

Considerations in Reaching the '30 x 30' Target The Role of Landscape - SLA Working Group 1

Purpose

To advise the Scottish Government of the key messages from Scotland's Landscape Alliance of the potential that landscape perspectives can provide in:-

- Delivery of the stated intention of UK/SG target of 30% of the land area of Scotland to be protected by 2030.
- Consideration of how certain Policy development can benefit communities of both People and Place as well as biodiversity across Scotland.

Background

The autumn 2021 publication of the **Shared Policy Programme by the Scottish Government and the Scottish Greens** has provided impetus for wider consideration and the urgent need for landscape scale thinking in policy development and delivering Scotland's national outcomes.

In the declared intention of **"at least one new National Park by the end of this session" ie by 2026**, this will be necessary in order to reach the intended target of 30% of land protected by 2030 in a meaningful way that benefits all communities of People and Place as well as special biodiversity interests.

However, effective **long-term nature protection will not be achieved solely by creating "islands of protection"**. The additional dynamic introduced into ecosystems by climate change reinforces this already well-established precept.

Landscapes, with all their human elements and associations provide a fruitful angle from which to tackle the current fundamental challenge of better connecting people with nature in challenging times. Forging this connection can be viewed as an important component of place-based policy approaches.

Key Messages

- **Protection is not enough** as we need to conserve landscape processes not 'protect' in the context of prevention of change. Dynamic landscapes and restoration, or rewilding of degraded landscapes can bring rewards to biodiversity, climate and people.
- **The key to reaching a more meaningful 30x30**, is a wider landscape perspective with environmental and societal aims as well as land management to meet the 30x30 goal.
- **Protected areas should not be viewed in isolation, but as core elements.** These core elements would be part of a more effectively managed wider network in the landscape. Policy and practice of landscape management beyond protected areas needs to be factored into the wider goals of better serving biodiversity, climate and local, national and international communities.

- **Connectivity of habitats, across landscapes, to benefit biodiversity, climate, and communities of people is crucial, but so is connectivity across policy.**
- **Ultimately, a national strategy is needed** that identifies geographical areas/locations and landscapes, including habitat types and geology that should be prioritised for conservation or restoration to maximise gains to biodiversity, climate and people.
- To protect nature and manage the wider landscape effectively in the current **Anthropocene era of human domination will requires a landuse planning system designed to identify the appropriate land management objectives for any given area**, which to be successful also require processes to be as open and inclusive as possible.
- **The SG's Land Use Strategy enshrines some of the above principles.** The task of translating these into guidance for action by the Regional Land Use Frameworks and the 5 pilot Regional Land Use Partnerships are tasked with preparing Frameworks. If successful this approach could be introduced more widely and ultimately connect possibly with the Town and Country Planning system for more sustainable and integrated landuse planning across Scotland.

Scotland's Landscape Alliance, Working group 1

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