

A Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme

Summary

The Scottish Government plans to publish a consultation on the draft Scottish Adaptation Programme (SAP) in late June 2013. LINK recommends that:

- The RACCE committee should scrutinise the draft SAP during the consultation period in early September and makes recommendations.
- The draft SAP must outline Government's strategic approach to adaptation, including its adaptation principles.
- The draft SAP should include wider policies which will make Scotland resilient and adaptable to a changing climate in the long-term, i.e. not simply addressing risks in the next 5 years.
- Government includes policies to deliver early and real action on the ground in the SAP and a plan to demonstrate it.

Scotland needs to plan now for the consequences and impacts of our changing climate. We are already observing climate change and its impacts. We need to reduce GHG emissions but also adapt how we run our economy, our society and how we look after our environment. Adaptation is the term used to describe our responses to a changing climate. Adaptation is inevitable – the important thing is to plan early and to do it in the right way.

This briefing sets out the background and current policy on adapting to a changing climate and raises concerns about the forthcoming Scottish Adaptation Programme (SAP).

Scottish Adaptation Programme background

Section 53 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009¹ requires Government to lay before the Scottish Parliament '*programmes for adaptation to climate change*' which must include objectives, policies and proposals. **The Scottish Government plans to publish a consultation on the draft Scottish Adaptation Programme in late June 2013.** The SAP was preceded by the Government's Adaptation Framework² published in 2009.

In developing the SAP the Scottish Government has chosen to address the risks and threats presented in the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) 2012. The CCRA was useful but limited and not comprehensive, for example, it does not cover sea-level rise or extreme weather events – both of which will be exacerbated by climate change.

LINK's work on climate adaptation

LINK's Climate Adaptation Taskforce is working to influence the development of the SAP – with a particular concern for biodiversity and the natural environment (which underpins all sectors). In 2012, we produced a position statement outlining 5 Principles for Adapting to a Changing Climate³ (see box). It includes suggested guidelines for helping the natural environment to adapt and guidelines for ensuring adaptation is sustainable and coordinated across all sectors. LINK also held a workshop to develop our SAP recommendations⁴.

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2009/12/part/5/chapter/1>

² <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/climatechange/scotlands-action/adaptation/AdaptationFramework>

³ http://www.scotlink.org/files/policy/PositionPapers/LINK5_ClimateAdaptPrinciples.pdf

⁴ <http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/LINKReports/LINKAdaptWkshopReport12.pdf>

LINK's Concerns with the draft SAP

LINK is concerned that the draft SAP will be limited in scrutiny, scope, and content.

- **SCRUTINY:** A consultation during summer 2013 reduces the time for debate and scrutiny by the Scottish Parliament. **We recommend that the RACCE Committee scrutinises the draft SAP during the consultation period in early September and makes recommendations.**
- **SCOPE:** Government is obliged by the Climate Act to include Objectives, Policies and Proposals in the SAP, however, Scotland needs to discuss how we will negotiate a path into a new climate, not simply what we will do in the next 5 years. **LINK believes that the draft SAP must outline Government's strategic approach to adaptation, including its adaptation principles.** For example, we recommend the approach outlined in LINK's 5 Principles (below).
- **SCOPE:** The draft SAP is likely to limit policies and proposals to action within the next 5 years only – in line with the risks identified in the UK CCRA. **The SAP must outline the long-term policies which will help Scotland adapt and be resilient to a changing climate.**
- **CONTENT:** Because the SAP is based on addressing CCRA risks it does not provide a holistic view of all Government policies which will be beneficial to Scotland in the future. **LINK recommends that the draft SAP includes all policies which will make Scotland resilient and adaptable in a changing climate.** We recommend that the SAP includes existing policies which aim to improve Scotland's environment and thereby make it more resilient to climate trends and shocks.
- **CONTENT:** The Act requires that the SAP includes '*the mechanisms for ensuring public engagement in meeting those objectives*'. **LINK recommends that the SAP includes early and real action on the ground and a plan to demonstrate it** to people so that they can see what adaptation and resilience to climate change involves.

LINK recommends that five principles are followed during the development of Scotland's Adaptation Programme:

1. **Develop knowledge** – of climate impacts and the impacts of our adaptation actions - and then make decisions based on it.
2. **Plan strategically** - with a flexible, long-term view and in a joined-up integrated way.
3. **Build resilience** – in the infrastructure, systems and environment we currently have.
4. **Accommodate and enable change** – so people and wildlife can transition and thrive in new ways and in new places in response to climate changes and impacts.
5. **Adapt sustainably** – to avoid maladaptation and detrimental impacts on other elements of the environment.

This briefing is supported by the following LINK members and members of LINK's Climate Adaptation Task Force:

- Plantlife Scotland
- RSPB Scotland
- Scottish Wildlife Trust
- Bumblebee Conservation Trust
- Scottish Wild Land Group
- Soil Association Scotland
- Woodland Trust Scotland
- Butterfly Conservation Scotland
- Archaeology Scotland

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