

## Land Reform Bill Consultation Analysis Position

The Scottish Government's analysis of the Land Reform Bill Consultation provides clear evidence that there is substantial appetite for bold and transformational land reform. **The Government must take this golden opportunity to ensure that Scotland's land works for everyone.** We must move away from our current model of extractive land ownership towards diversified ownership which is rooted in community wealth building, securing fairness and opportunity at the heart of the Scottish economy and society.

To realise this vision, **the Scottish Government needs to act upon the mandate** provided by the consultation to secure key land reform mechanisms in law. Over 70% of respondents to the consultation supported:

- **Public Interest Tests on large-scale landholdings**
- **A more robust Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement (LRRS) and rigorous Land Management Plans**
- **The enshrinement of the Land Rights and Responsibility Statement into law**

There was also a **consensus on 3,000ha being too high a threshold for a 'large-scale' landholding**, which would not capture the scale of monopoly landowners around Scotland. That is why **Community Land Scotland will continue to advocate for 500ha as the threshold** for a landholding of significance, whilst also including urban landholdings of significance in the Public Interest Test. Crucially this Public Interest Test must not only apply at the point of sale, but also when a landholding is not adhering to the requirements laid out in the LRRS.

It is for this reason that Community Land Scotland calls for the Scottish Government to heed the call for more ambitious land reform in the consultation, and to adopt additional measures to achieve transformational land reform:

- **A total cap on land landownership** by an individual or linked companies
- **Removing the £1 million notional threshold on the Scottish Land Fund** – instead allowing decisions on a case-by-case basis
- **Securing amendments to Community Right to Buy legislation** – to make it easier to communities to register their interest in land and therefore be able to trigger a Community Right to Buy

The consultation responses also highlight areas where greater specificity will be needed in the legislation. Notably, the insufficient focus on community ownership and limited attention to redistributive measures to address the concentration of wealth and power in large-scale landholdings is a matter of concern which can be addressed through the proposals we suggest above.

Transparency in land ownership has been rightly acknowledged as a crucial aspect of land reform. Enhanced transparency through the disclosure of beneficial ownership is a positive move, as is the ongoing enhancement of the land register. **However, without measures to accelerate registration**



**and concerted efforts to address the scale and concentration of land ownership, transparency alone may not yield significant improvements.**

Moreover, the consultation document does not fully consider the negative effects of extensive landholdings on communities and the environment. **Maintaining the status quo is not an option.** Fairness and opportunity in land ownership should be the priority - [it is untenable for 0.025% of Scotland's population to continue owning 67% of its private rural land](#). Community Land Scotland welcomes the opportunity to discuss with the Scottish Government how to make the Land Reform Bill the transformational piece of legislation that Scotland desperately needs.

In summary, while the proposed land reform contains some important proposals, there is a pressing need for bolder action to promote community ownership, address wealth and power imbalances, and ensure sustainable land management. **The Scottish Government has an opportunity to create a more equitable and fair land system, benefiting all Scottish communities, but they need to be ambitious and bold** when drafting this legislation.

Community Land Scotland

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