

# Acting Locally



**The Scottish Environment LINK Manifesto  
for the Scottish Council Elections, 2012**



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# Introduction

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## Sustainability

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012, for the first time since the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, the Scottish people will have nationwide local government elections in Scotland. This will allow a proper focus on the way that Councils perform as they are held to account by the electorate. In no field of policy will this be more important than the field of protecting and enhancing the environment. Scotland's Councils are essential to achieving truly sustainable development.

- Scottish Environment LINK wants to help our Councils improve their environmental performance.
- We want to help the Scottish political parties as they establish their policies for the next four years - and to assist them in putting sustainability at their core.
- We want to help Council political groups writing local manifestoes.

At national level, the environmental NGOs are framing our policy "asks", increasingly, within the National Performance Framework. We have been using, also, the Concordat and Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) and believe these too can become a highly effective framework at local level within which to place the commitments we want to see. We have added, therefore, boxes to our text here – **Fitting it into SOAs** – which show how our key requests can be accommodated within the SOA system when it is reviewed after the elections.

## Preventative Spending

We are aware that local councils will be facing a period of financial stringency over the next four years. Budgets are already being squeezed, but we believe that, even in a period of relative austerity, local government can change the direction of the way it spends money towards spending that prevents downstream, expensive problems – especially those caused by climate change and other problems caused by the failure to secure sustainability.

The Christie Commission on Public Services, published in June 2011, clearly demonstrates how a very large proportion of local government income is spent on problems that might have been prevented with earlier intervention. We believe that this approach is fundamentally the same as achieving sustainable development. All public policy should be directed toward achieving sustainable goals for resilient communities – but also should be properly assessed for any downstream problems created. Nowhere is this more important than in the protection and enhancement of our immediate, local environments.

Accordingly, we have added a sentence or two to every section of this manifesto indicating how expenditure will lead to downstream benefits – and we have marked them as:

## Preventative Spending

## The Concordat & Single Outcome Agreements

In the long term LINK believes that Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) should be a key mechanism for the delivery of sustainability by both the Scottish Government and Councils. We hope that policy development within the political

parties and the Councils will utilise the SOA mechanism as a framework for the future.

At national and local levels we want:

- SOAs to be clearly shown to guide local activity and delivery of national targets and outcomes with clear lines of responsibility through all levels of the local authority;
- an improved set of indicators to be developed to include a wider range of issues related to sustainability and the environment, with robust datasets applicable to a local level; and
- quantifiable progress towards the Scottish Government's Purpose to be reported in a transparent way on an annual basis.

At Council level we want:

- Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) to fully engage with communities of both place and interest (including the voluntary sector), bringing a more inclusive approach to the development of the next round of SOAs; and
- Councils to set quantifiable long-term targets that will make meaningful progress towards the given sustainable outcomes.

**Key recommendations from LINK's SOA report** (Working for Sustainable Development through Single Outcome Agreements): We want:

- local priorities and area profiles to recognise the importance of sustainable development and the environment;
- sustainable development issues to be integrated into SOAs and reflected in both above and below-the-waterline activities, with links between these two levels to ensure positive action is reinforced; and
- preferred outcome indicators to be given for ten topics related to environmental issues in Part II, along with additional outcomes and indicators which aim to inform below-the-waterline activities and reflect local characteristics.

We recommend that a Strategic Environmental Assessment should be carried out on all SOAs. LINK and its member bodies are keen to offer support and advice to local authorities in the drawing up, assessment and review of SOAs.

## Public Bodies' Climate Change Duties

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act was one of the first pieces of domestic climate change legislation in the world. All political parties in Scotland voted for the Act, when it was unanimously passed by the Parliament on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2009. It remains the most progressive climate change legislation anywhere in the world in a number of key areas including a three-part duty on all public bodies to contribute to climate change targets.

The public bodies' climate change duties under the Act came into force on 1st January 2011 and apply to an estimated 7,000 public bodies of varying sizes, from councils, health boards, bodies such as Scottish Water, colleges, universities and police forces, to the smallest GP surgery. The duties require that all public bodies must, in exercising their functions, act:

- in the way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of the Act's emissions reduction targets;
- in the way best calculated to help deliver any statutory adaptation programme; and
- in a way that it considers is most sustainable.

## Climate Change - Mitigation

We all have our part to play in combatting climate change – and that includes our Councils. Local authorities have both a legal and a moral duty to take climate change seriously right across their operations.

Within 5 years we want:

- each Council to fully comply with its duty as a Public Body under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act (2010);
- report annually on emissions reductions; and
- greenhouse-gas emissions to be reduced for local authority operations, and in the local authority area, through the exercise of local authority functions, contributing to the national statutory climate change targets.

## Preventative Spending

The internationally acclaimed Stern Report convincingly makes the argument that if we do not spend resources now on tackling climate change, there will be far higher spending in future years and decades to remedy the disastrous consequences. Spending on climate change measures is spending to save.

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## Climate Change - Adaptation

As climate change begins to affect local communities, Councils should be playing their part in adapting to the new situation on behalf of their community.

Within 5 years we want:

- each Council and public body to develop a sustainable climate change adaptation strategy which includes and outlines how they will help to deliver the Government's statutory Adaptation Programme (from 2013); and
- all Councils and public bodies fulfilling statutory requirement to report annually on adaptation progress.

In the longer term we want adaptation to the impacts of Climate Change embedded into all planning at the local level.

## Preventative Spending

Spending now on adapting to climate change can help prevent emergency and crisis spending later, as the effects grow more pronounced.

### Fitting it into SOAs

#### Climate Change - National Outcomes 10, 12 and 14

**Outcome:** Greenhouse gas emissions are reduced for local authority operations and in the local authority area through the exercise of local authority functions, contributing to the national statutory climate change targets.

**Indicator:** Carbon Management Plan, Carbon Trust. Local authority own data; DECC National Indicator 186 Per capita reduction of CO2 emissions in the local authority area.

**Source:**

[http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/what\\_we\\_do/lc\\_uk/lc\\_reg\\_dev/ni185\\_186/ni185\\_186.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/what_we_do/lc_uk/lc_reg_dev/ni185_186/ni185_186.aspx)

## Education - Schools

Sustainable development is about conserving the resources of our environment for future generations. Part of achieving this is to ensure that education for sustainability should be embedded in our schools, their ethos and their teaching, for the benefit of our young people.

Within 5 years we want:

- all schools to have a whole school approach to sustainable development education (SDE) – embedding it in their work on the curriculum, how the campus is run and in the culture of the school;
- every child to enjoy at least one day per year of learning in the outdoors, focussed on understanding the natural environment and human interactions with it; and
- sustainable design and build principles to be incorporated throughout the Scottish school estate with measures to ensure these become part of schools' learning resources.

### Preventative Spending

School leavers and students knowledgeable of the need to reduce our use of resources will be receptive to the policies required to save energy and resources – and they will be the decision makers of the future.

### Fitting it into SOAs

**Education / Volunteering** - National Outcomes 3, 4, 11, 12

**Outcome:** All schools have a whole school approach to sustainable development education (SDE) – embedding it in their work on the curriculum, how the campus is run and in the culture of the school.

**Indicators:**

- Number of schools with SDE in their School Development Plan.
- Number of schools with an SDE Action Plan.
- Number of schools achieving an Eco Schools Green Flag.
- Number of schools achieving Rights Promoting School or other Global Citizenship award.

**Source:** Local Authority own data, HMIE inspection process.

## Health & Well-Being - Outdoor Access & Recreation

Councils have a general duty for the health and well-being of the community – and specific duties through Community Planning Partnerships. Protecting and enhancing the local terrestrial and marine environment lays a foundation for people's health and enjoyment of life. It can, in addition, help to regenerate areas and lead to long term economic benefits.

Within 5 years we want:

- more people to enjoy regular visits to the outdoors, local greenspace and coastal and marine areas for recreational purposes;
- an increase in the number of children and adults meeting minimum recommended physical activity targets;
- core paths plans to be clearly referenced in SOAs, leading to their implementation and further development across Scotland;
- council recognition of the importance of wider path networks, with action to maintain all local paths; and
- access rights to be upheld in all cases where land managers are not acting responsibly, leading to court action where necessary - with performance on this as a target in SOAs.

In the longer term we want each local authority to promote, support and manage a wide variety of opportunities for outdoor recreation, both in its own area and in partnership with bordering authority areas, enabling people to be active from their doorsteps.

### Preventative Spending

Spending on the outdoors now will encourage people to be more active. This will prevent the need to spend on ill-health later – and will help solve the growing problems related to obesity.

#### Fitting it into SOAs

**Recreational Access** – National Outcomes 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14

**Outcome:** More people enjoy regular visits to the outdoors, local greenspace and coastal and marine areas for recreational purposes.

**Indicator:** Increase in percentage of people making one or more visits to the outdoors each week.

**Source:** [Scottish Recreation Survey](#) / local authority data, such as Ranger Service programme, Country park/core path visitor counts.

#### Fitting it into SOAs

**Physical activity/ Health** – National Outcomes 6, 10, 12, 14

**Outcome:** Increase in the number of children and adults meeting minimum recommended physical activity targets.

**Indicator:** Targets and activities in local physical activity strategy are achieved.

**Source:** Scottish Government/Local authority physical activity data.



## Health & Well-Being - Waste Management

Scotland's Councils are a mechanism for the delivery of the reduction, re-use and recycling of our resources – and the disposal of waste. Only they can deliver a zero-waste environment. In addition, ending landfill is economically important for each Council as landfill tax bites. We all have to head towards zero-tolerance of waste if we are to achieve sustainability.

Within 5 years we want:

- a start to the implementation of waste charging; and
- source segregated recycling provision (including food waste) for every household.

In the longer term we want to see Councils deliver recycling and composting rates for all of Scotland's waste of at least 80% by 2020.

### Preventative Spending

Spending now on improved waste management will prevent higher landfill tax burdens and make a central contribution to the reduction of resources.

### Fitting it into SOAs

**Ecological footprinting / Consumption and use of resources / Waste** – National Outcome 10, 12 and 14

**Outcome:** Ecological or Carbon Footprint is reduced.

**Indicator:** Ecological or Carbon Footprint.

**Source:** <http://resource-accounting.org.uk/downloads/scotland/?page=downloads&area=scotland>

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## Health & Well-Being - Food

Healthy eating and good, nutritious food is the foundation for people's health and wellbeing. Councils should make a major contribution to improving standards.

Within 5 years we want:

- each Council to contribute to Regional Food Strategies which take whole systems approach to food;
- each Council to promote the benefits of Grow Your Own, identifying locations to meet the local demand for allotment and community growing; and
- all school meals to meet new sustainability standards.

In the longer term we want to see low carbon food procurement policies implemented, reduced food waste and 100% composting of remaining waste.

### Preventative Spending

Spending now on improving food standards will save on health problems avoided and the costs of obesity later.

## Health & Well-Being - Fresh Water

Fresh, clean water is vital for human society – and to all of our biodiversity. The most economically sound way to manage our water resource is to base it on an ecosystem approach, and our councils have a vital role to play in this process.

Within 5 years we want our Councils:

- to oversee increasing numbers of water bodies meeting good ecological status/potential under the Water Framework Directive;
- to be engaging fully with the River Basin Management Plan (RBMPs) process, including pollution reduction and river restoration;
- to be engaging fully with the Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMPs) process and the implementation of sustainable flood management;
- investing resources into Natural Flood Management (NFM) and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) – with designs that optimise biodiversity and public amenity benefits; and
- to encourage efficient use among consumers and promote water-efficiency measures in new and existing developments.

In the longer term we want all Councils to be delivering the full ecosystem benefits of the implementation of the RBMPs and FRMPs.

### Preventative Spending

Spending now on improving water quality, ecosystem health and natural flood management will prevent the need to spend on cleaning up pollution, restoring damaged systems and expensive and inefficient flood defence schemes later.

### Fitting it into SOAs

**Water and Flooding** – National Outcome 10, 12

**Outcome:** Sustainable management of water resources and flooding

**Indicator:** Number (or percentage) of water bodies meeting good ecological status/potential under the Water Framework Directive.

**Source:** SEPA's District and Area River Basin Management Plans.

**Indicator:** Proportion of total flooding expenditure allocated to natural flood management measures (such as area of floodplain restored, protected or enhanced).

**Source:** Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009.

## Communities - The Historic Environment

Scottish communities are deeply rooted in, and sustained by, their long, amazing and distinct histories. Knowing and preserving this history is at the core of maintaining community identity and spirit – and increasingly important to tourism and the health of local economies.

Within 5 years we want:

- a Historic Environment Service to be supported by every local authority to an agreed national common standard.

In the longer term we want to see simplified and standardised heritage decision making across Scotland. It should be based upon expert opinion and knowledge concordance, and both marine and land-based decision-making should be co-ordinated.

### Preventative Spending

Spending now on our heritage prevents the irreparable loss, or damage to, our historic buildings and sites – and will help foster income from tourism, one of our most important industries. Having a local Historic Environment Service would help smooth the path of developments.

### Fitting it into SOAs

#### Historic and Built Environment

- National Outcomes 4, 10, 12

**Outcome:** An effective system for managing change in the historic environment is maintained.

**Indicator:** Historic Environment Service maintained by every local authority to an agreed national common standard.

**Source:** Archaeology Scotland annual publication; Discovery and Excavation in Scotland. ALGAO Scotland annual report:  
<http://www.algao.org.uk/Association/Scotland/ScotIntro.htm>

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## Communities - National Parks

National Parks are areas of high nature and landscape value and at the forefront of sustainable development. We want Councils to have a more positive view of the economic, social and environmental benefits to local communities from achieving National Park status for appropriate areas.

Within 5 years we want Councils:

- to include potential areas for designation of further National Parks within the Main Issues report in their Local Development Plans where relevant;
- to promote the objects and benefits of National Park status to relevant local communities and investigate possible designations with local stakeholders; and
- existing National Park Authorities to review the application of Permitted Development Rights within their boundaries.

In the longer term we want Councils to lobby the Scottish Government for National Park status where it is relevant and where there is local support.

### Preventative Spending

Considering National Park status now will help us to make progress towards better preservation of our natural heritage – and can also lay the foundations for increased local income and employment from sustainable tourism and recreation.

## Crime & Policing - Anti-Social Behaviour and Graffiti

The immediate environment in which people live and work is vital to their well-being. Protecting and enhancing the immediate local environment is an essential task for our Councils – and makes an important contribution to building resilient, sustainable communities.

Within 5 years we want Councils to:

- work in partnership with local communities and the police to tackle anti-social behavior;
- encourage the use of planting (using native trees and shrubs) to block access to surfaces at risk of graffiti;
- gather data on anti-social behaviour hotspots, to monitor the impacts of interventions and to communicate results to local communities;
- provide diversionary activities, especially for younger people, and to make links with employment agencies to increase employment and volunteering opportunities;
- target rapid removal of graffiti, especially in areas of deprivation;
- expand use and enforcement of Fixed Penalty Notices for littering and dog fouling;
- Participate in campaigns to fight wildlife crime; and
- increase the use of 'green roofs' on buildings such as schools.



In the longer term we want to see improved design of our communities with the creation of more natural surveillance and active frontages to make people feel safer.

### Preventative Spending

Spending now on reducing anti-social behaviour and graffiti will save on policing, social work and clean-up costs at a later date.

*Photo credit: The Queen's Hall*

## The Economy - Measuring Success

The 'success' of any locality cannot be measured in terms of economic growth alone. We require a new approach from Councils to the measurement of what makes for a high standard of living.

Within 5 years we want:

- CoSLA to work with the Scottish Government on a revision of the two high level GDP targets within the National Performance Framework and the promotion of the changes locally.

In the longer term we want Councils to utilise a revised high level indicator for economic growth at a local level - together with new indicators of well-being and environmental sustainability.

### Preventative Spending

Measuring ALL of the strengths of local communities will lay the foundations for more resilient and sustainable communities in the future.

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## The Economy - Planning

Sustainable development is at the heart of the Scottish terrestrial and marine planning systems and is at the heart of the guidance given to Council planning departments.

Within 5 years we want to see:

- sustainability principles embedded within all new development plans;
- planning decisions being made in accordance with the sustainability policies in the development plans;
- planning consents monitored and enforced to ensure new development is constructed in accordance with planning consents; and
- all local planning authorities having access to specialist advice on the natural and cultural heritage and to take such advice into account in planning decisions and plan making.

In the longer term we want to see real evidence of improved quality in new developments, both in terms of individual new developments and the pattern of new development across each area.

### Preventative Spending

Spending now on promoting sustainable developments will prevent the costs associated with the expensive business of correcting all the downstream problems of poor and unsustainable developments.

## Energy

Councils must be at the forefront of our fight against climate change – especially in terms of their operations. Conservation of energy and the introduction of renewable heat systems will be vital in this respect.

Within 5 years we want each Council:

- to produce a heat map describing community and public sector renewable heat potential across the region;
- to have developed and begun implementing a plan to convert all remaining public sector properties to renewable heat;
- to have developed and begun implementing a plan to generate and sell renewable electricity to the grid;
- to have and deliver a full plan to cut energy demand across its operations;
- to ensure all homes in their area are on track to achieving at least a grade C energy efficiency rating by 2020; and
- to have replaced at least half of their appropriate petrol and diesel cars with electric vehicles.

In the longer term we want these maps to provide the basis for provision of community renewable heat and the conversion of current public sector heat demand to renewable heat sources by 2020.

### Preventative Spending

Spending now on increased efficiency in energy use and the reduction of the waste of energy will result in reduced energy bills in future years and decades.



*Photo credit: wittyveta*

## Transport - Roads

Roads have been the over-dominant focus of local transport planning for many decades. In the pursuit of sustainable development we want to see Councils reverse this thinking and concentrate on the economic, social and environmental benefits of modal shift towards sustainable transport systems.

Within 5 years we want Councils to:

- re-focus transport spending towards walking, cycling and public transport;
- continue and enhance the use of speed restrictions; and
- concentrate effort and finance on road maintenance and safety on existing routes as opposed to building new roads.

In the longer term we want councils to use all of their powers to promote healthy active travel in local communities.

### Preventative Spending

Spending now on active travel now will help reduce air pollution and increase people's health, thus reducing the costs of health problems such as obesity and asthma – and will reduce the demand for capital spending on expensive roads. Redirecting spending to public transport will help to reduce the huge costs of climate change.

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## Transport - Cycling

Cycling is one of the healthiest transport options – and produces no greenhouse gases to contribute to climate change.

Within 5 years we want Councils to:

- re-focus transport spending towards walking, cycling and public transport;
- complete the National Cycle Network;
- be actively planning and building safe cycling routes in their area;
- ensure new developments encourage sustainable transport; and
- ring-fence 10% of transport budgets for cycling and walking.

In the longer term we want to see cycling have a 15% modal share in Scotland's major cities, and all Councils to have a deeper understanding of the economic social and environmental benefits for the local community of developing a cycling network.

### Preventative Spending

Spending now on local cycle paths and networks now will increase people's health, thus reducing the costs of health problems such as obesity – and will reduce the demand for capital spending on expensive roads.

### Fitting it into SOAs

**Transport** – National Outcomes 1, 6, 10, 12, 14

**Outcome:** Local environments are highly conducive to walking and cycling for people of all ages and abilities.

**Indicator:** Increase in the number of local journeys (less than 5 miles) made by walking or cycling.

**Source:** [Scottish Household Survey: Travel Diary](#)

## Transport - Pedestrians

Helping people to improve their health and care about their environment is perhaps the very foundation of the preventative approach which should be at the heart of planning public services. Councils have a vital role to play in helping in this process – and encouraging walking is one of the best ways to do it.

Within 5 years we want Councils to:

- consider removing car parking from school playgrounds, create drop off exclusion zones around schools, and encourage 'park and stride' points at least 10 minutes' walk from the school gate, with identified safe routes;
- enforce traffic regulations around schools;
- ring-fence 10% of transport budgets for cycling and walking;
- make 20mph speed limits the norm in urban areas;
- set targets for removal of unnecessary guardrails from our town centres and residential streets; and
- review local guidance on street design and amend it in accordance with Designing Streets policy, requiring absolute compliance from new developments.

In the longer term we want local authorities to prioritise tackling air pollution across their functions, and to reduce it back to safe limits in all towns and cities. We want councils to implement any new legislation on pavements and drop-kerb parking.

### Preventative Spending

Spending now on promoting walking in our communities will help to prevent downstream health and capital investment costs.



*Photo Credit: Biffinger Berger Group*



## Land Use - Agriculture

We believe that Councils must take a holistic view of the land management of their area for the overall benefit of their communities and local economies.

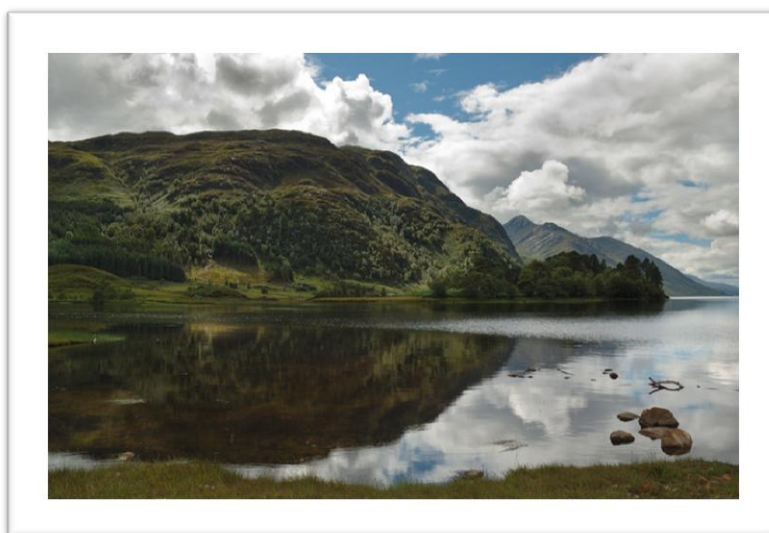
Within 5 years we want Councils to:

- engage in regionalisation of the Scottish Government's Rural Development programmes; and
- engage with land managers to provide services such as flood management and biodiversity enhancement.

In the longer term we want local authorities to make the links between land management and the provision of further services such as good quality landscape, tourism and recreational access.

### Preventative Spending

Spending now on sustainable land use will help avoid the cost of reversing the continued degradation of local habitats and biodiversity.



*Photo Credit: Carlos Lorenz*

## Land Use - Forestry

Woodlands are an essential part of the Scottish landscape – and in both urban and rural settings are the 'lungs' of our communities and a crucial asset for people's well-being.

Within 5 years we want Councils to:

- produce for each area a new Forestry and Woodland Strategy based on the new FCS guidance, "The Right Tree in the Right Place", including urban woodland and street trees; and
- the 19 LAs located within the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) area to actively engage with the CSGN delivery plans as they develop.

In the longer term we want local authorities to ensure that within their boundaries everyone has easy, recreational access to quality woodland.

### Preventative Spending.

Spending now on woodlands will help to avoid physical and mental health problems later – and will help to fight climate change and all the costs entailed.

## Land Use - Landscape

Protecting and enhancing Scotland’s landscapes is vital for our communities and our recreation but also essential to developing our economies through growing our tourism. Councils have a role to play here.

Within 5 years we want Councils to:

- sign up to Scotland’s Landscape Charter;
- show Green Belt boundaries and land with high wildness quality (or value) in Local Development Plans and include policies for their protection;
  - ensure that they have sufficient landscape expertise within their staff to meet local and national requirements; and
  - review Areas of Great Landscape Value and clearly indicate replacement Local Landscape Areas in all Local Development Plans.

### Fitting it into SOAs

**Landscape** - National Outcomes 1, 13, 10

**Outcome:** Exemplary management of National Scenic Areas (NSAs) by local authorities.

**Indicator:** Agreed management plans for NSAs drawn up and implemented with SNH and other stakeholders.

**Source:** [SNH National Scenic Areas](#).

In the longer term we want local authorities to implement management strategies for all National Scenic Areas, and to establish landscape policies across the whole Council area.

### Preventative Spending

Spending now on landscape protection and enhancement will help lay the foundations for social resilience and the economic advantages of increased tourism and recreation.

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## River Catchment Management

As climate changes, it becomes even more important that Councils are aware and engaged in the management of the river catchments within their area. Integrated and sustainable management of catchments can deliver a multitude of benefits including improved water quality, flood risk management, provision of habitat for wildlife and people and climate change adaptation.

Within 5 years we want:

- all Councils to be fully engaged in implementation of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs), including pollution reduction and riverine restoration, and to be fully involved in the flood risk management planning process to deliver sustainable flood management.

In the longer term we want Councils to be fully engaged in implementation of the RBMPs and FRMPs and ensuring that land within catchments is managed sustainably.

### Preventative Spending

Sustainable catchment management that reduces pollution at source will bring improvements in water quality thus ultimately reducing the costs of treating water at the treatment works. Spending now on natural flood prevention measures will help to prevent the need to spend on expensive static flood defence schemes later.

## Marine Strategy – Marine Protected Areas and Planning

Most of our 32 councils have coasts and, accordingly have the many benefits and responsibilities attached to our precious marine environment.

Within 5 years we want Councils:

- to be playing a key role in Marine Planning Partnerships and taking decisions in accordance with the relevant plans;
- where appropriate, to act as the relevant authority to carry out the duties set out in the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010;
- to promote the social and economic benefits of Marine Protected Areas to local communities; and
- to be carrying out their functions and actions in accordance with the stated conservation objectives for Marine Protected Areas in their waters as required by Scotland’s Marine Act.

In the longer term we want local authorities to have a keen understanding of the importance of their social, economic and environmental relationship with our seas and how our waters can benefit communities fully.

### Preventative Spending

Spending now on the protection and enhancement of our marine environment will contribute to improving the health of our seas – with major benefits for local communities and economies in terms of marine industries such as fishing, renewables, tourism and recreation.



*Photo Credit: John Bostock*

## Biodiversity Action

Local authorities have a critical role to play – and a duty – in protecting and enhancing terrestrial and marine biodiversity and all of the life in their area.

Within 5 years we want:

- each Council to ensure that all their functions, especially planning and transport, are carried out in accord with their statutory biodiversity duty;
- each Local Authority to be employing a biodiversity officer, supporting an active Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) and reporting annually on the actions they have taken to meet the biodiversity duty;
- each LBAP to list all national priority species and habitats that occur within the area;
- Councils to be managing green spaces more effectively for biodiversity; and
- Councils to be fulfilling LBAP commitments for carbon-rich soil-based habitats.

### Fitting it into SOAs

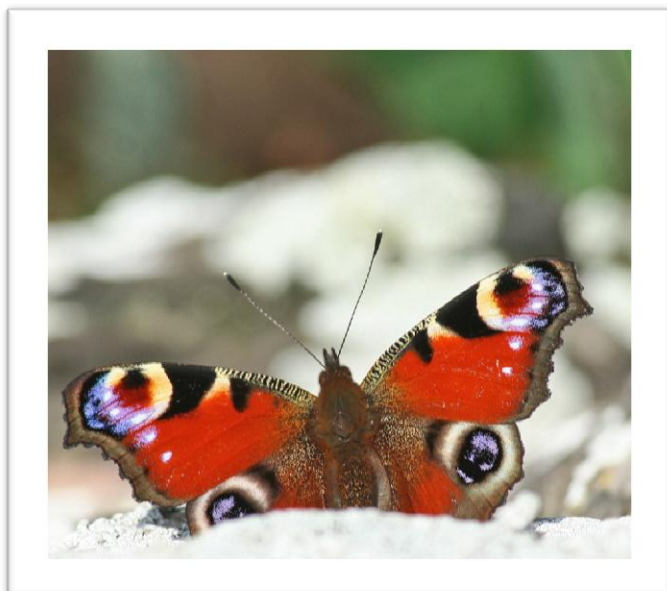
**Biodiversity** - National Outcomes 1, 5, 6, 10, 12, 14

**Outcome:** Delivery of priorities identified in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)

**Indicator:** Number of LBAPs that have progressed and/or increased/been completed.

**Source:** Data held by local authorities.

In the longer term we want local authorities to be proud of their local biodiversity and to see it as a major indicator of the health of their local environment.



### Preventative Spending

Spending now on biodiversity protection and enhancement will protect ecosystem services and prevent the need to spend later on environmental restoration programmes and on human health problems.

*Photo Credit: Jonathan Osborne*

## Justice & Governance - Environmental Justice

As public bodies, our Councils have a duty to ensure that the community has access to good environmental information and clear involvement in decisions with environmental consequences. Often the performance of these duties could be improved.

Within 5 years we want:

- Councils to fully abide by the conditions of the Directives implementing Pillars 1 (Access to Environmental Information) & 2 (Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making) of the Aarhus Convention.

In the longer term we want local authorities to fully understand and comply with the principles of environmental justice in the way that they lead the community.

### Preventative Spending

Spending now on ensuring community involvement in environmental decision making can improve the quality, longevity and sustainability of the decisions taken.

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## Justice & Governance - Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a key tool for all local authorities to use for the early environment 'proofing' of all their plans, policies and strategies. This is legal responsibility of Councils and an important element in delivering truly preventative spending for local services and communities.

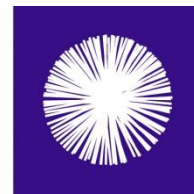
Within 5 years we want Councils to:

- ensure findings of SEA are properly taken into account in decision making;
- ensure that environmental mitigation measures are delivered when developments are undertaken; and
- improve public and other stakeholder engagement with SEA process.

In the longer term we want local authorities to properly value SEA as a basic building block in the effective and efficient delivery of all local services.

### Preventative Spending

Spending now on good SEA procedures will prevent spending later on clearing up the consequences of policy decisions which did not have their environmental consequences – and the financial accounting externalities - fully assessed.



Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment organisations. Its over 30 member bodies represent a wide range of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society. LINK provides a forum for its member bodies enabling informed debate, and assisting co-operation within the voluntary environmental sector. Core activities are information sharing, discussion, and joint action.

LINK assists communication between member bodies, government and its agencies and other sectors within civic society. Acting at local, national and international levels, LINK aims to ensure that the environment is fully recognised in the development of policy and legislation affecting Scotland.

LINK is a Scottish charity (No SC000296) and a company limited by guarantee (No SC250899) working to its Memorandum and Articles of Association, its Operating Principles and the LINK Corporate Strategy 2009-12. LINK is supported by Membership Subscriptions and by grants from Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Government and the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation.

LINK works mainly through its Taskforces, groups of members working together on topics of mutual interest, exploring the environmental issues and developing advocacy strategies to promote these to other interests, the public and decision-makers.

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