



*The 'go to' organisation for
Local Government
improvement in Scotland*

Land Use and Agriculture Workshop:

8th August 2023

Key Points

Outcomes

General feedback – these themes emerged in relation to several outcomes:

- Where does the marine environment sit? Need more focus on blue space. Also, vacant and derelict land is not mentioned.
- Greater urgency – land is responsible for 50% of net emissions, need much faster/ambitious progress with a real focus on actions. Need to take on big interests and be prepared for pushback from big organisations.
- Place based approach, focus on co-benefits and inequalities needs to be stronger focus throughout plans – emphasise this is a public health emergency
- FAQ's (you said we did) and myth busting may be helpful to respond to common misconceptions re. the sector.
- More support needed to encourage community participation – resources, advice and facilitation – potential role for anchor orgs.

Jobs, Skills and Economic Opportunities – Diversity of opportunities needed, ensuring good jobs/employment conditions, and greater local opportunities at all areas and levels (including land ownership).

Communities and Place – Develop greater food culture; more informed about food production, encourage local sourcing and opportunities to grow within housing developments. Need to balance policies and action around food security, food poverty and farming opportunities. Farmers and local authorities can work together to develop new regional groupings and promote better communication.

People and equity – Greater evidence and public transparency around healthy foods, importance of healthy soils and biodiversity to encourage different choices. There needs to be a greater link between new practices from food production and demand from consumers. One can't change without the other.

Environment, Biodiversity, and Adaptation – Lack of infrastructure to deliver local food to local plates. Need funding and data to support better understanding of what is grown where, what soils we have and what blue infrastructure we have, in order to create regional plans. Better communication needed between farmers, land owners and public sector to identify opportunities around climate change adaptation.

Actions

Support and resource community engagement - Community engagement but with a focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity, environmental sustainability, etc. Develop specific policies and programmes in regards this and allocate sufficient resources to it. Should also require private investors to first engage with communities to create a vision for their place which investors must then align to. Support also needed to allow communities to be involved in decision-making about what happens to land and taking over assets on the land.

Increase understanding and training – Developing skills and upskilling where there are gaps. Need better understanding and recognition that all jobs are “green” jobs and demystifying what jobs are needed, many of these are jobs we already recognise with a degree of upskilling. Engagement needed throughout the education system to highlight these opportunities. Promotion of “green champion” roles to take this forward

Embed these actions within our own approaches – Need to ensure our own organisations take on actions to drive this change, e.g. ensuring SG invests in land use (e.g. agricultural support), allocate time and resource for green initiatives rather than an add on, engage with public sector around how it can use its own land holdings.

Specific Actions for the Land Use and Agriculture Sector

- Buy land and re-sell it on a more equitable basis.
- (SG can) Create coherent governance structures and support frameworks to enable community and stakeholder participation in land use decision making at a landscape scale – considering local and national needs for land use.
- Continue with Nature Restoration Funding programme.
- Progress speedily with land reform especially with transparency about who owns land.
- Co-ordinating investment between gov, private investment, HE research etc.
- Strengthen policies to protect and restore ecosystems.
- Develop funding programmes for the public sector to use its own land holdings for carbon sequestration, adaptation, biodiversity, etc. Similar to the way it has developed such programmes for public sector buildings e.g. in energy efficiency, heat networks, etc.
- Establish clear land ownership rights and tenure systems to protect the rights of smallholders and communities.