



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT - RESULTS

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| Title of Policy | National Development Plan for Crofting |
| Summary of aims and desired outcomes of Policy | <p>The Plan will set the long-term strategic direction for crofting, highlighting the core elements necessary to ensure that crofting delivers policy priorities in relation to climate change and biodiversity and remains at the heart of our rural and remote rural communities.</p> <p>The Plan will showcase the environmental credentials of crofting, highlighting the importance of crofting to the environment, biodiversity and mitigation of climate change, through the use of best practice case studies.</p> |
| Directorate: Division: team | Directorate for Agriculture & Rural Economy Agriculture Policy Division Agricultural Development and Crofting |

Executive summary

The overarching aim of the Plan is to create and maintain sustainable crofting communities and businesses. The Plan will set the long-term strategic direction for crofting, highlighting the core elements necessary to ensure that crofting delivers policy priorities in relation to climate change and biodiversity and remains at the heart of our rural and remote rural communities.

The Plan will promote high nature value agricultural activity, and showcase the environmental credentials of crofting, highlighting the importance of crofting to the environment, biodiversity, and mitigation of climate change.

Background

The Plan will affect crofters and crofting communities. Crofting is a system of land tenure that exists in Scotland's Highlands and Islands. Crofting contributes to the sustainability of Scotland's rural and island communities.

The Plan covers a number of areas, including the Crofting Commission's role in the development of crofting, job creation and partnership working, environment and biodiversity, housing, local food networks, community development and financial investments.

Through the Crofting Commission's expanded development and regulatory activities, the Scottish Government will encourage: active management of common grazings; taking action on failure to cultivate and neglect of croft land, as well as non-residency, which will create further opportunities for new entrants; and the exploration of new ways to ensure that entry to crofting is more accessible.

Throughout the development and drafting process of the Plan, crofting officials engaged with members of the Crofting Commission, HIE, NatureScot, SG colleagues and the Crofting Stakeholder Forum.

The Scope of the EQIA

The National Development Plan was based upon the work undertaken by the Crofting Stakeholder Forum and its six priority papers covering crofting legislation, new entrants, housing, crofting development, financial incentives and common grazings.

The Plan also builds upon the responses received to the SG 'Stability and Simplicity' consultation, undertaken in 2018; the public consultation of 'Crofting Legislation and Future Priorities for Crofting'; and the survey results to the 'Economic Condition of Crofting Report, together with various published reports that have been carried out on the subject of crofting, or affecting crofting.

The Crofting Commission were involved in the EQIA process.

Key Findings

There is no barrier to individuals with protected characteristics from becoming crofters, or gaining advice and support from the relevant bodies on becoming a crofter. The National Development Plan is applicable to all crofters, irrespective of age, disability, gender and gender identity

(including pregnancy and maternity), sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Having considered the potential impacts of the Plan, crofting officials and those consulted, agree that no individual will be disadvantaged by the Plan. The Plan is neutral to all protected characteristics and all individuals, as it applies to all crofters equally across the crofting counties of the Highlands and Islands. It is therefore our assessment that the National Development Plan for Crofting does not give rise to any equality issues.

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