by implementing business systems that provide additional online services to crofters such as online application facilities
- Improve our efficiency and accuracy, and ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act, through our Records Management procedures

What will success look like?

- We see improved turnaround times for Regulatory applications
- We see improved Customer Satisfaction rates
- We see an increase in services available to crofting communities and other stakeholders through digital delivery
- We see officers taking more delegated decisions, providing a faster, more consistent service to our customers.

Outcome four

We work with stakeholders to inform and support the future of active crofting.

There is a common understanding in the sector and beyond that crofting makes a valuable contribution to the economic and social development of Scotland. The Crofting Commission is able, through the Crofting and Grazings Census and its Regulatory functions, to provide evidence that could be used to inform future decisions on the development of crofting. To support this, we will continue working closely with key crofting stakeholders, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Ministers on a variety of issues and to identify and prioritise any areas of action.

Key objectives:

- Develop and maintain a clear focus on priorities and actions by actively engaging with stakeholders and draw on grass roots knowledge
- Work with Scottish Government and other key crofting stakeholders to help identify priorities for legislative change
- Provide evidence to aid discussions and proposals for development by utilising information from the Crofting and Grazings Census

What will success look like?

- We see an increase of collaborative working with other stakeholders on joint initiatives

Outcome five

Our workforce have the right skills and motivation to perform well; our governance processes are best practice.

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 our staff to create lasting improvements in the service we provide.

Key objectives:

- An appropriately skilled staff and Board who are fully equipped to fulfil their responsibilities
- An empowered and motivated Board that can carry out their role
- Improved Governance processes

What will success look like?

- We see an established Corporate Development programme ensuring continued investment in staff and the Board
- We see proactive Workforce Planning used within the organisation
- We see increased job satisfaction across the organisation
- We see robust risk management in line with best practice

Outcome six

We reduce our impact on the environment.

We want to ensure we keep our impact on our environment to a minimum by working to reduce our carbon emissions.

Key objectives:

- Increased awareness of environmental issues amongst staff
- An identified action plan to reduce our carbon footprint

What will success look like?

- We see an increased level of awareness amongst our staff leading to adoption of good practices which consider the environment
- We see a reduction in the carbon emissions generated by our organisation.

Measuring our success

Each of the outcomes detailed in this plan will be delivered through actions in our annual Business Plans which will also detail specific performance improvement targets for that year. Our progress against these targets will be reported annually in our Annual Report which will also reflect our overall progress against the high level success criteria identified in this Corporate Plan and in particular the following:

High Level Indicator	Objective
Number of occupied crofts	Increasing
Number of actively managed crofts	Increasing
Number of regulated grazings with committee in office	Increasing
Number of common grazings registered on Crofting Register	Increasing
Regulatory application turnaround times	Decreasing
Customer satisfaction rates	Increasing
Staff engagement rating	Increasing
Corporate carbon emissions	Decreasing

Over the period of this Corporate Plan, measures for each of these key success criteria will be developed, if not already in place.

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's National Outcomes contained in Scotland's Economic Strategy. We believe that we contribute to five of the National Outcomes as summarised below.

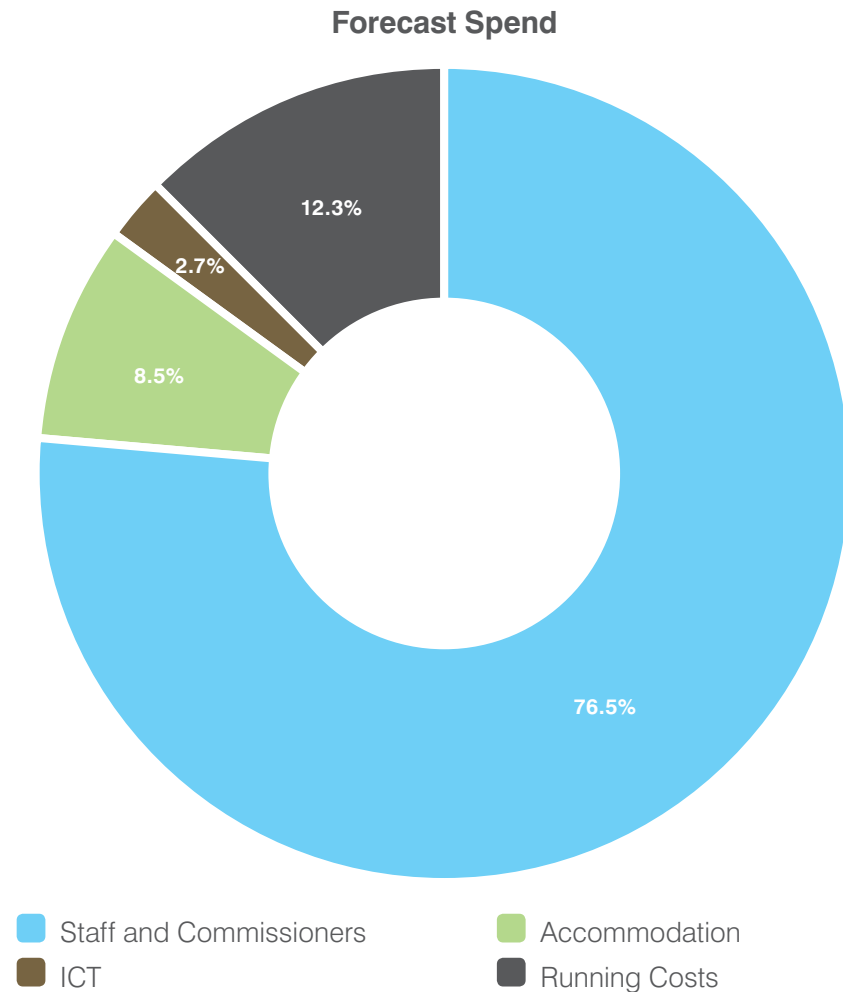
National Outcomes	Crofting Commission outcomes	How we contribute
We live in well designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services that we need	1 2 3	By ensuring crofts are well managed and by facilitating development of crofts and common grazings through our decision 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	1 2	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 land's potential through better management of shared assets. In addition, 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.
We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations	1 2 4	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	1 2 6	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 reduction 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, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs	3 4 5	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 has been allocated grant in aid of £2.397m for 2017/18.

As the Commission has had a number of new responsibilities added to its function 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 for 2017/18. For planning purposes we assume that the core budget will remain at the current level for the duration of this plan, however, it must, at this point, be assumed that the pressure funding will drop off after the first year.

A high level breakdown of how our budget combined with the pressure funding will be allocated during the first year is shown opposite. If no additional budget is secured from 2018 onwards then this will have to be reviewed.





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