

**Analysis of Consultation Responses for Scotland’s Third Land Use Strategy**

**Final Report**

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

Scotland's latest Land Use Strategy is due for publication by 31st March 2021. This will be the third, five-yearly Strategy. It follows Scotland's first Land Use Strategy (2011) and the second Strategy "Getting the best from our land – A Land Use Strategy for Scotland", published in March 2016.

A consultation on the new draft Land Use Strategy opened on 2nd December 2020 and closed on Sunday 17th January 2021. It contained 8 closed and 9 open free-text questions. These covered the Land Use vision and the objectives set to achieve it, the use of landscapes to communicate the Strategy and the equality impacts of land use.

The consultation received 86 responses. Responses were almost equally split between individuals (41) and organisations (45).

## The Land Use vision and objectives

### Vision

The document opens with a discussion of changes since the last Strategy, and notes the vision put forward in 2016:

***A Scotland where we fully recognise, understand and value the importance of our land resources, and where our plans and decisions about land use will deliver improved and enduring benefits, enhancing the wellbeing of our nation.***

**Q1: Do you feel this vision still reflects the outcomes we need to achieve?**

This was a quantitative question. A quarter (26%) answered 'Yes'; 62% answered 'No' and the remainder selected 'Don't know'/'I do not have enough information' or did not respond.

**Q2: If not, what key changes would you like to see for a new Land Use vision?**

Discussion of changes to the vision in terms of its scope, urgency and clarity was the most prevalent theme across responses. On scope, a recurring theme was that the Strategy would benefit from an expanded focus on the climate emergency, the biodiversity crisis and sustainability, including calls for greater acknowledgement that land use can have a negative impact on biodiversity.

Many comments about the vision focused on clarity; several suggested it lacked specificity and could be open to interpretation. Several respondents reflected on the wider context in their discussion of the vision, referencing recent changes, legislation, strategies and other issues of relevance.

## Objectives

The draft Strategy paper presents the three objectives set out in the previous strategies:

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

Consultation question three asked if any of the objectives need updating.

**Q3: 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.**

This was a quantitative question; respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Q3	No. of responses	%
I think they are good as they are, no changes needed	14	16%
"Land based businesses working with nature to contribute more to Scotland's prosperity" should be changed	47	55%
"Responsible stewardship of Scotland's natural resources delivering more benefits to Scotland's people" should be changed	48	56%
"Urban and rural communities better connected to the land, with more people enjoying the land and positively influencing land use" should be changed	40	47%
Not answered/ Blank response	11	13%

**Q4: 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.**

### Responsible stewardship

Responsible stewardship featured most frequently across respondents' comments. Their suggested changes included calls for this objective to be prioritised, for an expanded definition of effective stewardship and greater discussion about the context for achieving this objective.

### Land based businesses

Comments on changes to this objective centred on the perceived vagueness of the phrase 'working with nature' and the word 'prosperity'. Suggested edits to this objective reflected respondents' interest for a shift in emphasis, for example with links to the Green Recovery.

## Urban and rural communities better connected to the land

Comments on changes to this objective, which refers to people ‘enjoying the land’ and ‘positively influencing land use’, included suggestions that it describe how people can have an influence. In this discussion, respondents highlighted the importance of education in gaining understanding and awareness of the land and being engaged in decision-making processes.

## Understanding and engagement with land use issues

### Q5: Before reading this document were you aware of the pressures on our land?

This was a quantitative question; respondents were invited to select one of five options indicating a scale of awareness about pressures on the land.

Q5	No. of responses	%
Strongly aware of all pressures on our land	63	73%
Aware of many of the pressures on our land	17	20%
Knew land was needed for some things	1	1%
Not aware of the extent we need our land	0	0%
Completely unaware of the importance of our land	0	0%
Not answered/ Blank response	5	6%

### Q6: Are you aware of ways people can get involved in land use matters within your local area?

This was a quantitative question: 70% answered ‘Yes’, 20% answered ‘No’ and 10% did not answer the question.

## Using landscapes to talk about land use

### Q7: Do you think the landscapes are an effective way to communicate Scottish Government policy?

Question seven was a quantitative question followed by a blank box for comments. 65% answered ‘Yes’; 17% answered ‘No’ and the remainder selected ‘Don’t know’/‘I do not have enough information’ or did not answer the question.

Endorsements of landscapes as a way to communicate policy were found in the majority of open-text responses. In these comments, many explained that the approach makes policy less abstract and more accessible to a wider audience. Other positive comments centred on the landscapes being comprehensive and the value of the landscape approach in addressing complexity.

Many respondents advocated for further development of the landscapes put forward in the Strategy. Some expressed concern about perceptions of priorities within and across landscapes.

**Q8: Under each landscape we have identified three subheadings: Climate Change, Biodiversity and Communities. Do you think that these capture the crosscutting themes that are important to all of Scotland?**

This was a quantitative question followed by a blank box for comments. Just over half (53%) answered 'Yes'; 26% answered 'No' and the remainder selected 'Don't know'/'I do not have enough information' or did not answer the question.

The most prevalent suggestion in the open-text responses to question eight was to include an additional subheading related to economy. The second most common theme related to issues to include under each subheading. Respondents explained that the crosscutting themes could be strengthened by further discussion; some highlighted different impacts, challenges or aspects of the delivery context and policy landscape they wished to see highlighted.

**Q9: 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?**

Question nine was a quantitative question, with answer options plus a blank box for comments. Just over one third (35%) answered 'Yes'; 40% answered 'No' and the remainder selected 'Don't know'/'I do not have enough information' or did respond

A prevalent theme in responses was the notion that the draft Strategy, at present, is not detailed enough to demonstrate that the Scottish Government is taking steps to deliver sustainable land use. Respondents made observations that the Strategy would benefit from setting out more specific aims, objectives and targets and the actions that will be taken to realise positive change.

Calls for additional issues and information to incorporate within the Strategy was the second most prevalent theme in responses to question nine. For example, restoration of natural ecosystems was raised by several respondents who raised concerns that efforts targeted at natural restoration and regeneration were not represented or promoted strongly enough in the Strategy.

## **Equality: Call for Evidence**

**Q10: If you have lived experience or have studied the impacts of land use, land use change, or access to the outdoors on age, disability, sex, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, please provide us with details about this in the box below.**

One in ten provided links to documents or evidence for the Scottish Government to review. These sources are listed in Appendix 1.

The most relevant theme from a relatively small number of responses was the lack of gender diversity in land ownership and careers. While not a protected characteristic, socio-economic inequalities was another minor theme.

**Q11: Are you aware of any examples of how the Land Use Strategy might impact, positively or negatively, island communities in a way that is different from its impact on mainland areas?**

The most prevalent theme in response to Q11 was how island communities differ from the rest of Scotland. These comments mainly took two forms – some focussed on practical differences and others on the challenges of managing island land. One respondent also noted the need to consider the diverse histories and cultures of the islands.

**Q12: Are there any particular current or future impacts you can think of on young people, (children, pupils, and young adults up to the age of 26) of land use, land use change, or any other aspect of the Land Use Strategy, positively or negatively. Please provide examples or evidence.**

The most prevalent theme was for young people to have greater environmental awareness and knowledge of land use.

The second most prevalent theme was around jobs and training. Comments covered three areas. Firstly, some highlighted the limitations of rural areas, such as a lack of jobs, or poor public transport reducing employment options. Others noted the importance of land-based jobs to rural communities.

## **Conclusions**

Respondents shared their visions and ambitions for Scotland, providing a useful evidence base for the Scottish Government to draw upon when developing the final Land Use Strategy.

Key themes included calls for an update to Scotland's vision and objectives. Respondents expressed a sense of urgency, asking for the Strategy to go further in explicitly recognising the role of land use in tackling the climate emergency and the biodiversity crisis. Other cross cutting themes included ownership, access, equity and sustainable approaches to land management. Linked to this, they look forward to seeing a detailed delivery plan.

Reflecting across responses, it is evident that the new Strategy is welcomed. It may not be possible to satisfy the different interests and priorities expressed across the many stakeholders who participated in the consultation. However, above and beyond specific interests, most participants wish to see more detail about how the Strategy will be delivered.

# Introduction

Scotland's latest Land Use Strategy is due for publication by 31st March 2021. This will be the third, five-yearly Strategy. It follows Scotland's first Land Use Strategy (2011) and the second Strategy "Getting the best from our land – A Land Use Strategy for Scotland", published in March 2016.

While the overarching purpose of the Strategy remains the same - demonstrating Scotland's ambition for sustainable land use - the third Land Use Strategy will be different from previous ones in two important ways.

First, the layout and language has been redesigned to make it more accessible and engaging to everyone, beyond those with a specific interest in land use. This aims to ensure everyone understands the integrated nature and importance of land use and what we need our land to deliver. As part of this change, and in order to demonstrate the multiple aspects of land use in a manner that is relatable it is being illustrated through a series of conceptual landscapes.

Secondly, the Strategy will not contain new policy proposals. It will bring together for the first-time key strands of Scottish Government policy that affect land use and sets out how these work together. The aim of this approach is to reinforce the message that land use is an integrated, Scotland wide issue.

A consultation on the new draft Land Use Strategy opened on 2nd December 2020 and closed on Sunday 17th January 2021. It contained 8 closed and 9 open free-text questions. These covered the Land Use vision and the objectives set to achieve it, the use of landscapes to communicate the Strategy and the equality impacts of land use. The consultation is an opportunity for the Scottish Government to understand a wide variety of stakeholders' views on the draft third Land Use Strategy, which will shape the approach to the final document.

## Profile of respondents

The consultation received 86 responses. Of these 81 were submitted via the online consultation platform, Citizen Space. A further four responded with an alternative format, for example, a PDF document. Responses were almost equally split between individuals (41) and organisations (45).

The profile of organisations that took part in the consultation is as follows:

- 17 third sector organisations / campaign groups
- 9 membership organisations
- 5 academic / research institutions
- 3 public bodies
- 3 environmental consultancies
- 3 local authorities
- 2 advisory bodies
- 1 industry body, 1 business and 1 partnership of environmental organisations

Responses to the consultation, where permission for publication was granted, can be found on the Scottish Government's website.

### **Approach to analysis and reporting**

This report presents the range of views expressed and trends amongst responses. To improve readability and avoid duplication, the report is structured around themes, aligning questions or common themes in comments.

The analyst team applied a qualitative coding framework based on a review of the consultation questions and sample of responses. Three alternative format responses contained information which did not align to specific questions. The analysts exercised judgement about the most relevant place to include this material for analysis purposes.

While qualitative analysis of open-ended questions does not permit the quantification of results, we signify the weight of a particular view using the following framework. Where there are several themes, we have indicated which are the most common or prevalent across responses:

- The most common theme / the most prevalent them in responses (and second most common) i.e., the most frequently identified.
- 'Several' or 'many' respondents (more than 10) i.e., a recurring theme but not most common.
- 'Some' respondents (5-9) i.e., another theme.
- 'A few' or 'a small number' of respondents (3-4); a minor theme.
- Where only one or two people have made a specific point, we propose describing this as 'Two respondents' and 'one respondent' / 'a singular comment.

### **Report Structure**

The Lines Between was commissioned to provide an independent and robust analysis of the responses to the consultation. This report is set out as follows:

- This section closes with a quantitative summary of the closed questions contained in the consultation.
- Chapter 1 presents analysis of responses to Q1-Q6. These address the Land Use vision, the objectives set to achieve it and awareness of land use among respondents.
- Chapter 2 covers Q7-Q9, which focus on the use of landscapes to communicate the Land Use Strategy.
- Chapter 3 addresses Q10-Q12, which consider the equality impacts of the Strategy.
- Conclusions are set out in Chapter 4.
- A quantitative summary of the questions included in the consultation is included as an appendix, alongside sources of information provided by respondents.

# The Land Use vision and objectives

## Vision

The document opens with a discussion of changes since the last Strategy, and notes the vision put forward in 2016:

***A Scotland where we fully recognise, understand and value the importance of our land resources, and where our plans and decisions about land use will deliver improved and enduring benefits, enhancing the wellbeing of our nation.***

**Consultation question 1: Do you feel this vision still reflects the outcomes we need to achieve?**

This was a quantitative question; respondents were invited to select one of four options.

Q1	No. of responses	%
Yes	22	26%
No	53	62%
Don't know	1	1%
I do not have enough information	4	5%
Not answered/ blank response	6	7%

Question 2 provided an opportunity for respondents to share feedback on the vision:

**Q2: If not, what key changes would you like to see for a new Land Use vision?**

A clear majority (66 from 86) of respondents answered Q2. We note that this included some comments from a small number who responded 'yes' to indicate the vision still reflects the outcomes Scotland needs to achieve. Multiple themes were identified across the responses, including endorsement of the vision in part, or in its entirety. Most prevalent were comments reflecting the vision statement's role as an agent of change; many suggested adjustments or additions to broaden the scope of the vision or strengthen its impact. Others comments more widely about other aspects of the Strategy or the changing context since the 2016 Strategy launched.

The analysis below outlines key points of discussion identified in each theme. It should be noted that some respondents offered contradictory views.

### Urgency, language and scope

Discussion of changes to the vision in terms of its scope, urgency and clarity was the most prevalent theme across responses.

On scope, a recurring theme was that the Strategy would benefit from an expanded focus on the climate emergency, the biodiversity crisis and sustainability, including calls for greater acknowledgement that land use can have a negative impact on biodiversity.

Other suggestions on scope varied, often in discussion of the ‘enduring benefits’ referenced in the Strategy. In these comments, there were calls for greater mention of integrated land management, consideration of economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable land use, for a focus on land ownership, to consider the historic environment, informed decision-making processes, to highlight the benefits for wildlife and natural assets as well as the people of Scotland, and to emphasise the role of land use in inclusive growth, enhancing equity and equality.

Many comments about the vision focused on clarity; several suggested it lacked specificity and could be open to interpretation. For example, Climate Action East Linton felt “it needs to be clearer on what basis plans and decisions will be made”. In this strand of discussion respondents asked for detail about delivery, timescales and implementation arrangements. There were some calls for key concepts to be defined, for example the meaning of the ‘wellbeing of our nation’ and ‘improved and enduring benefits’.

**“We suggest something along the lines of: “A Scotland where land use, policy and support mechanisms have been fully aligned to address climate, biodiversity and social justice challenges and delivery wellbeing, economic success, environmental sustainability and land reform for the benefit of our nation”.”**

**Community Woodland Trust**

Third most common in comments about scope were calls for a greater sense of ambition and urgency, reflecting the scale of the climate and biodiversity crises. For example, one respondent suggested these issues should be “explicit and visible” within the vision.

Many respondents put forward specific changes to the vision wording; these suggestions varied. The focus of these changes included: phrasing to reflect the Strategy’s potential contribution to enhancing social and economic equality in Scotland; recognition of harmful impacts of land misuse; for the vision to highlight positive impacts on wellbeing; and inclusive language to encourage people to make responsible choices and promote engagement with the Strategy.

**“Given the importance of human rights and sustainable development to the wellbeing of Scotland and the direction of travel connecting human rights with the environment and climate justice, the Commission would welcome a reflection of their importance in the Vision.**

**Strategy Vision: “A Scotland where we fully recognise, understand and value the importance of our land resources, and where our plans and decisions about sustainable land use will deliver improved and enduring benefits, enhancing the wellbeing of our nation and the progressive realisation of our rights.”**

**Scottish Human Rights Commission**

Some respondents reflected on priorities for the Land Use Strategy, often calling for sustainability to be Scotland’s foremost objective. A common theme in this strand of comments was the tension between economic and environmental demands. There were calls for clarity on what basis difficult decisions would be made, highlighting that trade-offs

would be required. One shared an example of decisions within their region that they felt had favoured economic outcomes over environmental sustainability.

Discussion of rights and responsibility featured in some in comments. This often centred on management; one respondent suggested that landowners should be responsible for biodiversity and face sanctions for not doing so; another wanted the vision statement to mention the cumulative damage done by “misuse and poor stewardship”; another suggested the vision should “embrace the significant role of communities and people in land use – including the ownership and users of land”; another called for the Strategy to encourage stewardship of the historic environment.

In addition to the general calls for a greater focus on the climate and biodiversity crises, some respondents described other matters for the vision to encompass. For example, a few wanted specific protection for valuable habitats e.g., Sites of Special Scientific Interest, SPAs, SACs and Ramsar sites and for plants and animals to be considered in decisions affecting habitat loss. A small number mentioned water and sea; for example, one respondent felt that the vision should reference marine issues, alongside land, in order that it can represent an integrated vision across onshore and offshore.

There were also general comments about specific types of land use; a small number highlighted the role of forestry in tackling climate change and enhancing biodiversity, calling for this to be given greater prominence in the vision.

### **The wider context and links to other strategies and legislation**

Several respondents reflected on the wider context in their discussion of the vision, referencing recent changes, legislation, strategies and other issues of relevance. Many of these comments reinforced issues discussed in the Land Use Strategy; some highlighted matters to consider in any further development of the vision.

The COVID-19 pandemic was highlighted in some responses, often in acknowledgement that the Strategy sits within a wider context of significant challenges for Scotland. A small number noted opportunities for achieving the vision in a post COVID-19 green recovery; the Centre for Strategic Climate Solutions stressed the importance of Scotland’s vision given it is hosting the COP26 in 2021.

A few respondents considered the vision in the context of Brexit. For example, one said farming and agriculture practice would change as a result of withdrawal from the EU; others highlighted transitions after Brexit as a key challenge for Scotland, noting that the Land Use Strategy should convey a sense of urgency in this context. On this theme, two referenced the EU Continuity Bill; with one shared disappointment that environmental issues raise by individuals would not be enforced by the environment watchdog.

A small number of respondents referenced Scotland’s ambitions for a just transition, for example noting that land use exists within this context or calling for the key concept of equity to be incorporated in the vision.

Some respondents considered the Strategy in the wider policy landscape. This included acknowledgment of important links, for example “this meshes well with Scotland’s Forestry Strategy and provides a good basis for the rest of the Strategy” (Institute of Chartered

Foresters); a small number suggested cross sector links could be strengthened, with reference to energy, infrastructure, circular and green recovery strategies. Historic Environment Scotland urged for links to 'Our Place in Time (Scotland's Strategy for the historic environment)'. Another proposed that the vision needs to better reflect the Environment Strategy's vision: 'One Earth. One Home. One shared future', and one made a general observation that consideration should be given to reviewing and integrating farming and forestry planning.

There was also reference to the complexity and role of planning structures including Regional Land Use Partnerships (RLUPs). Comments on Regional Land Use Frameworks were identified in a small number of responses; one suggested that the Land Use Strategy should provide the strategic guidance essential for the Frameworks; another pointed to the need to promote collaborative relationships through RLUPs.

Finally, there were a small number of comments about the evolution of the Land Use Strategy since its origins in the 2009 Climate Change Act. One suggested previous versions of the Strategy existed in silo; "regarded too much as a mechanism of relevance only to the environment agenda, not the wider responsibilities of government". Another felt it clear that the new Strategy demonstrates how land use can deliver against climate change, biodiversity and communities.

The National Trust for Scotland recommended the vision incorporates the legal objectives, advocating for small changes to the vision statement to better reflect this: "A Scotland where we fully recognise, understand and value the importance of our natural and cultural resources, and where our plans and decisions about land use will deliver sustainable and enduring benefits, enhancing the wellbeing of our nation."

### **Endorsement of specific elements of vision or Strategy**

Several respondents endorsed all or specific elements of the vision and Strategy.

Some praised the aspiration for Scotland to get the best out of its land and acknowledge this will require far-reaching changes across diverse landscapes and land management systems. They noted the opportunity to map out a truly sustainable future for land use in Scotland. One commented that the vision is correct to highlight the importance of plans and decision-taking on land use.

A few welcomed the discussion of benefits from restoring nature and tackling climate change; one endorsed the clear statement that the climate and nature crises are intrinsically linked and that both crises arise from stretching the Earth's systems beyond their sustainable limits. They also welcomed the acknowledgement that the way we manage and use our land needs to change radically if we are to deliver our climate and environment goals.

Others suggested the vision sets the wider context for the more detailed and specific changes which need to occur and welcomed attempts to manage land in an integrated way as it could deliver more benefits to society. One observed that the range of actions outlined in Section 3 of the Strategy are more radical than simply just recognising the importance of land resources.

## Engagement and inclusive approaches to working with stakeholders

Some respondents reflected on engagement with stakeholders. This included suggestions from a small number about the importance of involving communities in decisions on land use. Some highlighted willingness from their organisation to be involved in future development of the Strategy and vision. One suggested the vision could act as unifying influence; yet they felt more needs to be done to ensure it will be embraced by many stakeholders.

## Implementation and Enforcement

Reflections on the importance of incentives, regulation and advice were highlighted by some respondents as ways to convert the vision into reality. For example, one advocated for better recognition that “people pressure”, and increased post COVID-19 footfall in rural locations, can cause problems. With this in mind they wanted to see steps taken to educate and, if necessary, punish those who misuse the outdoors; for example, littering, allowing dog fouling and damage to trees.

## Objectives

The draft Strategy presents the three objectives set out in the previous strategies:

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

Consultation question three related directly to the objectives:

**Q3: 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**

This was a quantitative question; respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Q3	No. of responses	%
I think they are good as they are, no changes needed	14	16%
Land based businesses working with nature to contribute more to Scotland's prosperity” should be changed	47	55%
Responsible stewardship of Scotland's natural resources delivering more benefits to Scotland's people” should be changed	48	56%
Urban and rural communities better connected to the land, with more people enjoying the land and positively influencing land use” should be changed	40	47%
Not answered/ Blank response	11	13%

Question four asked respondents to explain any changes they would like to see.

**Q4: 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.**

A clear majority (71 from 86) of respondents shared an open text response to Q4. Their comments about changes mainly centred on calls for more detail and definition, for different phrasing, shifts in emphasis, or greater discussion of the broader context for achieving Scotland's land use objectives.

Some suggested that specific objectives should be prioritised; there were also calls for different or additional objectives to be introduced. Key themes in responses are presented below.

### **Calls for additional or different objectives**

Some respondents posed additional objectives for consideration. These included suggestions about objectives relating to the recovery of damaged ecosystems; reducing emissions from existing land use; health and wellbeing; equality and social justice; resilience in the face of climate change; objectives to specifically reflect COVID-19 and the Green Recovery; sustainable economic development and spatial planning issues.

### **Responsible stewardship**

Responsible stewardship featured most frequently across respondents' comments. Their suggested changes included calls for this objective to be prioritised, for an expanded definition of effective stewardship and greater discussion about the context for achieving this objective.

Many proposed changes to how this objective is described. Specific suggestions differed by respondent but centred on inclusion of reference to the global context, the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to address the biodiversity crisis and, for a small number, the cultural aspect of land. In discussion of benefits a few respondents called for a change in the emphasis of this objective, from regarding land as something for people to benefit from, to something important to care of, for its own sake.

Several suggested that the term 'natural resources' should be changed; their suggestions varied and included 'natural capital', 'landscapes', and 'land'. A small number called for an expansion of this objective by adding the words "and environment", "and it's natural environment", "and nature", "and places" or "and wellbeing of the natural world" at the end.

There were also calls for long term responsibilities to be considered, with a focus on sustainability. For example, one respondent asked for an explicit balance between people gaining benefits from land use and ensuring the environment is in more resilient to climate change; so it can continue to provide for society into the future. They argue that not addressing this matter risks undermining the ability of people to benefit from the complex range of ways in which all life is supported by healthy biodiversity.

**“Concepts of stewardship and connecting communities to the land seem outdated compared to the content set out in the updated strategy which is more focussed on sustainable land use, nature-based solutions and enabling sustainable local economic development. The actions to address barriers in relation to accessing green space and community engagement are also important.”**

**Crown Estate Scotland**

### **Land based businesses**

Comments on changes to this objective centred on the perceived vagueness of the phrase ‘working with nature’ and the word ‘prosperity’. A predominant concern was that prosperity is associated with economic growth; respondents suggested that if this is a primary driver, it should be qualified with comments on sustainable approaches, mitigating harm and restoring natural environments, or discussion of a prosperity that encompasses achievement of environmental goals.

**“Objective 1 should make reference to sustainable land use as a basis for economic prosperity.”**

**Community Land Scotland**

Suggested edits to this objective reflected respondents’ interest for a shift in emphasis. Examples of phrasing put forward included: “working with nature to contribute more to Scotland's social, economic and natural prosperity”; “restore natural environments, to mitigate the effects of climate change and thus create the conditions for future prosperity”; “working with nature to contribute more to Scotland's environmental restoration and economic prosperity”; “working sustainably with the environment to contribute more to Scotland’s prosperity”; “working with nature and communities to respond to climate emergency and biodiversity loss”; and, “working responsibly with nature to contribute to Scotland’s economic prosperity, and environmental wellbeing”.

Calls for this objective to specifically link with Green Recovery were identified in some responses. For example, one noted the importance of this given the increased understanding of how social and economic decisions (such as housing and transport) affect our natural environment. One said that the objectives should cover all businesses, as all businesses can have some impact on land and land use; another suggested that water-based businesses should also be included, for consistency.

Some respondents reflected on land-based businesses and current practice in the wider context. For example, one pointed to the potential for land-based businesses to contribute more to working with nature. They suggested that new build complexes should have a reasonable public garden space; both for residential homes and office complexes. One urged the Scottish Government to shift the emphasis from business as the agent of change, to the land itself. They suggested the objective be rewritten as “ensuring landscapes contribute towards Scotland’s economic success, driving inclusive growth”. Another insisted that the burden of achieving the objective should be shared among all who seek to gain benefit from the land, and not just put extra costs onto rural businesses.

A small number of respondents took issue with this objective appearing first in the list; they suggested this indicated a hierarchy, and felt this goal was not the priority objective.

### **Urban and rural communities better connected to the land**

Comments on changes to this objective, which refers to people ‘enjoying the land’ and ‘positively influencing land use’, included suggestions that it describe how people can have an influence. In this discussion, respondents highlighted the importance of education in gaining understanding and awareness of the land and being engaged in decision-making processes. A few respondents reflected on the link between engagement and community ownership, with suggestions that the objective could be more specific about equitable distribution of land ownership and increased community ownership or local management opportunities.

Several respondents suggested changes to wording of this objective. Some called for recognition of a goal to improve the wellbeing of communities and support tourism; others reflected a primary desire for increased biodiversity and environmental action to counter climate change.

**“This remains an important objective but could better reflect the benefits of land use other than for enjoyment, such as wellbeing, local employment, education, food growing etc.”**

**Perth and Kinross Council**

Some respondents reflected on the wider context surrounding connection with the land. For example, Historic Environment Scotland noted the connection with Scottish Government policy as reflected in the emerging NPF4 and a perceived alignment with Our Place in Time. The idea of ‘placemaking’ as a route to creating sustainable communities was also identified by RTPI Scotland and the Scottish Property Federation.

Other respondents reflected on links with the Scottish Government’s land reform agenda policy and their objectives of encouraging more community ownership in Scotland.

**“Some reference to diversity and inclusion would be helpful here – especially in the context of Scotland’s unusually concentrated pattern of land ownership.”**

**FutureArk Ltd.**

### **Urgency**

Calls for more urgency in achieving the objectives were identified in some responses. These comments stressed that the strategic objectives are important and need prompt attention. There were general observations that while the objectives remain relevant, they could better reflect the climate emergency and a biodiversity crisis. Also, that there needs to be more urgency in seeing the objectives deliver tangible progress.

## More specific or measurable objectives

Some respondents called for greater specificity or measurable objectives. This included framing these objectives in terms of their links to the national performance framework or sustainable development goals. One observed it would be difficult to construct fully SMART objectives for such wide-ranging issues, but felt more work should be done to ensure clarity around the objectives. Another said the objectives would be improved by clearer timescales and targets.

Linked to this discussion, some called for the recognition of trade-offs between achieving these objectives in the wider context of Scotland's ambitions.

## General agreement

While the question asked about changes that respondents would like to see, a small number used comments to express a sense of general agreement with the objectives as presented.

## How to achieve objectives

Across comments some respondents reflected on how to achieve the objectives. For example, one felt that in order to achieve Scotland's goals, we need to better connect urban communities to the land. They advocate more for public parks and using disused trainlines as cycle and walking paths as ways of making progress on this front. Another called for more rangers to watch over the land, the waters and the natural environment. One respondent suggested that the objectives be broadened to "encompass non locational communities – interest groups who may not reside in an area".

## Understanding and engagement with land use issues

Consultation questions five and six explored respondent's levels of understanding and engagement with land use issues.

### Q5: Before reading this document were you aware of the pressures on our land?

This was a quantitative question; respondents were invited to select one of five options indicating a scale of awareness about pressures on the land.

Q5	No. of responses	%
Strongly aware of all pressures on our land	63	73%
Aware of many of the pressures on our land	17	20%
Knew land was needed for some things	1	1%
Not aware of the extent we need our land	0	0%
Completely unaware of the importance of our land	0	0%
Not answered/ Blank response	5	6%

Question six asked about getting involved in land use matters.

**Q6: Are you aware of ways people can get involved in land use matters within your local area?**

This was a quantitative question with 'yes' or 'no' options.

<b>Q6</b>	<b>No. of responses</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	60	70%
No	17	20%
Not answered/ blank response	9	10%

# Using landscapes to talk about land use

## Conceptual landscapes

Section three in the consultation document explains the Scottish Government wants to improve the accessibility of the Land Use Strategy, to reach a wide audience, demonstrate its relevance and show how different strands of policy can deliver the vision and objectives. It describes a proposal to structure the policy content of the new Strategy around a series of conceptual landscapes to illustrate the effect of policies on the ground.

### **Q7: Do you think the landscapes are an effective way to communicate Scottish Government policy?**

This was a quantitative question answer options and a blank box for comments.

Q7	No. of responses	%
Yes	56	65%
No	15	17%
Don't know	7	8%
I do not have enough information	1	1%
Not answered/ blank response	7	8%

Almost two thirds of respondents provided a comment. Multiple themes were identified across the responses. Most common were positive comments on the approach. Some offered suggestions for improvements; these comments often reflected respondents' specific concerns and priorities.

### **Support for the landscape approach**

Endorsements of landscapes as a way to communicate policy were found in the majority of responses. In these comments, many explained that the approach makes policy less abstract and more accessible to a wider audience. For example, one respondent believed that landscapes make the Land Use Strategy more accessible to people who are not directly involved in land use activities. They felt that, as the country attempts to address the climate emergency, it is increasingly important that issues and opportunities related to the different land uses can be communicated effectively to everyone; not only those whose work bring them in direct contact with the land and natural resources. Another noted that Landscapes could help those with no prior knowledge of the Land Use Strategy to understand the key issues relating to different forms of land use.

**“Yes this does feel more engaging both to those with a personal or professional interest and would probably help someone with no prior knowledge of the Land Strategy comprehend key issues and opportunities relating to the typology of land that represented where they live or their area of interest.”**

**PAS (Planning Aid Scotland)**

Other positive comments centred on the landscapes being comprehensive. For example, one respondent praised the categorisations used and felt issues were looked at holistically; bringing in a range of policies and strategies. They felt this is an integrated and engaging way of articulating the issues. Another suggested that landscapes feel “tangible” and less divorced from reality than policy documents. One commented that landscapes are a good way to focus on land use; rather than individual sectors.

The value of the landscape approach in addressing complexity was highlighted. For example, an individual reflected that the scope of the Land Use Strategy is significant; there is a lot to process and landscapes help demonstrate the proposed aims are positive, and that the government is taking climate change and biodiversity restoration seriously. Another felt that using illustrative landscapes helps to show that our landscapes can support multiple uses, and that decision making has to be more integrated. This was echoed by another respondent who felt that that landscapes are a good way of showing how various policies combine around land-use issues.

**“We support this approach which addresses the challenge of sectoral silos and helps to ensure that vital connections between complementary and conflicting land-uses are surfaced and explored. In this regard, the landscapes approach is more fundamental than simply communicating policy...”**

**The Institute of Chartered Foresters**

One respondent made the general point that it would be difficult to find an approach to landscapes that would be perfect. The current presentation of landscapes was seen as being good, but they felt it should be acknowledged that many land types can fit into several categories.

### **Adapt themes, priorities and additional supporting information to include**

Many respondents advocated for further development of the landscapes put forward in the Strategy. They raised different issues; one felt that more care should be taken to depict the landscapes in the form that the Strategy envisages; rather than how they exist now. Taking semi-natural landscapes as an example, they point out that these are depicted as bare hills; yet the Strategy talks about restoration of native ecology and rewilding. Conversely, another contended the landscapes are aspirations and do not reflect urban decay, rural litter and wind-farm realities.

Some expressed concern about perceptions of priorities within and across landscapes. For example, Built Environment Forum Scotland suggested that care should be taken to avoid the presentation of the landscapes being seen as being a hierarchy; another proposed that the landscapes need to do more to address the important linkages between national and local policies. Another wanted more exploration of how the landscape approach can reflect the contribution of the historic environment and feed into the delivery plan for the Strategy; as well as the work of the Regional Land Use Partnerships.

## Concerns with the approach

Some respondents found fault with the approach. A small number suggested that the landscapes, on their own, do not constitute a strategy; and encouraged the Scottish Government to include additional material to provide a fuller picture of the issues including connections with other key areas of policy. For example, one highlighted that place-making principles only appear under the peri-urban landscape, in reference to cleaner air.

**“Landscapes paint a picture, but don't give you a policy, you have to begin at the start and describe a policy which will be derived from a vision of overall requirement ...”**

### **Individual**

One respondent reflected that they are unsure of the extent to which the landscapes are representative of the whole of Scotland; arguing that landscapes can create further division and silos and that the Strategy should be about integrating land uses. Perth and Kinross Council noted that while this approach was accessible, a sectoral approach would be of more benefit to specific land users and stakeholders. Another felt that the landscape approach, while accessible, may over-simplify and create confusion, noting the definitions of different landscapes may not be commonly shared or understood.

In addition, there were a few instances where respondents noted that this approach simplifies complex issues within landscape categories and does not address competition between land uses and sectors. They felt the Strategy needs to recognise that it may be more difficult to achieve a balanced land use approach in practice.

There was some discussion of how to handle issues which span landscapes. For example, one respondent asked for the landscapes to contain clear reference to land reform as an explicit cross-cutting policy issue.

### **Fewer or different landscapes**

A small number of respondents wanted to reduce or change the landscapes. In this discussion one advocated for combining and rationalising the number of landscape themes; having six rather than ten landscapes. Their suggested themes were; Farmland, Coast and Seas, Hills and Moors, Settlements, Freshwater and Forests and Woodlands. Another respondent called for refinement of the landscape categories, to clarify issues in respect of semi-natural land, marginal land and uplands.

**“There are too many ‘landscapes’ and given that they are not necessarily mutually exclusive there is the potential for confusion. A simplification should be considered which can more clearly map to where policy will have its biggest effect. For example, presently forestry and peatlands appear across many types...”**

### **The Scottish Science Advisory Council**

A few respondents urged refinement of the Landscapes, to avoid unhelpfully linking land use types with policy objectives.

## Landscape subheadings

Consultation question eight asked for views on the three subheadings identified under each landscape: Climate Change, Biodiversity and Communities.

**Q8: Under each landscape we have identified three subheadings: Climate Change, Biodiversity and Communities. Do you think that these capture the crosscutting themes that are important to all of Scotland?**

This was a quantitative question answer options and a blank box for comments.

Q8	No. of responses	%
Yes	46	53%
No	22	26%
Don't know	8	9%
I do not have enough information	2	2%
Not answered/ blank response	8	9%

Question eight received 52 open-text responses. Respondents' views on the subheadings were mixed; many endorsed the subheadings, while several others suggested additional or alternative subheadings. In addition, many respondents called for further information to be included under each of the subheadings.

Each of these views is discussed in further detail throughout this section.

### Additional subheadings

The most prevalent suggestion in response to question eight was to include an additional sub heading related to economy. A common theme in this discussion was that although economic information is contained within the 'Communities' sub heading, 'Economy' should be a stand-alone section, with one respondent describing it as "a bit lost" under the 'Communities' sub heading. It is important to note that this was not a unanimous view; one respondent noted that although initially it seemed an oversight that 'Economy' wasn't included, they were satisfied that economic activity was well represented and addressed under other subheadings.

Other additional subheadings suggested by small numbers of respondents included:

- Health and wellbeing – the John Muir Trust noted that how land in Scotland is used directly and indirectly impacts the health of people in Scotland.
- Inclusive growth
- Social and commercial enterprise
- Opportunities
- Prosperity
- Place making

## Information/issues not covered under existing subheadings

The second most common theme in responses related to issues to include under each subheading. Respondents explained that the crosscutting themes could be strengthened by further discussion; some highlighted different impacts, challenges or aspects of the delivery context and policy landscape they wished to see highlighted.

Some respondents described the Biodiversity subheading as too narrow in its scope. They shared different suggestions on how it could be expanded, including geology, habitat connectivity, environmental quality and ecosystems. A few suggested there could be more reflection on the human impact on biodiversity, e.g., through farming and car use. One respondent suggested the subheading could be renamed 'The Ecosystem Approach' which would allow a wider scope for this theme. Another called for more examples or case studies of activity across Scotland.

Other comments about the subheadings included:

- It was noted that under the 'Climate' crosscutting theme there is no reference to the growth of biomass for energy.
- A few respondents felt that there should be more prominence given to key national issues facing Scotland, for example Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A small number reflected on how the visions and objectives will be achieved; one intimated that Scotland's environmental goals are not achievable, due to cost implications; and one called for a route map for strategy implementation from the Scottish Government.

## Endorsement of the subheadings

Several respondents shared positive feedback on the subheadings in the draft Strategy, describing them as "suitable", "very useful", "important" and "good starting points". Respondents praised the simple, uncomplicated nature of the subheadings which were deemed accessible to the general public. A few respondents agreed that the three subheadings summarised the major challenges for the future with one respondent describing them as "general enough to work across Scotland."

The 'Communities' subheading was particularly well-received by a number of respondents, with appreciation expressed for its effectiveness in communicating how land use affects the public in different ways.

**"The cross-cutting nature of the Communities theme is an effective way to illustrate the importance of land and its use to people in their everyday lives; one of the stated ambitions of the new Strategy. It also underscores the importance of ensuring sustainable place-making and, by extension, sustainable communities as central objectives of land use policy in particular."**

**Community Land Scotland**

## Priorities

Some respondents reflected on priorities within and across the subheadings; for example, calling for one theme to be highlighted as the greatest priority; or for general guidance on how to avoid conflict between objectives. Across these comments there was no consistent view; priorities were different for each respondent.

## Delivering sustainable land use

Question nine asked respondents to consider whether the draft Land Use Strategy shows that steps are being taken to help deliver sustainable land use in Scotland.

**Q9: 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?**

Q9	No. of responses	%
Yes	30	35%
No	34	40%
Don't know	9	10%
I do not have enough information	7	8%
Not answered/ blank response	6	7%

This question received 72 open-text responses in which mixed views were evident. Several respondents felt that the draft Strategy provides sufficient evidence that the Scottish Government is taking action to deliver sustainable land use, and noted specific sections in the draft Strategy which demonstrate this. However, many others disagreed, highlighting issues not considered in the document, a need for more detail on the intended delivery plan and expecting a greater sense of urgency from the Strategy. These perspectives are discussed further below.

### Details of delivery plan

A prevalent theme across responses to question nine was the notion that the draft Strategy, at present, is not detailed enough to demonstrate that the Scottish Government is taking steps to deliver sustainable land use. The document was described as aspirational with good ambition, but lacking direction about implementing change “on the ground”. Respondents expressed a desire for information about the Scottish Government’s delivery intentions.

Themes in this discussion included observations that the Strategy would benefit from setting out more specific aims, objectives and targets and the actions that will be taken to realise positive change. Some respondents called for more examples of practice, to provide insight on how sustainable land use will be achieved.

**“Bringing about these changes should be the overarching objective of all relevant public policies. The Land Use Strategy should specify the desired destination and set the course for reaching it, providing the strategic guidance essential for the Regional Land Use Frameworks that should spell out the detail.”**

**Scottish Environment LINK**

The Scottish Government’s proposal for a more detailed delivery plan in the future was referred to by a few respondents, however they felt that the draft Strategy provides less direction than necessary to drive progress.

**“We welcome in principle the proposal to follow up the LUS itself with a more detailed delivery plan. But without spelling out more clearly in it the outcomes that are desired, the LUS can hardly constitute an adequate basis for such a plan.**

**As a result, the content of this document doesn't demonstrate what steps the Scottish Government is taking to help deliver sustainable land use.”**

**Buglife**

### **Issues and information not included in the Strategy**

Calls for additional issues and information to incorporate within the Strategy was the second most prevalent theme in responses to question nine. Respondents put forth a number of topics that they felt were either not addressed or merited additional discussion.

**“What is missing is the wider social and economic context which is going to shape our landscapes and land use in the coming 5-10 years: Brexit and changing market access; changing subsidy regimes (with CAP replacement); opportunities for new products and services arising from the natural capital (the emerging bioeconomy).”**

**EIT Climate-KIC**

Restoration of natural ecosystems was raised by several respondents. They raised concerns that efforts targeted at natural restoration and regeneration were not represented or promoted strongly enough in the Strategy.

**“There is a lack of recognition, as an overarching approach, of the importance of nature based solutions, working with nature and the restoration of degraded natural systems, except in particular circumstances where there are action programmes, as on peatlands.”**

**Individual**

A few advocated for the inclusion of aims related to a reduction in livestock numbers and the introduction of more sustainable farming practices to allow ecological recovery. One respondent wanted to see a more explicit commitment to rewilding.

A small number of respondents noted that, although they welcomed a commitment toward peatland restoration and tree-planting, this should not come at the expense of other natural habitats. For example, the North East Mountain Trust reflected that “planting is appropriate in some places, but the document needs to acknowledge a greater role for natural regeneration, which is better at sequestering and retaining carbon and for wildlife”. The Scottish Geology Trust reflected on Scotland’s strengths in this area, noting “a land use strategy that fails to mention our world class geodiversity is a missed opportunity”.

Land ownership was also raised by many respondents. The absence of an explicit discussion on land reform in the draft Strategy was raised repeatedly; in this discussion respondents stressed the critical importance of the relationship between land ownership and sustainable land use. A few felt that community ownership should be promoted in the Strategy. One suggested that the topic of land reform be included in the contextual policy narrative near the beginning of the document.

Other notable suggestions for additional information that would help the draft Strategy communicate that the Scottish Government is taking steps to deliver sustainable land use include:

- More detail on the challenges Scotland faces in delivering sustainable land use, such as the implications of climate change.
- Calls for greater enforcement of regulations in the forestry sector.
- More explicit references to and integration with other national policies and strategies.

### **Endorsement of the Draft Strategy**

Expressions of support for the Strategy, including its attempts to demonstrate the steps being taken to help deliver sustainable land use were shared by several respondents. Those who endorsed the document noted that it shows a good understanding of the issues and sets out positive actions for the future.

A few noted specific areas or aspects of the Strategy which helped to illustrate that the Scottish Government is taking action. For example, respondents praised the cross-sectoral ambition and integrated approach of the Strategy, the acknowledgment of the need for radical change and the focus on tree-planting.

**“One aspect that stands out in the strategy is that all land uses are presented as legitimate and not in competition...we are therefore pleased to see forestry and farming presented as equals, both with their respective roles to play in building a sustainable green economy.”**

**BSW Timber Group**

Two respondents observed that the Strategy is an improvement on the previous strategies.

### **Lack of urgency**

Concerns that the aims of the Strategy do not reflect the urgency or scale of the climate change crisis or biodiversity emergency were raised by some respondents. They called for a stronger, faster and more radical approach to delivering sustainable land use.

The Strategy's description of the ecological state of the uplands, which states that "much of this landscape is land with a high nature value" was described as flawed and unrealistic by a few respondents. Their comments included requests for acknowledgement that much of Scotland's uplands are severely degraded and felt that such areas require more drastic action than is laid out in the draft Strategy.

### **Comments on presentation**

Some respondents said the structure and presentation of the Strategy made it difficult for them to understand the steps that the Scottish Government is taking to help deliver sustainable land use. A few described the Strategy as simply a list of existing policies, strategies and actions which do not tie together to make a coherent Strategy.

Suggestions to improve the presentation of the draft Strategy, included:

- Setting out a clear list of actions early in the document.
- Framing the Strategy more systematically against the expected outcomes.
- Including a description of the current baseline conditions and a vision of what should have changed by 2026 at the beginning of the document.

### **Areas for clarification**

A few respondents noted phrases and terms throughout the Strategy that they felt required clarity. There was little consensus in this area, however comments included:

- For better explanation of 'semi-natural' and 'marginal' land.
- To avoid jargon such as 'green infrastructure' and 'peri-urban'.
- More clarity on the interrelationship between the NPF4 and LUS3.

# Equality: Call for Evidence

The final section of the consultation was a call for documented or academic evidence on the impact of land use on equality. As this is not widely available, the Scottish Government wish to ensure that potential impacts of the Land Use Strategy are not overlooked.

## Protected characteristics

The first question in this section asked respondents if they have any lived experience or have studied the impact of land use, land use change or access to the outdoors.

**Q10: If you have lived experience or have studied the impacts of land use, land use change, or access to the outdoors on age, disability, sex, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, please provide us with details about this in the box below.**

Around three in ten (26) respondents provided an answer to this question. However, only a small number directly addressed the question and provided information about the nine protected characteristics in the 2010 Equality Act. This section provides an analysis of these responses.

One in ten provided links to documents or evidence for the Scottish Government to review. These sources are listed in Appendix 1.

## Lack of diversity

The most relevant theme from a relatively small number of responses was the lack of gender diversity in land ownership and careers. Three respondents noted land in Scotland is predominantly owned by men, two of whom cited a figure that 7% of land in Scotland is owned by women, compared to 10% globally. They felt this could change through encouraging community land ownership and changes to land value tax and inheritance law.

**“Scotland’s land ownership is predominantly male; we are not aware of data showing that other diversity groups are under-represented among landownership, but experience indicates it is very likely.”**

**Forest Policy Group**

One organisation commented that land-based careers are still seen as male, and not promoted by career specialists, exacerbating a shortage of new entrants to land use.

## **Socio-economic inequalities**

While not a protected characteristic, socio-economic inequalities was another minor theme. Comments on this varied and included:

- A mention that those living in suburbs and rural areas are cut off from amenities and work due to a lack of public transport.
- That a Just Transition should consider a broader perspective on social justice than the categories under the Equality Act 2010.
- Findings from National Trust for Scotland's research which showed: "outdoor areas and greenspace being a higher priority for low-income groups, while transport was a greater priority for higher income groups."

## **RLUPs and decision making**

Related to this, a small number noted the value of involving people and communities in decision making around land. They suggested how the proposed RLUPs could play a role in this. A response from Scottish Borders Council noted that their RLUP pilot was considered to have a positive impact on rural groups for all nine protected characteristics. National Trust for Scotland proposed that RLUPs should be based on good public engagement, given research which shows that 60% consider they had little influence on how decisions about how their local greenspace or historic environment is managed.

A response from The Southern Uplands Partnership called for RLUPs to build on existing networks across Scotland. They also asked for clarification on what role RLUPs will have in resolving competing claims or conflicts, stating that: "*It seems inevitable that without the ability to direct funding and/or influence regulation, their impact will be minimal.*"

## **COVID-19 context**

COVID-19 was cited by a few respondents. They noted that the pandemic has highlighted the value of outdoor spaces, the increase in poverty, and the divide between different groups in the population in terms of financial and cultural capital.

## **Other comments**

A small number of singular comments were provided:

- One respondent noted the negative physical and mental health effects on city dwellers who have no public parks for exercise or enjoyment.
- Another noted that both young and old people want to access and enjoy land.
- In their detailed response, the Scottish Human Rights Commission notes that several international conventions set out a right to participation and access to information including for specific groups such as women, children, disabled people and minorities. They note participation helps to ensure that systems are responsive to the needs of disadvantaged groups.

## Impacts on Island Communities

In addition to the protected characteristics, The Scottish Government also sought views on potential impacts of the Land Use Strategy on island communities and young people. These two groups were the focus of the last two questions in the consultation.

**Q11: Are you aware of any examples of how the Land Use Strategy might impact, positively or negatively, island communities in a way that is different from its impact on mainland areas?**

One in five respondents (18) answered question 11. Responses often made specific points and varied considerably. However, there were still some recurring themes, detailed below.

### Special features of island environments and communities

The most prevalent theme in response to question 11 was how island communities differ from the rest of Scotland. These comments took two forms – some focussed on practical differences and others on the challenges of managing island land. One respondent also noted the need to consider the diverse histories and cultures of the islands.

Practical issues which affect day-to-day life on the islands include distance and isolation from the mainland, limits to supplies and weather. The implications of these on the cost of work on the islands, due to travel and accommodation, were noted.

A small number highlighted different forms of land use and management in the islands, and why priorities for using and adapting land can be different:

- Different farming methods need to be recognised and supported such as the systems used by crofters on the machair support many high conservation species.
- Scottish Land and Estates commented that island land use can be unique to the specific setting. There may be variations in soil quality and type in small spaces, and land might need to be used in a mixture of ways to ensure local communities are supported such as marginal land may be needed for food production. They also noted that some islands might be defined as ‘peri-urban’ according to the Land Use Strategy, given their role as part of and supporting the community.
- Woodland Trust Scotland noted: *“From a forestry point of view, it is important that the grant schemes for the island communities reflect the higher costs of creating woodlands there.”*

### Islands and remote rural areas

Related to this, though not the second most frequent theme, were opposing comments. A small number felt the practical challenges islands face and the types and use of land on islands are very similar to remote areas of mainland Scotland. They believed all these areas should be given the same considerations.

In their response, James Hutton Institute cited research from the Islands Revival project. This highlights that the population of the Islands has fallen while that of the rest of Scotland has risen. However, some islands have seen increases linked to growing towns, local economic activity or tourism and changes to community ownership.

## Island vulnerabilities

A few respondents made brief comments about vulnerabilities. These were the dangers of an island having only one main source of income, how island communities are potentially more vulnerable to negative impacts of land use and climate change, and that they have fragile environments which are easily damaged.

Tourism was mentioned by a small number of respondents. One noted the importance of tourism to island communities. Another noted the links between tourism and islands' heritage and culture. The negative impact of tourism on land and landscapes, in the form of increased visitor numbers and the need for new facilities, was also mentioned.

## Comments on the Land Use Strategy

Some respondents provided comments and suggestions on what the Land Use Strategy should include in relation to the islands, making this another prevalent theme. These were mostly specific points, which included:

- Two called for support schemes delivered or influenced by the Strategy to recognise different priorities for land use in the islands, and to ensure that support is provided at a strategic, national level.
- Farmers for Stock-Free Farming made a specific point that greater promotion of kelp crofting would provide better, more sustainable livelihoods than the continuation of sustainable fisheries which they feel are promoted in the Strategy.
- Two organisations suggested that the Strategy consider the wider context in which islands sit and recognises the differences between islands. It should be noted that in addition to this suggestion James Hutton Institute also noted: "*Significant consideration has been dedicated in the draft Strategy as to how issues relate to Scotland's islands.*"

**"The initiatives concerning Scotland's islands are poorly defined and disappointing – they seem an afterthought rather than having islands integrated into national and regional land use planning. Indeed, the focus is on the natural environment and grant funding for island initiatives, rather than considering the island communities as part of the wider picture in terms of economic development, housing, employment and land use."**

### **Scottish Islands Federation**

**"The Land Use Strategy recognises the potential implications of a change in emphasis of the economies of some island, for example in relation to a just transition to a net-zero green and sustainable economy. However, it should give recognise the differences between island regions (e.g., community land ownership rates, extent of crofting, oil and gas development, renewable energy development) and that the pathways of transitions will differ in social, economic and environmental terms."**

### **James Hutton Institute**

## Impacts on Young People

**Q12: Are there any particular current or future impacts you can think of on young people, (children, pupils, and young adults up to the age of 26) of land use, land use change, or any other aspect of the Land Use Strategy, positively or negatively. Please provide examples or evidence.**

Just under half (41) answered question 12, with the majority linking their response to young people. A small number provided references to evidence; these are listed in Appendix 1.

### **Greater environmental awareness**

The most prevalent theme was for young people to have greater environmental awareness and knowledge of land use. A few noted that it is vital that young people understand how land can be used, can see themselves living and working in rural areas, and appreciate how they can benefit from the land. However, they noted young people need to be able to experience the land to gain this understanding. Other brief comments highlighted the need for increased awareness so young people have a better understanding of food production, or because the majority are disconnected due to living in urban areas.

**“They need opportunities to be able to experience and value what is all around us and to be confident that all is being done to avert more environmental damage.”**

### **Sustaining North Berwick**

Schools were mentioned by a small number, welcoming their potential role in increasing environmental awareness. One individual noted the opportunity for enhanced outdoor learning and recreation, particularly about teaching science and ecology through forestry. A response from Scottish Islands Federation suggested crofting and community land use should be included in the curriculum to encourage young people’s involvement. An individual – a teacher – proposed the curriculum should encourage challenges to the status quo of land use, for example questioning the merits of hill sheep farming or forestry.

### **Employment and training**

The second most prevalent theme was around jobs and training. Comments covered three areas. Firstly, some highlighted the limitations of rural areas, such as a lack of jobs, or poor public transport reducing employment options. Others noted the importance of land-based jobs to rural communities.

Secondly, specific suggestions were made about how to increase job opportunities. Confor reflected that “a key part of a Land Use Strategy with a higher public profile will be promotion of careers in land use”. There were singular calls for: more stock-free farming rather than using mechanised, industrial farming methods; taking advantage of increasing opportunities in tree-related sectors; for a diverse land-based economy with activities such as adventure sports, wildlife tourism, and renewable engineering; maximising the potential from restoring “empty land” such as peatland, creating jobs in surveying, woodland management and wildlife control; and ensuring employment opportunities are available

close to new housing developments. One commented that the Strategy should help to promote careers in land use (see below).

Training was mentioned by a small number of respondents. Suggestions included offering apprenticeships in farming, forestry and fishing to young people in urban areas, a more localised forestry sector offering more opportunities for apprenticeships, and programmes to help existing rural workforces to adapt.

### **Using the Land Use Strategy to increase engagement with young people**

Views on links between the Land Use Strategy and young people were expressed by some respondents. Views were mixed:

- Three respondents were positive about the role the Strategy could play by: ensuring woods are created in the right place to serve future generations; supporting a green transition and offering opportunities for young people; and by prioritising long-term interests in the environment and climate mitigation. The latter comment referred to all people, rather than young people specifically.
- NatureScot recommended it should highlight the difference between those making the decisions about land and the wider public interest and should call for increased involvement of young people. An individual also commented that if the Strategy included more stakeholders it could provide a vehicle for citizenship among young people.
- James Hutton Institute called for the draft Strategy to have greater reference to impacts on future generations. They included a suggestion to link the engagement of young people with the Scottish Government agenda on digital transformation in planning in relation to RLUPs. They also noted the Strategy could include an acknowledgement of children's rights in relation to the environment and play, linked to the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the celebration of 2021 as the 'Year of Childhood'.

### **Health and wellbeing**

Some respondents commented on the impact of land use on the health and wellbeing of young people. Over half of these comments were brief, noting that both physical and mental health could improve, citing the freedom to enjoy and connect with nature and the importance of making decisions which could improve health. The remainder provided more detail or examples: that using land for plant-based agriculture could improve food security and young people's access to fresh local produce; and one cited a report which considers how environments and amenities can support safe play for young people.

### **Access and ownership of land**

Another theme was better access to land for young people. A few respondents simply called for greater access to green spaces, accessible wilderness and growing spaces such as forest gardens. National Trust for Scotland noted their research showing that outdoor areas and facilities are a greater priority for younger and middle-aged people.

There are opportunities for innovation in land-use which schools and colleges could encourage but without access to land there is a major barrier to entrepreneurship in the land-use sector.

**“There are opportunities for innovation in land-use which schools and colleges could encourage but without access to land there is a major barrier to entrepreneurship in the land-use sector.”**

#### **The Southern Uplands Partnership**

Related to this a small number made the specific point that young people either do not own land or have limited routes to becoming landowners. They noted this excludes them from decisions about future land use and limits economic opportunities.

#### **Housing**

Housing was mentioned by some. Most cited a lack of housing for young people, primarily in rural areas, though one noted this also applies to urban areas. Respondents noted that being priced out of housing in their area could lead to young people moving away or being unable to move back to their communities. Two respondents noted the role of second home ownership and Airbnb in reducing housing options.

Two respondents raised housing in a different context, noting how increased house building could damage land for future generations and limit the availability of open space.

#### **Importance of land use to future generations**

Some respondents highlighted the importance of managing land so it can be used and enjoyed by young people in the future. They cited the need for future generations to experience biodiversity, to have fertile land to farm and food security, and issues around afforestation and carbon sequestering through forestry. Woodland Trust Scotland noted the need to think carefully about the needs of future generations when making decisions now, given the timescales involved in forestry.

#### **Consequences of climate change**

A small number referenced the impact of climate change on young people. Two noted that young people are likely to experience the brunt of the effects of climate change. The other stated improved ecosystem resilience and green infrastructure could help protect future generations from flooding and other consequences of climate change.

#### **Other and general comments**

Three respondents made general comments which did not align with the themes above.

- The Scottish Human Rights Commission provided a response detailing a series of rights related issues and evidence. They urged the Scottish Government to consider these in relation to land use but did not directly link these to the Strategy. They noted several rights to a healthy environment as enshrined in the UNCRC and other General Comments produced by UN treaty Body Committees. Examples of legal cases where young people are challenging their rights being violated were also cited.

- One simply stated that future generations will have to live with decisions being made today.
- As part of their wider response to question 12, one respondent discussed the negative impact of Scotland's dominant land use of supporting animal agriculture.
- Another detailed their thoughts on the feasibility of achieving net zero emissions.

# Conclusions

Many informed individuals and stakeholders took part in the consultation. They are engaged and knowledgeable about a multitude of land use considerations. Respondents shared their visions and ambitions for Scotland, providing a useful evidence base for the Scottish Government to draw upon when developing the final Land Use Strategy.

This report provides a high-level summary across the range of consultation responses submitted. For more detail, readers are encouraged to look to individual responses where permission was granted for publication<sup>1</sup>.

Key themes included calls for an update to Scotland's vision and objectives. Respondents expressed a sense of urgency, asking for the Strategy to go further in explicitly recognising the role of land use in tackling the climate emergency and the biodiversity crisis. Other cross cutting themes included ownership, access, equity and sustainable approaches to land management. Linked to this, they look forward to seeing a detailed delivery plan.

In the context of the Green Recovery, COP26 and anticipated changes to agriculture wrought by Brexit, the vision and strategic objectives are seen as a valuable opportunity to create a greener, sustainable and more equitable Scotland. In this vein, respondents suggested various clarifications, changes to wording or shifts in emphasis to enhance the Strategy's potential to achieve change; the specific priorities expressed often varied, reflecting the many different areas of expertise or interest that respondents represented.

Reflecting across responses, it is evident that the new Strategy is welcomed. The landscape approach was endorsed as a successful way of making the Strategy accessible and engaging beyond the land use sector. However, many highlighted specific priorities, adjustments or expansions they would like to see; some of these requests were contradictory.

It may not be possible to satisfy the different interests and priorities expressed across the many stakeholders who participated in the consultation. However, above and beyond specific interests, most participants wish to see more detail about how the Strategy will be delivered.

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<sup>1</sup> Responses are published on the Scottish Government's consultation website: <https://consult.gov.scot/>

# Appendix 1: Additional evidence

**Q10: If you have lived experience or have studied the impacts of land use, land use change, or access to the outdoors on age, disability, sex, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, please provide us with details about this in the box below.**

The evidence and sources suggested by respondents in response to Q10 are listed below.

Colley, K., Currie, M., Hopkins, J. and Melo, P. 2016. Access to outdoor recreation by older people in Scotland, Final report. Report for Rural Communities Research, Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services (RESAS) Division, The Scottish Government.

[www.gov.scot/publications/access-outdoor-recreation-older-people-scotland/](http://www.gov.scot/publications/access-outdoor-recreation-older-people-scotland/)

Colley, K. and Irvine, K.N. 2018a. Disparities in use of the outdoors across equality groups in Scotland. Research Summary. July 2018, James Hutton Institute.

[www.hutton.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/RS-use-of-the-outdoors.pdf](http://www.hutton.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/RS-use-of-the-outdoors.pdf)

Colley, K. and Irvine, K.N. 2018b. Investigating use of the outdoors across adult population groups in Scotland - Final Report. Report to the Scottish Government, July 2018.

[www.hutton.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/Fullreport-use-of-the-outdoors.pdf](http://www.hutton.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/Fullreport-use-of-the-outdoors.pdf)

Colley, K. Currie, M.J. B. and Irvine, K.N. 2019. Then and Now: Examining Older People's Engagement in Outdoor Recreation Across the Life Course, Leisure Sciences, 41:3, 186-202, DOI: 10.1080/01490400.2017.1349696

[www.hutton.ac.uk/research/projects/distributional-issues-natural-capital-accounting-0](http://www.hutton.ac.uk/research/projects/distributional-issues-natural-capital-accounting-0)

Paths for All - National survey of attitudes and barriers to walking in Scotland, 2019

<https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/resources/resource/public-opinion-survey-2018>

Barriers and Facilitators to Recreational Walking. A report produced by the Physical Activity for Health Research Centre (PAHRC) at the University of Edinburgh. The report was jointly commissioned by Paths for All and Ramblers Scotland.

<https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/resources/resource/barriers-and-facilitators-to-recreational-walking>

Enjoying the outdoors - Monitoring the impact of Coronavirus and social distancing - latest survey results (October 2020). NatureScot carried this out in partnership with Scottish Forestry, the Cairngorms National Park Authority and Paths for All.

<https://www.nature.scot/enjoying-outdoors-monitoring-impact-coronavirus-and-social-distancing-latest-survey-results-october>

The National Trust for Scotland Heritage Observatory briefing note, November 2017  
Planning for Scotland – citizen views

[https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/ws-nts/Production/assets/downloads/NTS\\_briefing\\_note\\_-\\_planning\\_in\\_Scotland\\_-\\_November\\_2017.pdf?mtime=20180301132427](https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/ws-nts/Production/assets/downloads/NTS_briefing_note_-_planning_in_Scotland_-_November_2017.pdf?mtime=20180301132427)

The Southern Uplands Partnership Annual Report 2019/20  
<http://sup.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/SUP-Annual-Report-2019-20.pdf>

In relation to The Southern Uplands Partnership's contribution to the recent local strategic forestry pilots:

<https://forestry.gov.scot/support-regulations/woodland-creation/regional-strategic-woodland-creation-project>

In relation to waiting times for allotments:

Glasgow Allotments Forum

The Council Food Growing Strategies and Food Plan

Uploaded to the Citizen Space Portal and provided to The Scottish Government as a PDF document:

Tarland Climate Crisis Group - 3 Don X Precognitions - Tom Rogers - with rebuttal - 17th November 2011

**Q12 - Are there any particular current or future impacts you can think of on young people, (children, pupils, and young adults up to the age of 26) of land use, land use change, or any other aspect of the Land Use Strategy, positively or negatively. Please provide examples or evidence.**

Scottish Borders Council, Housing Needs and Aspirations of Young People:

[https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/download/1166/young\\_peoples\\_housing\\_needs](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/download/1166/young_peoples_housing_needs)

Regional Strategic Woodland Creation Project:

<https://forestry.gov.scot/support-regulations/woodland-creation/regional-strategic-woodland-creation-project>

2011 Good Places Better Health for Scotland's Children report:

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s63145/Good%20Places%20Better%20Health%20for%20Scotland's%20Children.pdf>

<https://childrensneighbourhoods.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/CNS-Annual-Report-19-20.pdf>.

(The first report of a new programme designed to provide a focal point for neighbourhood activities for children growing up in poverty)

Scottish Government Guidance on the Food Growing Strategy section 119 of part 9 Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

<https://www.monbiot.com/2013/10/07/rewild-the-child/>

Miller, D., Morrice, J., McKeen, M., Donaldson-Selby, G., Wang, C. and Munoz-Rojas, J. 2016. Use of digital and 3D technology in planning: research report. Final Report for Scottish Government. pp109.

Wang, C., Miller, D., Brown, I., Jiang, Y. and Castellazzi, M. 2015. Visualisation techniques to support public interpretation of future climate change and land-use choices: a case study from N-E Scotland. *International Journal of Digital Earth*.  
[www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17538947.2015.1111949](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17538947.2015.1111949)

Wood, J. (2015) Children and Planning: To what extent does the Scottish town planning system facilitate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child? *Planning Practice and Research* 30(2), 139-159.

Wood, J., (2017). Planning for children's play: Exploring the 'forgotten' right in Welsh and Scottish policy. *Town Planning Review*, 88(5), 579-602.

A new project funded under the EU H2020 Programme (MOVING, [www.moving-h2020.eu/](http://www.moving-h2020.eu/))

## **Appendix 2: Quantitative summary of questions**

Question 1	Yes		No		Don't know		I do not have enough information		Not answered/blank response	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Question 1: Do you feel this vision still reflects the outcomes we need to achieve?	22	26%	53	62%	1	1%	4	5%	6	7%
Question 2	Answered question					No response				
	No.		%		No.		%			
Question 2 (open response): If not, what key changes would you like to see for a new Land Use vision?	66		77%		20		23%			
Question 3	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		Not answered/Blank response	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Question 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.	14	16%	47	55%	48	56%	40	47%	11	13%
Question 4	Answered question					No response				
	No.		%		No.		%			
Question 4 (open response): 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.	71		83%		15		17%			

Question 5	Strongly aware of all pressures on our land		Aware of many of the pressures on our land		Knew land was needed for some things		Not answered/ Blank response			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Question 5: Before reading this document were you aware of the pressures on our land? <sup>2</sup>	63	73%	17	20%	1	1%	5	6%		
Question 6	Yes		No		Not answered/ blank response					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%				
Question 6: Are you aware of ways people can get involved in land use matters within your local area?	60	70%	17	20%	9	10%				
Question 7	Yes		No		Don't know		I do not have enough information		Not answered/ blank response	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Question 7 (response options): Do you think the landscapes are an effective way to communicate Scottish Government policy?	56	65%	15	17%	7	8%	1	1%	7	8%
Question 7 (comments)	Answered question				No response					
	No.		%		No.		%			
Question 7 (Open response): Do you think the landscapes are an effective way to communicate Scottish Government policy?	56		65%		30		35%			
Question 8	Yes		No		Don't know		I do not have enough information		Not answered/ blank response	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Question 8 (response options): Under each landscape we have identified three sub headings: Climate Change, Biodiversity and Communities. Do you think that these capture the crosscutting themes that are important to all of Scotland?	46	53%	22	26%	8	9%	2	2%	8	9%

Question 8 (comments)	Answered question				No response					
	No.		%		No.		%			
Question 8 (Open response): Under each landscape we have identified three sub headings: Climate Change, Biodiversity and Communities. Do you think that these capture the crosscutting themes that are important to all of Scotland?	52		60%		34		40%			
Question 9	Yes		No		Don't know		I do not have enough information		Not answered/blank response	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Question 9 (Response options): 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?	30	35%	34	40%	9	10%	7	8%	6	7%
Question 9 (comments)	Answered question				No response					
	No.		%		No.		%			
Question 9 (Open response): 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?	72		84%		14		16%			

<sup>2</sup> This question also included options at the lower end of the scale; 'not aware of the extent we need our land' or 'completely unaware of the importance of our land'. None of the participants selected those answer options.

Question 10	Answered question		No response	
	No.	%	No.	%
Question 10 (Open response): If you have lived experience or have studied the impacts of land use, land use change, or access to the outdoors on age, disability, sex, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, please provide us with details about this in the box below.	26	30%	60	70%
Question 10 (additional information)	Answered question		No response	
	No.	%	No.	%
Question 10 (documents to support response):	3	3%	83	97%
Question 11	Answered question		No response	
	No.	%	No.	%
Question 11 (Open response): Are you aware of any examples of how the Land Use Strategy might impact, positively or negatively, island communities in a way that is different from its impact on mainland areas?	18	21%	68	79%
Question 12	Answered question		No response	
	No.	%	No.	%
Question 12 (Open response): Are there any particular current or future impacts you can think of on young people, (children, pupils, and young adults up to the age of 26) of land use, land use change, or any other aspect of the Land Use Strategy, positively or negatively. Please provide examples or evidence:	41	48%	45	52%