

*Landscape – transforming our lives and experience:  
The Climate Change Plan and the Just Transition Commission's Report*

## 1. Purpose

To advise the Scottish Government of the key messages from Scotland's Landscape Alliance on the place of landscape in:-

- meeting climate change targets and delivering a just transition to sustainable net-zero future and
- to position this work as a key enabler in the Scottish Government's ambitions towards a fairer, greener, healthier Scotland.

## 2. Background

The declaration of the climate and biodiversity emergencies has prompted widespread debate on the action that will deliver a sustainable future for Scotland. Attention has focused on the need for large-scale landscape change to meet the future pressures from agriculture, renewables and forestry and to support thriving communities.

Landscape is about 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.

[Position statement on Landscape, Land use and Economy, SLA 2020](#)

This SLA working group has explored the challenges and opportunities presented by the changing climate and explored the key issues for positive action that puts landscape at the heart of

- delivering Scotland's national outcomes and
- Scotland's contribution to embedding the principles of the European Landscape Convention and UN Sustainable Development Goals

## 3. Key messages

Drastic changes are anticipated in how we manage land in Scotland. Decisions are being made in three key areas and we have a chance now to ensure a positive impact on all of Scotland's landscapes through:-

- 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.
- Adapting to a changing climate by building resilience and supporting production in a way that enhances our biodiversity and maximises the health, cultural and economic benefits for local communities.

#### 4. Recommendations

Decisions being made now will have a significant impact on the Scottish landscape. The Alliance will work closely with the Scottish Government and key stakeholders to :-

- a. Explore the practical actions that will secure diverse landscapes that represent the communities who live and work within them and which support a rich biodiversity while supporting climate resilient land use.
- b. Prioritise specific actions focused on-
  - i. Land into landscape – using key tools to pilot practical application of within specific communities
    1. the Land Use Strategy for Scotland and
    2. the Regional Land Use Pilot projects to highlight the practical ways to deliver an integrated approach to multi-functional landuse.
    3. The 4<sup>th</sup> National Planning Framework
    4. Place into landscape – putting communities at the heart of the decision making process on land use decisions through practical application of The Place Principle focused on positive change for landscape within local communities for a just transition.

Scotland's Landscape Alliance, working group 3  
28 Jan 2022

See over for Annex

## 5. Annex

Group discussion captured specific issues and tools. These are set out below and indicate the breadth of cross-sectoral and landscape wide interest.

### Specific issues discussed

The following key issues might be prioritised for action to explore how decision making processes might be designed for a coordinated and integrated approach.

- Role of land in reaching net zero
- Vacant and derelict land
- A new national park (protected areas + all areas)
- Dynamic coasts
- Soil health
- Legacy problems
- Renewable energy
- Understanding the 'industrialisation' of our landscape
- Putting landscape at the heart of a just transition

There are many existing tools and mechanisms that we can use *now* to deliver.

The discussion focused a lot on process, and how best to use the available tools to deliver on the core objectives. These include:

- Reaching a shared understanding about what goes where
- Accommodating different land uses
- People, place and change
- Stewardship and maintenance
- Need for urgent action
- Resources and skills for community engagement
- Balancing mitigation and adaptation
- Scale and nature of change required/ expected?
- Leadership
- Sector-based approaches and Integration
- Timescales for delivery
- Land use planning
- Uncertainty
- Recreational value

### Policy tools and stakeholder voices

The group recognised the importance of making best use of existing and planned tools. The following were highlighted for early attention

- **Existing tools / mechanisms**
  - [National Planning Framework 4](#)
  - [regional spatial strategies](#)
  - [SLC land rights and responsibilities statement](#)
  - [Land use strategy](#)
  - [Regional land use partnerships](#)
  - [Scottish forestry strategy](#)

- [UK Forestry Standard Review](#)
- [Climate Change Plan 2018-2032: Update](#)
- Historic Environment Scotland and NatureScot [joint statement](#)
- **Anticipated tools/ mechanisms**
  - New draft climate change plan expected in 2024
  - Post-brexite agricultural support
  - Natural capital approach and nature-based solutions
  - NPF 4 and spatial planning (regional and local)

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