

# Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy 2021-2026

## Getting the best from our land

The consultation process undertaken

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This Consultation Report accompanies Scotland's third Land Use Strategy, presented to the Scottish Parliament by the Scottish Ministers on *[add date when known]*. It outlines how the views expressed about the draft strategy during the consultation process were taken into account in the final document, which can be found online at:

*[add hyperlink when available]*

## 1.2 Purpose of this report.

The production of a Land Use Strategy is a requirement of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The Act specifies what should be included in the strategy, the requirements for consultation on a draft strategy and for the production of a consultation report.

The requirements for consultation and consultation reporting are set out in Sections 4 and 5 of the Act as follows:

4. Before laying the strategy before the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Ministers must publish a draft strategy and consult with such bodies as they consider appropriate and also with the general public.

5. The strategy must be accompanied by a report setting out—

(a) the consultation process undertaken in order to comply with subsection (4); and

(b) the ways in which views expressed during that process have been taken account of in finalising the strategy (or stating that no account has been taken of such views)

## 1.3 Structure of this report

In order to provide insight into how the results of this consultation were taken in to consideration we have structured the response based on the structure of the written consultation. Each of the below sections will briefly summarise the key methods and findings of the consultation analysis, and outline the Scottish Government response.

Section 2 sets out the consultation process and stakeholder engagement, statistics on responses received and main methods of analysis. Section 3 highlights the main points of feedback raised during the consultation and the Scottish Government response to how each has been taken into account.

## 2. The Consultation Process

### 2.1 Pre-consultation: Stakeholder engagement during the preparation of the draft Strategy

The impacts of COVID-19 meant that engagement with stakeholders throughout the preparation of the consultation draft of the strategy was of a limited nature. The inevitability of this was broadly accepted by all. Discussions were held where possible with a range of stakeholders including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the National Farmers Union Scotland, the Scottish Wildlife Trust, Scottish Land and Estates, the National Trust for Scotland and Trees for Life. These discussions were used to explore the intended changes in approach within Scotland's third Land Use Strategy as well as seeking wider views on the sustainable land use vision and objectives.

### 2.2 Stakeholder engagement during the consultation period

A formal written consultation on a draft strategy was held between 02 December 2020 and 17 January 2021. In line with the Strategy's stated aim of making land use a more accessible issue, user friendliness was an important consideration in the design of the consultation and led to the publication of a combined Consultation and Draft Strategy on the CitizenSpace consultation platform.

The consultation was launched via a Ministerial announcement on social media with a number of key stakeholders being notified of this directly, including targeting of groups who may have an interest in Equality issues but who may not have engaged with the Land Use Strategy previously. The consultation was promoted primarily via Twitter with a second round of promotion in the final week of the consultation. Both posts together received 20,871 views over the course of the consultation window, and were retweeted by organisations including the Scottish Land Commission, Community Land Scotland, NatureScot, Forest Policy Group, Scottish Forestry, and the Communities Housing Trust.

#### *Social media reach:*

Launch Tweet (2nd Dec 2020): 13,730 impressions

21 Likes

31 Retweets

Reminder Tweet (12th Jan 2021): 7,141 impressions

11 Likes

19 Retweets

### 2.3 Statutory consultation response and thematic analysis

The consultation document contained 12 questions in total. These focused on the vision, objectives, the use of landscapes to demonstrate the integrated nature of land use and a call for evidence regarding land use and equalities. There were 86 responses to the consultation, split almost evenly between organisations and individuals. 45 (52%) of these were from organisations, including membership representative bodies, businesses, campaign groups,

charities, public sector bodies and research institutions. The remaining 41 (48%) responses were submitted by individuals.

Analysis of the responses was submitted to public tender and carried out by an independent consultant – ‘The Lines Between’.

For closed questions a quantitative analysis was carried out, and a thematic analysis was applied to the responses to open-ended questions and comments boxes. In order to do this the analyst team at The Lines Between 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. The full analysis report and methodology and analysis is available at:

*[add hyperlink when available]*

### **3. How the views expressed were taken into account**

Following the public consultation, the Scottish Government updated the Strategy to take into account the views expressed where possible and appropriate. Below is an overview of the main outputs of the consultation analysis and how the points raised were taken into account.

#### **3.1 General feedback**

Many well-informed organisations and individuals took part in this consultation, as highlighted by the responses to question 5 regarding knowledge of the pressures on land. In general responses to the draft Strategy were positive. Key proposals, like the change from a sectoral to a landscape approach, were endorsed as a promising way of making the Strategy accessible and engaging beyond traditional land-based sectors. Many respondents highlighted specific priorities, adjustments or expansions they would like to see. Key themes included calls for an update to the vision and objectives, the need to express a stronger sense of urgency, and asks for the Strategy to go further in explicitly recognising the role of land use in tackling the climate emergency and the biodiversity crisis. There was also a call among respondents to address issues such as land ownership, land reform, access, equity and sustainable approaches to land management.

#### **3.2 Does a changing context need a changing vision - Vision and objectives section**

##### **Questions 1 and 2 - Do you feel this vision still reflects the outcomes we need to achieve?**

The majority of respondents (62%) did not feel that the vision still reflected the outcomes that need to be achieved. There was a wide variety of suggestions for change or amendments with the vision’s scope, urgency and clarity being amongst the most prevalent themes.

**Questions 3 and 4 - Do you think any of the above objectives need updating? If so, please indicate which you think needs changes**

On average across the three objectives the majority of respondents felt that they required updating and we received a variety of suggestions for changes or amendments. Themes such as responsible stewardship, natural capital and Scotland's green recovery were all mentioned.

**Scottish Government response** - As there was no consensus on the specific wording for revised vision and objectives, we have published the strategy with the original phrasing but recognise the importance of on-going consideration.

### **3.3 Achieving the objectives: getting the best from our land section (demands on our land)**

**Question 5 - Before reading this document were you aware of the pressures on our land?**

Almost three quarters (73%) of respondents indicated that they were strongly aware of all the pressures on our land with a further 20% indicating that they were aware of many of the pressures our land faces.

**Question 6 - Are you aware of ways people can get involved in land use matters within your local area?**

Over two thirds (70%) said 'yes' indicating awareness of how to get involved in land use matters; a fifth (20%) selected 'no'.

**Scottish Government response** – We firmly believe that the only way our land can achieve the many targets and priorities that are placed upon it is through increased understanding and collaboration across Scotland. While the majority of respondents answered positively to both of these questions, our ambition is to ensure the Land Use Strategy is accessible and informative to as wide an audience as possible. In order to continue to reach out to those who are not aware, we are maintaining content regarding the role of land and the demands that is placed upon it within the Strategy.

### **3.4 Using landscapes to talk about land use section**

**Question 7 - Do you think the landscapes are an effective way to communicate Scottish Government policy?**

The majority of respondents (65%) indicated that they felt that the use of landscapes was an effective way to communicate policy. Respondents provided a range of endorsing comments, suggestions for further development and some concerns around perceptions of priorities within and across landscapes. 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.

**Scottish Government response** – In discussion with various stakeholders we have refined the landscapes to reduce duplication and overlap. The number of landscapes was reduced from 10 to 7 and a revised naming convention for the landscapes was discussed and agreed with stakeholders to ensure ease of understanding and accessibility.

**Question 8 - 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?**

Just over half (53%) of respondents indicated that they felt the sub-headings captured the cross cutting themes. Several described them as “suitable”, “very useful”, “important” and “good starting points”. Economy was a theme that was raised within the open text responses as a possible addition to the subheadings.

**Scottish Government response** – After consideration we have included more economy-based content, such as the role of Scotland’s land in the Green Recovery and Green jobs as well as specific economy actions and targets such as our Food and Drink Sector Ambition 2030 Strategy, but have decided not to add another subheading.

**Question 9 - 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?**

Just over one third (35%) of those that responded to this question answered ‘Yes’ with 40% ‘No’ and the remainder suggesting that they ‘Don’t know’/‘I do not have enough information’. Within the open text responses several themes were highlighted including reiteration that there was not enough detail (such as aims, objectives and targets) to demonstrate that the Scottish Government is taking steps to deliver sustainable land use. A range of other specific areas of focus such as additional promotion of nature based solutions were also given.

**Scottish Government response:** We have introduced a new section to the Strategy aimed at imagining what sustainable land use may look like including an illustrative example of a ‘before and after’ to give a visual representation of the types of changes across the landscapes that sustainable land use could bring. Further information on related actions such as tree planting and peatland restoration that has been set out in the Climate Change Plan update has been included. We have also added two annexes containing tables that demonstrate the national crosscutting nature of policy action and the land use outcomes they help to deliver.

### 3.5 Equality Call for Evidence section

Our consultation included a call for evidence, either academic or lived experience, of land use related impacts on the protected characteristics (as set out in the Equality Act 2010), as well as on young people and island communities.

**Question 10: 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 in the box below.**

Submissions regarding the protected characteristics have informed the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) published separately to this report. The EQIA did not identify any specific impacts likely to result from publication of Scotland's third Land Use Strategy, but some evidence relating to wider issues was received.

**Scottish Government response:** We have brought wider land use and Equality issues more to the fore throughout the Strategy. For example, we have strengthened the focus across the Strategy on Scotland's Just Transition and Green Recovery, and in particular on safeguarding quality of life and healthy environments for future generations and young people. Following the submission of the Scottish Human Rights Commission we have also foregrounded the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement, which is centred on a Human Rights Approach.

**Question 11 - 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?**

Our call for evidence also included specific reference to islands. A recurring theme in the responses related to island vulnerabilities, for example 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 have fragile environments which are easily damaged. Tourism was mentioned by a small number of respondents, including the potential negative impact of tourism on land and landscapes, in the form of increased visitor numbers and the need for new facilities.

**Scottish Government response:** One of the key changes in this iteration of the Land Use Strategy in relation to its predecessors has been the inclusion of a dedicated landscape section on islands. This has enabled us to highlight land use on islands in more detail and with more nuance than sectoral approaches can. It is also worth noting that the ordering of the landscape chapter seeks to follow a natural progression from inland areas through to the marine environment, and does not imply a hierarchy of importance in any way.

**Question 12 - 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.**

Many submissions to the consultation considered young people, but no responses were received from organisations representing youth interests, and data on age of respondents was not collected. Environmental awareness, employment and training, using the Strategy to engage with young people, health and wellbeing, access and ownership of land, housing, importance of land use to future generations, consequences of climate change, and human rights were all themes raised by respondents. These were considered as part of the 'Age' characteristic in the EQIA.

**Scottish Government response:** Land use affects us all, but can have particular consequences for young people, as was evident in the submissions from respondents. We are keen to hear directly from young people, and any future engagement work will focus in particular on youth organisations to ensure their views and thoughts are fully considered.