



Respondent Form 001

Questions

Q1. Do you agree that Highlands and Islands Enterprise Community Land Unit is the appropriate body to provide advice to the KLTR on potentially suitable community groups? If not, who would you suggest and why?

Yes; although I believe Community Land Scotland should also be involved (especially if the land in question is located in Scotland)

Q2. Do you agree that a valuation and other reports undertaken by the KLTR are sufficiently independent to avoid duplication of cost for all involved in the OPTS? If not, why not?

Yes

Q3. Do you think three months for the local authority to decide whether or not it wishes to take ownership of an ownerless property is reasonable? If not, how long would you suggest and why?

I believe four months would be more suitable - it takes at least a month to build awareness of this type of opportunity in a community, two months of consultation, and a fourth month to ensure ample time for a well-informed decision to be made.

Q4. Do you agree that the above process is reasonable and workable? If not, how would you improve the process?

Yes

Q5. Do you agree that the property transfer value for OPTS should be at "nominal value" as described above? If not, what value do you think should apply and why?

The Crown owns 116,000 hectares of rural property alone. Anything other than "nominal value" would be scandalous; indeed, I believe OPTS property should be handed over to local communities at a symbolic value of £1 in order to improve the Crown's and KLTR's public image and relationship with the public.



Respondent Form 001

Q6. Do you think the KLTR should place conditions on the transfer of OPTS property to ensure the intended benefits to local communities are delivered?

Yes

Q7. Do you think a recognised public authority should retain a property to allow an appropriately constituted community body to raise the necessary funds, etc.? If so, should a timescale be set for raising the funds?

No

Q8. Do you think the OPTS should apply to all properties as described or should it be restricted to certain types of properties? If the latter, which types?

Yes, all types. Commercial properties can be adapted into residential ones if this is seen as necessary for a community, and vice versa.

Q9. Do you agree that the above proposals provide an opportunity for ensuring community interests are considered as early as possible? If not, why not?

Yes, although even in the 4 month period I suggested it would be difficult to ensure that *all* community interests would be collected efficiently

Q10. Do you agree that the above criteria should apply to the OPTS? If not, what criteria do you think should or should not apply and why?

Yes

Q11. Do you agree that the OPTS should ensure the wider public interest is considered before private interest? If not, why not?

Yes, public interest should always be considered before private interest.



Respondent Form 001

Q12. Do you think the public interest is defined reasonably for the purposes of the OPTS? If not, how should it be defined?

Yes

Q13: Do you agree that the KLTR should take a high-level approach to sustainable development issues, as above, in order to allow further scrutiny and transparency at local level? If not, why not?

Yes

Q14: Do you consider there are specific circumstances in which the KLTR should never deal with dissolved company property when a company still remains within its 6-year restoration window?

As long as problems don't arise and lengthy/costly legal battles don't arise from any loopholes, so that a dissolved company doesn't attempt to take a now-refurbished property away from the community

Q15. In addition to the above, do think any other financial controls or safeguards are required? If so, please describe how and why.

Yes; all safeguards that ensure private profiteering will not in any way hinder or hijack this process.

Q16. Do you think the KLTR's approach to liability and risk is acceptable? If not, how could this be improved?

Yes

Q17. Are there any other ways you think the OPTS may be monitored? If so, in what way?

Through a twice-yearly review by a committee composed of members of the public living nearby recently-acquired OPTS properties.

Q18. Do you agree that penalties for non-delivery of aspirations are unnecessary, as above, and that local accountability should be sufficient to ensure delivery of agreed aspirations?



Respondent Form 001

Yes, most likely.

Q19. Which of the further measures above do you think should be applied to the OPTS?

Ideally, none of them; I think the market value of the OPTS properties shouldn't be limited to under a certain amount as it would be a valuable asset for the community to have a larger property / a property in better condition than one which is completely run-down.

Q20. Do you think properties within the 6-year restoration window should be excluded from OPTS or do you agree that a criteria-based policy approach, as described above, is the best way of addressing this?

Yes

Q21. Are there any other measures you think should be taken to safeguard those involved in the OPTS process?

No

Q22. Are you aware of any examples of how the proposals in this consultation might impact, positively or negatively, on island communities in a way that is different from the impact on mainland areas?

The impact of anything to do with properties is always much stronger - both negative and positive - in island areas. Ten social housing units (flats or houses) are like scraping the tip of an iceberg in densely populated urban areas; while in an island setting, like the island in the Outer Hebrides where I live, ten social housing units could completely turn around the fate of a town by providing opportunities for young people and young families, reversing demographic decline, and so forth. There are so many derelict houses in the Outer Hebrides and every piece of legislation that might help us deal with this problem is welcome. The ownership would have to be in the hands of the local authority, however, to prevent the crisis with second home ownership and short-term lets which we are already seeing unfold before our eyes.

Q23. Are you aware of any examples of particular current or future impacts, positive or negative, on young people, (children, pupils, and young adults up to the age of 26) of any aspect of the proposals in this consultation?



Respondent Form 001

As I have said in Q22, the impact of enlarging the existing social/affordable housing stock for adults up to the age of 26 and (their) children would be immense in every part of Scotland, considering the housing crisis we are living through right now. As a 26 year old with no prospect of ever owning a home in the community I live in, I feel very strongly about this issue.

Q24. Are you aware of any examples of how the proposals in this consultation may impact, either positively or negatively, on those with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation)?

People with protected characteristics are even more likely to have issues accessing / finding affordable housing, so increasing the provision of this in our communities will benefit all of the groups mentioned above.

Q25. Are you aware of any examples of potential impacts, either positive or negative, that you consider any of the proposals in this consultation may have on the environment?

I can't speak for the Lowlands, but what we need most desperately in the Highlands and Islands is re peopling; the impact of human activity (in gardens, roadsides, hedges) often increases biodiversity in our region rather than diminishing it, especially in areas where damage by deer overgrazing is significant. Inhabited houses have trees and flowers growing around them which may not have had the chance to grow there otherwise.

Q26. Are you aware of any examples of how the proposals in this consultation might impact, positively or negatively, on groups or areas at socioeconomic disadvantage (such as income, low wealth or area deprivation)?

I have already answered this question in Q22-24

Q27. Are you aware of any potentially unacceptable costs and burdens that you think may arise as a result of the proposals within this consultation?

No; see answer to Q5

Q28. Are you aware of any impacts, positive or negative, of the proposals in this consultation on data protection or privacy?



Respondent Form 001

No

Please email to the KLTR Policy Team's mailbox at Policy@KLTR.gov.uk.
You can save and return your responses while the consultation is still open but please ensure that consultation responses are submitted before the closing date.

If you are unable to respond by e-mail, please print and complete the Respondent Information Form and send it by post to:

**OPTS Consultation
KLTR Policy Team
Scottish Government Building
Area 1F North
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ**