Written submission from John McLeod

Response to the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill

1. I welcome the Bill, and believe that it is timely, has the potential to enhance the prosperity and well-being of the people of Scotland, and contains many practical proposals of substance and merit.

2. I believe that a significant barrier to meaningful and effective land use and reform in Scotland is the lack of information available to the public concerning the crucial importance of this dimension of national life. I would therefore urge the Committee to give further consideration to the role of the Land Commission in promoting greater public awareness and engagement around these issues. This could be achieved through a website, newsletter, and local meetings. In addition, I would suggest that it would be enormously helpful for the Commission to organize and sponsor an annual two-day Conference, open to all, at which participants could offer and present papers or workshops on any aspect of land use, and which would include opportunities for genuine dialogue between different stakeholders. The Commission could be mandated to undertake such activities by adding the following statement, at page 9, section 20.1: “to promote active public awareness and engagement in all aspects of land use and policy”.

3. While the Land Commission represents a valuable addition to the governance of Scotland, I am concerned that the Bill formulates its role in isolation from other parts of the Scottish Government. I believe that maximizing the benefits of more effective land use and reform, in relation to both economic and well-being outcomes, requires comprehensive integration and consideration of land issues into decision-making in fields such as health, social care, education, housing, criminal justice, and industry. I therefore urge the Committee to give further consideration to the coordination and liaison role of the Land Commission. The Commission could be mandated to undertake this role by adding the following statement, at page 9, section 20.1: “to liaise with other departments of the Scottish Government around any issue or policy that has a land use dimension”.