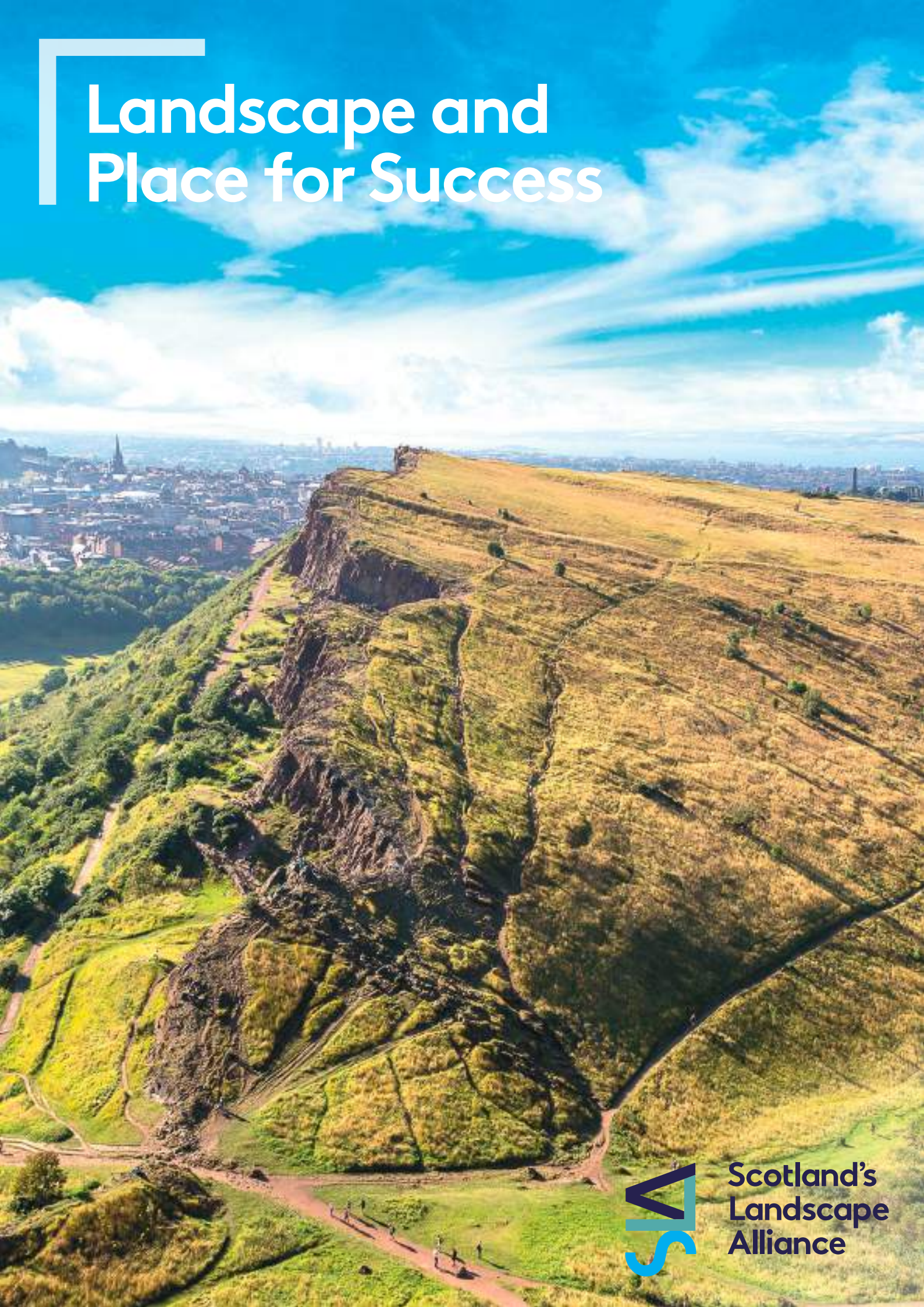


Landscape and Place for Success



Scotland's
Landscape
Alliance



Call to action

Scotland's Landscape Alliance has set out this call to action as we respond to the effects of the 2020 global pandemic. As effort is focused on the extraordinary steps required to revitalise our country, we need to continue to tackle the changes required to address climate change, public health and wellbeing and inclusive economic growth. Scotland's landscape should be recognised as part of the critical infrastructure and solutions needed for our recovery and essential to the delivery of Scotland's National Outcomes.

Who are we?

Scotland's Landscape Alliance (SLA) is a grouping of over 60 organisations with a common interest in raising awareness of the importance of Scotland's landscapes to climate resilience and biodiversity, our economic performance and public health and wellbeing. In doing this, we want to gain public and political support for the better care of Scotland's landscapes and places to maximise future benefits.



WHAT IS LANDSCAPE?

Landscape is the relationship between people and place. It provides the setting for our day-to-day lives and is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: our urban areas, countryside, coasts and waterways, in areas recognised as being of

outstanding beauty, as well as everyday spaces. Landscapes are an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of diversity of our shared cultural and natural heritage and a foundation for our identity, now and in the future.

Why is landscape important?

Scotland's landscape provides the physical foundation for our lives and the places where we live, work, learn and play. Access to high quality landscape influences our health, wellbeing and livelihoods. Landscape plays a vital role in tackling the global issues of climate change and biodiversity loss that are already having a major impact on all our lives. Scotland's landscape is essential to our nation's economic success both directly, in terms of the natural capital which underpins many industries, and indirectly through its impact on quality of life which attracts people to live in, work in and visit Scotland.

Why do we need action now?

Scotland is known internationally for the quality of its landscape, natural capital and built heritage. To continue to uphold this deserved reputation we need to be alive to and actively manage the changes that we face in the 21st century. Urbanisation, transport and energy choices as well as the global issues of climate change and biodiversity loss are now impacting on people's lives across Scotland due to declining air quality, urban heating, flooding and coastal erosion. Management practices are having a profound impact on the health of our land and native species, and new development is impacting on our wild landscapes.

We are at a tipping point, where change is happening at such a scale and speed that it is hard to comprehend the potential and cumulative impacts, but we do know that some changes will be hard to reverse. We need early action to safeguard our landscape and through good design and stewardship maximise the benefits to society and nature now and for the future. Landscape scale design responses are required to tackle the global issues of climate change and biodiversity loss and address the challenges that Scotland faces.

This will require a major shift in the mindset of all organisations and people involved in matters that affect our landscape. This needs to permeate daily actions and be supported by joined-up decision-making. Through the combined action of the Scottish Government, local government, stakeholders, landowners and communities we can ensure that Scotland's landscape is safeguarded and can play a full part in our recovery from current and any future biosecurity challenges, delivering health and wellbeing, inclusive economic growth and climate resilience.



OUR VISION

Our vision is a Scotland where the benefits of landscape are recognised and strengthened to support delivery

of Scotland's National Outcomes, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the principles of the European Landscape Convention.

Our Recommendations for Change

Scotland's Landscape Alliance has developed three interlinked high-level statements (about landscape and resilience, health and the economy), which are set out later in this document. The statements inform three recommendations to:

- Increase Scotland's resilience to climate change and associated environmental challenges.
- Improve the health and wellbeing of people in Scotland and reduce health inequalities.
- Support integrated land uses and deliver inclusive growth in Scotland's economy.

Outcomes

Our ambition is to achieve the following outcomes over the next five years across each of the three themes through concerted 'whole system' approaches:

1. There is leadership and recognition amongst key stakeholders (including the public) of landscape's many benefits and the need to protect and care for Scotland's landscape in order to deliver them.
2. There is better integration of regulation and policy for landscape and biodiversity, recognising their mutual dependencies and co-benefits.
3. We understand, can measure and quantify landscape quality. Methods of evaluation and investment recognise the multiple contributions of landscape and biodiversity to Scotland's economy and our cultural, social and environmental wellbeing.
4. Develop and implement an internationally recognised national statute for landscape protection which safeguards the benefits and co-benefits offered by well-managed landscapes.

5. Greater numbers of people are actively participating in landscape at all levels and are positively engaged in landscape decision-making.
6. Policies impacting on the landscape are shaped to positively contribute to the environmental, health and economic challenges of our time.
7. Land use and development planning, mechanisms and incentives are designed to maximise investment in landscape to deliver multiple benefits.
8. Urban and rural landscapes are designed and actively managed to increase resilience to environmental and health challenges.
9. Place/landscape-based decision-making informs trade-offs helping to resolve potential land use conflicts.
10. Those responsible for achieving landscape quality for resilience, health and the economy are supported and work collaboratively to take the necessary actions.





What the SLA is going to do

Communications and Engagement

We will deliver an evidence-based communications and engagement strategy to raise the public profile of Scotland's landscape and its contribution to addressing the environmental, social and economic challenges we face.

Scotland's Landscape Forum

We will develop the role of the SLA to become the forum for discussion and insight on landscape matters. We will act as a point of contact for advice, guidance and expertise. We will offer challenge where applicable to ensure appropriate landscape considerations relating to climate and resilience, health and wellbeing, land use and the economy are incorporated into relevant statute, policy, mechanisms and practice.

Land Management

We will work with our members to consider how their property and land can be managed and used to deliver and demonstrate the widest range of benefits around:

- reducing carbon emissions and increasing carbon sequestration.
- increasing the resilience of communities, businesses and places.
- protecting and enhancing natural habitats, ecosystems and species.
- improving the health and wellbeing of workers, local communities and visitors.
- reducing land use conflicts and contributing to inclusive, sustainable growth.





What we are asking stakeholders to do

Whilst the SLA and its member bodies can make a start, we will require the commitment and leadership of key stakeholders to get involved. We cannot continue to work in single issue silos, and we believe a whole system approach is required, led by the Scottish Government and the public sector and supported by private businesses, landowners and communities. We believe the following action is needed:

High Level Advisory Role

Landscape advice: Appoint an independent Chief Landscape Advisor to the Scottish Government and clearly identify responsibility for landscape within local authorities and planning.

National Standards, Indicators and Data

Landscape quality standards: Define appropriate quality standards and indicators to deliver positive health and wellbeing, environmental outcomes to address climate change action and biodiversity, and inclusive growth and reduced inequalities.

National indicators for landscape: Develop and begin reporting on national indicators for landscape within the National Performance Framework.

A statutory national plan and policy for Landscape, Land Use and Infrastructure: Consider and design appropriately for large scale change to deliver on Scottish Government priorities for climate change, loss of biodiversity and health and wellbeing.

Landscape protection: Develop a new statute based on best international practice (as for example developed by the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas), setting out a basis for protection for the public good.

Landscape data: Embed landscape thinking in the revision and digital transformation of Scotland's planning system, including the collection and inclusion of landscape data.

Degraded landscape: Define and map degraded landscape (urban, rural and coastal) and agree with landowners and communities the actions needed to revitalise them.

Decision-making

Statutory duties: Embed the proper design, management and effective use of all landscapes (rural and urban) into the statutory climate change, biodiversity, health and economic duties of all public sector bodies.

Accounting: Expand the use of Natural Capital Accounting to inform asset management and investment decisions around infrastructure and development.

Multifunctionality: Develop appropriate place/landscape-based policies, controls, incentives and support schemes to drive the delivery of a multifunctional approach to landscape by landowners and/or developers to meet climate change, biodiversity net gain, health and wellbeing, net zero carbon and housing targets and help resolve land use conflicts.

Good practice: Promote and support programmes that recognise, accredit and reward good practice in design, delivery, management and use of quality landscape.

Funding Mechanisms

Landscape Green Deal: Develop a new Landscape Green Deal funding mechanism to support action by public/private/community landscape partnerships (for example, to reinvigorate degraded land, deliver landscape-scale action, promote cultural landscapes, and address tourism landscape hotspots).

Rural development: Include funding mechanisms in a new Scottish Rural Development Programme that aim to deliver landscape quality outcomes, and increase partnership working and community-led innovation in relation to agricultural landscape.

Revenue funding: Establish and utilise revenue budgets to properly resource the management of public landscape assets to address environmental challenges, deliver health and wellbeing services and resources to the community and individuals, and contribute to equitable inclusive growth.

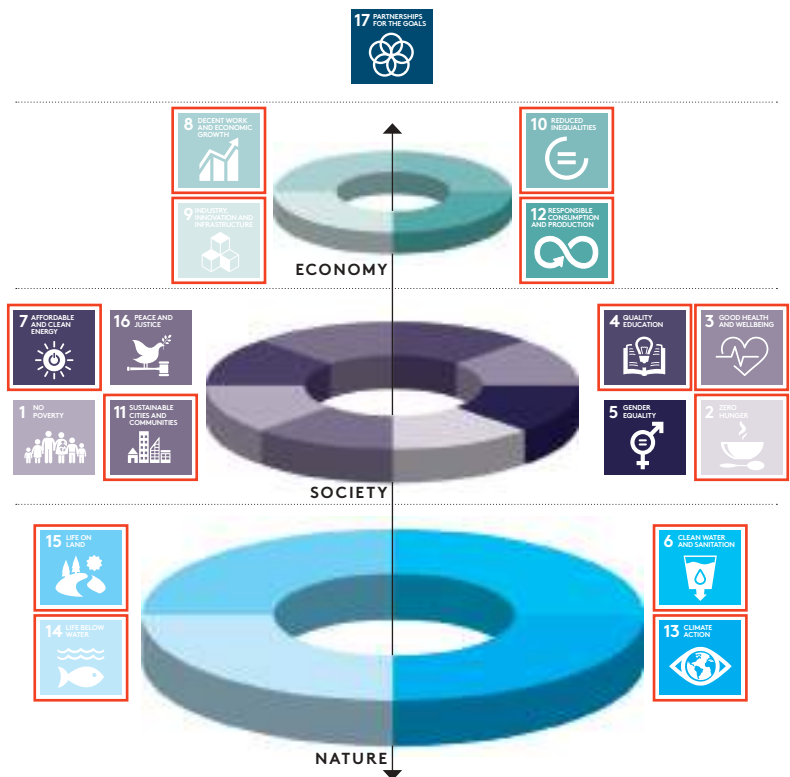
People

Communities: Ensure that decisions affecting local landscapes are taken collaboratively, with local communities given an equal voice and influence.

Invest in staff: Employ landscape experts within local authorities and invest in staff training to support better decision-making about landscape outcomes. Ensure equitable pay and conditions to help retain committed land-based workers, rangers and community facilitators who manage and connect communities with landscape.

Education and raising awareness:

Address landscape benefits explicitly in any decision-making processes involving local communities and at relevant subjects in secondary education. Raise awareness of its value to encourage active engagement of more people in landscape and also the employment opportunities available in landscape and land-based professions and industries.



The Wedding Cake diagram shows that nature supports society and then the economy. Landscape and Natural Capital, highlighted, are fundamental to the founding base and key components to the delivery of a number of the UN's 17 sustainable development goals and in consequence our National Performance Framework.



Landscape and Resilience to Environmental Challenges

Key messages

- Globally, we are facing existential challenges relating to our climate, biodiversity and the overall 'health' of our environment. The Scottish Government recognised a global Climate Emergency in 2019 and the clear link between climate change and the biodiversity/ecological crisis.
- These challenges are interconnected and interdependent and both act upon and are influenced by what happens to our landscape.
- High quality, well designed landscape has the potential to deliver climate change mitigation and adaption; to increase the resilience of our communities and businesses to the impacts of climate change; and to protect and enhance biodiversity.
- Collaborative, empowering approaches to placemaking and to local decision-making will support community resilience in the face of these environmental challenges.
- Action at a range of landscape scales is required, from green roofs and rain gardens to catchment-wide natural flood risk management and nature-based climate solutions such as a national ecological network. This is needed to improve urban air quality, reduce surface water flooding and the effects of urban heating.
- Place-based/landscape approaches to land use planning and management offer the potential to reduce land use conflicts (particularly between current land uses and new climate change interventions) and to deliver sustainable long-term solutions.





What environmental challenges are we facing?

In Scotland, and globally, we are facing a series of interconnected and interdependent challenges relating to our environment, most notably the twin issues of climate change and biodiversity loss. Whilst these challenges are environmental in nature, they have wide-ranging social and economic causes and consequences.

Landscapes are always changing but the responses we need to have in place to tackle these challenges will increase both the pace and scale of change. Care is needed to ensure that these changes are made sustainably and equitably, so that no section of Scottish society suffers unfairly, and that the actions we take are effective now and will not have future negative impacts.

1 Climate change and loss of biodiversity

Landscape management provides the opportunity to mitigate climate change by increasing carbon sequestration and, through adaptation, to increase resilience. There is significant demand on our land to store and sequester carbon through peatlands and woodlands and to reduce emissions from agricultural production and erosion of organic soils. An increase in renewable energy production is an essential requirement to decarbonise our power supply by 2045 and careful consideration is needed to deliver increased demand whilst minimising conflict with high value wild and protected landscape.



At a landscape scale, this will require more new forests and woodlands and management of existing woodlands and peatlands to act as carbon stores and to hold rainfall to slow the flow of water into rivers and burns. In the urban environment, we will need to invest in urban woodlands and green infrastructure, including green roofs, green walls and sustainable urban drainage systems. This new form of infrastructure, which will also bring more nature into our cities and towns, presents opportunities to improve urban landscape including treating underused, vacant and derelict land.

Many of the challenges facing Scotland’s fauna and flora are the result of (or are exacerbated by) development and intensive or single function land uses leading to a loss of biodiversity. With a change of focus, new development and different approaches to land use and land management can contribute positively to a net gain of biodiversity. The development of more wildlife-friendly and sustainable approaches that protect and enhance key habitats and sites, and create wider, national-scale ecological networks will reduce habitat fragmentation and allow wildlife to move through our urban and rural areas.

2 Reducing the potential for land use conflicts

We should recognise that the land use changes that will be needed to sequester more carbon, reduce flood risk, mitigate sea-level rise and increase habitat connectivity, for example, have (if introduced without sufficient thought and care) the potential to place restrictions on other land uses and impact negatively on wider landscape quality.

Trade-offs will be required but taking a landscape perspective, and working collaboratively with communities and other local stakeholders, is likely to lead to more sustainable, multifunctional, healthy and equitable results.

3 Landscape and community

The adaptation actions outlined above will increase the physical resilience of ecosystems, landscapes, settlements and buildings but it is important to remember that community resilience is also needed. There is evidence both from climate change work and from urban regeneration that if people are engaged and empowered within local decision-making and action they are likely to: develop solutions that are a better ‘fit’ to the local context and conditions; make connections that may be missed by professional stakeholders; better understand risks and proposed solutions; and cope better and recover more quickly when challenging events do occur.

This is one of the key reasons why we advocate working collaboratively with communities and other local stakeholders and applying the Place Principle to broader decision-making, policy development and planning processes at all scales.

FLOODING

Infrastructure Commission for Scotland: Phase 1 Key Findings Report – A Blueprint for Scotland

£42M

provided each year for new flood protection schemes

110,000

further properties at risk of flooding by 2080

865KM

of soft coastline has moved position since 1970s

33-50%

of coastal buildings, roads, rail and water networks lie in erodible areas

Landscape for Health and Wellbeing



Key messages

- Good landscape contributes to improved health and wellbeing, including in our poorest, most deprived areas and most vulnerable groups. The benefits of being in landscape are not limited to improvements associated with physical activity; using the outdoors improves mental wellbeing and encourages community cohesion.
- Poor landscape and deprivation often occur together, meaning that those in greatest need are least able to access quality outdoor spaces. This contributes to health inequalities in Scotland.
- Action at a range of landscape scales is required to improve air quality and reduce flooding and urban heating; effects of our changing climate that are directly and indirectly impacting on societal and individual health and wellbeing.
- Greater numbers of people could benefit from landscape for health and wellbeing but cannot do so due to underinvestment in the design, implementation or stewardship of their local landscape.
- Communities can feel that local landscapes important to them are at risk and that they have little say in what happens to the facilities and services and the benefits they offer.
- Landscape quality is not routinely or consistently measured and reported. This is due to variable coverage, methodologies and frequency of collection resulting in a lack of good quality data. Data can also be hard to access.





What makes for health-giving landscape?

The World Health Organization has identified some of the characteristics of a health-giving landscape. These include:

- Accessible, safe and good quality – there is greater use and levels of physical activity if people perceive landscape to be safe, aesthetically pleasing, with many amenities, is well maintained, easy to get to and close to home.
- Bigger is better – the size of landscape is likely to influence the levels and types of activity people undertake within it. Larger areas of urban greenspace are more beneficial in terms of physical activity behaviour compared to a number of smaller areas.
- Facilities encourage activity – park facilities such as marked/paved trails, water areas and playgrounds are effective at increasing levels of physical activity.
- Trees matter – greater tree cover and canopy density provide greater health benefit as long as they are maintained.
- Naturalness is important – being in more natural environments (like broadleaf woodland, improved grassland, and coastal landscapes) results in greater health gains.

What health challenges are we facing?

There is now a wealth of evidence demonstrating the importance of natural environments for good physical and mental wellbeing. The global pandemic of COVID-19 has clearly shown our basic human need to be able to access the outdoors to exercise and socialise. However, the delivery of health-giving landscape lags behind the data and there is much we need to do to support action, especially for those in greatest need.

1 Health inequalities

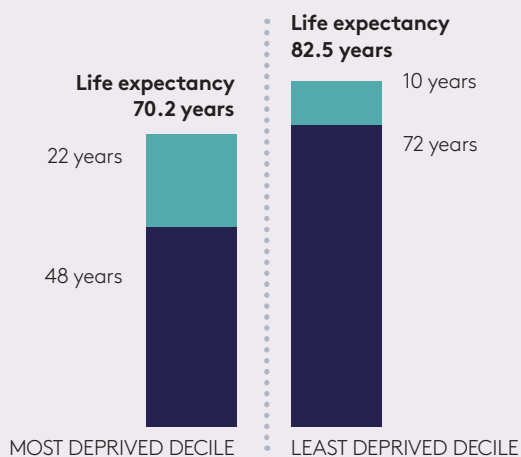
Health inequalities are the unfair and avoidable differences in people’s health across social groups and between different population groups. They represent thousands of unnecessary premature deaths every year in Scotland, and for men in the most deprived areas nearly 25 fewer years are spent in ‘good health’ than men in the least deprived areas; for women this is 22 years.

Those living in areas of greater deprivation are more likely to be exposed to harmful environmental factors, such as poor air quality, and less likely to have access to beneficial ones, such as greenspace. At present those suffering the worst health outcomes (i.e. the most deprived) have less access to health-enhancing outdoor places and more exposure to health-damaging environments.

For some health outcomes, particularly mental health, research shows that managed greenspaces can help mitigate the health impacts of socio-economic inequality. This is also likely for all-cause and circulatory disease mortality. In other words, the benefits of greenspace are greater for those worse off in society and landscape-based solutions that provide access to greenspace can help narrow the gap in health outcomes caused by socio-economic deprivation.

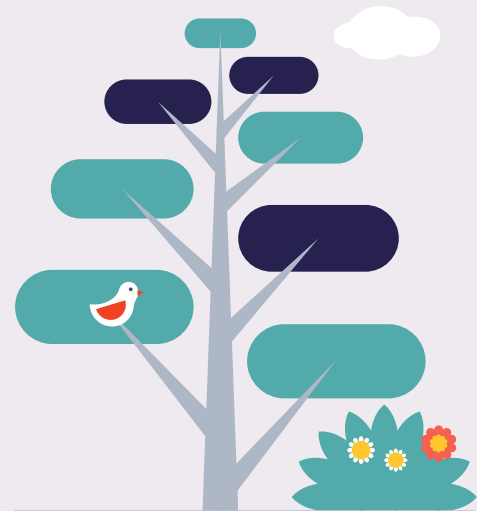
INEQUALITY RESULTS IN SHORTER LIVES

Health inequalities are the unfair and avoidable differences in people’s health across social groups and between different population groups



Scotland’s life expectancy gaps are among the worst in Europe

Years in good health
 Years not in good health



36%

Only a third (36%) of households in the most deprived urban areas of Scotland say there is a natural environment or wooded area in their neighbourhood

2 Underinvestment

Good quality and well-maintained facilities, including seats, toilets, cafes, play and sports facilities, provide greater choice, encourage activity and reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness. The presence of nature and opportunities to participate in cultural and social activities, such as growing food, are shown to improve mental health, encourage individual and community participation, strengthen social networks and increase the likelihood of physical activity.

In contrast, underinvestment in landscape results in problems such as overgrown vegetation, graffiti, vandalism, litter, noise, pollution and dog fouling. This leads to negative associations with park use, reductions in physical activity and increased levels of anxiety due to concerns of personal safety or fear of crime.

If we are to address health inequalities brought about by years of austerity and deliver wider health and social outcomes, we need to invest in our everyday landscape, our urban parks and greenspaces. This requires greater resources going into design, delivery and management of landscape and community infrastructure to encourage greater use and community engagement.



3 Landscape and community

It is true that we have excellent policies and tools, such as the Place Standard, to assist with engagement but the lived reality is that the true value of our landscape is poorly understood (especially at a local authority level) and investment in landscape is not a priority (parks and green infrastructure delivery and management are not a statutory function) and local people have very little say in their local greenspace. By recognising the importance of landscape and naturalness to health and by investing in place, using traditional and innovative funding models, we can do much to improve Scotland's health and wellbeing.

This is why we are advocating for the delivery and management of our landscape (including parks, greenspace and green infrastructure) to become a statutory duty for local authorities.



Landscape, Land Use and Economy

Key messages

- Greater public debate is needed to improve understanding and widen engagement about Scotland's landscape.
- Landscape has intrinsic value(s) which should be recognised in asset management and evaluated and costed when changes in land use are proposed.
- Areas of highest scenic and landscape quality should be identified and protected through appropriate legislation and stewardship.
- Investing in landscape and landscape-led design solutions will help Scotland meet its ambitious renewable energy and climate targets, whilst maintaining its reputation for quality food and drink and as a visitor destination driven by its landscape.
- Decisions on development, land use or land management should not result in net loss of landscape quality or biodiversity. In fact, change can be used to enhance landscape quality, offset adverse impacts and deliver biodiversity net gain.
- Communities of interest and of place have a right of access to landscape and should have the support and means to influence and determine change in local landscapes.
- Landscape rights and the understanding of benefits of landscape should be part of school and relevant higher education curricula.





Landscape is not static – it is constantly changing as a result of natural systems and human interventions. The landscape and seascape of mainland Scotland and its islands are a focus for development and changes in its character are, therefore, inevitable. We can identify a number of land use drivers with considerable potential to impact on Scotland’s landscape over the next 25 years. These include:

- Aligning infrastructure provision with housing and energy targets.
- Balancing densification of urban areas with the need to retain greenspace for health and wellbeing and introduce or retrofit green infrastructure for resilience.
- Increasing renewable energy generation and storage on shore and offshore to meet net zero carbon targets.
- Landscape scale action to mitigate climate change, including management of peatlands and soil, afforestation and coastal and catchment flood management.
- Changes to agriculture practices and crops as our climate changes (with associated biosecurity risks) in parallel with an increasing focus on food security and food growing.
- The shift towards more sustainable land use practices for sport and recreation in the uplands.
- More electric vehicles and perhaps other new forms of travel and distribution of goods as we decarbonise and become more reliant on automation, balanced by increased provision for walking, cycling and public transport.

What land use and economy challenges are we facing?

1 Landscape capacity for change

A key challenge is how to balance future development with the ability of our natural infrastructure to accommodate it, particularly where there are conflicting demands on the same land and where one form of development could undermine other uses or result in damage to landscape quality.

It is vital that the planning policy is informed by strategic, place-based decision-making (at national, regional and local scales) which uses well-established landscape evaluation and visual impact methodologies to help determine what is most appropriate in a particular landscape. As much as possible, solutions should seek to be multifunctional, sustainable and contribute to better landscape quality and environmental and biodiversity net gain.

2 Degraded landscape

Degraded landscapes have adverse impacts on productivity and wellbeing. They include land recorded as vacant and derelict, damaged, underused, or not formally maintained, resulting from underinvestment, poor design, construction or management, or changes in priorities and use. Their environmental, social and cultural significance may extend beyond individual property boundaries or units of land use. They represent opportunities for remediation, restoration, renewal or new uses which address contemporary and future needs such as enhancing biodiversity, agro-ecological systems of agriculture, creative spaces for recreation, and innovative economic activities.

We need visions for such landscape, co-constructed with communities and public, private and civic society landowners, and informed by accurate information on their extent and recognition of their potential.

3 Protected landscape

Scotland has landscape of international and national importance which deserves proper protection and care. However, there is a lack of rigorous statute, policy and practice to safeguard our most important landscape and a lack of awareness of the importance of long-term stewardship. By comparison, Scotland is world leading in its recognition of the value of wildness and protection of Wild Land Areas and could expand this concept to recognise these attributes in less remote places.

We should ensure we are meeting international standards by reviewing and updating our approach to the identification and protection of areas of highest scenic and landscape significance, including National Parks and National Scenic Areas. We should also look to integrate landscape and biodiversity management and its regulation, which are considered as separate entities.

4 Landscape for community

Change is inevitable. Sometimes it is only after change that we realise we have damaged the very places we cherish and are important to us. If we are to maximise the benefits derived from our landscape whilst maintaining its quality and diversity, we will need to ensure that development occurs only where it can be accommodated and that it delivers a range of public goods whilst maintaining landscape quality and character.

This is complicated, requiring trade-offs to balance competing pressures, and is why we are advocating for an independent Chief Landscape Advisor to be appointed to advise ministers on landscape matters and better protection of our most important landscape areas.

In 2015, the asset value of Scotland's natural capital was estimated to be more than

£290 billion

or 37% of the total UK asset value



Next Steps

We need to continue to tackle the changes required to address climate change, public health and wellbeing and inclusive economic growth. Scotland's landscape must be recognised as part of the critical infrastructure and solutions needed for our recovery and essential to the delivery of Scotland's National Outcomes.

The Scottish Landscape Alliance has developed the following three detailed Position Statements each with supporting evidence that demonstrate that landscape is critical to the solution:

- Landscape and Resilience to Environmental Challenges
- Landscape for Health and Wellbeing
- Landscape, Land Use and the Economy
- which can be accessed via the SLA website
- www.scotlandslandscapealliance.org

If you would like to discuss or support our next steps or assist the SLA in achieving its ambitious outcomes please get in contact.



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