



**Crown Estate
Scotland**

Oighreachd a' Chrùin Alba

Rural Assets Strategy - Consultation Analysis

May / June 2019

“Scotland’s land is one of our most valuable assets, vital to our national prosperity and to our wellbeing as individuals and communities. In an inclusive and progressive Scotland, it is only right that everyone benefits from it.”

Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Scottish Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement

By Sarah Brown, C2W Consulting



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Executive summary

Summary of Consultation Analysis

Scottish Crown Estate rural assets include 37,000 hectares (around 91,000 acres) of land in rural Scotland. The vast majority is let for a variety of uses including farming, residential, commercial, sporting and mineral operations. Forestry assets on these estates are managed directly by us rather than being let. It also includes salmon fishing rights on many Scottish rivers and the rights to naturally-occurring gold and silver across much of Scotland.

Crown Estate Scotland put forward a number of key considerations related to the overall long-term objectives of managing the rural assets and for views on how we should actively manage these assets to drive inclusive sustainable development.

The consultation was open online from 15 February to 26 April 2019. In total 33 respondents were submitted online, from 9 individuals and 24 organisations. The responses provided constructive answers and suggestions to the 30 questions asked in the consultation document. In addition, some verbal feedback was gathered at community events.

Respondents said they wanted to see a real difference between land managed on a purely commercial basis and land managed by Crown Estate Scotland. The responses supported a collaborative management approach, with Crown Estate Scotland improving access to information, increasing transparency in decision-making and conducting early and meaningful engagement with affected parties.

The responses strongly supported provision for biodiversity improvement throughout the rural assets and a desire to see Crown Estate Scotland take an ambitious approach to the natural environment to achieve this.

Cross-cutting themes

The consultation provided an opportunity for respondents to express a range of views about Crown Estate Scotland and how it functions. The cross-cutting themes outlined here can be taken as comments on the organisation as a whole, and are not specific to the rural assets strategy:

- Crown Estate Scotland should continue to function as a viable business, able to make profit and release capital for reinvestment in the Estate.
- The organisation should exercise its new abilities to be able to support wider societal improvements and be less driven by the need to make profit to return to Government.
- The planning strategies of Scotland, Local Development Plans, National Planning Framework etc, are well defined and have been widely consulted upon. Crown Estate Scotland should use these as a framework to guide priorities and decision-making.
- Throughout the consultation participants were clear that they welcomed this opportunity to input to the Crown Estate Scotland rural assets strategy and that they wished to see engagement with the wider community and information sharing becoming increasingly frequent and meaningful.
- Transparency in decision-making is very important to those who responded to this consultation. All opportunities for engagement, collaborative decision-making and information sharing should be taken.
- There were several references to the need for land ownership to be diversified within Scotland and for decision-making to adhere to the principles of subsidiarity. Crown Estate Scotland should be mindful of opportunities where they could play a part in making this happen.
- Opportunities for recreational access should be identified across the Estate and areas where repairs are required identified and addressed.

With a focus on the rural assets strategy it was clear that people wanted to be able to see, at a glance, the difference between land managed on a purely commercial basis and land managed by Crown Estate Scotland. Land in the Estate should be run collaboratively with the affected individuals, businesses and communities, for the betterment of the natural environment as well as for profit. Cross-cutting themes specific to the consultation on the rural assets strategy include:

- The respondents would like to see Crown Estate Scotland take a stronger, more ambitious approach to improving biodiversity.
- The rural assets strategy should make provision for more woodland crofts and support an increase in native woodland cover.
- When it is safe to do so, access to should be encouraged and maintained for a wide range of users including horse riders, walkers and others.
- Crown Estate Scotland should exploit their unique status and foster innovation, undertake strategic research and test new approaches to land management.
- Within the rural assets strategy opportunities should be taken to play an active role in place-making.

Having stated these cross-cutting themes here they are not repeated in the recommendations for each question which draw out more question specific details.

Core issues

The consultation has highlighted a number of core issues which should be given early consideration:

1. Crown Estate Scotland should consider ways to improve engagement across all areas of activity. This includes improving access to information, more transparency in decision-making and early and meaningful engagement with affected parties. More well-advertised public engagement events, with longer notice periods for strategic consultations such as this one, would be welcomed.
2. Crown Estate Scotland should be more closely aligned to national, regional and local strategies. A review of how Crown Estate Scotland delivers against these strategies would be a useful first step.
3. Crown Estate Scotland should consider reviewing the licencing of recreational activities such as gold panning on the Estate.
4. Respondents clearly stated their desire to see Crown Estate Scotland take a lead in improving biodiversity across the Estate including setting objectives for native woodland coverage. A review of woodland coverage on the Estate and the establishment of a working group to set objectives would assist with achieving this.
5. Respondents wanted to see greater consistency between the strategies, aims and objectives produced by Crown Estate Scotland and the enactment by managing agents. The publication of the rural assets strategy should assist with this. Publishing minutes of meetings or the circulation of a newsletter should also be considered.

Crown Estate Scotland responses

In this report, Crown Estate Scotland have provided a response to each analysed consultation question. Detail on these responses is in the Consultation Analysis section. The key points from these responses can be summarised as follows:

1. In finalising the Rural Assets Strategy, Crown Estate Scotland will ensure our Guiding Principles appropriately reflect the themes of access, environment, place-making, community engagement and wider-societal improvement. Taking these themes into account, the finalised Guiding Principles will align with the feedback received through this consultation and the strategic considerations outlined in the Scottish Crown Estate Act.

2. Crown Estate Scotland are committed to prioritising environmental sustainability in the Rural Assets Strategy and in our wider business planning activities. The strategy will reflect the call for the organisation to support and foster innovation for natural resource use through undertaking strategic research and collaborating with tenants to test new approaches to land management.
3. Work to position Crown Estate Scotland as a leader in Natural Capital management in Scotland will continue, with a focus on biodiversity, soil and water health, biosecurity, carbon and environmental/ecosystem resilience.
4. Crown Estate Scotland want to work in partnership with communities to ensure future decision making delivers wider value while continuing to release capital for reinvestment in the Estate and function as a viable business.
5. Consultation with tenants, communities, third parties, will be conducted in a manner that ensures the process is both fair and transparent. Crown Estate Scotland will ensure good practice principles on engagement are followed, setting a clear standard which will allow a consistent approach across office locations and internal/external representatives of Crown Estate Scotland.

Finalising the Rural Assets Strategy

Crown Estate Scotland are currently developing a 2020-23 Corporate Plan. This will present the overall objectives for the assets managed by Crown Estate Scotland and propose how to deliver these objectives through specific actions. There will be a dedicated consultation on the draft 2020-23 Corporate Plan starting at the end of August 2019. This, along with feedback gained through this rural assets consultation, will feed into the final 2020-23 Corporate Plan and the final Rural Assets Strategy. Both of these documents will be published in early 2020.

Summary of Recommendations

Question 1 - Do you think these principles are appropriate for the rural assets strategy?

- Review the Guiding Principles in light of comments, especially the wording of Principles 1 and 5.

Question 2 - From the principles listed above, please choose the three you think are the highest priority and rank them 1 (very high priority) to 3 (lower priority).

- Principles 4, 5 and 6 should be prioritised and thought should be given to Principle 6 and how it relates to communities and individuals in particular.

Question 3 - Please identify any additional guiding principles you think Crown Estate Scotland should include in the rural assets strategy.

- Review the suggested text and consider for inclusion in the rural assets strategy.

Question 4 - What do you think are the key external considerations that should be addressed by the rural assets strategy?

- Aim to enhance aspects of the rural assets strategy which can deliver positive benefits regarding climate change e.g. reforestation and positive management of habitats including existing woodlands.

Question 5 - What should the main objectives be for this strategy? In answering this, please consider, who should benefit from Crown Estate Scotland managing rural assets?

- Review the strategy to ensure that the priorities of enhanced community working, greater support for the natural environment and positive financial returns are taken into consideration and seek opportunities to better communicate with interested parties.

Question 6 - Should Crown Estate Scotland continue to be a significant provider of agricultural tenancies, whatever the cost, or should there be a rebalancing of the assets for financial sustainability?

The rural assets strategy should seek opportunities for Crown Estate Scotland to

- become a progressive agricultural landlord
- be an innovator, supporter and promoter of best practice and in providing the “farming ladder of opportunity”
- enshrined the need for early and meaningful engagement within the strategy.

Question 7 - Assuming Crown Estate Scotland continues to be a long-term manager of let agricultural land, what should be the priorities that a future strategy should address?

- Thought should be given as to how to establish and integrate environmental and low impact farming targets into the strategy.

Question 8 - How can Crown Estate Scotland best fund the extensive capital investment requirements on the agricultural estate without reducing public benefit investment in other sectors?

- In a fair and transparent manner, draw up a strategy for sale of assets. Consider how to ensure that people are kept informed throughout the process of disposal and acquisition.

Question 9 - How should a future strategy inform decisions regarding which assets might be sold and which should be retained in the longer-term?

- More thought should be given to how the organisation can develop the business case for decisions using the full range of guiding principles.
- A clear process for identifying opportunities to sell assets preferentially to local communities should be identified.
- Thought should also be given as to how Crown Estate Scotland should identify, and refuse sale to, purchasers who do not meet a set of criteria or standards which are acceptable to those most affected.

Question 10 - What do you consider to be the key opportunities to involve local communities in the work of Crown Estate Scotland?

- The organisation should consider a wholistic review of its community engagement approach and seek to build a strategy which gives clear process and access to meaningful engagement.
- The potential for a mismatch between local and national office engagement, information sharing and management approaches should be examined and the organisation should ensure that all opportunities to improve are taken.

Question 11 - How can we remove barriers to communities being able to input into decision-making?

- The potential for a mismatch between local and national office engagement should be examined and the organisation should ensure that all opportunities to improve are taken.
- Opportunities for improving community engagement should be examined and included in both the rural assets strategy and in the wider work of the organisation.

Question 12 - Should Crown Estate Scotland seek to be a long-term investor / manager of new commercial forest areas or are other bodies (such as Forestry and Land Scotland) better placed to manage forests in the public interest?

- The strategy should seek opportunities to review the impact of management decisions on the downstream industries supported by the Estate.

Question 13 - What are the key factors / priorities that should be taken into account in the management of Scottish Crown Estate woodland and forest assets?

- Review where the Estate contributes to existing strategies such as the National Planning Framework, Local Development Plans, Scottish Biodiversity Strategy etc., and publish the findings.
- Introduce targets or goals regarding biodiversity, public access and community development in the rural assets strategy.

Question 14 - Should a different approach be taken to invest in new woodlands on the Estate to help integrate forestry into wider land use? E.g. through the sale of existing woodland to support investment in new planting elsewhere.

- Maintain the existing approach but place further emphasis on partnership working, perhaps with the aim of establishing more woodland crofts.
- Partnership working should be considered a core approach for Crown Estate Scotland functions in the future and integrated into the rural assets strategy.

Question 15 - What factors should be taken into account when we decide to retain, sell and / or buy residential property assets?

- Investigate how to best take societal needs into account prior to buying and selling residential property assets.
- Investigate how to avoid selling to non-desirable purchasers.

- Review how the Estate, including future sales and purchases, helps to meet the goals of local plans.

Question 16 - What are the key factors that should be taken into account in the strategy regarding the future residential portfolio?

- Ensure that societal need, the creation of affordable tenancies, meeting aspirations within local development plans and ambitious environmental standards are enshrined within the rural assets strategy.
- Define the community engagement approach of the organisation and make this clear to stakeholders.

Question 17 – Are there any specific issues relating to mineral workings on the Scottish Crown Estate that should be addressed in a future strategy?

- Consider allowing licences for recreational gold panning and assess the opportunity for extraction of dimensional stone for use in restoration or maintenance of historic buildings.

Question 18 - Should Crown Estate Scotland actively seek mineral development opportunities (e.g. sand and gravel extraction) where these exist within the current portfolio and elsewhere, through the purchase of new sites?

- If this is to be pursued, early and meaningful dialogue with affected communities would be prudent in order to identify any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Question 19 - Should Crown Estate Scotland be managing these [salmon] rights in a different way?

- From the responses to this question there is no clear demand for a change to the management practice. Some ideas for enhanced ways of working have been suggested and Crown Estate Scotland should take these into account as the strategy becomes more fully formed.
- Crown Estate Scotland could consider increasing the rebate if it was connected to investment which improves the asset.

Question 20 - Should Crown Estate Scotland continue to provide support through financial rebates to local angling clubs and tenants of beats in category three conservation rivers to allow them to continue to manage the rights locally?

- Consider increasing the rebate if it is connected to investment which improves the asset.

Question 21 - Should Crown Estate Scotland consider selling some salmon fishing rights to fund investment?

- Crown Estate Scotland should consider the impact of retaining these assets and the potential of selling some assets to local fishing club(s) or other community interests.

Question 22 - Bearing in mind that in most cases Crown Estate Scotland do not own the river bank or river bed, do you believe they should be investing in their salmon fishing interests and if so in what way?

- Consider the impacts of any such investment and commit to early and meaningful dialogue and information exchange with both the affected individuals and the wider public.

Question 23 - What should the priorities be for built development on the existing rural assets?

- Consider developing a strategy for where renewable energy generation and storage capacity might be developed.

- Consider developing maps of areas potentially suitable for woodland crofting.

Question 24 - Should Crown Estate Scotland actively seek new built development opportunities through the purchase of new areas of land?

- An investment strategy should be developed after an analysis of available resources and opportunities within the Estate.

Question 25 - Should Crown Estate Scotland seek to promote/support the development of renewable energy schemes (wind, solar, hydro, biomass) on the rural assets in line with relevant strategic planning guidance/priorities and working with relevant stakeholders?

- Seek opportunities to incorporate support for renewable energy into the rural assets strategy and consider the wider implications of including storage alongside generation.
- Clear communication with the public and stakeholders is important when considering this investment, including discussion about the mix of investment in onshore and offshore renewable energy development.

Question 26 - How should a rural assets strategy address the requirement to enhance and protect natural capital and promote more sustainable use of natural resources?

- Consider undertaking a natural capital audit of the Estate and creating a long-term set of measures which mainstream natural capital within the wider decision making of Crown Estate Scotland.

Question 27 – What should be the key priority for the strategy in relation to biodiversity and wildlife management?

- Consider including ambitious targets for increases to biodiversity on the assets. A deer (grazing pressure) reduction strategy may be a useful tool.

Question 28 - Are there other strategic natural capital or environmental issues or opportunities that the strategy should address and if so what are these?

- Working in ecologically functional units the organisation should consider the suggestions listed as the rural assets strategy is being more fully developed. Thought should be given about how this could be communicated to the public.

Question 29 - How should the strategy prioritise investment in projects that enhance cultural and natural heritage infrastructure of most benefit to local communities and visitors to the Scottish Crown Estate?

- Consider developing strategic plans for each of the rural estates e.g. on tourism and wildlife/natural capital enhancement, in partnership with those most affected.

Question 30 - What should the priorities be for future acquisitions of property and what benefits should Crown Estate Scotland focus on delivering in a future purchasing strategy?

- Be aware of the need to clearly communicate how any future purchases complement, complete or enhance the existing portfolio.

Unnumbered question - If you have any further comments or points that you think should be taken into account in the development of a rural assets strategy please state these below.

- Consider if the rural assets strategy falls under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland Act) 2005.
- Consider if coastal assets could be considered holistically with the rural assets.

Context

Background

The role of Crown Estate Scotland is evolving. New legislation, the Scottish Crown Estate Act 2019, paves the way for a long-term approach to managing the assets in a way that delivers economic, social and environmental benefit for Scotland.

Between 15 February and 26 April 2019, Crown Estate Scotland requested feedback on a series of questions about how the organisation should actively manage the rural assets to drive inclusive sustainable development.

The responses to the consultation will inform the development of a 2019-23 Rural Assets Strategy and a 2020-23 Corporate Plan. Both these documents will align with Scottish Government priorities including those stated in the [Scottish Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement](#) and the [Scottish Land Use Strategy](#). They will also take into account the recent recommendations from the [National Council of Rural Advisers](#) which highlighted the need to mainstream the rural economy and embed it in Scottish Government's National Performance Framework.

The consultation covers the four rural estates of Glenlivet, Fochabers, Applegirth and Whitehill, which account for more than 91,000 acres (37,000 hectares) and some further rights relating to river salmon fishings and naturally-occurring gold and silver. However, the final strategy has implications for the management of the whole estate and therefore impacts on the management of the coastal and marine assets are also important.

Managing the Scottish Crown Estate

Crown Estate Scotland is self-funding. Revenue profits are passed to the Scottish Government. The public corporation cannot borrow money from banks. The organisation is dependent on leasing assets to tenants and releasing capital through sales and other transactions to generate funds.

Management tools available to Crown Estate Scotland are therefore restricted and can be summarised as follows:

1. Managing existing agreements to ensure they meet statutory obligations and support tenants in their business activities
2. Deciding how and to whom they lease vacant property & rights, for how long and under what terms - to promote sustainable development and management of natural resources.
3. Restructuring tenancies and driving performance through negotiating changes to leases, facilitating lease surrenders, rent reviews and lease assignments.
4. Selling property to raise capital funds for reinvestment, either in new property or in making existing assets more productive.
5. Investing in built environment and planning (zoning for residential and commercial development), infrastructure, environmental works to support tenants' businesses and help other stakeholders.
6. Place-making through investment in infrastructure / natural capital and cultural heritage assets.
7. Working with a wide range of stakeholders to identify new opportunities to develop the assets, master-planning for integrated asset management and demonstrating new and innovative forms of land management.

The rural assets strategy therefore needs to outline how they will use their expertise and manage the assets to

- Grow financial and wider value
- Support business growth and development

- Create opportunities for others to use assets
- Support beneficial land-use change
- Promote socio-economic, community and environmental benefits
- Provide opportunities for existing and new tenancies or agreements.

In analysing the consultation responses, it is important to take into account the stated Crown Estate Scotland guiding principles listed below. These were developed in response to the Scottish Crown Estate Act 2019, which is yet to be fully implemented. The Act emphasises the requirement to enhance revenue and capital value while contributing to wider social, environmental and economic benefits.

The Consultation

The consultation was open online from 15 February to 26 April. In total 33 respondents were logged through Citizen Space, nine individuals and 24 organisations. One late response was received shortly after the consultation closed but the response did not address the individual questions and so, whilst the essence of their response is included in the overarching sections of this report, their response is not counted against the individual questions.

No obvious campaign responses were received.

The response rate was good with an average of 62% responding to the questions overall, 74% for individuals and 56% for organisations. A total of 611 numbered questions were answered, 18 answers were received to un-numbered questions, these were also included in the analysis.

All organisational responses were from Scottish based groups or organisations including the Crown Estate Agricultural Tenants Working Group. Individuals were not asked for their addresses.

Four events were held to help raise awareness of the consultation and to answer questions face to face with affected individuals and organisations. These events were held at:

- Rosewell Resource Centre, 85 Carnethie Street, EH24 9AN on Wednesday 27 February from 6pm to 8pm (presentation at 7pm)
- Somerton House Hotel, 35 Carlisle Road, Lockerbie, DG11 2DR on Thursday 28 February from 4pm to 7pm (presentation at 6pm)
- Glenlivet Estate Office, Tomintoul, AB37 9EX on Wednesday 6 March from 1.30pm to 8pm (presentation at 6pm)
- Inchberry Hall, Fochabers, IV32 7QB on Thursday 7 March from 4pm to 8pm (presentation at 6pm)

In order to raise awareness of the consultation letters were sent to relevant Members of the Scottish Parliament including to Convenors of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee and the Rural Environment and Connectivity Committee. A press release was issued and the story featured prominently in the Press and Journal and in Northern Scot. Newspaper advertisements were taken out in the Northern Scot, the Press and Journal, the Midlothian Advertiser and the Galloway Gazette. Five consultation specific tweets were sent during the consultation period and posts placed on the LinkedIn and Glenlivet Facebook accounts. Emails were sent to eight community councils / groups with information about the events and a face to face meeting was held with the tenant working group. An e-newsletter was sent to 151 recipients (open rate around 40%) and the Rural newsletter sent to all agriculture tenants featured the consultation.

The consultation closed at 5pm on 26 April and one late submission was received shortly after closing. The analysis was done by independent analyst, Sarah Brown of C2W Consulting.

Analysis consisted of assessing the response rate to each question, seeking out key themes for each question for example by identifying repeated phrases or words and then assessing the responses from both individuals and organisations to check for conflicts.

The whole consultation was then reviewed for cross cutting themes.

Following the analysis, a number of recommendations were made for changes Crown Estate Scotland could make to the existing Guiding Principles, in particular, but also for significant issues to consider when developing the rural assets strategy further.

Consultation Analysis

Please note where a direct quote is given it is marked with double inverted commas “thus”. Where it has been shortened for the purposes of this report it is marked thus “...”. Where text has been added to aid understanding it is placed in square brackets [thus]. Spelling errors have not been corrected in quotations.

Crown Estate Scotland Guiding Principles

Question 1 - Do you think these principles are appropriate for the rural assets strategy

- **Number of respondents**

- 30 people, 90% of respondents, answered one or more parts of the question
- 19 responded ‘yes’
- 6 responded ‘no’
- 2 responded ‘don’t know’
- 3 did not to select from yes/no/don’t know
- 3 did not to select from yes/no/don’t know but did provide a written response

- **Highlights/summary of the responses**

Respondents were significantly in favour of the proposed guiding principles with more than half the respondents responding ‘Yes’ to the question.

Positive responses to the question focused their feedback on the following areas:

- Support for the strong emphasis on sustainability, sustainable development and the inclusive approach to working with communities/partnership working.
- Praise for the emphasis on non-financial value, for example, “The proposed principles provide a strong ‘bottom line’ of financial, environmental and social sustainability, combined with a pragmatic, long-term and evidence-based approach to weighing the costs and benefits of management decisions.”
- Support for the ability of Crown Estate Scotland to take more full account of the environmental and social value of the assets. For example, a respondent says, “The principles set out a sustainable approach to management of the estates assets. They leave open a question as to how non-financial assets such as carbon and biodiversity are going to be identified and evaluated. We would advocate an ecosystem service approach as encouraged in the Land Use Strategy for Scotland.”
- Support for the need for one area or asset to subsidise other areas or assets.
- Respondents welcomed the more transparent way in which the organisation is operating and encouraged this to continue.

People responding negatively to the question (‘no’ and ‘don’t know’) were concerned about a range of issues. These can be summarised as:

- The language used. Some respondents believed the principles used jargon (“empowering communities”) and rhetoric (principle 4) to mask intrinsic problems for example volunteers being burdened with managing assets.
- Insufficient emphasis on potential environmental benefits of the assets. Respondents would like to see more commitment to long term stewardship which would deliver environmental benefit, for example against the Paris Agreement goals.

- Insufficient emphasis on potential community benefits of the assets including community ownership, management and access to the assets as detailed in the Land Reform Scotland Act 2003.
- Unrealistic expectations. A respondent noted, “For some assets, including natural and cultural heritage, there may [be] no immediate or sustainable way of deriving an income, and this should be recognised in the principles.”

Respondents who did not select yes/no/don’t know gave feedback including:

- Welcoming the principles with the caveat that they could be worded to more fully include responsibilities towards the historic environment. Historic Environment Scotland noted, “While we recognise that the long-term sustainability of the assets in care of CES is a priority, we consider it would be beneficial to be more specific with regards to the historic environment.” The response included a suggestion for more specific wording under Guiding Principle 5 to “We will ensure that the long-term protection, enhancement and environmental sustainability of assets in our care is a priority.”
 - The need for more clarity on the definition of non-financial value, value and appropriate returns.
 - The need for more clarity about how partnership or flexible community-based management would work in practice when Crown Estate Scotland is fundamentally driven by contractual arrangements.
 - Concern that Principle 5 is not reflected in section 5.4.4. – a respondent noted, “As salmon fishing rights are separate from land ownership, the document appears to express a very narrow view of ‘investing in salmon fishing rights’. Many of the pressures which impact on salmon and sea trout are derived from the terrestrial environment and it is not sensible to manage fisheries in isolation from these other factors.”
 - The need for the strategy to support more than “sustainable” development, and to look towards positive enhancement which benefits the environment/biodiversity.
 - Desire was expressed for more work on place making including inclusion of “place-principle” in Guiding Principle 1 in particular.
- **Result / recommendation for action**

The respondents are largely in favour of the Guiding Principles as stated in the consultation document.

It would however be appropriate for Crown Estate Scotland to review the Guiding Principles in light of the comments above, especially the wording of Principles 1 and 5. In Principle 1 more thought should be given to including place making and in principle 5 consider including text which is more inclusive of historic environments. For example, “We will ensure that the long-term protection, enhancement and environmental sustainability of assets in our care is a priority.”

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Crown Estate Scotland will review the wording of the Guiding Principles considering these responses. Guiding Principle 1 will be amended to demonstrate our commitment to incorporating the place making principle in decision making. Guiding Principle 5 will be reviewed to clarify the long-term approach we will take to ensuring the protection, enhancement and environmental sustainability of the rural assets.

Question 2 - From the principles listed above, please choose the three you think are the highest priority and rank them 1 (very high priority) to 3 (lower priority).

- **Number of respondents**

100% of respondents (33) provided answers to this question, nine individuals and 24 organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

As you can see from the table below Principle 5 (The long-term environmental sustainability of the assets in our care is a priority, including the protection, enhancement and quality of natural capital.) and Principle 4 (We will work with communities and stakeholders to increase empowerment and resilience.) clearly stood out as priorities when compared to the other guiding principles.

Principle 2 (We will seek to ensure each type of asset we manage is financially sustainable and we act responsibly to ensure appropriate returns in line with the requirements of the Scottish Crown Estate Act.) was ranked lowest.

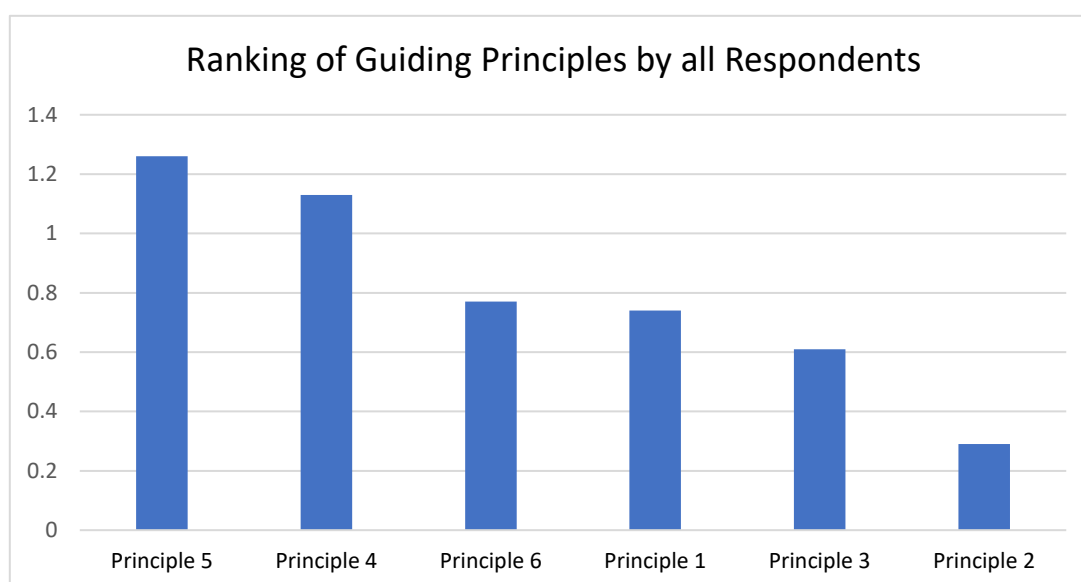


Figure 1 Ranking of Guiding Principles by all respondents

Looking in more detail at the responses from an individual and an organisational perspective we can see that organisations ranked Principle 4 more highly than Principle 5 and Principle 1 (We will make decisions based on the value (financial and non-financial) that we can add to assets and natural resources) was ranked third rather than fourth.

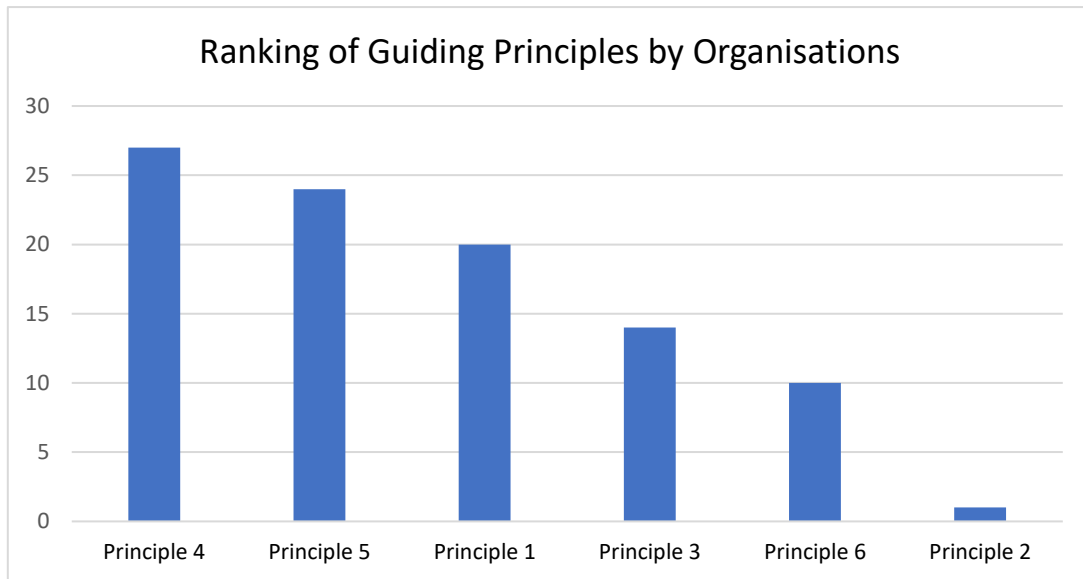


Figure 2 Ranking of Guiding Principles by organisations

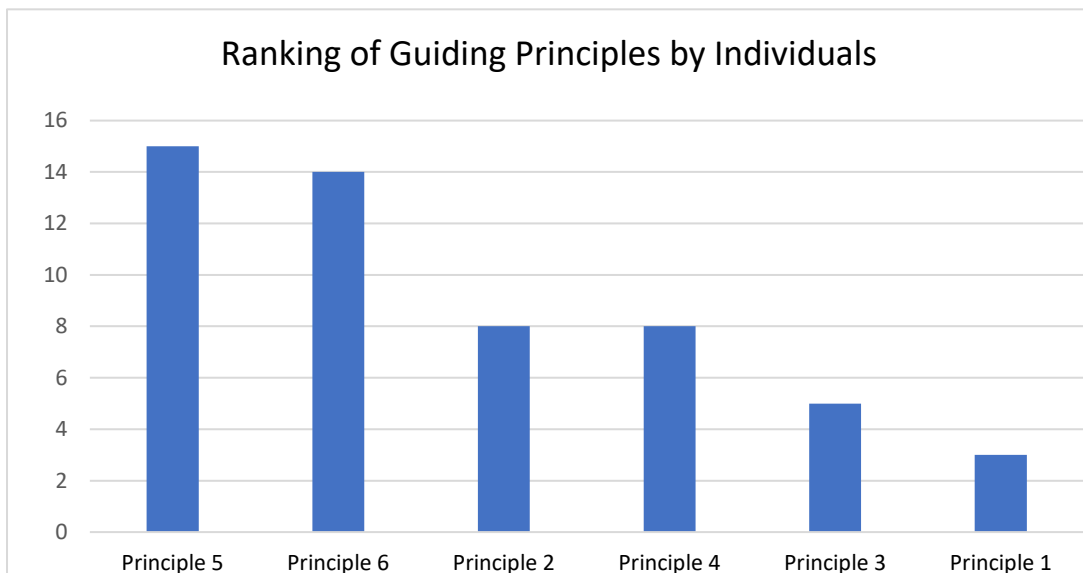


Figure 3 Ranking of Guiding Principles by individuals

Individuals responding to the consultation highly valued Principles 5 and 6 (We will manage, invest and divest so that the Scottish Crown Estate evolves in a way that increases its value to society.) and the other Principles were clearly of lower value. Interestingly Principle 2 (financial sustainability) came out as the third priority to individuals compared to sixth priority for organisations, trading places with Principle 1 (decisions based on value).

- **Result / recommendation for action**

The respondents favoured Principles 4, 5 and 6 and felt that these should be priorities for the organisation going forward.

Crown Estate Scotland be aware of the difference in priorities between individuals and organisations in this context. Principle 6 (We will manage, invest and divest so that the Scottish Crown Estate evolves in a way that increases its value to society) was very important to individuals who responded but ranked much lower for organisations.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

To ensure the Guiding Principles outlined in the consultation feed into our future business-planning, they have been used to develop the actions detailed in our draft Crown Estate Scotland 2020-23 Corporate Plan. In response to the consultation feedback, Guiding Principles 4, 5 and 6 have been used to shape Corporate Plan actions relating to the rural assets and these will be pulled through and further detailed in the Rural Assets Strategy.

The draft Corporate Plan outlines how we intend to support and promote more sustainable and financially viable agricultural businesses and enhance productivity and sustainability in Scotland's rural economies and communities, following Guiding Principle 4.

Guiding Principle 5 has been used to develop actions on embedding the natural capital approach within Crown Estate Scotland, focusing on biodiversity, soil and water health, biosecurity, carbon and ecosystem resilience. As part of this broader work on long-term environmental sustainability, the plan also commits to addressing sustainability issues in the wild fisheries sector.

The draft Corporate Plan includes an action on supporting innovations through co-investing in projects with tenants and partners, demonstrating a commitment to manage financial resources in a way that increases value to society (Guiding Principle 6).

Question 3 - Please identify any additional guiding principles you think Crown Estate Scotland should include in the rural assets strategy.

- **Number of respondents**

54.5% (18) of respondents provided a response to this question, six individuals and 12 organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

The majority of responses can be grouped under the following headings:

- Access – respondents wanted to see this maintained and enshrined in the guiding principles
- Environment – several respondents wanted to see a more structured approach to environmental improvements in the estate including commitments to meet objectives under the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Life Below Water and Life on Land) and to plant more trees
- Community – opportunities for community interaction in decision making should be taken and a commitment to devolving decision making to the most appropriate level would be welcome
- Engagement – respondents wanted to see a stronger emphasis on engagement with wider stakeholders (tenants, communities and affected business sectors) in decision making and strategic planning.

Some suggested text was offered in the responses and is included below:

“Crown Estate [Scotland] will work with local communities and take all reasonable steps to support their ambitions for the [Scottish] Crown Estate environments that impact on their lives.”

“We will seek to contribute to a more diverse pattern of land ownership in Scotland in support of sustainable development through our investments and divestments in assets.”

“Crown Estate [Scotland] must act as guardians of the countryside including people, landscape, and infrastructure.”

“We will make decisions based on transparent stakeholder involvement.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

The respondents to this question gave some specific text which Crown Estate Scotland should review and consider for inclusion in the rural assets strategy (see above).

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

In finalising the Rural Assets Strategy, we will ensure our Guiding Principles appropriately reflect the themes of access, environment, community and engagement. This could lead to additional Guiding Principles being included in the strategy, amending the wording of existing principles, or a combination of both these actions.

Strategic Priorities and Considerations

Question 4 - Above we outline some of what we consider to be strategic considerations. What do you think are the key external considerations that should be addressed by the rural assets strategy?

- **Number of respondents**

25 responses (75% of participants) were given to this question. Seven were from individuals and 18 from organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

As with previous questions environmental management and stewardship was referred to several times, particularly by individual respondents. Respondents were very keen to emphasise the potential positive role Crown Estate Scotland could take in reducing the impacts of climate change particularly by reforestation and positive management of existing woodlands.

Respondents, particularly those responding on behalf of organisations, also took the opportunity to encourage Crown Estate Scotland to take a place making approach, which was focused on well-being, in the context of sustainable development and to ensure all decisions were taken in partnership with those most affected.

Emphasis was placed on the need for decisions to be taken in line with existing national strategy and policy, again this was particularly important to organisational respondents. Uncertainty, mainly in the form of Brexit, was also noted as being a significant external factor.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“We look to CES to assist in maximising the benefits of public access, including footpaths, bridges and habitats, supported by an effective ranger service.”

“... there are concerns about a growing cultural gulf between town and country in Scotland, with conflicts between recreational, environmental and economic interests. The [Scottish] Crown Estate can play an important role in helping to build bridges of understanding about our shared land.”

“...The Scottish Government’s target on woodland restoration is not being met at present and this is noted with concern in progress towards meeting Aichi target obligations as well as by the Committee on Climate Change Adaptation Sub Committee.”

“... we would like to highlight that almost any decision on active land and property management will have spatial implications ... Place based approaches can help to minimise waste, duplication and contradictions. Therefore we believe the strategy should propose a framework by which Crown Estate Scotland (CES) decision making process can support and be supported by local development plans, community plans, Local Place Plans, Single Outcome Agreements, investment plans, locality planning and infrastructure delivery.” [RTPI]

“... CES has a key contribution to make in creating and supporting the development of resilient rural communities. Our view is that this involves a transition from the traditional land owning / leasing arrangement to, where possible, becoming a key strategic partner or co-investor with the community.” [DTAS]

- **Result / recommendation for action**

The respondents were clear that climate change was a significant external factor which should have an influence on the rural assets strategy. The organisation should therefore review the strategy and aim to enhance aspects which can deliver positive benefits to the climate, e.g. reforestation and positive management of existing woodlands.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Crown Estate Scotland are committed to tackling climate change and acknowledge this should be included in the key external considerations to be addressed in the Rural Assets Strategy. We will pursue woodland creation activity where this makes best use of land and seek other ways to take action on climate change through partnering with energy developers, tenants and communities.

Question 5 - What should the main objectives be for this strategy? In answering this, please consider, who should benefit from Crown Estate Scotland managing rural assets?

- **Number of respondents**

22 (66.7%) responses were offered to this question, seven from individuals, 15 from organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

The responses to this question focused on the need for even handed, fair, open and transparent management of the estate. The benefits listed by respondents to this approach to management included:

- Enhanced community working and partnerships
- Greater support for biodiversity and environmental improvement
- Greater potential for positive financial returns for greater public benefit

Respondents were also keen to see Crown Estate Scotland embrace opportunities presented by digital technology such as LoRaWAN (Long Range Wide Area Network).

With regards to who should benefit from the management of the Scottish Crown Estate respondents were clear that there is a balance to be struck between the needs of the communities, tenants and business most affected (i.e. those on the estate or immediately adjacent to it) and providing benefit to the wider Scottish population. The emphasis was that the benefits should be distributed fairly.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“Scotland, the people, the land, the environment, society, the future.”

“The rural assets should continue to be managed in a way which provides opportunities for people to connect with the land and with nature through recreation and outdoor learning.”

“...[we] would like to see the following objective for this strategy: To promote and guide the restoration of a functioning natural landscape to act as a strong economic/environmental base for the maintenance and development of rural businesses, ecosystem services and the heritage of wider society.” [The Woodland Trust]

“The main objective for the strategy should be to drive sustainable economic growth in the rural economy through an enlightened approach to land and resource management and a firm commitment to innovative thinking, particularly through the adoption of digital technology.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

The respondents were clear that the main objectives should be as listed above – enhanced community working, greater support for the natural environment and positive financial returns for societal benefit.

Crown Estate Scotland should review their strategy to ensure that these priorities are taken into consideration and should seek opportunities to better communicate how they strike a balance between balancing the need to make profit with wider societal and environmental needs and aspirations.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Crown Estate Scotland will ensure that the Rural Assets Strategy includes enhanced community working, greater support for the natural environment and positive financial returns for societal benefit.

These priorities will guide wider Crown Estate Scotland activities through their inclusion in the draft 2020-23 Corporate Plan. Our draft 2020-23 Corporate Plan includes commitments on working with tenants to enable sustainable use of natural resources and working with communities to deliver wider value, particularly social and environmental well-being and locally-led development.

Our overarching purpose of “investing in property, natural resources and people to generate lasting value for Scotland” drives us to deliver positive financial return for societal benefit. We want to explore how targeted investments can help release economic potential and bring significant benefits to communities and to prioritising projects that add most value (in terms of financial return and in relation to sustainable development).

Agricultural Assets

Question 6 - Should Crown Estate Scotland continue to be a significant provider of agricultural tenancies, whatever the cost, or should there be a rebalancing of the assets for financial sustainability?

- **Number of respondents**

21 respondents (63.6%) responded to this question. Nine were individuals and 12 were organisations.

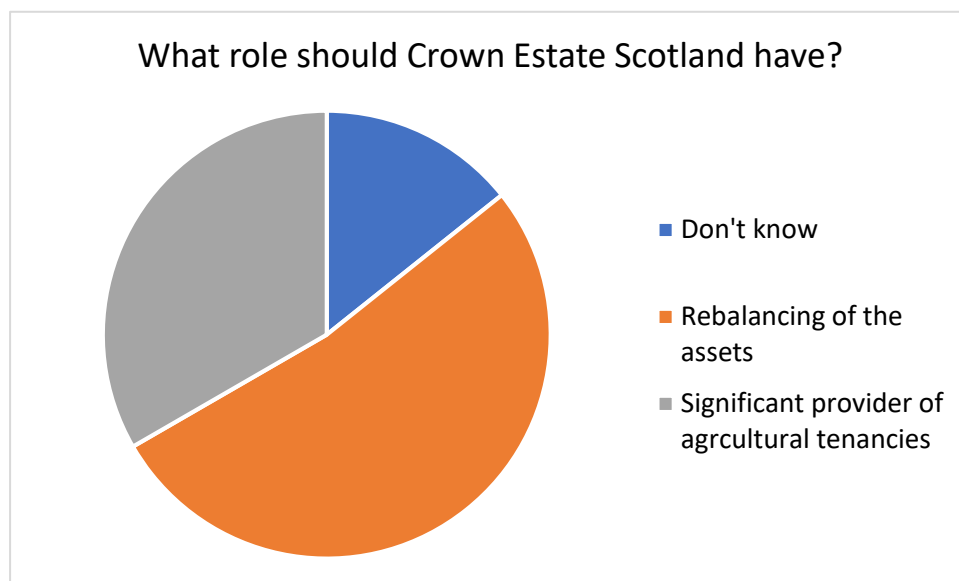


Figure 4 What role should Crown Estate Scotland have? All responses.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

More than half of respondents (52%) said they thought that Crown Estate Scotland should have a significant role in rebalancing assets. 33% said they thought providing agricultural tenancies was the top priority and 14% responded that they didn't know what the focus should be. There were nine responses by individuals to this question, eight of which indicated that they thought rebalancing of the assets was their key concern. Those responding on behalf of an organisation favoured provider of tenancies (seven responses), three said they would favour rebalancing of the assets and two said they didn't know.

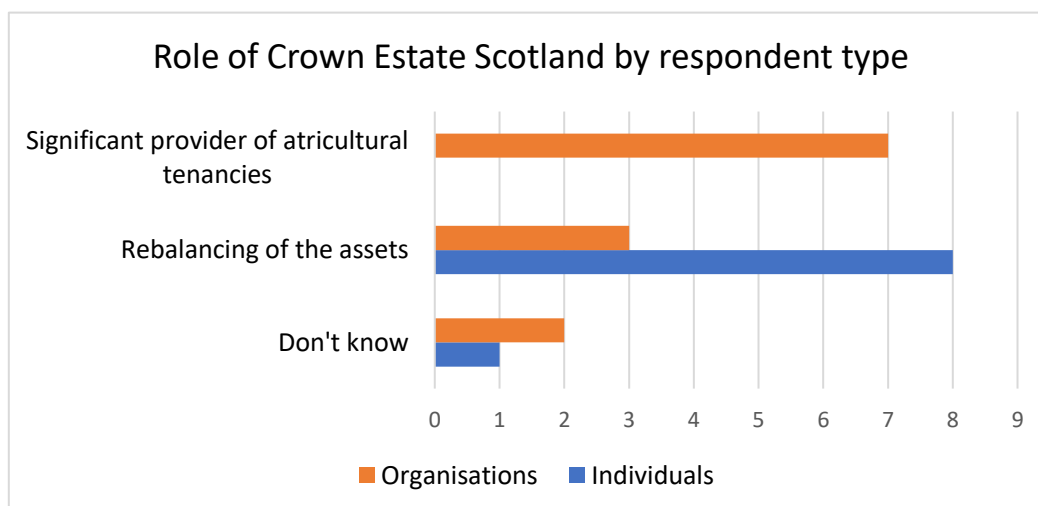


Figure 5 Focus of work by respondent type

In the following free text box 20 respondents took the opportunity to give their thoughts about agricultural tenancies and the need to rebalance. Several respondents said that they felt that Crown Estate Scotland played an important role in farming as a progressive agricultural landlord, supporting tenants and giving opportunities to newcomers to the sector.

People also felt that there was an important role for Crown Estate Scotland as an innovator, supporter and promoter of best practice and in providing the “farming ladder of opportunity”.

In general respondents felt that Crown Estate Scotland should continue to be a significant provider of agricultural tenancies but that there would be the need to rebalance from time to time. These decisions should be taken with the wider public benefit in mind and businesses which were truly unsustainable and provided a cost to the public purse, should be considered carefully.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“The choice faced by the CES is common to many rural landowners and whilst opportunities should be sought to sell assets which could be used more productively than others, this should only be done if the longer term implications for the CES are fully understood.”

“Any assets sold off should be prioritised for sustainable uses... Charities and groups who intend to use the land for sustainable and environmentally and socially beneficial purposes should be prioritised and favoured. For example, groups looking to expand native woodland.”

“...if there are investment options and opportunities available, which will produce better returns from the capital held in the agriculture assets, this should be considered. We believe it is important that a diverse portfolio is held and assets complement the management classes the Crown Estate has held previously.”

“If new land management partnerships such as this [shared venture tenancies/shared equity] can be developed and demonstrated, within the principle of long-term financial sustainability, this could be a valuable way to revive tenancies for the twenty-first century as a means to engage more people, in more diverse ways, to manage the land.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

More than half of respondents (52%) said they thought that Crown Estate Scotland should have a significant role in rebalancing assets. The rural assets strategy should seek opportunities to support Crown Estate Scotland in becoming a progressive agricultural landlord, supporting tenants and giving opportunities to newcomers to the sector.

The rural assets strategy should support Crown Estate Scotland’s ambitions to be an innovator, supporter and promoter of best practice and in providing the “farming ladder of opportunity”. When a need to rebalance the Estate is identified there should be early and meaningful engagement with communities and decisions should be taken with the wider public benefit in mind. This approach should be enshrined in the rural assets strategy.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Crown Estate Scotland will support, promote and facilitate more sustainable and financially viable agricultural businesses and future farm business planning. We want to open up opportunities for newcomers in the sector and encourage new farming entrants to take tenancies. We also see value in promoting the use of Integrated Farm Management Business Plans across core holdings and will work to promote the use of the NFUS Joint Venture Hub.

We will ensure that the Rural Assets Strategy clearly communicates our intention to engage early and meaningfully with communities, tenants and businesses. Furthermore, we will develop and

implement a Community Engagement Strategy which will ensure best practice engagement throughout Crown Estate Scotland activity.

Question 7 - Assuming Crown Estate Scotland continues to be a long-term manager of let agricultural land, what should be the priorities that a future strategy should address?

- **Number of respondents**

18 people (54%) responded to this question, comprised of eight individuals and ten organisational responses.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

In keeping with other sections environmental sustainability was seen as a high priority for a number of respondents with several making suggestions about ways in which the estate could be managed to yield ecological benefits such as:

- Setting nitrogen budgets
- Setting targets for woodland coverage
- Encouraging no-till, keyline ploughing and soil restoration

Respondents also suggested that Crown Estate Scotland should play a key role in innovation and research, particularly in supporting tenants in diversifying into other areas of income generation such as renewable energy, tourism, small scale forestry or recreation. They also wanted provision of secure, long term tenancies.

The future of subsidies was raised again, and respondents encouraged Crown Estate Scotland to be aware of, and take proactive steps to prepare for, changes to the landscape with regard to these interventions.

It was clear from the responses that people want to see Crown Estate Scotland exploiting the ability to not just drive for the highest economic value approach. Rather they would like to see the organisation prioritise perhaps less economically driven strategies which give new entrants to the sector and opportunity i.e. support the Scottish Government's 'Farming Opportunities for New Entrants' approach by providing smaller starter units or support for new approaches etc.

In common with responses to other questions people were aware that Crown Estate Scotland needs to make enough financial return to be viable and they expressed a desire to see this balance maintained through analysis of the estate, selling and investing where required.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“Priorities for future strategies should focus on increasing the sustainability of the holdings – this may include reducing the overall number of tenancies to increase viability of units. The strategy should also look at ways in which CES can support tenants in terms of diversifying income and improving business models.”

“We would like to see encouragement of innovation. There are ways to diversify, such as into renewable energy, tourism, small scale forestry that can be integrated with farming not replacing it. Recreation may also help increase the income these tenancies generate.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

The rural assets strategy should ensure that environmental sustainability is at the heart of Crown Estate Scotlands' management approach. Thought should be given as to how to establish and integrate targets into the strategy such as setting nitrogen budgets, targets for woodland coverage and the integration of lower impact farming methods such as no-till and soil restoration.

Opportunities for supporting tenants to move towards these land management approaches should be identified.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Crown Estate Scotland are committed to prioritising environmental sustainability in the Rural Assets Strategy and in our wider business planning activities. We will work to position Crown Estate Scotland as a leader in Natural Capital management in Scotland, with a focus on biodiversity, soil and water health, biosecurity, carbon and environmental/ecosystem resilience.

As noted by respondents, continuing to make a financial return will also be a priority as this enables us to carry out activities which deliver this wider environmental value.

Question 8 - How can Crown Estate Scotland best fund the extensive capital investment requirements on the agricultural estate without reducing public benefit investment in other sectors?

- **Number of respondents**

17 responses (54%) were received for this question, eight from individuals and nine from organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

Individuals responding almost universally suggested selling off land to fund capital investment, however they also suggested only selling to specific groups such as to people who would use them for environmentally beneficial purposes.

Organisational responses gave a variety of suggestions based on:

- selling assets
- subsidisation across the estate from other, more financially buoyant, areas of the estate such as offshore wind leases
- using partnerships and collaborations as tools to lever more funds

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

"We would recommend decisions are made on the basis of explicit and, where possible, quantifiable measures of public benefit."

"Like other rural landlords, CES will not be able to fund investment in its holdings purely from rental income. Cross subsidisation across the holdings has long been the practice of the Crown Estate and should continue."

"No investments should be made which only prop up an ultimately loss-making activity."

- **Result / recommendation for action**

Respondents were supportive of the need for the organisation to sell land to fund ongoing work. They also felt it was appropriate to cross subsidise different areas of work. It would be appropriate for Crown Estate Scotland to consider how they can ensure that people are kept informed throughout the process and that the approach is both fair and transparent.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Crown Estate Scotland will carefully consider how best to keep affected parties informed of any decision around selling land to fund ongoing work. Consultation with tenants, communities, third parties, will be conducted in a manner that ensures the process is both fair and transparent.

Question 9 - How should a future strategy inform decisions regarding which assets might be sold and which should be retained in the longer-term?

- **Number of respondents**

18 responses (54%) were received for this question, five from individuals and 13 from organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

In general respondents were keen to see Crown Estate Scotland work through the business case for the sale or retention of assets in a clear and transparent manner to the extent that commercial sensitivities allow. Several indicated that there should be early and open discussions and engagement with affected groups.

Several respondents would like to see the organisation offer any assets preferentially to local communities and to be able to refuse a sale which would lead to negative impacts such as intensive development or insensitive development which might spoil an important historical feature or not contribute to place making for example.

Throughout the responses a theme emerged which encouraged Crown Estate Scotland to use principles (such as those within this strategy) to guide decisions about sale or retention of assets rather than using market forces.

Any sale of assets should take into account the impact on, or contribution to, public policy including, but not limited to, the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, and should work towards diversifying land ownership within Scotland.

The sale of any asset should be done in consultation with the local community and affected parties.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“Any future strategy on assets to be disposed of or retained should also consider the cultural or historic value of the asset in question, along with its contribution to the local area in terms of being a visitor attraction/contribution of character.”

“...we believe that in the spirit of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, CES should be open to asset transfer to local communities, at market value, where the communities can demonstrate the benefit and sufficient organisational capacity.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

More thought should be given to how the organisation can develop the business case for decisions of this nature in partnership with affected individuals, sectors and communities. The business case should include consideration of the full range of guiding principles, and not be based on purely financial reasoning.

A clear process for identifying opportunities to sell assets preferentially to local communities should be identified. Thought should also be given as to how Crown Estate Scotland should identify, and refuse sale to, purchasers who do not meet a set of criteria or standards which are acceptable to those most affected.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Crown Estate Scotland want to work in partnership with communities to ensure future decision making delivers wider value. We understand that the business case for decisions of this nature may involve investment with a different financial threshold to more typical investment activity, but we are committed to meaningfully collaborating with communities and affected parties to shape and deliver this way of working.

Community Engagement and Involvement

Question 10 - What do you consider to be the key opportunities to involve local communities in the work of Crown Estate Scotland?

- **Number of respondents**

22 responses (67%) were received to this question comprised of six individuals and 16 organisational responses.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

Respondents felt that much had been achieved with the launch of the Pilot Scheme and commended Crown Estate Scotland for their work establishing this engagement initiative. In general people felt that this approach could be expanded and more and better communication with communities would undoubtedly lead to useful knowledge exchange and more genuine engagement in decision making.

Some words of caution were also expressed where respondents acknowledged that resources are not unlimited and that efforts should be focused on communities who have proactively engaged with Crown Estate Scotland or responded positively to outreach efforts.

Opportunities for communities could centre around land purchase, perhaps as a joint venture or co-ownership arrangement with Crown Estate Scotland or around environmental stewardship projects such as circular economy work. Other ideas for opportunities where communities could be more involved included:

- Volunteering opportunities where people could help with land management
- Community payback where unpaid work could enhance estate assets
- Making small plots of land available for community gardens, allotments or orchards for example
- Expansion of the Local Management Agreements process across all assets.

Respondents noted concern about a potential disjoin between local staff and senior management suggesting opportunities could be, or have been, missed. Respondents noted the need for improvement in information flow, particular with regard to policy, between head office and local offices and officers.

Opportunities for Crown Estate Scotland to contribute to national policy and emerging strategy were also noted including the Scottish Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement, outputs of the Community Land Ownership Leadership Group and the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland.

Throughout this consultation innovation is a recurring theme in the responses and people are keen to see Crown Estate Scotland play a role in supporting research and test cases which will inform future management, particularly with reference to climate change and support for the natural environment and biodiversity.

Some respondents referred to the potential for the estate to be managed under regional and local plans, and that the process for creating these plans would lead to more positive engagement with communities throughout the estate.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“The comments here regarding community engagement and involvement are particularly welcomed. For instance, this aligns well with Policy HEP6 of the HEPS which recognises that ‘Decisions affecting the historic environment should be informed by an inclusive understanding of the potential consequences for people and communities. Decision-making processes should be collaborative, open, transparent and easy to understand.’”

“Consultation on change is important - you will often get great help from local people.”

“The Scottish Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement (LRRS) ... has produced a Protocol for community engagement ... This has been the practice for the CE and should continue.”

“Involving local communities should be regarded as integral to economic activity, rather than separate or conflicting with it.”

“One way [to work better with communities] could be for Crown Estate Scotland to act as a third party to buy land and/or other assets which has been identified by a community as beneficial for its sustainable development and subsequently sell or otherwise transfer title to the land or assets to the community.”

“Empowering communities by strengthening their voices in decisions about public services is central to the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and one of the key goals behind the genesis of the Scotland (Planning) Bill.”

“The launch of the Local Management Pilots Scheme ... is a very welcome development and Crown Estate Scotland is to be commended for taking a proactive approach to effective community engagement. Each community will have its own priorities, aspirations and expectations. Local engagement will enable those expectations to be placed in the context of Crown Estate Scotland resource availability.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

The respondents were clear that they felt that Crown Estate Scotland could benefit from greater engagement with communities and sectors/businesses. The organisation should consider a wholistic review of its community engagement approach and seek to build a strategy which gives clear process and access to meaningful engagement. The list of opportunities given above should be explored in this context.

The potential for a mismatch between local and national office engagement, information sharing and management approaches should be examined and the organisation should ensure that all opportunities to improve are taken.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Crown Estate Scotland are refreshing our approach to local partner engagement and, as detailed in our draft 2020 – 2023 Corporate Plan, we will develop and implement a new Community Engagement Strategy. This strategy will ensure good practice principles on engagement are followed across the organisation, setting a clear standard which should allow a common understanding across office locations and internal/external representatives of Crown Estate Scotland.

Question 11 - How can we remove barriers to communities being able to input into decision-making?

- **Number of respondents**

21 responses (63%) were received, four from individuals and 17 from organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

Individuals responding to this question emphasised the need for good, two way, communications between people living or working on the estate and managers both at a local level (Savills) and national level (Crown Estate Scotland staff). They emphasised that online engagement will miss a significant number of potentially affected people, particular those living in rural areas or the over 50's. They encouraged face to face or personal engagement as much as possible.

One key theme emerging from both individuals and organisations is the need to make sure people are aware of the role that Crown Estate Scotland plays in their local community and also what the benefit is to them of engaging. It is clear that many people and communities do not fully understand the way the organisation functions, what it manages and what legal obligations it works under.

Many referred to the excellent work done under the Pilot Scheme, commended Crown Estate Scotland for taking this forward and encouraged ongoing investment in engagement. Again, the disjoin between what local managers convey and the policy and strategy emerging from Bells Brae was noted.

Organisations offered a number of structured approaches to improve community engagement including

- Follow accepted community engagement protocols to ensure best practice
- Use charettes and the Place Standard Tool as engagement processes
- Reducing burden on communities by removing the requirement for bodies to be legally convened
- Work through Community Councils and neighbourhood groups to target residents
- Use newsletters, public meetings and good advertising to ensure a higher level of awareness
- Develop regional and local plans that people can get engaged with
- Be fair, inclusive and transparent and remember that engagement does not equal empowerment.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“It is critical that people are able to see the impact of their engagement but also that they understand the nature of their input ie consultation does not mean that everyone’s views will be accepted. The CES will have to ensure that it addresses situations of a vocal minority inputting while the views of the majority are ignored/unheard.”

“We welcome the aspiration to remove barriers to communities being able to influence decision making and would suggest reference to the land rights and responsibility protocol (<https://landcommission.gov.scot/lrrs/communityengagement/>)”

“Consultation activity such as this allows input and feedback to be provided on the Crown Estate Scotland’s activity which is positive.”

“Good practice includes engaging communities early on in any decision-making processes, developing genuine listening skills, holding site visits, good on-site signage including contact details, and cultivating human relationships and personal trust through face-to-face meetings with community leaders.”

“Crown Estate Scotland has already taken significant steps (see above) to remove such barriers. In January 2019, the Scottish Land Commission introduced its Community Engagement Protocols. It is suggested that Crown Estate Scotland embeds those protocols into its decision-making process to further enhance community engagement.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

As with question 10, the potential for a mismatch between local and national office engagement, information sharing and management approaches should be examined and the organisation should ensure that all opportunities to improve are taken.

A number of approaches to improving community engagement have been offered above. These should be examined by Crown Estate Scotland and considered for inclusion in both the rural assets strategy and in the wider work of the organisation.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

In developing its Community Engagement Strategy, Crown Estate Scotland will make sure to assess and include where appropriate, the approaches to improving community engagement suggested through this consultation.

The Community Engagement Strategy will provide a standardised approach for Crown Estate Scotland staff and agents to engage with communities and interested parties, following best practice.

Other Rural Assets

Forestry

Question 12 - Should Crown Estate Scotland seek to be a long-term investor / manager of new commercial forest areas or are other bodies (such as Forestry and Land Scotland) better placed to manage forests in the public interest?

- **Number of respondents**

24 responses (73%) were given to this question, nine individuals and 15 organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

Taking all responses into account almost half (46%) thought Crown Estate Scotland should be a long-term investor/manager as opposed to other bodies (25%).

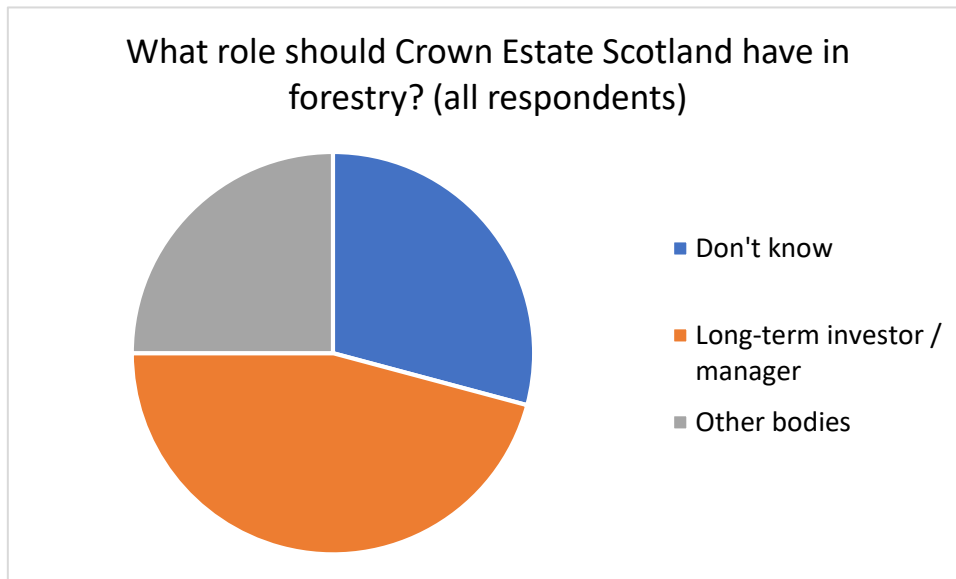


Figure 6 The organisations role in forestry, all respondents.

Individuals responded with an even split between the three options.

Organisational responses were clearer (53%) in expressing their desire to see Crown Estate Scotland continue in its long-term role as investor/managers.

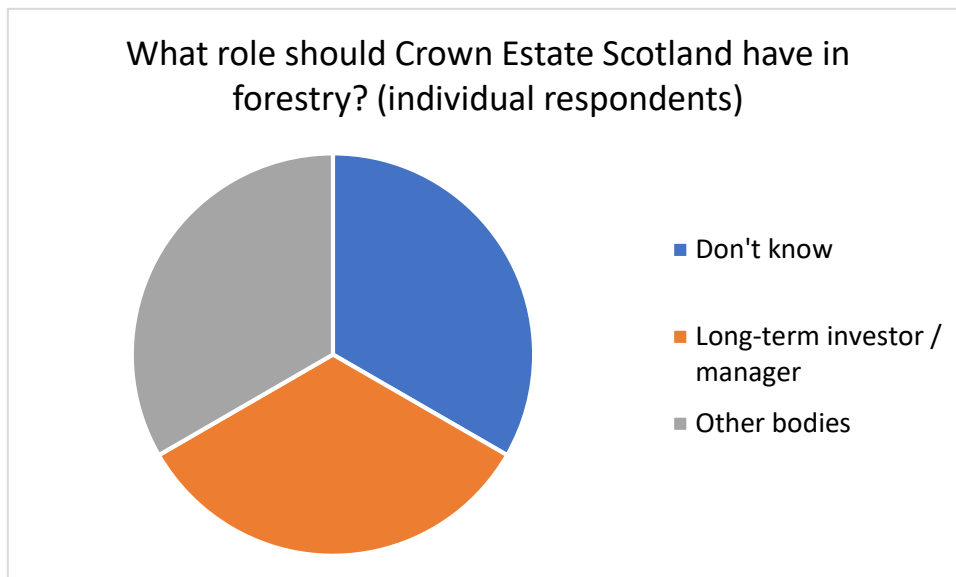


Figure 7 Role of the organisation in forestry, individual responses.

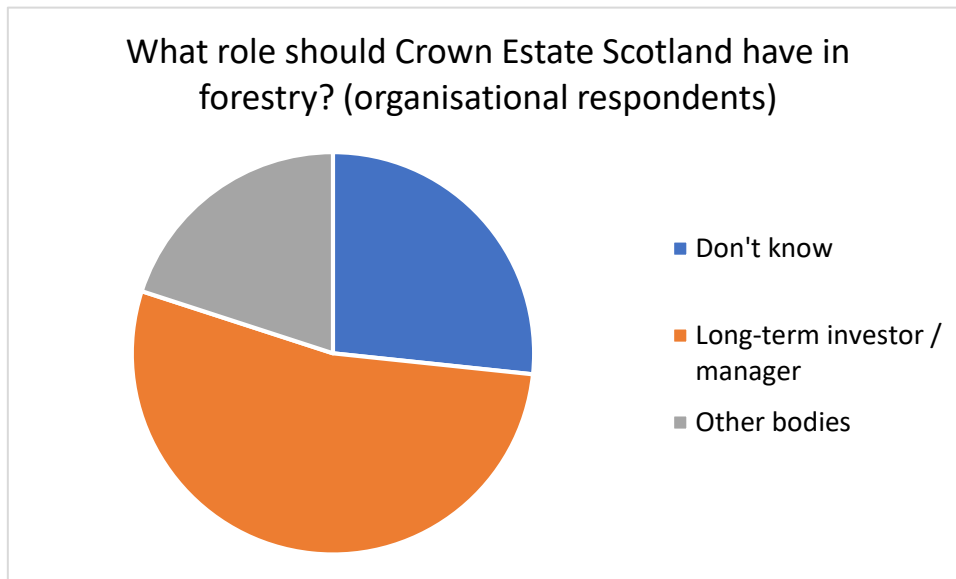


Figure 8 Role of the organisation in forestry, organisational responses.

Question 12b

The subsequent free text box allowed respondents to give further explanation.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

Individuals suggested that unprofitability of woodland management meant that it may sit better with other organisations however some felt that forestry does sit naturally with the other assets so it is a logical part of the mix. People were complementary about the use of existing forested assets, particularly at Glenlivet, and encouraged more woodland coverage throughout the estate.

Organisational responses were keen to support Crown Estate Scotland's role in forestry management but there were clear indicators that the majority wanted to see more diverse woodland and forestry management rather than straight commercial monoculture. Diversity also came across in regard to title where respondents welcomed a diversity of owners as well.

Some did support straight commercial planting and encouraged this to be done in partnership with tenants and to take into account the downstream effects for example in the timber processing sector. Those supporting mixed woodland planting suggested that woodland crofts would be useful approach and suggested that this would also help to deliver Scottish Government targets for planting.

Those favouring the assets being transferred to one body justified their response by suggesting that this approach would offer economies of scale and would allow for centres of excellence to be further developed.

Again, themes of community involvement (regional and local planning, working with tenants etc) as well as the possibility for Crown Estate Scotland to be a leader of innovation or in research were identified within the responses.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

"Forestry and Land Scotland is already the largest single forest manager in Scotland. As the forestry sector grows and matures, it is valuable to retain a diversity of owners and managers to ensure a range of strategies are developed and tested both in the public and private sectors."

“Crown Estate [Scotland] forestry provides a well-integrated landscape feature which provides multiple public, environmental and commercial benefits. It also fits well into an integrated land management approach.”

“We consider that the Crown Estate Scotland (CES) should be a manager/investor of new forests in the public interest, where it can provide enhanced benefits in comparison to those that others are delivering.”

“The stated aim is to develop commercial forests. I would like to see an equal, perhaps greater emphasis placed on tree-planting to restore ancient Scots Pine and broadleaf forest ecosystems, which are of much greater value to Scotland as a whole than the dark and densely planted wildlife dead-zones we see so much in commercial forestry.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

The responses to the consultation make it reasonably clear that there is support for Crown Estate Scotland to remain a long-term investor and manager of forestry assets.

The strategy should seek opportunities to review the impact of management decisions on the downstream industries supported by the Estate.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Recognising the responses to the consultation supporting our role as long-term investor and manager of forestry assets, Crown Estate Scotland will continue to deliver investment on the forested estate.

Our draft 2020 – 2023 Corporate Plan includes actions relating to woodland creation, where this makes best use of land, and commits to meeting capital expenditure needs on the forested estate.

Question 13 - What are the key factors / priorities that should be taken into account in the management of Scottish Crown Estate woodland and forest assets?

- **Number of respondents**

25 responses (76%) were received to this question. seven from individuals and 18 from organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

In general respondents were complementary about the way Crown Estate Scotland has managed its forests to date but they felt that there were opportunities to benefit people and wildlife with a more ambitious forestry strategy.

Several respondents made reference to the need to work within and be guided by strategies such as the National Planning Framework, Scottish Forestry Strategy 2019-29, Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, the Land Use Strategy and Scotland’s Wild Deer: A National Approach as well as Local Development Plans. Compliance with legislation was also referred to.

Respondents were keen to see the Estate broaden its approach to management of commercial forestry so that a difference could be seen between land managed purely for commercial return and Crown Estate Scotland land which would take opportunities for biodiversity, public access and community development more into account.

The impacts of climate change including drought, soil erosion, increases in diseases and pests were also mentioned and the rural assets strategy should be developed with these in mind. A ban on the use of neo-nicotinoids was recommended.

Woodland crofts, more community ownership and collaborative working approaches were all suggested as ways to work more closely with local communities and tenants. Respondents would like to see opportunities taken to diversify not only the pattern of planting, with more native trees, but also the pattern of land ownership with more locally owned and managed in the future.

Rewilding was again suggested by respondents who also discussed the possibilities presented by diverse planting which offers greater disease resistance, the potential for fire avoidance or mitigation etc. In common with responses to other questions people were keen to stress that they were aware that ambitious plans would need to be balanced with financial return and practical management.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“All the forest and woodland assets should be managed in a sustainable way, preferably to high independently verified international standards such as FSC®, as is currently the case on the estate’s commercially managed forestry.”

“The future management of the Crown Estate Scotland’s forestry asset is an important consideration for communities. As the only land asset that is managed directly by CES and is outside lease agreements it represents land that has fewer burdens and is available for future development...Our initial feedback would be to dispose of low value, poorly performing woodland and reinvest in higher value woodland with an amenity / visual / habitat value.”

“Availability and access to traditional materials such as stone, slate, timber and thatching materials is crucial to the maintenance of the historic built environment...HES is keen to work with partners to explore potential for “heritage” stands of native woodland being grown and managed over longer periods of time... Crown Estate Scotland might consider how forest reserves within your care might be managed to help contribute to the future repair needs of the historic environment.”

“Woodland crofts also integrate with other land uses, providing a holistic solution to land management which provides both personal and community resilience.”

“Re-wilding at landscape scale will bring new financial opportunities and create employment, to offset losses elsewhere. Forest diversity to increase natural resilience – tree diseases. Carbon farming – all trees inoculated with mycorrhizal fungi, no mounding / scarifying etc. Open woodland / scrub / agroforestry/ fire avoidance design – eg – incorporate oak, hazel belts which can buffer fire as well as feed us.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

Many respondents felt that Crown Estate Scotland should be guided by existing strategies (National Planning Framework, Scottish Biodiversity Strategy etc.).

Biodiversity, public access and community development should be seen as key additional factors and this should be reflected in the emerging strategy.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Across all our areas of activity, including our management of Scottish Crown Estate woodland and forest areas, Crown Estate Scotland will act in line with existing statutory plans and strategies whenever there is a relevant one in place. Being guided by existing strategies will help ensure that

our activity is aligned with stakeholder and community interests and reflects considerations related to the environment.

Further to the consideration of existing strategies, Crown Estate Scotland will make sure to take the additional factors detailed in the consultation response into account when finalising the Rural Assets Strategy. The themes of biodiversity, public access and community development, in relation to the management of Scottish Crown Estate woodland and forest assets, should be carefully considered and appropriately reflected in the final strategy document.

Question 14 - Should a different approach be taken to invest in new woodlands on the Estate to help integrate forestry into wider land use? E.g. through the sale of existing woodland to support investment in new planting elsewhere.

- **Number of respondents**

22 respondents (67%) gave answers to this question, nine individuals and 13 organisational responses were received.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

Looking at all responses you can see that there is almost an even split between 'Don't know' (45%) and 'Yes' (41%).

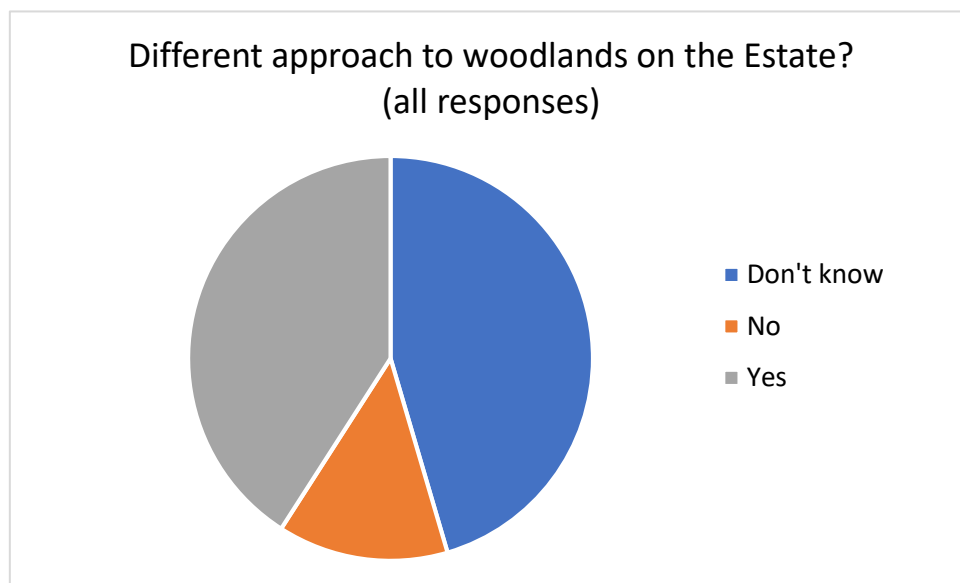


Figure 9 Changes to the approach to woodland management, all responses.

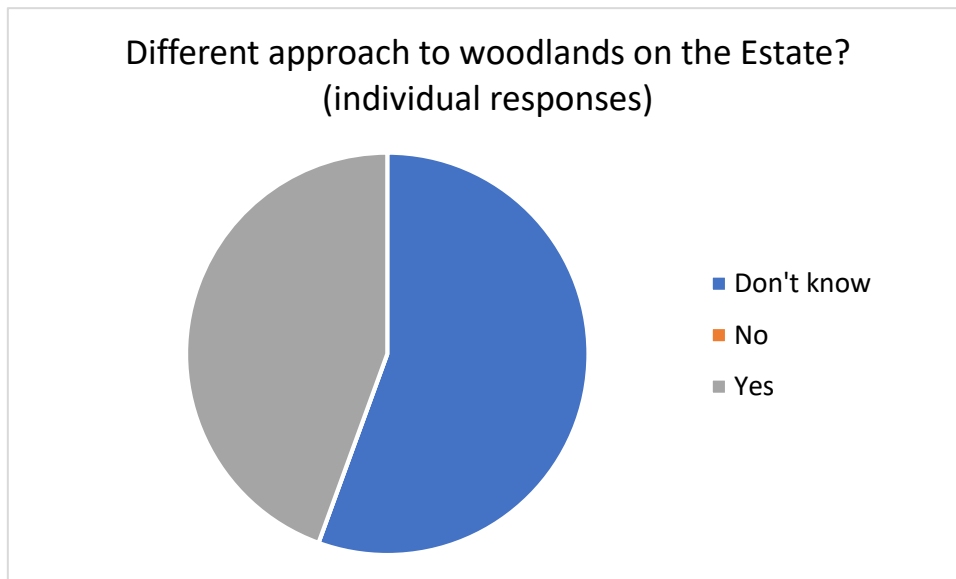


Figure 10 Changes to the approach to woodland management, individual responses.

Individuals offered almost the same pattern with 'Don't know' and 56% and 'Yes' and 46%.

Organisational responses also offered an even split between 'Don't know' (38%) and 'Yes' (38%) with the remaining 23% offering 'No' as their response.

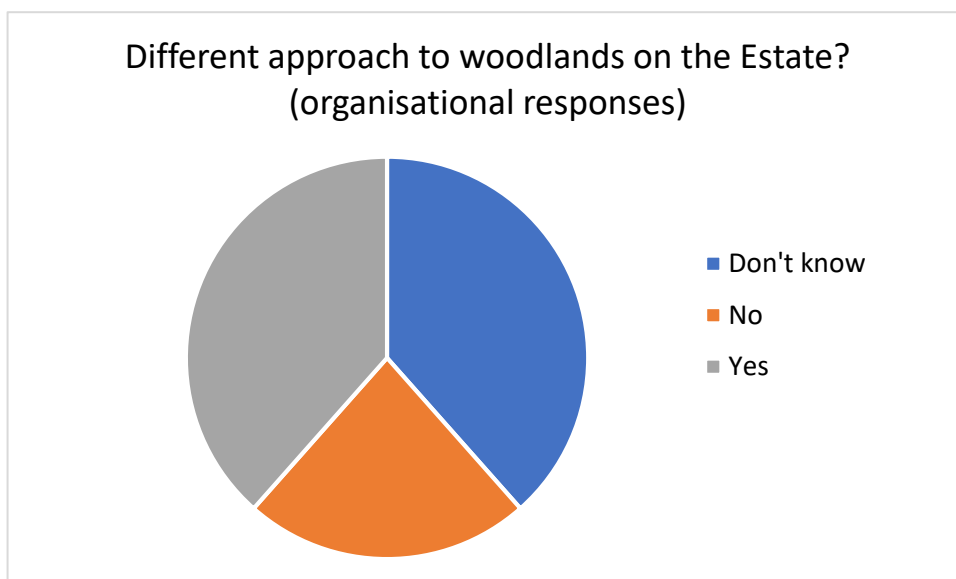


Figure 11 Changes to the approach to woodland management, organisational responses.

Question 14b

Participants had an opportunity to further explain their answer.

- **Number of respondents**

A further five respondents added text here but did not respond to the Yes/No/Don't know question.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

The majority of the responses in the 'Don't know' category gave caveats to their answers i.e. retention would be their preference if Crown Estate Scotland was able to plant more diverse woodlands to benefit wildlife, keep up with replanting and retain and enhance access. And likewise,

the respondents in this category said they would only want to see the assets sold if the new owners could meet these same types of criteria.

Those responding 'no' largely felt that the assets should be managed under a strategy which would see benefits for woodland crofting.

Those responding 'yes' to the question of a change to management and suggestion of sale of assets expanded on their response by offering support to the idea of further woodland crofts and more partnership working with tenant groups in particular. There was a feeling that the existing crop should be proactively managed to support downstream industries and if no expansion was planned then at least critical mass, which supports the wider sector, should be maintained.

Those who had not responded to the Yes/No/Don't know question said they would like to see the Estate support Scottish Government targets as well as Crown Estate Scotland's own aims as stated in the Crown Estate Scotland's response to the Scottish Biodiversity Statement Challenge 2020. they also built on the theme of partnership working which they saw as being an excellent way to deliver broader benefits from smaller scale woodlands and forestry.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

"It would be wise for the Estate to maintain the commercial core of the forestry asset portfolio, and seek to achieve a balanced range of age-classes across it, to ensure a steady income from timber sales for the estate."

"Sale [of] woodland crofts would support the long term sustainable development of the woodlands. It is a model that encourages family forestry, tackles rural housing shortages in this niche dynamic. Encourages rural and community development, small business, makes use of non-commercially viable land/ woodland."

"Crofts can be created from existing woodland areas being proposed for disposal, and then sold as woodland crofts to owner-occupier crofters, or alternatively to tenants with an 'entry fee' to reflect the value of the timber being purchased. In either case measures could be taken to avoid speculation and protect the public interest..."

"Where forestry could be managed just as well by a private owner, yes, consideration should be given to the sale of forestry assets to support investment in new planting. This may be appropriate if there are outlying blocks of woodland which are not delivering the specific aims of the estate's forests as well as the rest."

- **Result / recommendation for action**

When taking into account the supplementary information offered in 14b, the responses to this question should guide Crown Estate Scotland towards maintaining the existing arrangement but with an added emphasis on partnership working, perhaps with the aim of establishing more woodland crofts or taking downstream effects of management decisions into account.

This style of partnership working should be considered a core approach for Crown Estate Scotland functions in the future.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

In line with the responses to this consultation, Crown Estate Scotland want to establish a new way of working in partnership with tenants and communities. Through co-investing with partners, we want to support innovation throughout the rural estate, including the forestry assets. We hope that the areas highlighted in the consultation response, including woodland croft establishment and

investigating downstream effects of management decisions, can be investigated further through this partnership approach and reflected in detail within the Rural Assets Strategy.

Residential Property

Question 15 - What factors should be taken into account when we decide to retain, sell and / or buy residential property assets?

- **Number of respondents**

21 responses (64%) were gathered for this question, six individuals and 15 organisational responses.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

A broad range of factors were suggested. These fall under the following common themes:

- Societal need – respondents want to see Crown Estate Scotland taking the needs of wider society into account along with financial viability. Unintended consequences should be anticipated and avoided through early and meaningful engagement.
- The Estate plays an important role in providing (affordable) residential tenancies and this should be continued. These lettings could be used to support key public services e.g. by being let preferentially to essential service providers or to support either farmers retiring (allowing more farming tenancies to become vacant) or to encourage more young people to stay locally and therefore be more likely to take on a farming tenancy in future.
- Sale of property should be considered as part of the management of the wider Estate, especially where a property is loss making. However, there should be a presumption against sale to second home owners, for holiday accommodation or to absentee landlords.
- Investment is needed to ensure that older buildings meet and exceed modern standards for energy efficiency.
- Good regional or local planning would provide early engagement and a strategy for sale and purchase which would benefit local communities.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“Decision making should be made in context of the place principle which states that: ‘All those responsible for providing services and looking after assets in a place need to work and plan together, and with local communities, to improve the lives of people, support inclusive growth and create more successful places’.”

“CES residential property asset strategy should be driven by local need and demand. There should be a presumption against sale or lets for holiday or second homes and priority given to local residents. The future residential property portfolio should seek to support our communities desire to be a great place to live, work and visit.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

Crown Estate Scotland should investigate how they can best take societal needs into account prior to buying and selling residential property assets. This may be through better local engagement and/or use of local guidance such as local strategies or Local Development Plans.

The organisation should investigate ways it can meet the respondent's aspirations to avoid selling to non-desirable purchasers.

The review of how the management of the Estate, including future sales and purchases, helps to meet the goals of local plans would be useful in communicating the role of the organisation to wider society.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

In order to take societal needs into account prior to buying and selling residential property assets, Crown Estate Scotland will take a plan-led approach to managing their built environment, aligning with Local Development Plans as appropriate. We will also use the Place Principle to guide our decisions on residential property, to ensure the needs of wider society are taken into account alongside other factors such as financial viability.

Question 16 - What are the key factors that should be taken into account in the strategy regarding the future residential portfolio?

- **Number of respondents**

15 responses (45%) were received to this question, four from individuals and 11 organisational responses

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

In common with responses to other questions people were keen to see Crown Estate Scotland take advantage of their ability to look beyond the financial return on investment and invest in a portfolio which was inclusive, innovative, energy efficient and fulfilled community needs.

The respondents were keen to see the Estate manage a diverse portfolio with an emphasis on affordable accommodation. In order to do this respondents encouraged development of local and regional plans or development in accordance with Local Development Plans, thereby investing in property appropriate to the aspirations of the local community.

Opportunities to bring empty properties back into use should also be taken. Respondents were frequently repeated a desire to see investment in digital connectivity which supported community development.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

"I would love Crown Estate to be seen to be at the vanguard of real excellence in contemporary, 'green' architecture in the landscape - really pushing away from the repetitive, thoughtless 'boxes' that have cropped up all over."

"We would encourage decision making affecting historic environment assets to apply the principles and policies contained within HEPS."

"CE[S] should be setting an example in the quality and energy efficiency of its property portfolio, with efforts made to minimise the carbon footprint of the buildings."

- **Result / recommendation for action**

The guiding principles that respondents felt should be taken into account when making decisions are societal need, the creation of affordable tenancies, meeting aspirations within local development plans and other appropriate strategies, and environmental standards. A strategy which ensures that

there is early and meaningful dialogue with affected parties and planning authorities is also recommended.

Respondents were also keen to see Crown Estate Scotland make a commitment to a presumption against sale of assets to second home owners, for holiday accommodation or to absentee landlords. It would be appropriate for Crown Estate Scotland to investigate the legal implications of this request.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

The consultation response provides key factors for Crown Estate Scotland to take into account when considering the future of the residential portfolio, and we will build these factors into the delivery of the Rural Assets Strategy. Some aspects we can commit to are improving energy efficiency standards of the residential portfolio, refurbishing residential properties and continuing to ensure that our decision making aligns with aspirations of relevant Local Development Plans.

Minerals

Question 17 – Are there any specific issues relating to mineral workings on the Scottish Crown Estate that should be addressed in a future strategy?

- **Number of respondents**

There were 12 responses to this question (36%), five from individuals and seven from organisations

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

The responses to this question focused broadly on the need for careful planning, adherence to planning policy and the need for early and meaningful engagement with affected communities.

In addition, there was strong representation from hobbyists interested in gold panning. Responses discussed the important positive economic impact this pastime can have on local businesses supporting the tourist trade. They also stressed the low impact nature of the hobby when undertaken as per the SEPA guidelines and outside of any fish spawning periods. Respondents asked that Crown Estate Scotland open a line of dialogue with the British Goldpanning Association and consider levelling the playing field with other licenced recreation activities such as fishing, and issue leisure licences for this activity.

Respondents requested that Crown Estate Scotland review the opportunities to extract dimensional stone for restoration of historic buildings as well as aggregate. They also noted that the Estate has a responsibility to ensure that all extractive industries under their licence should be compliant with legislation and should ensure that all necessary and agreed remedial action is taken when extraction is complete.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“Issuing gold panning licences would help regulate amateur gold seeking in the same way as is done for angling. There are a multitude of benefits to society by encouraging this pastime.”

“I think the rights to gold and silver in alluvial deposits in river beds need to be managed positively for recreational use as part of Scottish Crown Estates future strategy... Fishermen can carry out their hobby by purchasing a permit or by joining an angling club.. the benefits of recreational fishing are extolled, and even financial help for struggling angling clubs is given in the form of rent rebates...”

“Crown Estate must ensure satisfactory reclamation procedures are in place before, during and after extraction to bring land back to an acceptable condition and bonds put in place to ensure this can be carried out. Companies must not be allowed to leave our land scarred.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

Crown Estate Scotland should consider allowing licences for recreational gold panning and assess the opportunity for extraction of dimensional stone for use in restoration or maintenance of historic buildings.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

In finalising the Rural Assets Strategy and any specific content on mineral workings, Crown Estate Scotland will take these responses into consideration. We will ensure any new licenced activity adheres to existing strategies, aligns with local plans and follows available best practice guidance.

Question 18 - Should Crown Estate Scotland actively seek mineral development opportunities (e.g. sand and gravel extraction) where these exist within the current portfolio and elsewhere, through the purchase of new sites?

- **Number of respondents**

16 responses (46%) were gathered for this question, six individuals and ten organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

Looking at all respondents ‘yes’ (44%) leads with a reasonable balance between the choices of ‘No’ (25%) and ‘Don’t Know’ (31%)

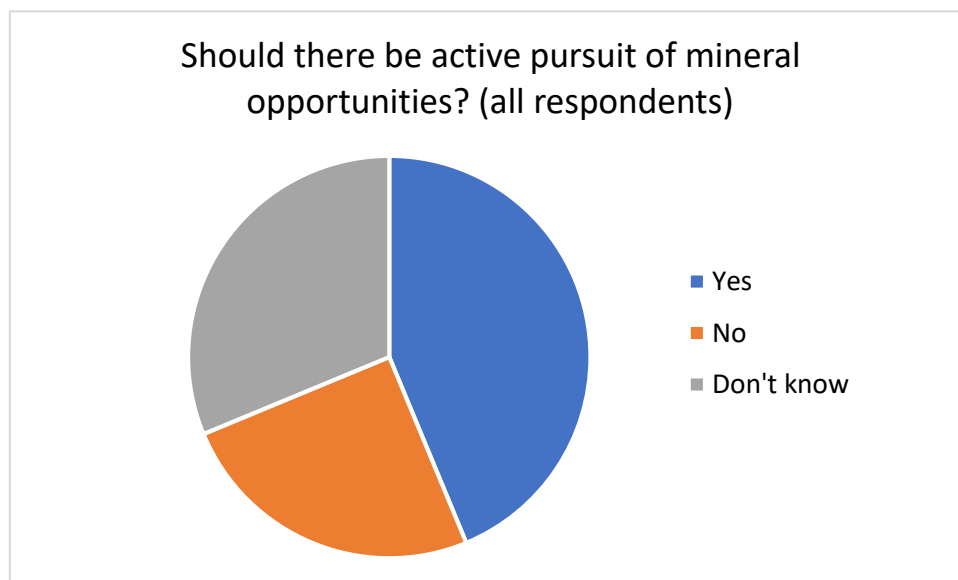


Figure 12 Should there be active pursuit of mineral opportunities, all responses.

Looking in more depth at the individual responses you can see that the individual responses were overwhelmingly in favour of not actively pursuing this line of development with 50% responding ‘No’.

This is directly opposed to the organisational responses where 50% of the respondents indicated ‘Yes’ there should be active pursuit of this opportunity.

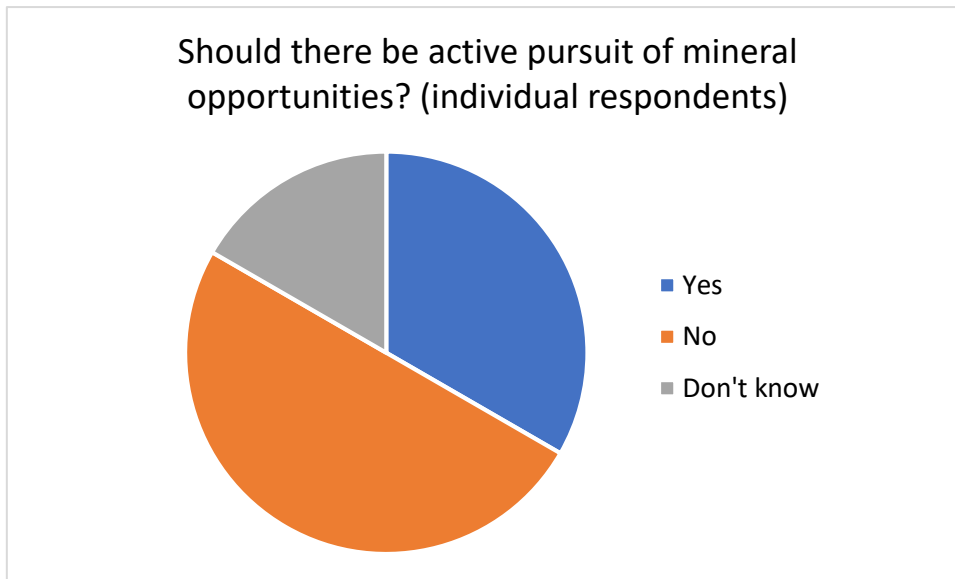


Figure 13 Should there be active pursuit of mineral opportunities, individual respondents.

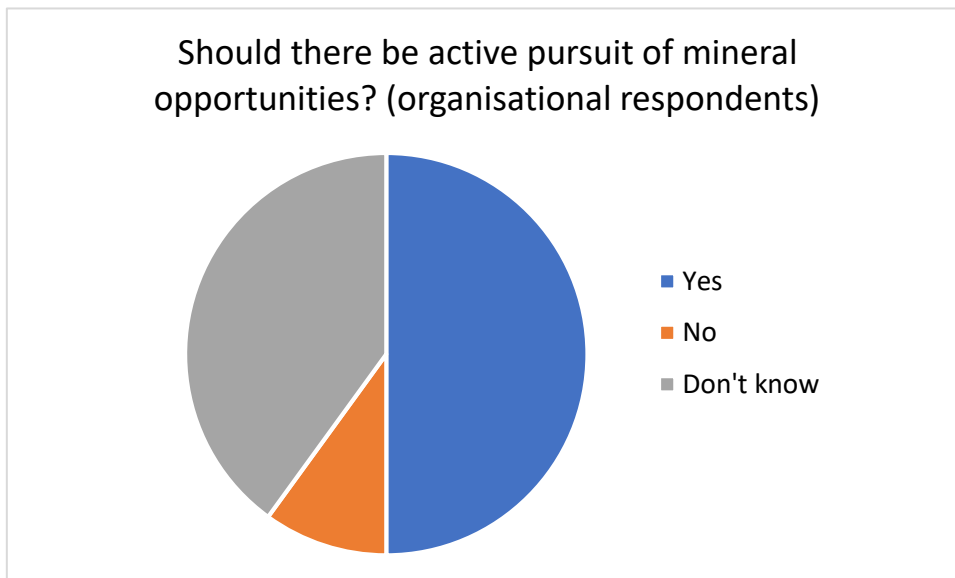


Figure 14 Should there be active pursuit of mineral opportunities, organisational responses.

Respondents were asked to explain their selections and 13 took the opportunity to do so. Those that responded 'Don't know' expanded to say they could not see the benefit of overall ownership of these sorts of asset and that they would favour a strategy which supported renewable energy rather than extraction of mineral resources.

Those answering 'No', or did not answer 'Yes/No/Don't Know', went on to say that they had concerns about the skills needed to manage extractive assets, and that they had significant concerns about the (local) social and environmental impacts. However, they did also emphasise the potential for extraction of higher value dimensional stone or slate for future repair needs of historic buildings.

Respondents saying 'Yes' suggested that the economic benefit from a sustainably run extraction site could be useful to the estate but only if reclamation was ensure of the site and bonds in place to ensure that this was carried out. They also stated that there should be no detrimental impact on access.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“The consultation document makes clear Crown Estate Scotland’s commitment to sustainable development of its mineral resources. That Crown Estate Scotland should seek to develop its existing assets and expand its mineral portfolio through the acquisition of new sites to generate revenue and help support core activities is reasonable.”

“In particular, there are currently no suppliers of Scottish roofing slate. HES would welcome the opportunity to explore the potential for supporting the extraction and production of natural slate and/or stone for the future repair needs of Scottish historic buildings.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

The split between organisational responses and responses from individual was quite marked in this question. Individuals commented in their responses that they were concerned about the potential negative social and environmental impacts.

If Crown Estate Scotland wishes to pursue mineral development opportunities a rural assets strategy which encourages early and meaningful dialogue with affected communities would be prudent in order to identify any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Crown Estate Scotland will ensure that early and meaningful dialogue with affected communities and third parties takes place prior to pursuing any mineral development opportunities. This consultation has revealed that this is an area that requires greater dialogue with both organisations and individuals to more fully understand potential positive opportunities the activity can bring about and the potential negative impacts it could lead to.

Wild Salmon

Question 19 - Should Crown Estate Scotland be managing these rights in a different way?

- **Number of respondents**

There were 18 responses (55%) to this question, seven from individuals and 11 from organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

The majority of responses indicated that they didn’t know (50%) if management of salmon fishing rights should remain the same. 39% were clear that it should not change and 11% thought that the management approach should change.

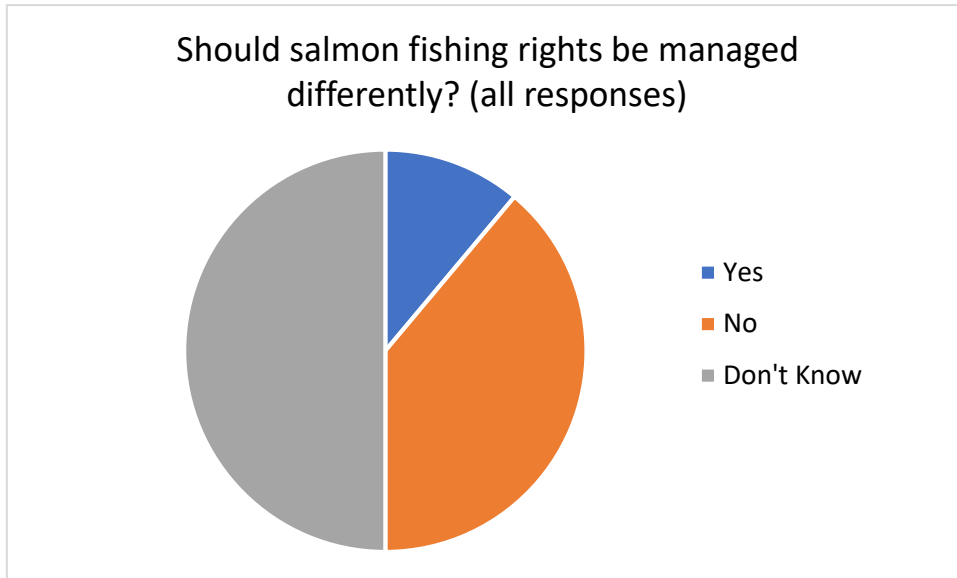


Figure 15 Should salmon rights be managed differently? All responses.

Looking in more detail at the responses from individuals you can see that 43% felt that the management should not change and 57% did not know if it should change or not.

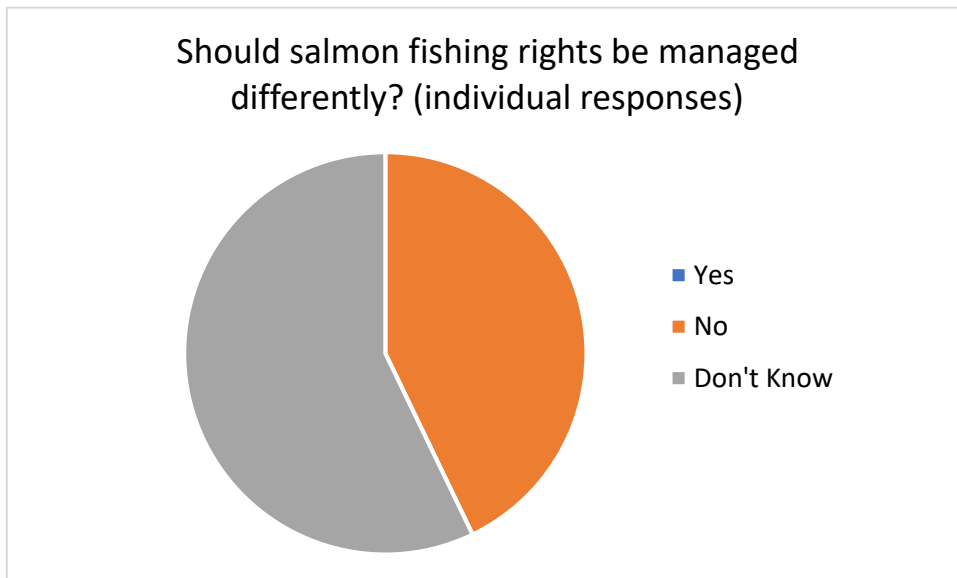


Figure 16 Should salmon rights be managed differently? Individual responses.

Organisations responded 45% don't know, 36% to no change and 2% were in favour of a change in management.

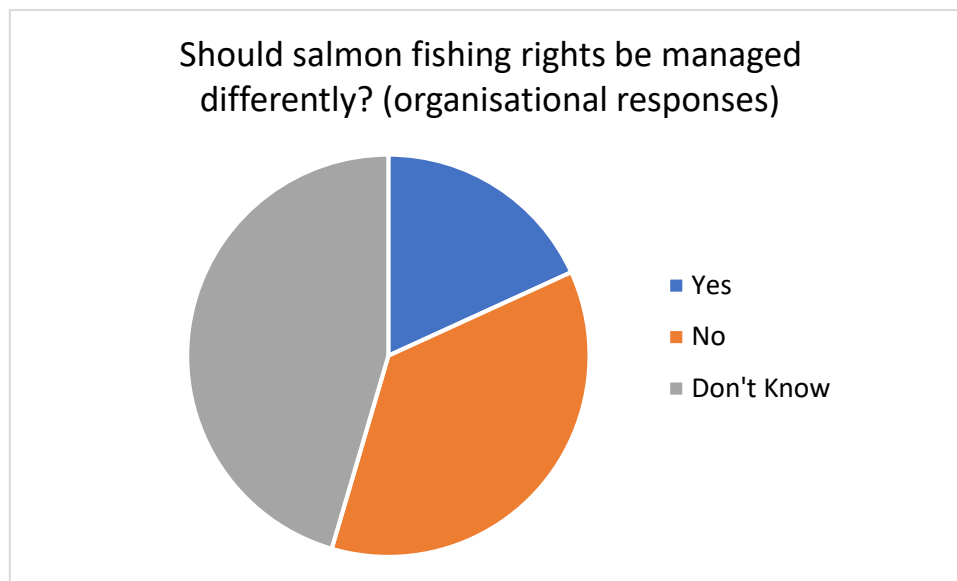


Figure 17 Should salmon rights be managed differently? Organisational responses.

Respondents were given a free text box and asked to expand on their answers. Several gave feedback that supported the existing structure and management approach, provided that it continues to make provision for responsible management and improvements to biodiversity. Respondents repeatedly mentioned the need to protect salmon populations, promote environmental stewardship and the need to protect and enhance native biodiversity.

A number of respondents indicated that they would be supportive of, or are already engaged in, more local management or transfer of assets to community interests. In common with other questions respondents encouraged early and meaningful dialogue with interested parties and affected communities.

One respondent discussed their concerns relating to potential fragmentation of management which might impact negatively on key industries such as fin fish development. Respondents also encouraged good liaison with regulators and the retention of netting rights by Crown Estate Scotland.

Supporting the theme of innovation respondents mentioned the opportunities presented by changes in management of fishing rights to deliver local and community benefits, some of these innovations are currently being explored under the Pilot Schemes.

One organisational respondent encouraged Crown Estate Scotland to play a more active role in marketing fishing opportunities and noted that there is potential for the existing process for evaluating rental value may be off putting to tenants who wish to improve fisheries. They also felt that the assets could be managed by District Salmon Fisheries Boards (DSFB's).

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“Whilst we welcome the fact that CES support local conservation policies and best practice through the lease agreements we do not consider that these requirements are always adequately enforced. Some of our members have difficulty in securing catch returns, and the ultimate responsibility for these legal requirements should sit with the proprietor of the fishery, rather than the tenant.”

“In respect of unused coastal netting rights, it is essential that these be retained, lest they be restarted by change of ownership or granting of leases. This is an important conservation issue at a

time of great concern about North Atlantic Salmon stocks. These fisheries would also impact adversely on trout/sea trout stocks.”

“In a time of decreasing stocks, CES should lead the way in innovation in management techniques to ensure that the management structure is suitable and adaptable to meet the needs of the different requirements. One structure and approach will not fit all circumstances.”

“Where DSFBs are in existence, the local DSFB, if willing, could effectively manage these public fishings.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

From the responses to this question there is no clear demand for a change to the management practice. Some ideas for enhanced ways of working have been suggested and Crown Estate Scotland should take these into account as the strategy becomes more fully formed.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Crown Estate Scotland will continue to manage river salmon fishing rights in a way which promotes responsible fishing. Respondents have highlighted the need to ensure that this responsible management makes provision for improvements to biodiversity, Crown Estate Scotland will build this into our management approach through introducing measures which will support the long term sustainability of the wild fisheries sector. We will initiate research on wild salmon population decline and implement a protocol to measure lice levels on wild fish in fish farming areas.

The suggestion to work in closer partnership with district salmon fisheries board is being explored through our Local Pilots Management Scheme. We are currently progressing a pilot project with a district salmon fisheries board which aims to increase coordination of conservation measures, support new anglers and support local community decision making when it comes to managing the fishing rights of the area. Crown Estate Scotland will continue to support and encourage this kind of local management by building on the Local Management Pilots Scheme work through the transfer and delegations mechanism within the Scottish Crown Estate Act 2019.

Question 20 - Should Crown Estate Scotland continue to provide support through financial rebates to local angling clubs and tenants of beats in category three conservation rivers to allow them to continue to manage the rights locally?

- **Number of respondents**

There were 18 responses (55%) to this question, six from individuals and 12 from organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

- Looking at all responses there is a clear preference for this type of support to continue with 67% answering ‘Yes’ to the question. 28% didn’t know and 6% said it should not continue. Breaking this down to individual responses you can see that again people are broadly in favour of retaining the support (57%) with an almost equal number in the ‘Don’t Know’ bracket

Should there continue to be financial rebates for beats in category three conservation rivers? (all respondents)

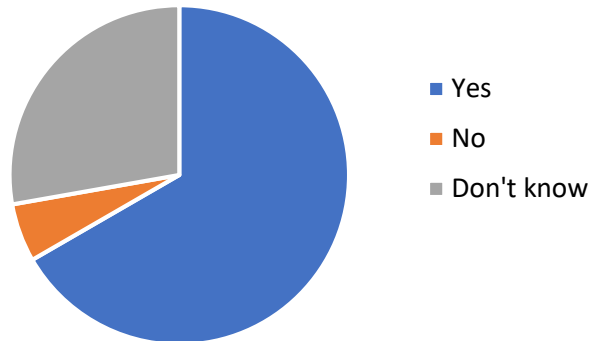


Figure 18 Changes to financial rebates on category 3 rivers, all responses.

Should there continue to be financial rebates for beats in category three conservation rivers? (organisation respondents)

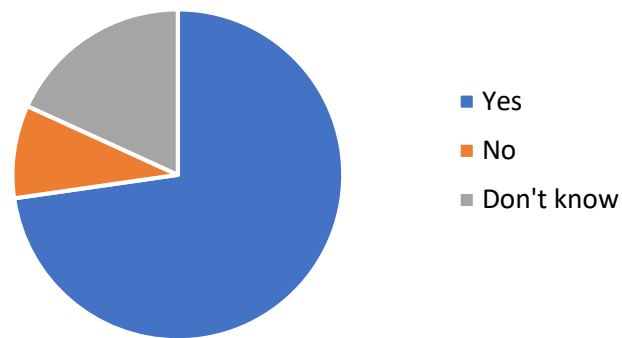


Figure 19 Changes to financial rebates on category 3 rivers, organisational responses.

Should there continue to be financial rebates for beats in category three conservation rivers? (individual respondents)

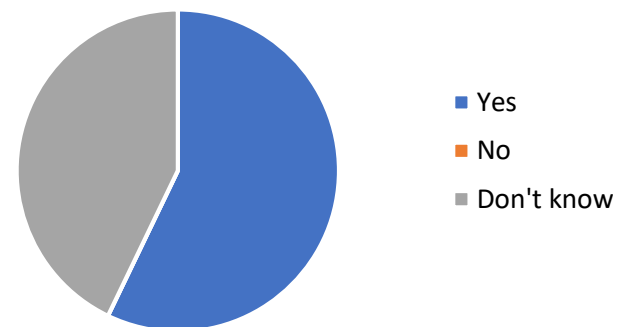


Figure 20 Changes to financial rebates on category 3 rivers, individual responses.

An analysis of the organisational responses shows an overwhelming support for the support to remain with 73% responding 'Yes, and only 18% saying they didn't know and 9% saying no, the support should end.

A follow up free text box provided additional insights. Several felt that the rebate was a useful tool which helped to support clubs which provided a range of services to the community including recreation, health and support for wellbeing. However, several respondents also questioned whether the rebate was enough to secure improvements in fish stocks and also questioned if catch and release was enforced as well as it should be.

Some respondents questioned the possibility of increasing the rebate in order to ensure more management and positive enforcement of conservation measures, many of which were currently beyond their budget.

Respondents encouraged more outreach and education to enable fishing clubs to better understand the natural environment and the role of species, such as the beaver, in order to minimise conflict and enhance biodiversity for the benefit of all.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“Community based angling clubs do not have the same resilience as other Trust led salmon waters and should receive a discount in line with their contribution to non-financial local community benefits.”

“Despite decline in salmon, Scotland continues to offer a world-class angling experience for a range of fish species. Alongside conservation measures it is important Crown Estate Scotland continues to support the value angling brings to rural Scotland – financial rebates have been a welcome measure in helping support angling clubs at this difficult time.”

“In most cases, the rebate will simply be used to keep permit costs down, which is an important social contribution to allow clubs to retain members. However, in order for such rivers to meet their conservation limits investment in the needed improvements will be required.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

The respondents were in overwhelming agreement that rebates should continue. Crown Estate Scotland could consider increasing the rebate if it was connected to investment which improves the asset.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Crown Estate Scotland will continue to administer rebates to local angling associations. From the 2019 season until the end of the 2021 fishing season, all tenants on beats managed by Crown Estate Scotland on category three rivers, as assessed by Marine Scotland, will see their rents rebated by 50%. All tenants on category two rivers will see their rents rebated by 25%. Further details around these measures will be included in the Rural Assets Strategy.

Question 21 - Should Crown Estate Scotland consider selling some salmon fishing rights to fund investment?

- **Number of respondents**

There were 18 responses to this question, seven from individuals and 11 from organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

More than half of respondents (56%) answered that they did not think salmon rights should be sold to fund other investments. 28% said they didn't know and 17% said yes, they should be sold.

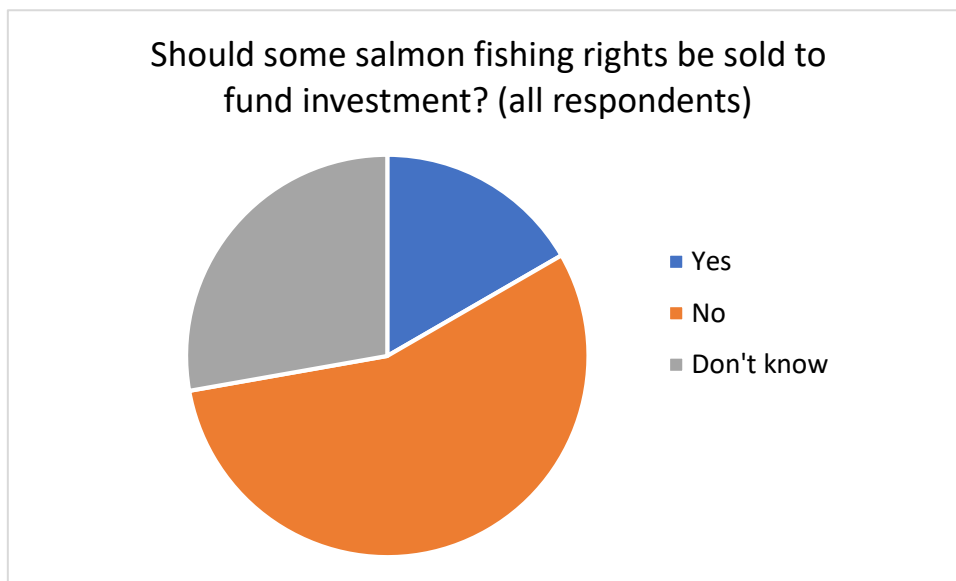


Figure 21 Potential to sell salmon fishing rights, all responses.

Looking in more detail at the responses from individuals and organisations you can see that the responses virtually mirror that of the group as a whole.

A follow up free text box asked for clarification. Respondents were in general agreement that salmon rights should not be considered for sale unless it was to a community-based angling club or if the economic benefit was overwhelming. Again, meaningful dialogue would be required with the affected groups and impacts on the society, the environment and economy would need to be taken into account.

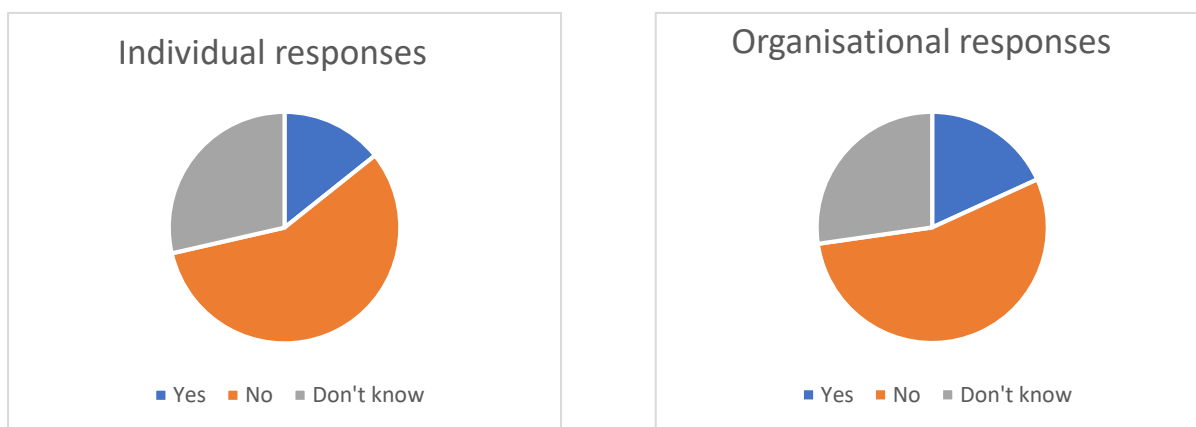


Figure 22 Potential to sell salmon fishing rights, responses from individuals (L) and organisations (R)

Some respondents felt very strongly that selling these rights would negatively impact access for local people and could have Crown Estate Scotland “portrayed as a Highland Clearances Landlord ignoring the needs of communities”.

“There may be examples of where this is appropriate however, where values are low and the financial returns do not cover the cost to support the management then CES needs to look at other methods of support. Just selling the assets will not in itself deliver the economic, societal and

environmental improvements and could be seen as CES off loading assets that have no monetary value to them. This would not lead to improvement of the public asset.”

“Crown Estate Scotland should actively manage this public resource for the benefit of people and the environment.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

Respondents stated overwhelmingly that they felt it was not appropriate for Crown Estate Scotland to consider selling these assets unless it was to a local fishing club or other community interest.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Crown Estate Scotland will not seek to sell salmon fishing rights to fund investment. Through mechanisms demonstrated by the Local Management Pilot Scheme, the management of these rights could however be delegated or transferred to a community or local organisation, giving them more say on how these rights are managed in their area.

Question 22 - Bearing in mind that in most cases Crown Estate Scotland do not own the river bank or river bed, do you believe they should be investing in their salmon fishing interests and if so in what way?

- **Number of respondents**

There were 17 responses (52%) to this question, six from individuals and 11 from organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

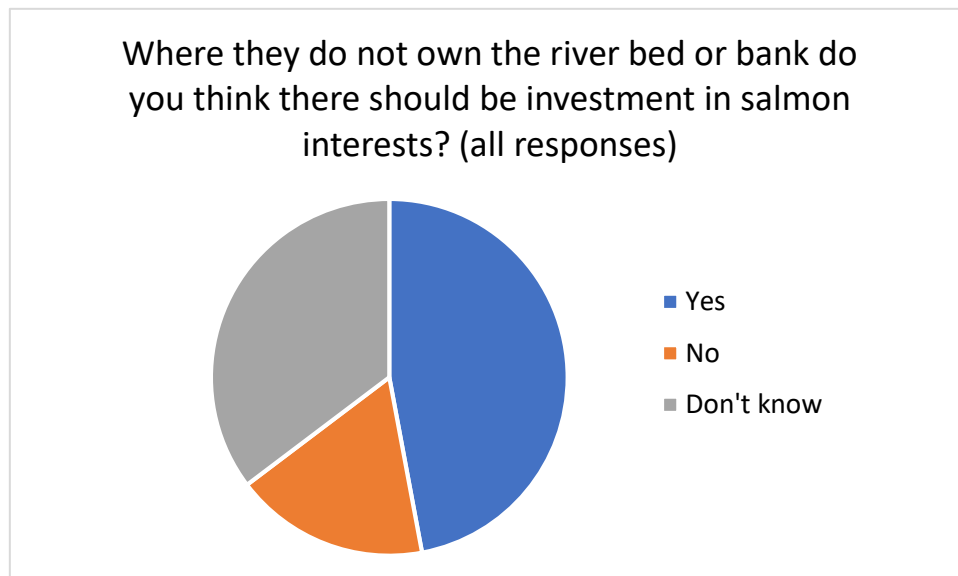


Figure 23 Investment strategy for riverbeds and banks, all responses.

The whole picture of all respondents gives a slight lead to 'Yes' with 47% of responses, 'Don't know' has 35% and 'No' has 18%. This picture changes considerably when you look in more detail at the individual and organisational responses.

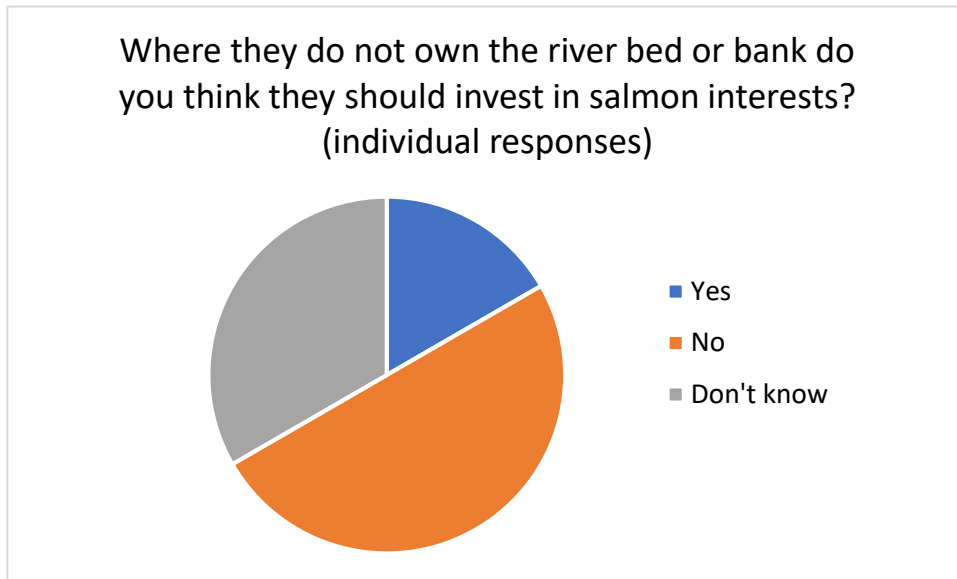


Figure 24 Investment strategy for riverbeds and banks, individual responses.

Individuals are more supportive of no investment with 50% responding this way, only 17% in favour of investment and the remaining 33% unsure. Organisations are almost completely opposite in their response with the vote split 64% in favour of investment and 36% 'Don't know'.

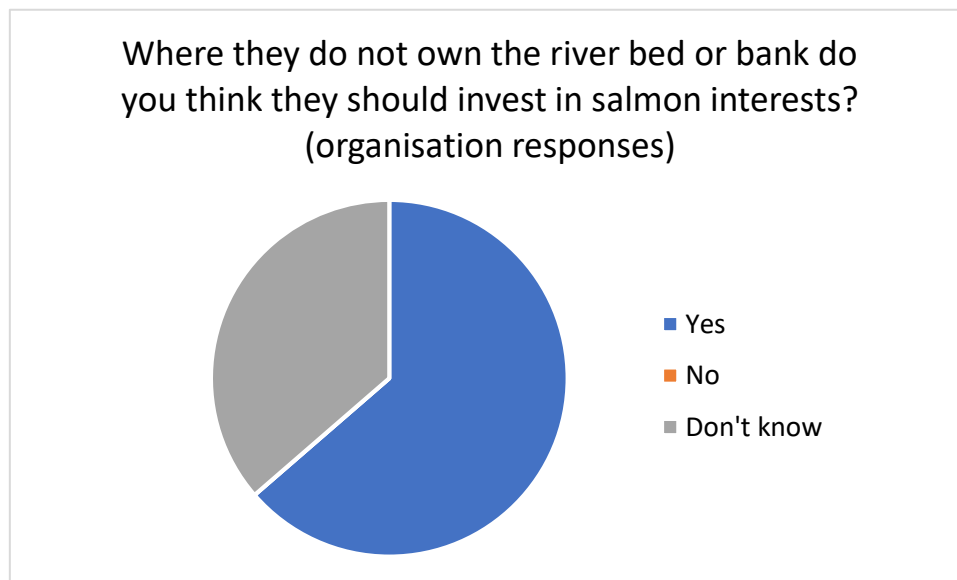


Figure 25 Investment strategy for riverbeds and banks, organisation responses.

Another free text box allowed further analysis and individual respondents said that Crown estate Scotland should invest in huts and shelters more than the river structures, unless it was to support the overall health of the salmon populations, in which case they had an obligation to try to halt the decline.

Organisations were clear in the rationale that Crown Estate Scotland gains a benefit from healthy fish stocks which rely on a healthy ecosystem, therefore investment is required. Other support for

ongoing investment was in the form of the organisation playing its role in the management of the whole ecosystem or catchment, not just the salmon themselves.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“Recreational fishing provides significant ecosystem services throughout Scotland and is of great socio-economic importance to rural Scotland, providing direct financial benefits to local economies. More needs to be done to protect the species and encourage the growth of stocks.”

“Let nature take its course and allow 'tenants' to improve if they want to. Support fishing huts/shelters.”

“As the value is in the fishings and this is directly related to the number of fish caught then it would seem sensible that CES (as the owners of the salmon fishing rights) invest in the support required for healthy populations of salmon and sea trout. No fish, no value.”

“The ecological management of water bodies has broadened over recent decades to include their terrestrial catchments. Ecosystem-based management is now common place and activities have expanded above and away from the water to include the management of anglers and others.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

There is a split between organisational interests (74% Yes) and individuals (50% No) in the response to this question. Crown Estate Scotland should carefully consider the impacts of any such investment and ensure early and meaningful dialogue and information exchange with both the affected individuals and the wider public. This commitment to engagement should be spelt out in the rural assets strategy.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Crown Estate Scotland will invest in their salmon fishing interests through taking measures to promote the sustainability of the wild fisheries sector. In our draft 2020 – 2023 Corporate Plan, we are committing to taking measures to help address wild salmon population decline and implementing a protocol to measure lice levels on wild fish in fish farming areas.

Any further investment in these interests will be subject to early engagement, following best practice principles.

Unnumbered question - Please comment on any other considerations that should be included in a future strategy relating to salmon fishing interests.

- **Number of respondents**

There were nine responses to this question, two from individuals and seven from organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

Respondents gave additional information about the importance of addressing the whole ecosystem and also challenged the role of fish farming in negatively impacting wild salmon populations.

Respondents suggested that “Crown Estate Scotland consults with angling clubs, tenants of beats, fishery boards and trusts and other relevant stakeholders on the future management of local angling rights and arrangements to sustain the value of fishery assets in the face of declining stocks.”

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“Any strategy to support CES assets must include a wider strategy relating to the national, regional and local issues affecting salmon and sea trout populations.”

“Wild salmon are, in our view, not given sufficient prominence in public policy at present. CES could use its role in this regard to champion the health and sustainability of wild salmon stocks.”

“The strategy should explicitly take into consideration the impact of fish farming on wild fish... sea lice infestation, escapes from sea cages, gill disease and infectious salmon anaemia – a disease presumed to be carried to cages by wild fish.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

These have been captured in the section on cross-cutting themes.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Through supporting the long-term sustainability of the wild fisheries sector, we hope to contribute to the body of work tackling wild salmon population decline in Scotland. A recent example of this is the contribution made recently to the Atlantic Salmon Trust’s Missing Salmon project, a campaign to raise awareness and fund research to uncover the reasons behind the recent declines in salmon returning to Scotland’s rivers. We plan to continue to champion the health and sustainability of wild salmon stocks in Scotland and reflect this in our final strategy document.

Built Development / Rural Development

Question 23 - What should the priorities be for built development on the existing rural assets?

- **Number of respondents**

There were 18 responses (55%) to this question, five from individuals and 13 from organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

Respondents wanted to see a series of priorities for the built environment. These can be summarised as follows:

- Engage in meaningful dialogue with stakeholders and communities
- Support for existing businesses, particularly farming.
- Develop and support new businesses– particularly in rural areas
- Encourage great contemporary design which incorporates renewable energy and energy efficiency
- Develop opportunities for renewable energy development and energy storage
- Create small plots for woodland crofts
- Sell some assets and reinvest (as a slow drip feed)
- Seek out opportunities to transfer assets to communities
- Support Local Development Plans and, in time, place plans.
- Develop, or use, principles and policies which support the historic environment

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“It is suggested that Crown Estate maintains its welcome and proactive approach to identifying and providing opportunities for built development in line with local development plans.”

“Crown Estate Scotland should seek to invest in maintaining the existing historic environment and invest in ensuring that any new development meets the six qualities of good design outlined in Scottish Planning Policy.”

“Four main priorities should be considered for development on existing assets:

- Diversifying and connecting rural economic development ... Enabling new, better-paid and diverse employment opportunities is a key part of any rural challenge...
- Supply of affordable housing.
- Service provision. Evolving service provision to be more flexible will be important to address diverse needs and challenges of small [dispersed] communities.
- Sustainability - increasing sustainability in the context of climate change whilst conserving and enhancing open countryside to ensure food security, environmental protection and access to nature for society.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

Many of these themes have been captured in the cross-cutting themes section or under other recommendations. However, in addition, Crown Estate Scotland should consider developing a strategy for where renewable energy generation and storage capacity might be developed.

Making the rural assets strategy fully spatial would require considerable time and resources however maps of areas potentially suitable for woodland crofting would be helpful.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Crown Estate Scotland will look to identify opportunities to unlock and add value through built development on rural assets. We welcome the series of suggested priorities for built development on existing rural assets and will take these into account when finalising the Rural Assets Strategy.

Actions reflecting these priority areas are reflected in our draft 2020 – 2023 Corporate Plan where we commit to increasing land and property values through investigating potential planning uses on the existing estate and to exploring opportunities for joint development activities with preferred partners as part of our wider investment strategy.

Question 24 - Should Crown Estate Scotland actively seek new built development opportunities through the purchase of new areas of land?

- **Number of respondents**

20 responses (61%) were received to this question, seven from individuals and 13 from organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

More than half (55%) of respondents thought that Crown Estate Scotland should be investing in new land for development. 25% disagreed and said ‘No’ and 20% responded ‘Don’t know’. Looking at the breakdown by individual and organisation it is clear that those

responding on behalf of an organisation were more in favour of investment in new development land with 69% answering 'Yes' to the question.

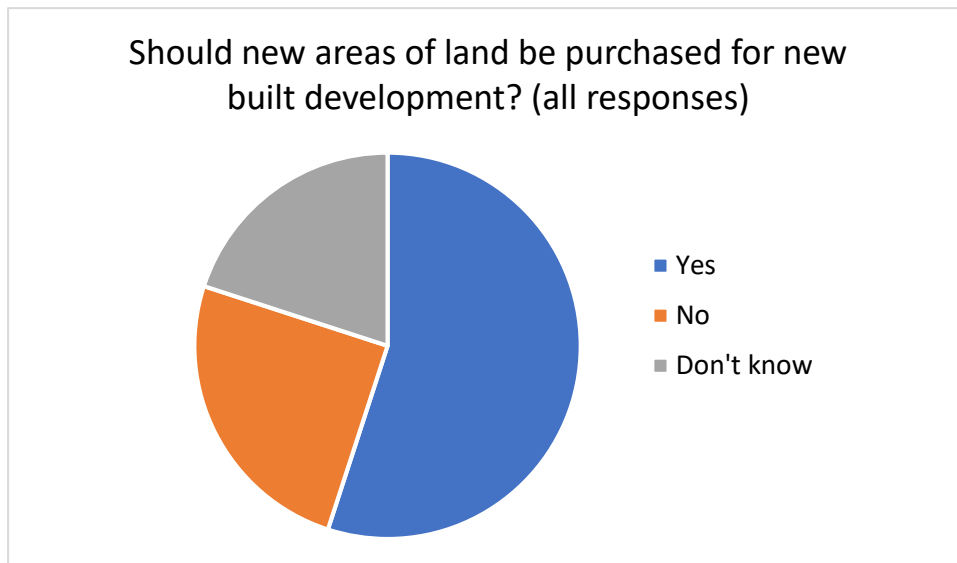


Figure 26 Purchase of new land for development, all responses.

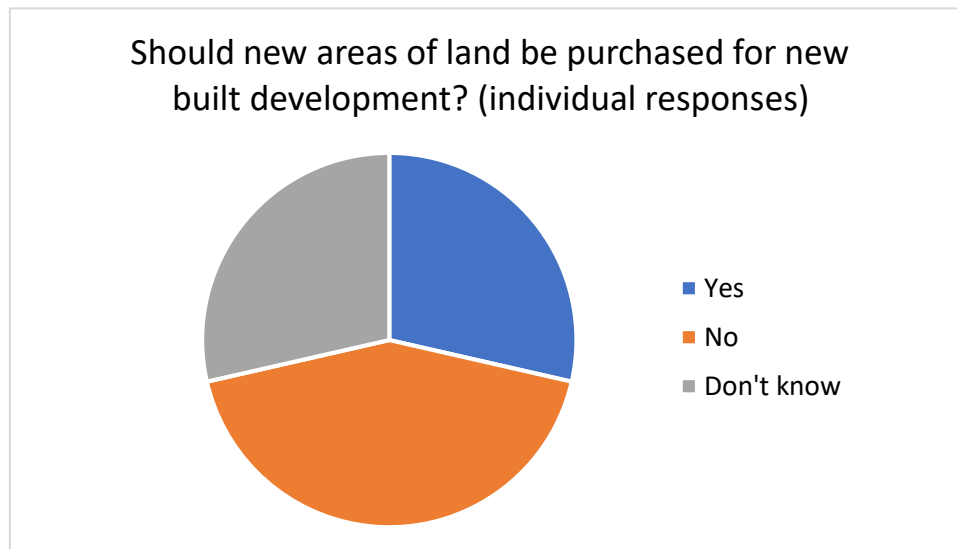


Figure 27 Purchase of new land for development, individual responses.

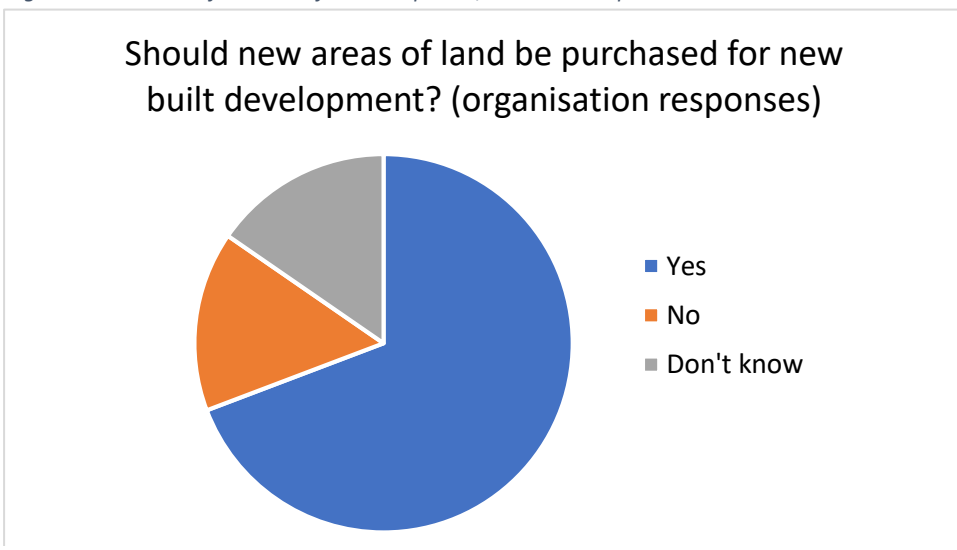


Figure 28 Purchase of new land for development, organisational responses.

A follow up question sought clarification from respondents. As expected from the results above many were supportive of the potential for Crown Estate Scotland to purchase new land for development but they also provided cautions and caveats. Caution was noted about the need for the Estate to fully evaluate the existing assets to make sure that there were no missed opportunities and to ensure that they have the skills to purchase and manage these new propositions.

Caveats included the need to have early and meaningful dialogue with tenants, communities and other affected groups. Any new purchases should be in keeping with the long-term strategy (not short-term gain) and seek to complement both the existing Estate and community aspirations. Any purchase should be done in line with Local Development Plans and support these and other relevant regional and local plans such as those supporting the historic built environment.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“DTAS would support the proposal for CES to seek new built development opportunities, on the condition that these were done with the support of local communities. We believe there is an opportunity to explore partnership and co-investment opportunities with the local community. In pursuing a strategy of this nature, CES would need to give thought to the criteria for such an intervention (hopefully featuring strategic place-making) and how the community would learn about any CES potential purchase.”

“The crown estate should purchase large estates and split them up into smaller individually and community owned areas where people can have control of their land.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

Respondents to this question were supportive of this sort of investment. An investment strategy should be developed after an analysis of available resources and opportunities within the Estate.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Although the focus of the Rural Assets Strategy will be on the existing estate, Crown Estate Scotland will consider opportunities through new land acquisition and partnership working across private, public and third sectors.

To ensure this work is in keeping with our long-term strategy and aligns with community aspirations and existing plans (e.g. Local Development Plans), we will carry out early and meaningful consultation and work with local authorities and other potential partners to identify appropriate locations for investment.

Question 25 - Should Crown Estate Scotland seek to promote/support the development of renewable energy schemes (wind, solar, hydro, biomass) on the Rural assets in line with relevant strategic planning guidance/priorities and working with relevant stakeholders?

- **Number of respondents**

21 responses (64%) were given to this question, seven from individuals and 14 from organisations

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

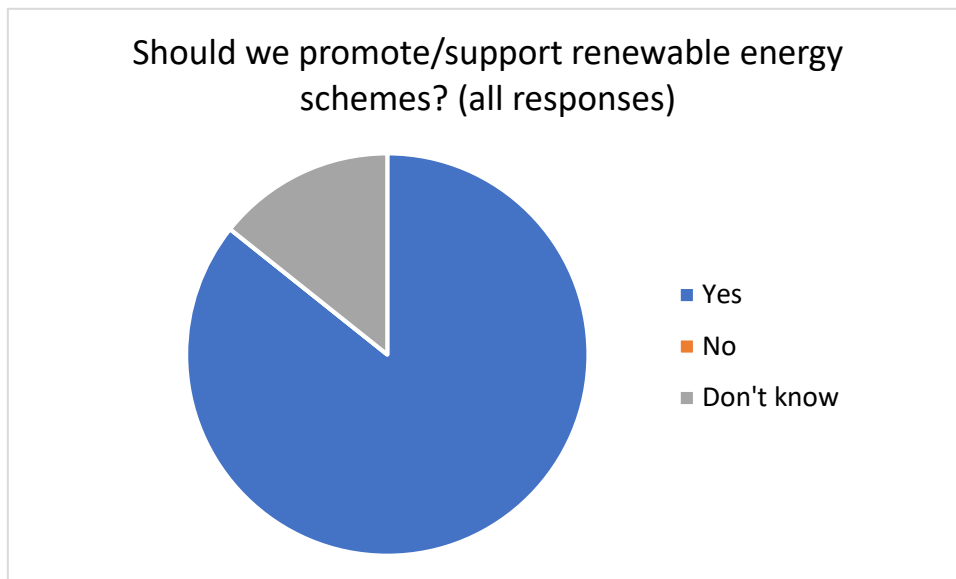


Figure 29 Promotion of renewable energy schemes, all responses.

The response to this question was extremely positive with 86% of respondents saying 'Yes' and only 14% saying 'Don't know', nobody voted 'No'. Organisations were slightly more hesitant than individuals in their support for this proposition with 21% saying 'Don't know'.

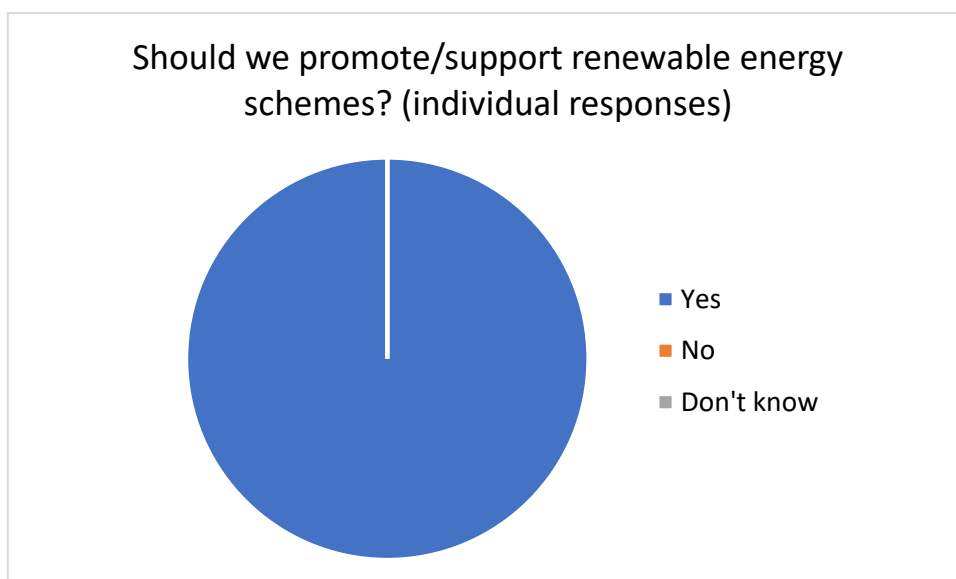


Figure 30 Promotion of renewable energy schemes, individual responses.

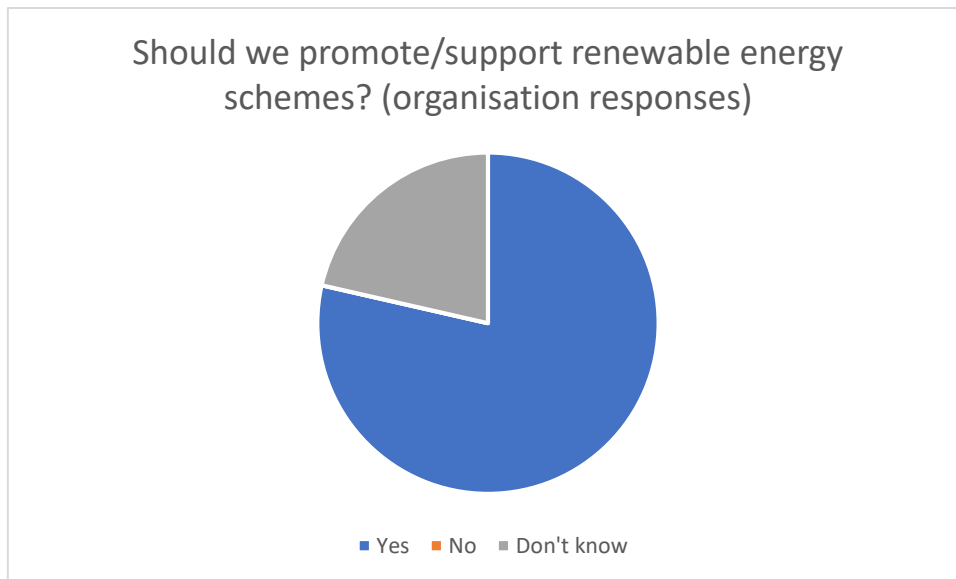


Figure 31 Promotion of renewable energy schemes, all responses.

A follow up question asked, “If so, how high a priority should be given to renewable energy development in the future strategy?”. Almost half of the respondents (eight out of 22) to this question stated that they saw this as top/high or very high priority for Crown Estate Scotland. Many suggested that it was crucial for the devices to be sited following close dialogue with affected communities and only where environmental impacts, and impacts on the historical environment, were manageable.

Opportunities for renewable energy should be coupled with energy storage to maximise the benefits and respondents noted that there was also significant potential for communities to part or fully own the devices.

Renewable energy was seen as the logical next steps for diversifying the Estate but that offshore wind and tidal energy sources would be preferable to others, particularly biomass which could compete with rural sectors.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“This is a very high priority and requires initiatives to help adopt social protection measures for people dependent on declining industries (including fossil fuels).”

“This would seem a sensible way of diversifying income streams and adding value to the estate. We would encourage consideration to be given to undertaking such initiatives with the local community so that benefits can be shared (and potential objections mitigated).”

“If Crown Estate Scotland will seek to promote the development of renewable energy on its rural assets then consideration must be given to the protection of ancient woodland and woodland of high nature conservation value.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

Respondents were overwhelmingly (86% ‘Yes’) in support of investment in renewable energy schemes. Crown Estate Scotland should incorporate this into the rural assets strategy and consider the wider implications of including storage alongside generation. Clear communication with the public and stakeholders would be helpful when considering the mix of investment in onshore and offshore renewable energy development.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Crown Estate Scotland will seek to promote and support the development of renewable energy schemes on the rural assets. We see the potential terrestrial renewable energy holds and will progress at least one renewable energy project in the time frame for our next corporate plan (2020 – 2023). Our work will include consideration of energy storage, with our local energy systems workstream informing our thinking in this space.

Countryside and Environment

Question 26 - How should a rural assets strategy address the requirement to enhance and protect natural capital and promote more sustainable use of natural resources?

- **Number of respondents**

There were 25 responses (76%) to this question, eight from individuals and 17 from organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

Respondents were generally very supportive of Crown Estate Scotland's ambitions to undertake this endeavour. People saw the need to audit the Estate and to assess where the threats and opportunities might lie for natural capital enhancement. Respondents felt that gains could be made by working in partnership with tenants and encouraging new entrants to be aware of, and able to demonstrate their positive contribution to the natural capital of the Estate.

Crown Estate Scotland was complemented a number of times for their generally good track record in environmental stewardship and applauded for taking this step forward looking at natural capital. Some respondents suggested there was significant additional opportunities presented within the rural assets strategy to embed natural capital for example within forestry there is significant scope to include proactive management of native and ancient woodlands.

Support for specific habitats such as those relating to salmonid species would be welcomed by a range of respondents. Other habitats, such as those protected by designations, should also lie at the heart of the rural assets strategy as a potential area for significant investment. Opportunities should be taken to connect these sites to make a more cohesive network of functions ecosystems and reverse biodiversity decline.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

"Enhancement and protection of natural capital and sustainable use of resources should be at the centre of all decisions made by Crown Estate Scotland. Investment opportunities should be considered on their environmental potential as well as their financial opportunities."

"Put much, much greater emphasis on the role of CES and other public bodies to restore native ecosystems and reverse biodiversity decline and tackle climate change through active land management (e.g. mass native forest planting and deer culling)."

"Ensure access to the countryside for all access takers including horse riders is not inhibited. Do not allow paths to be closed, gates to be locked and do not allow paths to be surfaced with tarmac. Urbanisation of the countryside destroys the countryside and natural environment."

"Management of the rural assets must be gold standard and recognise not just the economic production of the land and water but ensure there is proactive mitigation against damage caused. CES is in a unique position as a public body and should therefore be in the forefront of demonstrating integrated land and water management."

- **Result / recommendation for action**

Crown Estate Scotland should consider including the aim of undertaking natural capital audit of the Estate in the rural assets strategy. An audit of the designated sites within, or adjacent to, the Estate would also be a useful decision support tool.

Long-term a set of measures which can be used to prioritise action and measure success would be a useful ambition for the rural assets strategy to include.

The organisation should seek ways natural capital can be mainstreamed within the wider decision making of Crown Estate Scotland.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Crown Estate Scotland will promote sustainable use of natural resources and seek to position itself as a leader in Natural Capital management in Scotland. As suggested in the consultation responses, we will complete a Natural Capital assessment of the Scottish Crown Estate, detailing the rural assets dependencies and impacts on natural capital.

We are also undertaking a study to better understand the social, economic and environmental (including biodiversity and natural capital) value of the Scottish Crown Estate. A new approach will then be developed to assess the possible social, economic and environmental benefits and impacts of future decision making. This will assist with delivering the new legal framework contained in the Scottish Crown Estate Act 2019, which includes a legal duty to act in a way to further the achievement of sustainable development in Scotland.

Question 27 – What should be the key priority for the strategy in relation to biodiversity and wildlife management?

- **Number of respondents**

There were 22 responses (67%) to this question, eight from individuals and 14 from organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

Several respondents referred to the need for Crown Estate Scotland to use best available data and to create a set of measures against which they can prioritise action and measure success. In essence respondents wanted to see a reverse in the decline of biodiversity and an expansion of native habitats. Reduction in grazing pressure from deer would be a useful tool to aid this ambition.

Long term planning is required to achieve this goal and respondents referred to Crown Estate Scotland unique placement in the market which should allow them to work in this way. Respondents felt that it would be necessary to integrate natural capital thinking across all decision making within the Estate in order to mainstream the approach rather than having it as an add on or separate priority.

In common with other questions respondents again encouraged Crown Estate to work closely with partners, tenants and communities to achieve the best possible outcome for all concerned.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“The priority should be to align with and support the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.”

“CES should engage more actively on reducing the impacts and pressures imposed on this environment by leading in best practice and developing and supporting research and other activities which directly improve the water environment.”

“Where possible wild habitat should be encouraged back towards complex ecosystems of a characteristically Scottish nature, whether it be wildcats, otters or even wolves.”

“The Estate should seek to develop a metric to measure biodiversity and wildlife, so as to develop strategies which result in net biodiversity gain across the Estate’s activities, akin to strategies to become a net carbon sink. Developing a workable biodiversity metric is challenging, but would have widespread value in land management across the UK.”

“Ancient woodland is one of the most biodiverse habitats we have and therefore its restoration and enhancement should be key priorities for the management of this habitat for biodiversity...this is important to be included in the strategy because it is recognised that more than half of Scotland’s native woodlands are in poor condition for biodiversity.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

Crown Estate Scotland should consider including ambitious targets for increases to biodiversity on the Estate. An excellent start has been made with the response to the Scottish Biodiversity Statement.

The organisation could consider a deer reduction strategy on the Estate.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Crown Estate Scotland recognise the need to prioritise increases in biodiversity as part of the strategy. In the Rural Assets Strategy, we will focus on biodiversity as part of our wider work in promoting sustainable use of natural resources. This work will be aligned with and support the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.

Question 28 - Are there other strategic natural capital or environmental issues or opportunities that the strategy should address and if so what are these?

- **Number of respondents**

There were 19 responses (56%) to this question, seven from individuals and 12 from organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

It is clear that respondents overwhelmingly felt there were other natural capital or environmental issues and opportunities which should be addressed. The charts for individuals and organisations largely mirrored the overall result.

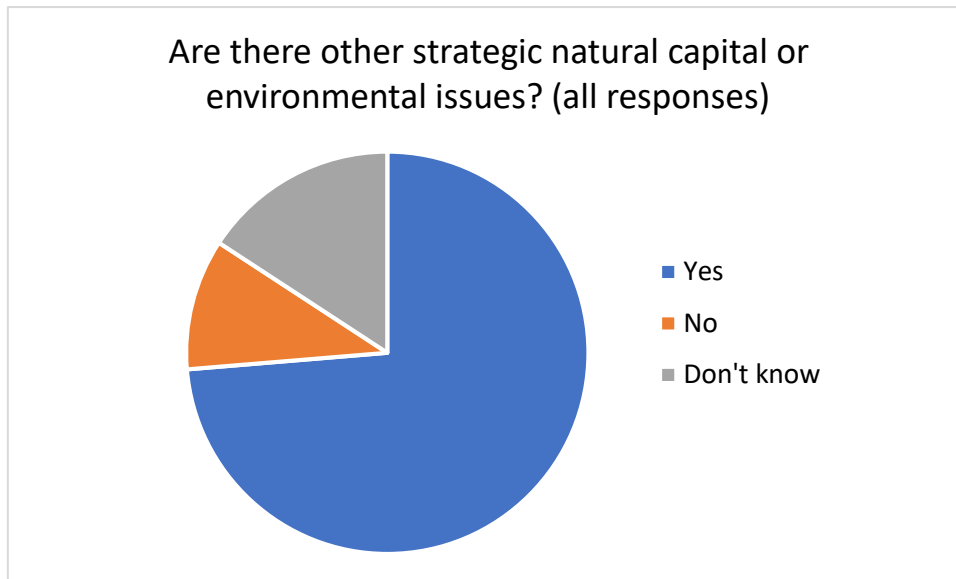


Figure 32 Are there other strategic natural capital or environmental issues? (all responses)

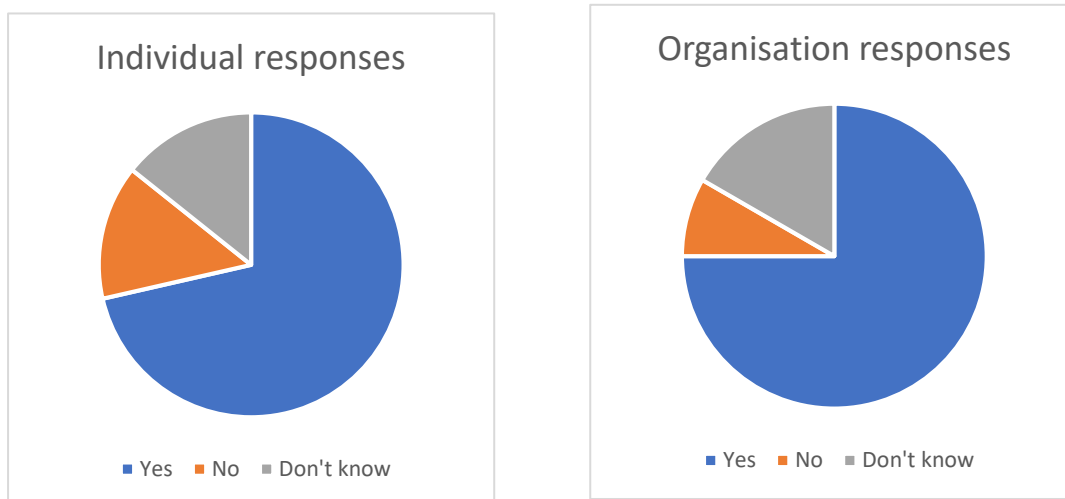


Figure 33 Are there other strategic natural capital or environmental issues? Individual responses (L) and organizational responses (R)

The question drew out significant detail with people naming a range of opportunities. Working in ecologically functional units the organisation could consider

- Rewilding with introductions of native predators (wolves)
- Carbon farming/trading where investors can invest in carbon capture related to tree planting or peatland restoration
- Woodland crofts which offer closer management for biodiversity gain
- Enhancement of water quality and bankside improvements
- Flood risk management
- Management of invasive non-native species
- Air quality improvement
- Landscape and heritage sensitivity studies.

All of these opportunities are mentioned in the context of delivery against the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the National Ecological Network for Scotland (proposed in the National Planning Framework) and the Paris Agreement. As per previous questions Crown Estate Scotland are encouraged by respondents to ensure that biodiversity and natural capital are considered in all decision making and not left as an add on or a separate strategy.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“Recognising natural capital as a financial opportunity with elements of nature that produce value, such as forests, rivers, land, minerals, renewable or non-renewable resources. Natural capital is the basic structure of all other types of capital.”

“An ecosystem services approach across the CE[S] rural estate would increase profile and co-occurrence with Scottish Government objectives on both Landuse Strategy and The 2020 Biodiversity Challenge. We would like to see CE[S] become an exemplar in promoting this approach to land stewardship. That would mean working in partnership to a greater extent in South Scotland than has been the case to date.”

“Environmental concerns should be embedded throughout the strategy, not left for consideration as a separate section. The aforementioned sections such as agriculture and forestry all have environmental issues at their heart as these types of land uses are dependent on the environment, therefore these land uses should take the key steps outlined in the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy available [here](#).”

“The rural estate should be ready to challenge the [re]introduction of invasive and non-native species. These have huge potential to seriously damage farming interests on the estate.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

Crown Estate Scotland should take onboard the suggestions listed above as the rural assets strategy is being more fully developed. As these are clearly areas of interest, the organisation should consider giving information to the public about these topics in relation to the management of the Estate.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Crown Estate Scotland will review and consider the natural capital and environmental opportunities suggested by respondents when developing the Rural Assets Strategy. We recognise the need for clear and early consultation with tenants and communities prior to pursuing these opportunities.

Question 29 - How should the strategy prioritise investment in projects that enhance cultural and natural heritage infrastructure of most benefit to local communities and visitors to the Scottish Crown Estate?

- **Number of respondents**

There were 20 responses (61%) to this question, four individuals and 16 organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

The responses repeatedly expressed the desire to see Crown Estate Scotland develop strategic plans in collaboration and consultation with those most affected. It was suggested this could be on the basis of each of the rural estates and the plans should align with the strategic local or regional plans such as the Local Development Plans.

Opportunities for tourism were suggested which included feedback about the need for improvement or investment in access (but not with tarmac paths) and parking. Respondents suggested focusing in on assets which are already popular with visitors and enhancing them, perhaps aligned to the proactive management of the historic environment. Investment in signage and interpretation was also suggested.

Other ideas included prioritising wildlife enhancement, support for improvements in biodiversity and rewilding projects.

Respondents also made it clear that they were aware of the need to make investments which provided good value for money.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“Don't pitch your offer so high that families are dissuaded from enjoying your assets. Landscapes should be free - for at least some days of the year or for locals. Building entry can be paid for. Car parks, free. Visitor numbers will be higher and you will make the cash in the cafe!”

“Priority should be given to projects that support the community's aspiration to be a great place to live, work and visit. They should provide the communities with opportunities to become more sustainable through the ownership and management of assets. We look to CES to build on their involvement in the Tomintoul and Glenlivet Landscape Partnership with on going support for the project legacy.”

“We welcome the recognition of the strong role that engagement, collaboration and partnership working plays in achieving positive outcomes for the historic environment and people's interaction with it.”

“The rivers may not provide a significant return in terms of direct finance to the exchequer but have considerable health, wellbeing, social and community benefits. The CES should invest in these areas which have the most potential impact on the people of Scotland.”

“The Strategy should make a commitment to develop a plan for each estate, identifying the key resources, identifying the key measures required, identifying the key partners in each case and the likely resources required.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

Bearing in mind the suggested focus on tourism, wildlife enhancement and good value for money, Crown Estate Scotland should consider developing strategic plans in partnership with those most affected. Plans on the basis of each of the rural estates have been suggested.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

In finalising the Rural Assets Strategy, Crown Estate Scotland will consider how it might approach developing estate wide plans to inform investment in projects that enhance cultural and natural heritage infrastructure of most benefit to local communities and visitors to the Scottish Crown Estate.

Future Asset Purchase

Question 30 What should the priorities be for future acquisitions of property be and what benefits should Crown Estate Scotland focus on delivering in a future purchasing strategy?

- **Number of respondents**

There were 15 responses (45%) to this question, five from individuals and ten from organisations, two of which referred to previous responses.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

Respondents were clear that future acquisitions should complement, complete or enhance the existing portfolio. They also recognised that there is a significant need to raise funds to deliver on the many aspirations both within the existing strategy and those raised by this consultation and so future acquisitions should be able to provide significant revenue generation opportunities. These should support the rural economy and should be considered as opportunities to work in partnership with communities in joint ventures which offer place-making benefits alongside the financial benefits.

Respondents again took the opportunity to emphasise the need for access (including for horse riders) to be maintained and enhanced and for biodiversity and natural capital to be prioritised.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“Only buy what you need to complete a particular sensible 'jigsaw'.”

“We suggest any expansion should relate to the current holding, eg expansion to include whole river catchments or where additional land or building makes a significant difference to viability. We also suggest that future expansion could be in partnership with local communities which could help deliver the Scottish Government's target for community land-ownership.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

Crown Estate Scotland should make clear how any future purchases complement, complete or enhance the existing portfolio.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

When considering any future acquisitions of property, Crown Estate Scotland will prioritise the need for future purchases to complement, complete or enhance the existing portfolio.

Unnumbered question - If you have any further comments or points that you think should be taken into account in the development of a rural assets strategy please state these below.

- **Number of respondents**

Nine responses (27%) were received to this question, two from individuals and seven from organisations.

- **Highlights / summary of the responses**

Respondents took the opportunity to encourage Crown Estate Scotland to work collaboratively with communities and other investors to maximise societal benefit whilst securing financial growth.

A number of useful suggestions and comments are included below. They have been edited for the purposes of this document.

- **Supporting quotations from the responses**

“It is fantastic to see Crown Estate Scotland's commitment to inclusive growth in this strategy and we look forward to continuing to support them as they develop and deliver it.”

“We appreciate that the approach suggested takes CES into a different arena and wondered whether a pilot investment working collaboratively with a development trust that has reasonably well-developed plans to create affordable homes, workspaces and relatively small-scale industry, perhaps a craft brewery or tourist accommodation.”

“The 3 estates managed by Crown Estate Scotland in Moray all lie partially or wholly within the area designated by the Scottish Government for the creation of new crofts. There is therefore the opportunity for the Crown Estate to create new crofts - and from our perspective, particularly new woodland crofts - on these estates, which would support all of the aims listed on page 4 of the consultation document, namely:

- Grow financial and wider value
- Support business growth and development
- Create opportunities for others to use assets
- Support beneficial land-use change
- Promote socio-economic, community and environmental benefits
- Provide opportunities for existing and new tenancies or agreements”

“You may wish to consider whether this strategy falls under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and we would be happy to offer further advice on this if that would be helpful.”

“It is noted that the Rural Assets Strategy Consultation does not cover coastal assets. We would query why this is the case as the issues and strategic priorities outlined in the consultation, and the approach to community engagement and involvement, are equally relevant to many coastal assets...We would urge Crown Estate Scotland to consider the approach to Rural Assets also includes coastal assets.

In addition to the omission of coastal assets from the Rural Assets Strategy it appears that the issue of climate change has not been acknowledged in the approach to managing assets:

- The value attributed to assets and natural resources should include those which contribute to climate change, adaptation and mitigation, especially those that could be developed to contribute more.
- ‘Resilience’ is mentioned in the document – resilience should include economic, social and environmental resilience with the latter including climate resilience.
- Climate change is a key strategic consideration that is not evident in the Strategy and must be addressed.”

“Our principle observation is that we welcome the opportunity to meet with CE[S]... We read with interest the work that CE[S] have been doing on rural estates with community organisations in other parts of Scotland. We would now like to see a similar more high-profile approach taken at Applegarth. We are aware of previous work but believe that Applegarth has much greater potential to contribute to the development of a sustainable future in this part of the Southern Uplands. We would be a willing partner to help with this.”

“The NFUS Crown Estate Agricultural Tenants Working Group welcome the opportunity to input into this important consultation. The tenants contend that, in general, the farming industry and the rural estates have been good custodians of Scotland’s land, given the financial and fiscal climate. A responsible balance must be maintained between traditional industries and industrial, environmental and recreational facilities, if they are to be enjoyed by the many even if they are managed by the few.”

- **Result / recommendation for action**

Crown Estate Scotland should consider if the rural assets strategy falls under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland Act) 2005.

The organisation should consider if coastal assets could be considered holistically with the rural assets.

- **Response by Crown Estate Scotland to the recommendation**

Crown Estate Scotland are currently developing a draft 2020 – 2023 Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan will present our overall objectives for the assets we manage and propose how to deliver these objectives through specific actions. We are currently preparing to consult on this draft Corporate Plan, with the consultation period commencing at the end of August 2019. The Corporate Plan consultation along with feedback gained through this consultation exercise on our rural assets will feed into the final 2020 – 2023 Corporate Plan and inform the final Rural Assets Strategy. We will publish both these documents in early 2020.

The Crown Estate Scotland 2020 - 2023 Corporate Plan is subject to the Environmental Assessment (Scotland Act) 2005 and so will go through the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) process. As we outline above, because the final content of the Rural Assets Strategy will be closely aligned to the Corporate Plan, we will not be completing a separate SEA on this strategy document.

As with our Rural Assets, Crown Estate Scotland are taking a strategic approach to managing its Coastal assets. We believe that ports & harbours and marine tourism combined with support for locally-led regeneration and sustainability will deliver long-term benefits for coastal communities. We will consult on these plans for our Coastal assets, requesting feedback on the overall objectives of managing these assets and principles for decision-making.

Annex 1 - Overview of respondents

In total 33 responses were received to the consultation, nine from individuals and 24 from organisations. One late response received shortly after closing, and not addressing individual questions, was from an individual. Organisations who responded were:

- Aberdeenshire Council
- Argyll and Bute Council (officer response)
- British Goldpanning Association
- British Horse Society Scotland and Bonnyrigg and Lasswade Community Council
- Business in the Community Scotland
- Community Land Scotland
- Confor
- Crown Estate Agricultural Tenants Working Group
- Development Trusts Association Scotland
- Dumfries and Galloway Council
- Eden Angling Association
- Fisheries Management Scotland
- Forth District Salmon Fishery Board
- Historic Environment Scotland
- RTPI Scotland
- Scottish Anglers National Association
- Scottish Land & Estates
- Southern Uplands Partnership
- The Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO) Scotland
- The National Trust for Scotland
- Tomintoul & Glenlivet Development Trust
- Woodland Crofts Partnership
- Woodland Trust Scotland

One organisation asked for their response not to be made public, this has been removed from the public record. Six of the nine individual responses requested to remain anonymous and their names have been removed from the public record.