

Consultation: Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy

Response from the Landscape Institute

Date: 15 January 2021

1 Summary

The Landscape Institute welcomes the government's consultation on Scotland's Draft Third Land Use Strategy. Scotland's Land Use Strategy is an important mechanism that ensures land is used sustainably and Scotland can respond to the climate and nature emergencies. The Committee on Climate Change suggests, that for Scotland to be able to meet the new emissions reduction targets of a 75% by 2030 and net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, significant land use change is required. For an effective response to the twin emergencies of climate and nature, land use change requires an integrated approach, with clear linkages of land use decisions and the consequent benefits and impacts. Scotland's Land Use Strategy is a strategic framework, the provides the opportunity to employ an integrated approach, and sets out the government's vision for achieving sustainable land use in Scotland. The strategy also sets out the objectives, policies and actions that will help deliver it.

This consultation was submitted via an online portal.

2 Response to specific issues and questions.

2.1 Do you feel this vision still reflects the outcomes we need to achieve?

I do not have enough information

2.2 If not, what key changes would you like to see for a new Land Use vision?

Scotland's land use strategy is an important mechanism that ensures sustainable use of land and has the potential to bring about transformative change to address the climate and nature crises. As also noted within the consultation document, the UK Committee on Climate Change (CCC) recognises that Scotland's land use sector has a greater capacity to remove emissions. The proposed vision, however, does not adequately translate the urgency and scale of action required to address those emergencies. Furthermore, landscape is instrumental in delivering multiple positive outcomes of land use and land management, such as reducing biodiversity loss, mitigating, and adapting to climate change and equity¹. The role of landscape quality and the relationship it has with these positive outcomes should be made more explicit within the vision. The LI recommends the following text for the vision- "A Scotland where we fully recognise, understand and value the importance of our landscapes and natural resources. Where our plans and actions about land use should restore and maintain nature, deliver multiple economic and societal benefits, and enhance the wellbeing of our nation."

2.3 Do you think any of the above objectives need updating? If so, please indicate which you think needs changes. You can tick all that apply

I think they are good as they are, no changes needed

- ✓ "Land based businesses working with nature to contribute more to Scotland's prosperity" should be changed
- ✓ "Responsible stewardship of Scotland's natural resources delivering more benefits to Scotland's people" should be changed
- ✓ "Urban and rural communities better connected to the land, with more people enjoying the land and positively influencing land use" should be changed

2.4 If you consider that one or more objectives need updating, please explain what changes you would like to see in the objective(s). Please make sure you state clearly which objective each suggestion relates to.

- 1) Land based businesses working responsibly with nature to contribute to Scotland's economic prosperity, and environmental wellbeing.
- 2) Responsible stewardship of Scotland's natural resources delivering more benefits to its people and nature.
- 3) Urban and rural communities better connected to the land, with more people understanding the importance and the means of improving landscape, and thus positively influencing land use.

2.5 Do you think the landscapes are an effective way to communicate Scottish Government policy?

Yes

¹ Scottish Landscape Alliance (2020): Position Statement on Landscape, Land Use and Economy <https://scotlandlandscapealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/SLA-Landscape-Landuse-and-Economy.pdf>

2.6 Under each landscape we have identified three subheadings: Climate Change, Biodiversity and Communities. Do you feel these capture the crosscutting themes that are important to all of Scotland?

I do not have enough information.

2.7 Does the content of the Land Use Strategy and the manner in which it has been presented, demonstrate that the Scottish Government is taking steps to help deliver sustainable land use?

The consultation document does not clarify on marginal land, there is an implicit assumption that there are limitations to the uses of such land. Marginal land can provide an opportunity to strengthen ecosystem services and need careful management. Different land categories and recognition of those categories within the strategy are necessary, to ensure appropriate/multiple functions of land can be identified and developed. A green infrastructure approach facilitates the transformation of such land².

3 Who we are

The Landscape Institute (LI) is the royal chartered body for the landscape profession. We represent over 5000 landscape architects, planners, designers, managers and scientists.

As a professional organisation and educational charity, we provide training, accreditation, technical advice, and standards to maintain the high quality of the landscape profession in the UK. We protect and enhance the built and natural environment for the public benefit.

For further queries please contact the policy team at policy@landscapeinstitute.org

² Drozda and Raszeja (2018): Useful wasteland - the potential of undeveloped land in modification of urban green infrastructure based on the city of Poznan, *Miscellanea Geographica* | Volume 22: Issue 4 <https://doi.org/10.2478/mgrsd-2018-0016>