

Scotland 2011:

Scottish Environment LINK's Challenge to the New Scottish Government



Foreword

For the last 20 years, the non-governmental organisations that form Scottish Environment LINK have campaigned for sustainable development to be at the heart of government policy in Scotland. Devolution has given us the opportunity to work more closely with decision-makers in a Scottish democracy that is more accessible and more open, and consequently better able to meet the needs of Scotland's people and environment.

The last eight years of partnership government have brought some progress for Scotland's environment, with ground-breaking legislation on land reform, nature conservation, water and strategic environmental assessment, and a sustainable development strategy that recognises that economic progress must not come at any cost. However, the implementation of these visionary strategies and legislation proved more problematic: with the pursuit of environmentally-damaging road-building projects, a missed opportunity to increase real rights for communities in the Planning Bill, and slow progress on the ground towards achieving the target to halt biodiversity loss set out in the Scottish biodiversity strategy and underpinned by the Nature Conservation Act.

A new Scottish government brings with it new opportunities – not least the chance to look at governance from a new perspective, to try out new ways of working collaboratively, and to tackle the old challenges from a different angle. It is for this reason that Scottish Environment LINK is publishing this document. Sharing our vision for the next four years, it argues for what can be achieved, proposing solutions to the problems we face. In doing this, we

challenge Scotland's new government to show leadership in order to meet the inter-related challenges of climate change, loss of biodiversity and resource depletion that threaten to unravel the ecosystems on which this planet and our own futures depend.

In Scotland, we can be proud of the natural and cultural heritage we have inherited. Our wild places and iconic species are part of our identity. The natural resources that our environment provides are fundamental to our economic success and social well-being. As the new government has recognised, without a greener Scotland we cannot become the wealthier, fairer, healthier, safer and stronger country to which we aspire. Although this document talks to the five 'Greener Scotland' themes, the issues we deal with are fundamental to the success of all five of the Government's objectives. Recognising that sustaining our environment is at the heart of governance is the challenge we give to the new SNP government. Together, let us ensure the flourishing of future generations of Scots.

John Mayhew
Chair
Scottish Environment LINK



Scotland's environment is vital if we are to have a healthy and sustainable existence . . . we need a greener Scotland so that we can become a wealthier, fairer, healthier, safer and stronger Scotland. how [can] we in Government . . . use the levers that are at our disposal—funding, guidance, legislation and example—to support and build on the efforts of the many people in Scotland who care about our environment and who are taking early action to protect it; for example by volunteering, recycling or buying locally.

Richard Lochhead
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment



Climate Change

Unchecked climate change will have serious direct consequences not just for Scotland's environment, including its biodiversity, but for our economy and our people. For instance, we know to our cost the impact of extreme weather patterns on our communities. That is why we have placed climate change at the heart of our economic decision making and why we will ask Parliament to support a climate change bill that will set ambitious targets to reduce emissions.

Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, 2007

Tackling Climate Change and its Causes

Vision 2011: Scotland will be tackling climate change in a sustainable manner, without causing environmental harm. Government reports a steady reduction in carbon emissions outputs. All levels of government, business and individuals are investing in energy conservation measures and finding non-fossil fuel alternatives to meet our future energy needs, in preparation for a carbon neutral future.

How we get there:

The most recent IPCC Assessment Report on mitigation emphasises that developed nations must reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050 in order to ensure global warming does not increase by more than 2 degrees. It is therefore essential that Scotland steadily reduces its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 3% per year every year in order to meet this target.

In view of the climate change arising from past emissions, adaptation strategies need to be put in place for all sectors of Government, which take account of the need to conserve biodiversity and natural ecosystems.

- Statutory long term and annual targets for cuts in greenhouse gas emissions set by the Scottish Government, and annual reports on progress:
 - Ensure annual reductions in greenhouse gases of at least 3%
 - 20% energy efficiency improvements by 2010
 - 50% of electricity from renewables using a broad range of technology by 2020
- The Scottish Executive to produce and report against a programme of action on adaptation to climate change.
- A fully funded programme to deliver the above which includes expansion of existing programmes and new measures targeting the fuel poor and small businesses. This should be done in a sustainable manner, considering the environment, social issues and the economy together.

Sustainable Transport

Vision 2011: Recognising that dependency on fossil fuelled transport is unsustainable and that carbon-free and low carbon travel will play an essential role in tackling climate change, the government has begun to shift its policies and funding priorities to encourage sustainable transport options. By 2011, many Scots view public transport as a sensible everyday option, and private car usage is reducing, particularly for short trips (those less than five miles). With faster, cheaper trains across the UK, and a government campaign to cut domestic flights, air travel to other parts of the UK has also fallen, and there has been no further expansion of airports in Scotland. There is less congestion in the cities as people walk and cycle more. Scottish town and city centres move towards the Danish and Dutch model of encouraging public transport, cycling and walking. People enjoy a better quality of life due to breathing cleaner air, living in less noisy streets, choosing healthier transport options and enjoying better community cohesion.

How we get there:

Legally binding targets set by the upcoming Scottish Climate Change Bill will necessitate the adoption of a budget that steadily reduces expenditure on carbon emitting transport projects in favour of carbon-free modes and low-carbon emitting forms of public transport. The following measures would help to ensure annual climate change targets were achieved:

- The current road traffic stabilisation targets set by the government in 2002 must be at the core of the National Transport Strategy. Interim targets should be set and an action plan put in place, with Ministers reporting annually on progress.
- Intervention is needed to ensure that bus and rail fares do not rise beyond the cost of motoring, as they have in recent years. Ministers should ensure that bus and rail contracts/ franchises specify that fares should not normally exceed the marginal costs of a single occupant compact car. A comprehensive and flexible national travel pass should also be introduced so that regular users of public transport are entitled to substantial discounts on standard maximum fares.
- Walking and cycling should be boosted to a level where they are seen as normal transport modes, the equal of carbon-emitting modes. For example, local authorities should be encouraged to invest in walking and cycling projects by using the revenue generated from parking fines and grasp the opportunity to ensure school children travel to school carbon-free, replicating the Dutch model where only 14% of children travel to school by motorised transport (in 2007 49% cycle and 37% walk).
- No further expansion of airports and an end to publicly funded subsidies for air travel in Scotland, diverting funds into the development of new rail services to cities not currently served directly from Scotland.

Consumption and Production

We must tackle over consumption and the throwaway society, which means that we must tackle both what we buy and what we use.

Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary for the Environment and Rural Affairs, 2007

Towards a Zero Waste Strategy

Vision 2011: Having committed to a zero waste strategy, Scotland will be seen as an exemplar in resource use, eliminating waste from society and making a critical contribution towards achieving sustainable development and reducing Scotland's waste footprint.

Scotland will be maximizing the efficient use of resources, avoiding waste mountains and pollution, saving money and creating significant business opportunities – optimising the social and economic benefits of re-use and recycling. Procurement initiatives will be used to their optimum to stimulate locally driven supply of recycled products with materials collected, sorted, re-used/recycled in local areas.

How we get there:

- Setting a household recycling and composting target of at least 40% by 2010 and 70% by 2020 would put Scotland's recycling on a par with levels currently found elsewhere in parts of the UK and Europe (currently 25% of Scotland's municipal waste is recycled, with a target to increase this to 55% by 2020).
- Combining high recycling with added impetus to the recently developed waste prevention plan would put Scotland on a path towards zero waste.
- The production of a resource map for Scotland which would map waste generation, recycling facilities and market/procurement opportunities in order to support strategic linkages between these components and adhere to the proximity principle.
- A clear commitment to avoid large-scale incineration of waste (or energy from waste) which are highly inefficient in resource use terms, contrary to efforts to reduce waste volumes, risk jeopardizing Scotland's ability to deliver high recycling rates in the future and are not compatible with achieving a truly zero waste society.
- An action plan to identify the best opportunities for Scotland to improve resource efficiency and reduce wasteful consumption including the role of fiscal and other rewards in order to move towards One Planet Living.

Sustainable Development

Vision 2011: Sustainable development will be integrated across policy areas and support radical changes to our lifestyles. As a society we will be more aware, take more self reliant care of our own situation, and pay more responsible attention to the needs of others now and in the future, create demands for sustainable products and services to which industry can respond, and support progressive political moves needed to motivate and if necessary force the laggards to follow the pioneers.

How we get there:

- Establishing Scotland's ecological footprint as an indicator and accompanying this with further indicators to reflect genuine economic and social progress and well-being would support Scotland in delivering sustainable development. Whilst understanding the role that GDP plays as an indicator it does not reflect progress towards sustainable development and should be accompanied by measures which indicate not just quantity but quality of economic activity.
- Robust sustainability appraisal of spending review proposals provides an opportunity to support the necessary consideration and integration of sustainable development.
- There are several opportunities for improving the scrutiny function for the Scottish Parliament on sustainable development including
 - Placing sustainability in the remit of the Audit Committee.
 - Providing guidance on sustainable development for Committee Conveners, Deputy Conveners and Clerks.
 - Providing training for all Parliament staff.

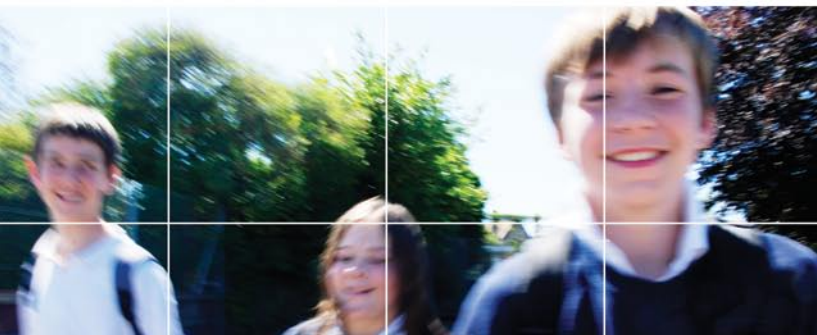
The Next Generation: Sustainable Development Education

Vision 2011: Formal education in Scotland will equip our population with the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes they need to change their behaviour and move towards more sustainable lifestyles.

How we get there:

Current changes taking place in Scottish education as a result of Ambitious, Excellent Schools and Learning for Our Future provide an excellent opportunity to ensure that our population is able to acquire knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes needed for a sustainable Scotland.

- At present, schools are expected to deliver up to eighteen different, but often overlapping, initiatives ranging from Anti-sectarian education to Taking Learning Outdoors. This 'initiative overload' causes great confusion. Instead, all closely related initiatives should be brought together to contribute to developing knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes for 'one planet living' - living within the limits of one planet, as part of one global community, in one global economy.
- Ensure that Initial Teacher Education and teachers' Continuing Professional Development routinely incorporate techniques and approaches that promote positive behaviour change, such as 'joined-up thinking' and reflective practice.
- Embed sustainable development in all appropriate units and modules of the qualifications accredited by the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Currently, opportunities to do this are not being routinely identified – a missed opportunity!
- Scotland is acknowledged as a world leader in innovation and research but current arrangements for funding and evaluating research are at odds with the cross-disciplinary, cross-departmental ways of working that sustainable development requires. Government must ensure that research funding is available that supports cross-disciplinary, cross-departmental research that advances sustainable development.



People and Landscape

Our landscape and our environment have made us what we are as a nation and a people. We cannot have landscapes without people. Communities are rooted in the land on which they live and work. Therefore, everything that we do must focus on sustaining living and vibrant communities. The concept of landscape and people will be central to our approach.

Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, 2007

Living Landscapes

Vision 2011: All landscapes in Scotland (not just 'special' landscapes) will be protected and enhanced, and recognised as a key factor in the quality of life of Scotland's people and communities.

How we get there:

The European Landscape Convention (ELC), signed by the UK in 2006, promotes better protection, management and planning for all landscapes. Recognising that landscape quality across Europe is deteriorating at a fast pace that will only get worse with climate change, it encourages coordinated action in the EU. The Scottish Landscape Forum, set up by the previous government recommends Scotland shows its commitment to the ELC by taking forward an action plan on landscape management. We would suggest the first steps towards this should be:

- A national policy statement produced by Scottish Ministers defining and celebrating the special qualities of all our landscapes and identifying the responsibilities of the Executive, Local Authorities, Public Bodies, businesses and individuals towards protecting and enhancing Scotland's landscapes.
- Landscape considerations will become a key factor in all other policy statements and actions by the Executive and other public bodies.
- Commitment to protect and enhance special landscapes, through the implementation of better legislation on National Scenic Areas (NSAs) that was introduced as part of the Planning (Scotland) Act last year. This will include the ability to create new NSAs, allow boundary review, develop management strategies and provide for the promotion of NSAs.

Our Shared History

Vision 2011: Scottish heritage and history will be recognised, valued and protected by all communities and businesses in Scotland. These heritage assets will be used to educate the people of Scotland on their past and help inform their future.

How we get there:

- The introduction of legislation to provide a statutory duty of care for the historic environment should be adopted as speedily as possible. (This is consistent with existing Scottish Executive Policy - cf SHEP 1 Scotland's Historic Environment and policy obligations such as the Aarhus Convention and the European Landscape Convention).
- Properly resourced Historic Environment Record systems will allow easy online access to information and advice on Scotland's heritage to individuals, communities and businesses. This will give a greater sense of ownership of Scotland's past and facilitate the supply of historic environment information to enable more sustainable land management and development.

Food and Farming

Vision 2011: A Scotland where environmental delivery will play an integral part in all farming and crofting systems, and where all agricultural support payments are tied to the delivery of environmental and other public benefits. The conservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage across much of the countryside depends on this, as three quarters of Scotland is farmed.

How we get there:

- Carry out a thorough assessment of the public benefits that are delivered for agricultural support payments, which currently amount to over £600 million of public expenditure per year in Scotland.
- Commit to ensuring this public funding secures environmental benefit through:
 - A continued and increasing movement of funding away from direct subsidy payments towards rural development funding.
 - Refinements to the baseline standards of cross-compliance and Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC), which underpin subsidy payments, to ensure they deliver public benefits.
 - Fully integrated plans for agri-environment and other rural development projects delivered by Rural Development Contracts (RDCs).
 - Appropriate and properly supported advisory services in place for RDCs.
 - Fully-funded RDCs available for all farmers and crofters, targeted at the delivery of local, as well as national and international priorities.
 - Full support for farmers and crofters engaged in organic conversion and maintenance schemes.
 - Reform of Less Favoured Areas in order to deliver environmental outcomes.



People and Nature

The importance of our relationship with the natural world is at the heart of our concern for a greener Scotland, so by spring 2008 we will have developed plans to deliver the next phase of the Scottish biodiversity strategy, and we will look closely at how we should best approach the commitment to halt biodiversity loss by 2010.

Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, 2007

Biodiversity

Vision 2011: The loss of biodiversity in Scotland will have halted, and the 2010 targets will have been met, thereby increasing our environment's resilience and adaptability to climate change, improving our quality of life, and sustaining rural economies.

Government leaders must take forward the climate change agenda in a responsible way that strengthens commitment to conservation activities and funding.

How we get there:

Biodiversity is life's only toolkit for adapting to and coping with new conditions. However, many species and habitats that make up Planet Earth's ecosystems are undergoing relentless decline, due to human activity. As a result, this toolkit is dangerously unfit for its greatest challenge - climate change.

We urgently need to intensify conservation efforts, to stop the loss of biodiversity, and thus enable our environment to adapt. Wildlife has high public resonance and is a tangible manifestation and early indicator of how climate change can affect our environment.

- Full implementation of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy is needed to safeguard species and important sites, improve habitats and reconnect isolated pockets of nature to create a dynamic landscape where wildlife has the space to recover, adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing environment.
- Government policy across all sectors needs to recognise ecosystem health to be the foundation of sustainable economic development with biodiversity as its key indicator
- Encourage and support opportunities for people to become involved and benefit from Scottish wildlife by supporting environmental volunteering, education, access to the countryside and urban greenspace and eco tourism.
- Funding for biodiversity is in decline in Scotland. If the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy is to be fully implemented it will require the commitment of significant additional funding.

Scotland's Seas

Vision 2011: Scotland's coasts and seas will be managed sustainably through the safeguarding of the marine ecosystems and marine biodiversity on which all economic activity is founded.

How we get there:

A Scottish Marine Bill which must introduce:

- A comprehensive three-tiered statutory system of Marine Spatial Planning – ensuring effective resource management, coordination between sectors and local decision-making powers.
- Proper protection for marine species and habitats – including identification, designation and protection of nationally important marine areas (NIMAs) and other conservation measures.
- A lead Marine body – a Scottish Marine Management Organisation - to lead on marine planning, licensing and enforcement.
- An ecosystem based approach to marine management, progress towards which is measured through a set of Marine Ecosystem Objectives.

A sustainable future for Scotland's seas also requires that Scotland, and all UK administrations, sign up to the UK Marine Bill that delivers an overarching UK Marine Policy Statement, the detailed delivery of which in Scottish waters can be enabled by a Scottish Marine Bill.

Rivers and Waterways, Sustainable Flood Management

Vision 2011: Scotland will have a healthy water environment that benefits both the people and wildlife that depend on it, and economic activities it supports. Better and more sustainable management of flooding will have developed, allowing communities and wildlife to cope with the worsening weather associated with climate change.

How we get there:

- Introduce primary legislation implementing the provisions of sustainable flood management enshrined in the Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act (WEWS) and the requirements of the new EU Floods Risk Directive
- Ensure the Water Framework Directive will be fully implemented through river basin management planning, by encouraging public participation, restoration of the damaged loch and rivers to good ecological status, and integration of all relevant government policies to deliver a healthy water environment.



Sustainable Places

Healthy communities need healthy places—they need clean air, green spaces and they need places where people want to live and work. We will work with partners and communities to build on the many good projects around Scotland, in order to support more sustainable places, especially in our most deprived neighbourhoods.

Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment 2007

Access to the Countryside

Vision 2011: There will be a network of paths throughout Scotland allowing people to access good quality recreational environments in order to improve the health, quality of life and cohesiveness of communities throughout Scotland.

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 has given us an excellent framework to achieve this, but we need to make sure implementation is well resourced and properly managed.

How we get there:

- Better funding for the implementation of land reform legislation on access, including adequate resources for path networks, outdoor education, access officers and access forums. Encourage the use of compulsory purchase where necessary to ensure path networks can be established effectively.
- Improving public transport infrastructure so that using public transport, cycling and walking is the easy option for people.
- Communicating how good access facilities can bring cross-sectoral benefits for example to health policy and land management strategies, in order to encourage joined-up decision-making for Access implementation.

Woodland

Vision 2011: By 2011, Scotland's woodlands should be under sustainable management, improving the quality of life for people, providing important habitats for wildlife and making a positive contribution to rural and urban environments.

Public money invested in the forestry sector must demonstrate public benefit and the increase of forest cover should recognise how afforestation can deliver multiple benefits. These include benefits to people's quality of life, biodiversity and adaptation to climate change. Woodland creation could also contribute to carbon storage whilst providing benefits for wildlife, recreation, landscape and communities but there is a danger in implementing 'quick fixes'. Carbon storage is only a relatively small part of the contribution forestry can make in tackling climate change.

Scotland's ancient and long established woodlands are still under threat from planning developments and inappropriate management, amongst other things. Ancient woodland habitats have evolved over centuries and they cannot be recreated. By 2011 this threat should have been removed and funding priority will have been given to existing ancient semi natural woodlands.

How we get there:

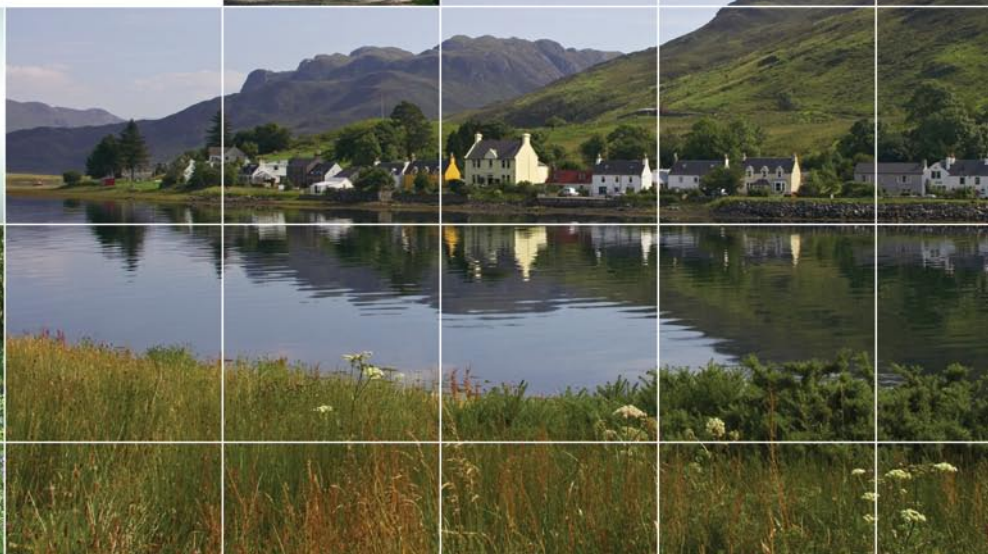
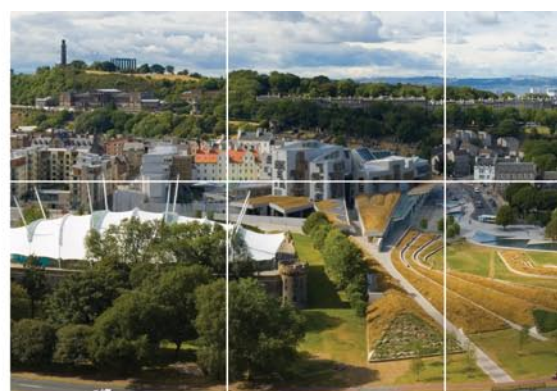
- It is vital that Scottish forestry attains the highest standards of management if Scotland is to have a truly sustainable future. Therefore all Scottish forestry should be certified by the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS).
- In addition, the Scottish Executive, Scottish local authorities and other public bodies in Scotland should be obligated to procure Forest Stewardship Council certified timber to be used in renovation and construction of public buildings and affordable housing. They should also be required to seriously investigate the use of woodfuel for heating/ CHP. More generally, grants for the installation of woodfuel heating should be targeted at communities within or near a forest resource.
- Climate change action should cut across forestry decisions by, for example, reducing timber mileage and ensuring appropriate sites for planting.
- Conservation of all semi-natural habitats should be prioritised; woodland creation needs to protect and extend these sites, particularly ancient woodland, contributing to the development of Forest Habitat Networks. The area of native woodland should be significantly increased and more work needs to be done on restoring ancient woodland sites that have been planted with conifers. The Scottish Rural Development Programme has the opportunity to deliver a more integrated approach to land use combining agriculture, forestry, landscape, biodiversity and water management issues. The opportunity to create a genuinely ecologically functioning landscape must not be missed.

Making it Happen: Good Environmental Governance

Vision 2011: There will be a democratic, fair, participative, accountable, transparent system of environmental governance in Scotland. That is, a Scotland where decisions affecting the environment, and people's sustainable use and enjoyment of that environment, will be taken by the appropriate body in the appropriate way – with equal rights for all stakeholders and means to hold the decision-takers to account, either democratically or judicially, as well as transparent scrutiny by Parliament.

How we get there:

- The development of a "Code of Practice" on participation and stakeholder engagement, setting out guidelines on the operation of consultations and of stakeholder groups, including how to achieve a genuine balance in the representation of economic, social and environmental interests and expertise. A commitment by Ministers to follow this code of practice and a process of monitoring its application by a Parliamentary Committee.
- A review of environmental governance to review the role(s) of agencies, as well as central and local government in the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental policy, and the rights of individuals, communities and businesses who are subject to such policies. This should take forward the review of enforcement, including the role of environmental courts, begun by the previous Executive. It should also advise on the appropriate structures to ensure that Ministers and Local Authorities are able to receive clear, independent, scientific advice, and that regulations are enforced by independent authorities.
- Full implementation of the Aarhus Convention and transposition of the EU Directives deriving from this Convention, as well as transposition into Scots law of the EU Directive on Environmental Liability.



About Scottish Environment LINK

Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment organisations - 34 member bodies representing a spectrum of environmental and associated cultural heritage interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society. LINK provides a forum and network for its members; and assists communication between members, government and civic society.

LINK has been engaged with the legislative process at Holyrood since 1999. Through engagement with the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament, we aim to establish sustainable development at the heart of government decision-making.

For more information on LINK's parliamentary work contact the Edinburgh office:

Scottish Environment LINK
Parliamentary Officer
3rd Floor, Gladstone's Land
483 Lawnmarket
Edinburgh EH1 2NT

Tel: 0131 225 4345

Fax: 0131 225 3230

Email: parliamentary@scotlink.org

Web: www.scotlink.org

LINK members are:

Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland
Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group
Buglife – the Invertebrate Conservation Trust
Butterfly Conservation Scotland
Cairngorms Campaign
Council for Scottish Archaeology
Friends of the Earth Scotland
Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust
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Scottish Seabird Centre



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Published by Scottish Environment LINK, Parliamentary Office, 3rd Floor, Gladstone's Land, 483 Lawnmarket, Edinburgh EH1 2NT

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