

# Net Zero Nation – 2021-22 to 2025-26 – Draft Public Engagement Strategy for Climate Change

## Response from the Landscape Institute

Date: 31 March 2021

### 1 Summary

The Landscape Institute welcomes the opportunity to respond to the draft Public Engagement Strategy for Climate Change. We support the objective-based approach and proposed principles presented within the draft Strategy. We recommend that the draft Strategy also recognises the crucial role professional organisations can play in bridging the gap between science-based knowledge and accessible information on climate change action. As landscape professionals work and communicate with a wide range of stakeholders within diverse sectors, we also recommend that mechanisms such as Green Recovery action plans and public engagement strategies consider the value that landscape professionals bring to disseminating knowledge and information on climate change action and encouraging sustainable behaviours.

This consultation was submitted via an online portal.

### 2 Response to specific issues and questions

#### 2.1 What are your views on the three objectives underpinning our approach to engagement on climate change?

We support the objective-based approach set out within the draft Strategy. We believe the linkages between public engagement, climate action, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are not clearly established within the document.

##### 2.1.1 Do you think that any of these objectives should be removed or changed?

We recommend that the objectives and corresponding actions within the draft Strategy make a distinction between individual and collective action, the capacity of people to act individually, and the scale of impact of recommended climate actions. In addition to contributing to frontline mitigation and adaptation measures, landscape professionals are able to communicate sustainable behaviours and engage with communities and other organisational stakeholders. For example, through advocating for stewardship of local landscapes, we encourage individual action within

communities. Through communicating on fairer standards for green spaces, we promote collective organisational actions within the sector. Both these actions require specific approaches in messaging and engagement, where the nuanced relationship of climate action, scope of influence of the people within the system that are expected to take climate action, and the scale of impact of those actions are actively recognised.

This nuance is crucial for public engagement and demand side behaviour change, as this may be best informed by specific messages and actions, that would then help deliver emission reductions on an individual and collective level<sup>1</sup>. For a just transition, sectors - and demographics - that have traditionally been high carbon emitters should be expected to adopt corresponding low carbon actions and behaviours, and where the burden of responsibility to change behaviours should not disproportionately fall on individuals and communities that have limited social and economic capacity to take individual action. The objectives currently do not provide clarity around public engagement and messaging in that regard.

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<sup>1</sup> Carmichael, R. (2019) Behaviour change, public engagement and Net Zero. A report for the Committee on Climate Change. Available at <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publications/> and <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/icept/publications/>

## 2.2 What are your views on our seven principles for public engagement set out in Box 1?

We support the proposed principles for public engagement as set out within the draft Strategy.

### 2.2.1 Do you think that any of these principles should be removed or changed?

Yes. We believe the principles are comprehensive and welcome that the multiple priorities of green recovery, just transition, equalities, and Open Government have been included within its scope. We recommend the following amendments:

- The principles of engagement should also consider the most effective and applicable ways of reducing the emissions gap, in the short and long term. UNEP's global emissions gap report 2019<sup>2</sup> reviews the extent of emissions reductions required from 2020 to 2030 to stay on path to meet the Paris goals. The report identifies and explores six entry points for closing the emissions gap through transformational change. We recommend that the engagement principles also consider those six entry points within their scope. They are: (1) air pollution, air quality, health; (2) urbanisation; (3) governance education and employment; (4) digitalisation; (5) energy- and material-efficient services for raising living standards; and (6) land use, food security, bioenergy.
- The following principles: positive, putting people first, and evidenced-based, should also incorporate urgency of climate action, in relation to the increased ambition to net zero pathway.

### 2.2.2 Are there any principles of good public engagement on climate change that you think are missing?

We recommend that the principles should have a separate category on partnership work with professional bodies and other organisations. The rationale is that sector practitioners such as landscape professionals work in diverse fields and roles and are uniquely placed to communicate with a range of stakeholders within wider civil society and with built and natural environment sector practitioners. As practitioners we are not only on the front-line of embedding nature-based measures within practice but are also about having conversations on climate adaptation solutions in the space of education and training. Landscape practitioners and other similarly aligned professions can be robust allies, not only in relation to sharing research insights and evidence, but also in the context of disseminating and public engagement.

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<sup>2</sup> UN Environment Programme: Emissions Gap Report 2019 <https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2019>

## 2.3 What are your views on the opportunities and challenges for public engagement in the Green Recovery?

We welcome the introduction of the Scottish Government's Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan for Scotland (CESAP)<sup>3</sup>, which we understand is part of Scotland's Green Recovery plan. Action Plans such as CESAP not only provide an opportunity to communicate the economic benefits of working within different sectors, but also encourage behaviour change through professional practice and commitments, which may be one of many effective approaches influencing sustainable behaviours - for when behaviour changes are overlaid by changing economic and technological frameworks<sup>4</sup>, they are likely to be long term.

The landscape sector plays a crucial role in delivering on Scotland's climate change and biodiversity aims, through the development of nature-based solutions such as designing urban green infrastructure, protecting natural assets, or encouraging environmental net gain objectives within infrastructure development. Landscape professionals can play a key role in responding to the climate emergency on several fronts, included enhancing skills and knowledge for green jobs and communicating various aspects of climate action. However, professionals such as landscape managers, landscape architects, urban designers, parks managers, landscape scientists and planners have not been considered in CESAP. We recommend that the Green Recovery action plan and Public Engagement Strategy also consider the value that landscape professionals bring.

## 2.4 What are your views on our approach to communicating climate change policy?

We support the stated approach.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/47336/climate-emergency-skills-action-plan-2020-2025.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Silbereisen and Tomasik (2010) Human Behavior in Response to Social Change European Psychologist; Vol. 15(4):243–245 <https://econtent.hogrefe.com/doi/pdf/10.1027/1016-9040/a000059>

## 2.5 Are you aware of any practical examples or case studies of good practice for communicating on climate change that could be useful for informing our approach?

The Landscape Institute (LI) has recently published a good practice report, *Landscape for 2030*<sup>5</sup>, for non-technical informed audience and sector practitioners. The purpose of the report is to inspire high-quality design and climate-resilient practice: within the landscape sector and other professions, such as planning, ecology, and architecture; and by landowners, clients, public bodies, and wider stakeholders. The report is a compilation of good practice examples that demonstrate climate change interventions across a range of developments.

## 2.6 What are your views on our approach to enabling participation in policy design?

We support the stated approach. We recommend that the approach to enable participation in policy design should also consider knowledge exchange opportunities between green credential professionals that have frontline climate mitigation and adaptation experience with communities, with the aim of enabling conversations on what climate impact and action looks like on the ground in Scotland. We believe this would provide multiple benefits, from providing insights on the roles and opportunities within different sectors, to bridging the gap between community awareness and demystifying the concepts and language on some of the complexities on climate change. This may enhance communities' confidence in participating in future policy design processes.

## 2.7 Are you aware of any practical examples or case studies of good practice for enabling participation in decision-making that could be useful for informing our approach?

There are opportunities to learn from other sectors in Scotland. For example, when the Scottish Government developed Scotland's Race Equality Framework (2016-2030)<sup>6</sup>, a wide range of stakeholders, from grassroots community organisations to practitioners as well as representatives from BAME and marginalised communities, contributed to identifying key issues and themes. The methodology employed enabled active participation from stakeholders that would normally not be engaged in policy processes. Additionally, the approach adopted within the methodology also enhanced the knowledge and skills base of the community representatives involved, thereby building their capacity in that topic area.

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<sup>5</sup> LI Climate Change Case Studies (2021): Landscape for 2030- How landscape practice can respond to the climate crisis. <https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2021/03/12510-LANDSCAPE-2030.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016 To 2030: <https://oss.scot/race-equality-framework-for-scotland-2016-to-2030/>

## 2.8 What are your views on our approach to encouraging action?

We support the stated approach. We believe there are further opportunities to collaborate with the landscape sector in this area. We understand funding programmes such as the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund (CCF) have encouraged communities to learn and adopt low-carbon lifestyle choices within the themes of waste, energy, travel, and food growing in community spaces. Evidence indicates that nature and natural spaces, growing and gardening, and architecture and built heritage (different dimensions of landscapes)<sup>7</sup> are important to communities in Scotland in the context of improving wellbeing, and renewing social and cultural connections. The pandemic has further highlighted the importance of urban natural spaces in relation to improving health and wellbeing outcomes. By including different dimensions of landscape within community low-carbon engagement programmes, we posit this place-based approach provides demonstrable climate actions at the local level and further encourages communities to become stewards of urban green spaces.

## 2.9 Are you aware of any practical examples or case studies of good practice for encouraging climate change action that could be useful for informing our approach?

The LI as a professional body hosts annual international competitions for professionals to showcase best practice examples or innovative proposals that provide environmental and climate-friendly solutions and designs for public spaces. The format is visually appealing and accessible to a range of audiences including non-technical, informed people. The competition process encourages cross collaboration with experts, inspiring practitioners to make climate-informed decisions in their practice. Highlights from the most recent competition are available at the following link: [https://competitions.landscapeinstitute.org/transforming-the-urban-landscape/blog/exhibition\\_entry/back-down-to-earth/](https://competitions.landscapeinstitute.org/transforming-the-urban-landscape/blog/exhibition_entry/back-down-to-earth/)

## 2.10 How do you think COP26 can help deliver a positive legacy for people of Scotland and climate action?

COP26 provides the opportunity to showcase Scotland's good practice and successes on climate change and biodiversity on a global platform. We believe collaborations that demonstrate how we can address the skills deficit in low-carbon jobs, ensuring a just transition where communities, practitioners and experts are active participants to drive transformative change, could provide a positive legacy.

## 2.11 How can we work with stakeholders and actors across Scotland to deliver our "people" theme for COP26?

We believe there are opportunities to have knowledge exchange on climate decisions being science informed and 'people led', which need to be accessible in diverse formats, accounting for digital exclusion and complexities of the themes. Professional bodies like the LI bring in considerable cross-sector expertise and reach amongst a diverse range of stakeholders, and collaboration opportunities with the professional bodies sector could bridge the information and access gap for the communities on a number of areas.

## 2.12 Are there other initiatives that the Scottish Government should consider joining or supporting ahead of COP26?

‘The European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe promotes the protection, management and planning of the landscapes and organises international co-operation on landscape issues’<sup>8</sup>. The European Landscape Convention provides members an opportunity for international cooperation in the consideration of the landscape dimension of international policies and programmes. UK is a member and the Convention will be meeting in May 2021.

## 2.13 What are your views on how our progress towards our objectives could be most effectively monitored and evaluated?

We recommend an integrated approach to monitoring and evaluation is employed, where biodiversity commitments and climate targets underpin the output and outcomes of the Strategy. The monitoring framework should be developed and regularly reviewed to reflect on-going legislative requirements of the Scottish Government and emerging evidence.

## 2.14 How regularly – and in what format – should we report on progress on the Strategy?

We recommend the progress is reported at five-year intervals, where the time frame is aligned with Scotland’s Climate Change Plans and Scotland’s Climate Change Adaptation Programme review, so that learning and emerging trends from the Public Engagement Strategy progress reports can be applied to the review.

# 3 Who we are

The Landscape Institute (LI) is the royal chartered body for the landscape profession. We represent over 5,000 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](mailto:policy@landscapeinstitute.org)

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<sup>7</sup> Position Statement on Landscape and Health and Wellbeing (2020)

<https://scotlandlandscapealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/SLA-Landscape-Health-and-Wellbeing.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/landscape/home>