

Senior Policy Officer – Agriculture & Environment

Based at: Scottish Land & Estates Headquarters, Musselburgh

Salary: dependent on experience.

Scottish Land & Estates

Scottish Land & Estates is a membership organisation that represents the interests of rural land owning businesses across Scotland. Our membership is heavily involved in a wide variety of business sectors, all of which are vitally important to rural prosperity and sustainability. Scottish Land & Estates strives to have the valuable contribution of landowners recognised both publicly and politically and aims to promote the contributions of landowners and estates, to protect property rights, to ensure an appropriate business and regulatory framework for members' interests and to play a key role in maintaining and delivering sustainable rural communities.

Policy team

The Scottish Land & Estates policy team comprises the Policy & Research Manager, Senior Policy Officer (Agriculture & Environment), Senior Policy Officer (Business & Property), Policy Officer (Conservation & Wildlife Management), Policy Officer (Communities & Rural Development), and the Legal Adviser. The team performs several key functions, it:

1. works with members to formulate policy positions and identify policy priorities;
2. keeps abreast of policy developments in all areas where members have an interest to ensure that members are informed about changes in policy and regulatory framework and it communicates these changes through a range of communication channels;
3. represents the interests of members at all stages in the policy development and legislative process, influencing government policy at local, national and European level;
4. responds to queries from members on policy topics;
5. develops, or raises awareness of, good practice across a wide range of policy areas of relevance to members; and
6. identifies new opportunities and risks for land-based businesses so that members are aware of forthcoming opportunities and challenges.

The work of the policy team is divided into two portfolios: Land Use & Environment and Business, Property and Communities with a high degree of integration and crossover between the two areas to ensure that issues are considered in a holistic and integrated manner. The Land Use & Environment portfolio encapsulates strategic land use issues, primary industries such as farming, natural resource management, wildlife management, conservation, protected areas and biodiversity. The Business, Property & Community portfolio encapsulates housing, planning, renewables, energy efficiency, business diversification, heritage, broadband, tourism, skills/education and community engagement and development. In addition, the areas of agricultural holdings and wider land reform sit with our Executive Director. These lists are not exhaustive but cover the main areas within each portfolio.

The Director of the Scottish Moorland Group sits separately to the policy team but the policy work of the DoSMG lies mainly within the LU&E portfolio, including areas such as Prevention of Wildlife Crime and Muirburn. In addition, the DoSMG works closely with all members of the policy team on issues which impact on grouse moor management or have a moorland dimension.

The policy work of the organisation is steered by the National Policy Group, which is made up of members and staff. The National Policy Group assists staff in the development of policy, the formulation of policy positions and it provides advice to staff on policy priorities and objectives. The group will also provide expert and diverse views on specific cross cutting areas of work such as land reform or post- Brexit rural policy. The National Policy Group:

- complements staff skills and provides expert advice on specific policy issues;
- advises on the implementation of policy and operation of regulation and legislation;
- provides a representative voice for the wider membership.

Job Summary

At a time of unprecedented change for Scotland, you will be required to represent the members of Scottish Land & Estates in relation to some of the key strategic policy issues for the rural sector. With a focus on the agricultural policy area (including environmental policy relating to farming), this will involve considerable engagement with a wide range of stakeholders as well as representational and lobbying activity. A key part of the job will be identifying strategic opportunities and threats and working to engage in the policy development process. It will involve producing policy briefings and technical guidance for the membership as well as informative articles for use in a range of communication channels.

You will be responsible for working up specific policy objectives for your policy portfolio area on an annual basis for discussion with the Policy & Research Manager and Executive Director and agreement by National Policy Group.

Specific duties will include:

- To be the lead officer in relation to agricultural policy. This will focus heavily on Brexit and the future of farming and land management in Scotland and include all areas of environmental policy relevant to farming and soil, and areas of policy development relating to integrated land management, natural capital and ecosystem services.
- To identify strategic opportunities and threats within your policy portfolio.
- To identify and seek to influence legislation, regulation and policy at regional, Scottish, UK and European levels which will affect the membership.
- To develop clear policy positions and objectives for each of the subject areas within your policy portfolio.
- To develop and deliver 2 or 3 discreet policy campaigns per annum.
- To help support the work of the Policy Officer (Conservation & Wildlife Management).
- To advise Scottish Land & Estates on all aspects of existing and emerging relevant land use and environment issues.
- To identify and take advantage of opportunities for thought leadership and profile raising.

- To represent Scottish Land & Estates on relevant issues to the Scottish Parliament, Scottish Government and its agencies, and in meetings with stakeholders and partners.
- To play a key role in the delivery of communications outputs relating to your policy portfolio.
- To produce technical papers (both internal and external) and Scottish Land & Estates member Briefing Notes and Information Sheets on relevant policy issues.
- To respond to consultation papers of relevance to the work of Scottish Land & Estates.
- To provide relevant input and support to the organisation's National Policy Group, and provide staff lead for technical and issue specific sub-groups relating to areas within your remit.
- To understand the legislative and regulatory burdens on rural businesses and where relevant work to minimise these.
- To promote best practice across the range of policy issues within your remit.
- To provide advice, within defined criteria, to individual members of Scottish Land & Estates, such advice being in addition to, and not a substitute for, that of the member's own professional advisers.
- To provide generic advice to Scottish Land & Estates members through Land Business, policy update, e-news, website, information sheets etc. on relevant current and future issues.
- To support the Policy & Research Manager and Executive Director in the achievement of the Business Plan objectives, including the production of specific work plans for relevant policy areas.
- To carry out other duties as agreed with the Policy & Research Manager and Executive Director.

Person Specification

Experience

Essential

- Experience of working within the land-based business sector.
- Experience of political representation and influencing.

Desirable

- Experience of working with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Experience of working within the environment sector.

Skills

Essential

- Excellent communications skills including ability to engage with members and with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Ability to understand and translate legislative and policy information.
- Ability to build strong and effective relationships with relevant stakeholders.
- Ability to produce concise written reports and briefings.
- Ability to work on own initiative and as part of a team.
- Strong skills in managing competing priorities in a pressured working environment and working to tight deadlines.
- High level of tact, diplomacy and confidentiality.
- Ability to use a wide range of computer packages.

Desirable

- Familiarity of social media for business purposes.

Knowledge

Essential

- Detailed understanding of the issues affecting Scottish farming and of the current policy challenges.
- Detailed understanding of Scottish environmental policy.
- Knowledge of the Scottish, UK and European legislative framework and policy development structure.
- Understanding of the issues raised by Brexit and the consequence issues facing the Scottish Government and land managers.
- Understanding of the business interests and concerns of rural landowners and land managers.

Desirable

- Detailed understanding of the wider issues relating to nature conservation and wildlife management.
- General understanding of a wider range of policy issues affecting rural Scotland and land owners.

Education

- Educated to degree level, or with equivalent work experience.

Other

- Candidates must possess a full driving licence and have access to a car – travel across rural Scotland is an essential part of the role.
- Willingness to work occasional evenings or weekends, for which time off will be given in lieu.

Closing date: 2nd March 2018. Applicants are asked to send a detailed CV and covering letter explaining why they are applying for the post and detailing evidence of how they meet the person specification.

Interviews: 12th March 2018

For further details please see www.scottishlandandestates.co.uk, email joyce.karch@scottishlandandestates.co.uk or telephone 0131 653 5400.