

# Living with the Land

Proposals for Scotland's First Sustainable Land Use Strategy





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*Living with the Land, Scottish Environment LINK*

## Summary

1. The Scottish Parliament recently passed a Climate Change Act which has been described as world-leading. One of its provisions gives Scotland the potential to have a genuinely world-leading Sustainable Land Use Strategy (SLUS). This was widely welcomed by member bodies of Scottish Environment LINK, a network with a combined membership of over 500,000 people. The SLUS is badly needed; although several strategies already exist for various types of land, these are largely for specialists in each field, and there are too few connections between them. This encourages a sectoral mentality and a single purpose for each piece of land, rather than a wider view of the multiple benefits which are the reality in most parts of Scotland.
2. Although its main purpose is to tackle climate change, the SLUS provides real opportunities to deliver other public objectives. It has potential to support landscape and wildlife protection, to ensure more co-ordinated planning and delivery between agencies, to reward multi-benefit land use and to resolve conflicts between different land uses. To do this effectively it needs a long-term vision, strong principles, clear definitions and as broad a scope as possible. Critically, it needs to be based on the internationally-accepted definition of sustainable development, in which environmental and social goals genuinely have equal status to economic ones.
3. This paper sets out LINK's proposals for the vision, principles and definitions which should underpin this Strategy, its suggestions regarding its status and scope, and its views on the principal issues which it must address. We look forward to discussing our views with all interested parties.

## Introduction

4. This paper sets out the views of member bodies of Scottish Environment LINK regarding the land use strategy to be prepared under Section 57 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. This strategy is referred to below as the “Sustainable Land Use Strategy” (SLUS).
5. Section 57 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 requires Scottish Ministers to produce a land use strategy by 2011 and every five years thereafter. This strategy must set out Ministers’ objectives in relation to sustainable land use, and their proposals and policies for meeting those objectives. These objectives, proposals and policies must contribute to achieving Ministers’ duties in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and must also contribute to sustainable development. The full text of the relevant section of the Act is given at Appendix 1. This paper sets out LINK’s view on the need for the SLUS, establishes the vision and general principles on which it should be based and proposes definitions for its key terms. It then proposes the potential status and scope of the SLUS and sets out the principal issues it needs to address.
6. Although it came about in relation to climate change imperatives in particular, the SLUS clearly presents a significant wider opportunity to promote the type of integrated multi-purpose land use which LINK member bodies have been advocating for many years.

## Need for the Strategy

7. A range of strategies already exists for the various types of land use in Scotland, including agriculture, forestry and tourism, and for some of the environmental resources which provide the context for that land use, including biodiversity, soil and water. The National Planning Framework also provides a strategic framework for the development of Scotland’s towns, cities and countryside. A summary list of these strategies and other references is given at Appendix 2. However, these have tended to be prepared in isolation by and for specialists in each subject, with insufficient connections being made between them. This has tended to encourage a sectoral mentality which focuses on a single purpose for each piece of land, rather than the multiple objectives and benefits from land use which are the reality in most parts of Scotland. This sectoral approach is neither inevitable nor universal.
8. The SLUS is therefore crucial in order to:
  - ensure that all land use contributes to the fight against climate change;
  - set out an overarching vision for land use in Scotland;
  - ensure more co-ordinated planning and delivery between the various agencies;
  - reward multi-benefit land use; and
  - resolve conflicts between different land uses.

## Vision

9. An agreed aspirational long-term vision is essential to inform all aspects of the SLUS. Our vision is of sustainable land use in Scotland that:
  - contributes significantly towards climate change mitigation and adaptation;
  - delivers environmental objectives, social justice and economic stability; and
  - is based on adaptable and resilient systems.

10. Achieving this vision requires a holistic approach in which all impacts of any land use decision are taken into account; for example it should not be necessary to sacrifice one environmental benefit to achieve another. “Adaptable and resilient systems” are systems which do not necessarily stay the same, but which are capable of adapting and are resilient to change, ie, ones which are operating well within environmental limits.

## General Principles

11. We argue that the following key principles must explicitly underpin all aspects of the SLUS:
  - Sustainable development principles;
  - Multi-benefit land use;
  - Rights with responsibilities;
  - Community involvement;
  - Resource protection;
  - Ecosystem services.
12. **Sustainable development principles**  
For the objectives, policies and proposals in the SLUS successfully to “contribute to sustainable development”, it must be based on and respect the five shared UK principles of sustainable development:
  - living within environmental limits;
  - ensuring a strong, healthy and just society;
  - achieving a sustainable economy;
  - using sound science responsibly;
  - promoting good governance.
13. These principles are based on international best practice and have been agreed between the UK Government and the devolved administrations. Figure 1, taken from *Securing the Future*, the UK Government’s Sustainable Development Strategy (2005), illustrates the relationship between the five principles.

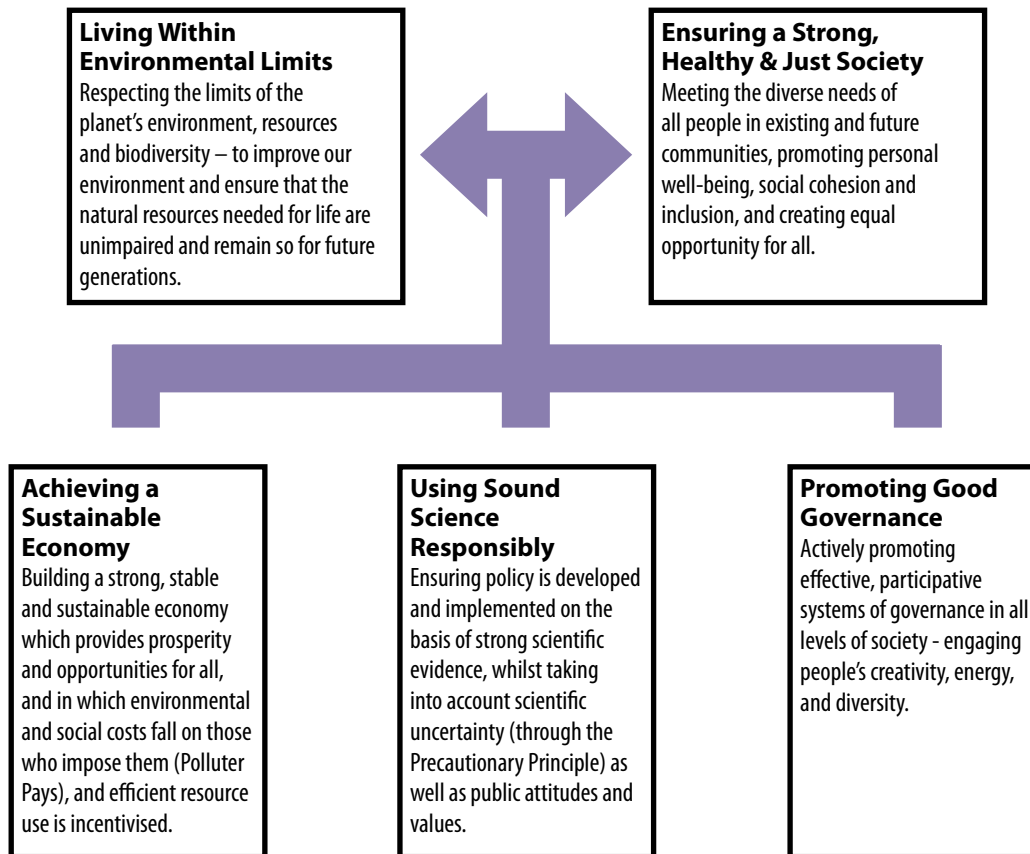


Figure 1 The Shared UK Principles of Sustainable Development

14. For a policy or strategy to be sustainable, it must respect all five principles; living within environmental limits and achieving a just society requires a sustainable economy, good governance and sound science.
15. **Multi-benefit land use**  
The SLUS should establish the general principle that multi-benefit land use should be the norm. Most land in Scotland, whatever its primary purpose, provides or has the potential to provide several benefits. For example, hill areas valued for mountaineering are also used for field sports; forests provide carbon sinks, wildlife habitats and bike trails as well as timber production. Promoting this approach often requires striking a balance between private and public interests in land. The SLUS should encourage an ethos within which all land managers consider the full range of potential uses for the land for which they are responsible. Land use can also generate disbenefits; the SLUS should seek to reduce these to a minimum.
16. **Rights with responsibilities**  
The ownership or management of land brings with it a number of important responsibilities, including the environmental stewardship of that land; the SLUS should use all available mechanisms to encourage this, including incentives, regulation and enforcement. In particular, the SLUS should make clear that anyone receiving any form of public subsidy must demonstrate a satisfactory level of environmental stewardship across all the land they own or manage.
17. **Community involvement**  
Sustainable development embraces the social as well as the environmental aspects of land use, demanding a greater level of community participation in land use planning and attention to issues of intergenerational equity. The SLUS should therefore encourage a general culture of community awareness and involvement in relation to land use decision-making. This is likely to reduce levels of conflict compared to the predominant current model of regulation and top-down incentive. The definition of 'community' must involve both local 'communities of place' – people who live near the land concerned, and national or global 'communities of interest'

– people with a specific interest in land use such as archaeologists, botanists or mountaineers. These national communities of interest are often represented by national non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

18. The context for this principle is the traditional widely-held Scots view that ownership of land is not absolute and that the people of Scotland have an important stake in how land in Scotland is used. There has been a recent increase in land ownership by local communities and national NGOs, accompanied by greater local input into decision-making, particularly in the Highlands and Islands. Community involvement has also developed in areas such as urban greenspace, river basin planning and community woodlands, but less so in other sectors such as agriculture or energy.

19. **Resource protection**

A key aspect of 'living within environmental limits' is protecting priority non-renewable resources, or 'critical environmental capital', for the benefit of future generations. The SLUS should enshrine this principle across the board, requiring the protection (and where necessary, enhancement or restoration) of Scotland's significant biodiversity, geodiversity and landscape resources (including the historic environment) and of its soil, air and water quality. This approach should apply across the whole country within both rural and urban areas, not just within protected sites and areas. This also requires the protection of the critical carbon, nitrogen, nutrient and water cycles upon which all life depends. Environmental resources should be protected whether or not they are currently designated or otherwise recognised, as in some cases it is not currently possible to tell which resources may be valued by future generations.

20. **Ecosystem services<sup>1</sup>**

Human health and wellbeing depend upon the services provided by ecosystems and their components: water, soil, nutrients and organisms. Ecosystem services are the processes by which the environment produces resources utilised by humans such as clean air, water, food and materials. The SLUS should be based on the ecosystem approach, which considers issues at a landscape scale rather than just as they affect individual landholdings. The phrase 'ecosystem approach' first found formal acceptance at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, where it became an underpinning concept of the Convention on Biological Diversity. An ecosystem approach seeks to achieve the sustainable use of ecosystem products and services through a number of key principles:

- management within natural limits;
- management for the long term;
- management at different scales;
- accounting for true value;
- making trade-offs clear;
- involving stakeholders in decisions.

## Definitions

21. The following definitions are proposed for the key terms in the title of the SLUS.

22. **Sustainable**

It is essential to note that the Act requires the SLUS to contribute to "sustainable development", rather than to the Scottish Government's current purpose of "increasing sustainable economic growth". These two phrases do not mean the same thing, and are not interchangeable.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ecosystemservices.org.uk>

Sustainable development involves concepts of qualitative or quantitative change, but does not necessarily require economic growth; it can constitute primarily social or environmental development as well as economic development. People live in the environment, and within that society we create and operate an economy, as shown in Figure 2:

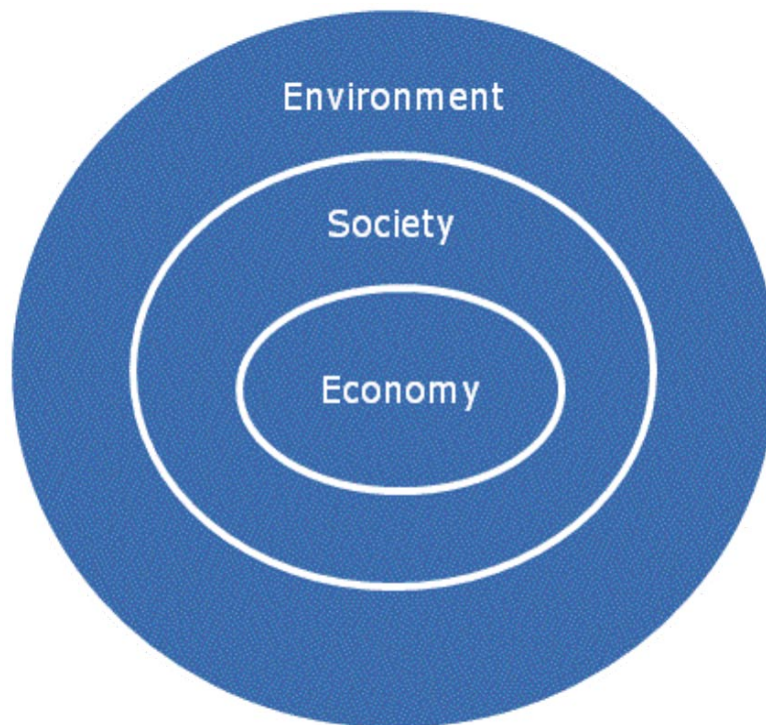


Figure 2 The Three Pillars of Sustainable Development

23. There is no support within LINK for the concept of “increasing sustainable economic growth” except in the context of sustainable development in the round. LINK member bodies support genuinely sustainable development, in which environmental and social goals have equal status to economic ones and are advanced whether or not economic growth occurs. In particular, however, the environment is not just another issue to be ‘traded’ or ‘balanced’ against economic development; it is the non-negotiable context within which all other systems operate.
24. **Land**  
The definition of ‘land’ should include not only the surface of the land, but the geodiversity which lies beneath it and the biodiversity which lives above it and within it. The definition should include freshwater environments but not marine areas (see under ‘Scope’ below).
25. **Use**  
The definition of ‘use’ should extend to both urban and rural areas, as the statutory basis for this strategy does not restrict it to rural land use.
26. **Land Use**  
The definition of ‘land use’ should also extend to all of the various functions which land provides (eg, ecosystem services) and all the values which people place on it (eg, cultural associations), even if it does not appear to be currently being physically ‘used’ by people in a utilitarian sense.
27. **Strategy**  
A strategy sets out how and why an organisation (in this case the Scottish Government) intends to achieve its stated aims and objectives in one or more areas of activity. All strategies are plans, but not all plans are strategies; three defining features which make a plan a strategy are that it:
  - operates at a relatively high, over-arching level;
  - applies over a reasonably long time period (in this case five years); and



- is strong on rationale, so that it is clear to all not only what the plan is but why that particular course has been chosen.

28. A strategy should:

- analyse strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the current situation;
- identify the mechanisms available to address the issues identified;
- set out its desired outcomes in clear, measurable terms;
- establish the mechanisms to be used to implement it and monitor its progress.

## Status

29. Although there are already a number of agreed strategies for various aspects of land use in Scotland, the SLUS will be the only one apart from the National Planning Framework and the forthcoming National Marine Plan with a basis in statute; it should also have the broadest scope. It should therefore sit above, and over time seek to influence, all of the other non-statutory strategies and frameworks, as shown in Figure 3:

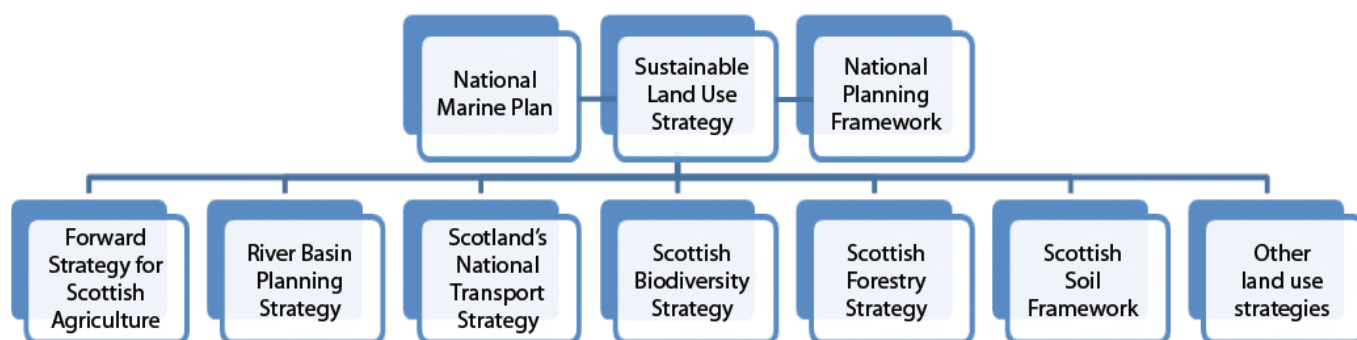


Figure 3 Relationships Between the SLUS and Other Strategies

30. NB this diagram is purely indicative; it is not intended to present an exhaustive list of strategies which the SLUS should influence.

## Scope

31. The scope of the SLUS should be as broad as possible, in order to give its principles the maximum possible influence over all aspects of land use, whether that use is primarily environmental, social or economic. The initial imperative for the SLUS came from the wish to maximise the contribution the land use sector can make towards climate change adaptation and mitigation, so as a minimum it must cover:

- climate change adaptation, including, amongst other opportunities, habitat restoration for coastal and inland flood management, and development of ecological networks;
- climate change mitigation, including emissions reductions from all land use sectors, and the protection and restoration of natural carbon stores and sinks.

32. Beyond that initial agenda, it should apply to at least the following *land uses*:

- agriculture, crofting and commercial horticulture;
- all built development, including commercial, domestic, industrial and leisure;
- deer management;
- energy production, including from biomass, fossil fuels, hydro and wind;

- forestry;
  - gardening, including allotments and orchards;
  - mining and quarrying;
  - outdoor recreation, including field sports;
  - transport infrastructure, including airports, railways and roads;
  - tourism, including the use of landscape as a core element of Scotland's brand.
33. The SLUS should apply to at least the following aspects of *resource protection* and *ecosystem services*:
- air quality;
  - biodiversity conservation;
  - carbon, nitrogen, nutrient and water cycle protection;
  - geodiversity conservation;
  - landscape conservation, including the historic environment and wild land;
  - soil conservation;
  - water services, including catchment management, flood risk management, sustainable urban drainage systems and water provision.
34. The SLUS should address the contribution which the following *processes and systems*, amongst others, can make towards promoting sustainable land use:
- integrated coastal zone management, including the interconnections between terrestrial land use and planning and the marine environment;
  - education and training on land and resource use;
  - food security;
  - land use-focussed scientific research;
  - land reform;
  - rural development;
  - the town and country planning system;
  - urban greenspace provision and management.
35. NB the lists in paragraphs 31 – 34 above are not intended to be an exhaustive delineation of the scope of the SLUS, but merely to indicate the minimum breadth it needs to have in order to achieve its considerable potential. It is also recognised that there are clearly considerable policy and spatial overlaps between the various land uses and issues set out above.
36. Whilst recognising the fundamental interconnections between the three main elements which make up our planet – land, sea and air – it is suggested that the SLUS should focus on the land. It is therefore proposed that the scope of the SLUS should exclude the marine environment, specifically fishing, marine nature conservation, marine recreation, offshore renewables development and oil and gas extraction. The reasoning behind this is that:
- marine issues have received a great deal of attention recently, with the UK and Scottish Marine Bills, the creation of Marine Scotland and the establishment of the Marine Strategy Forum, intended to deliver sustainable use of healthy seas;
  - a completely different suite of regulations and subsidies applies to the marine environment;
  - the SLUS has a complex enough task without addressing marine issues.

37. The SLUS should therefore not extend to the sea,<sup>2</sup> and should explicitly refer to the exclusion of the marine environment from its scope, except for the extent to which freshwater quality affects the ecological status of inshore coastal waters. However, it may need to take account of existing marine strategies in order to resolve some land use conflicts, and it should indicate how the inter-relationships between terrestrial land use and planning and the marine environment will be handled, particularly in the realm of coastal zone management.

## Climate Change

38. The primary reason for establishing the SLUS in the Climate Change Act was to ensure that land use is planned to reduce carbon emissions and to contribute to climate change adaptation, with clear links to the targets set out in the Act. The SLUS is therefore not just about rural land use; it is as much about public transport, facilitating mixed use developments and urban adaptation and their relationships as it is about changing farming practices and providing opportunities for landscape-scale habitat developments. The SLUS could be the mechanism for 'climate-proofing' land use decision-making, ensuring that all land use-related policies contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. It could also have a specific role in resolving any potential tensions or incompatibilities between other national strategies.

## Principal Issues – Land Uses

39. The following three sections set out some of the other principal issues which the SLUS will need to address, and suggests some of the approaches it should take towards them.
40. **Agriculture, crofting and horticulture**  
This paper has argued the importance of the SLUS applying to all land uses. However, as approximately 75% of Scotland is farmed, there is great potential for the agricultural sector (including crofting and commercial horticulture, orchards and nurseries) to help deliver the climate change and other objectives of the SLUS and to be better integrated with other land uses. The SLUS will need to address the climate change, food security and ecosystem issues related to agriculture in an integrated way, seeking to resolve any conflicts between them; for example: "Tackling one type of greenhouse gas emission may lead to increases in another; similarly reductions in one part of the farm ecosystem can prompt increases in another".<sup>3</sup> These changes are likely to be required in the context of pressure for expansion of agricultural land or intensification of production on existing land, both to improve food security and to make up for lower yields elsewhere in the world as a result of climate change. Agricultural funding needs to give more support, particularly through agri-environmental measures, to systems that deliver resource conservation measures in tandem with economic production.
41. Agriculture is responsible for 13% of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions, due primarily to the use of nitrates in fertilisers and to the methane emitted by livestock; over 50% of all fertiliser used on farms is estimated to end up in the atmosphere or waterways. Much firmer action to change agricultural practice is therefore required to meet Scotland's 2020 carbon emissions reduction target. Agriculture can reduce its greenhouse gas footprint by making much more efficient use of organic and inorganic nutrient sources. Whilst recognising the implications of methane emissions from livestock, we encourage the SLUS to take full account of the ecological benefits of appropriate extensive livestock systems, compared to the potential disbenefits of

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2 as defined by Section 57 of the Marine (Scotland) Bill (as introduced)

3 Meat and Dairy Production and Consumption *Food Climate Research Network, 2007*

<http://www.fcrn.org.uk/frcnPubs/publications/PDFs/TG%20FCRN%20livestock%20final%206%20Nov%20.pdf>



intensive systems with high demands on land, energy and other inputs. There are also clear links to be made to food policy; the SLUS should take an integrated global perspective on diet, food supplies and land use.

- 42. Farms can be large energy users, both in terms of electricity and vehicle fuel, and so should be encouraged to adopt energy efficiency measures and to use renewable sources. Sound management of soil resources is vital in helping reduce emissions, given the high levels stored in Scotland’s soils; agricultural land use change accounts for 8% of Scotland’s greenhouse gas emissions in the form of carbon dioxide lost from cultivated soils. The SLUS should therefore encourage best-practice soil management techniques, such as reduced tillage and leaving soil bare for minimum lengths of time. The ‘Farming for a Better Climate’ initiative launched in September 2009 gives further information on the types of measures required.
- 43. **Energy**  
LINK has previously called for the Scottish Government to produce a strategic energy framework, which would rely on reducing energy demand and promoting energy efficiency alongside the development of renewables, using the full range of technologies and scales. Such a strategy should be informed by a sustainable energy hierarchy such as that shown below in Figure 4. This sets out different ways of delivering carbon reductions; all can be pursued, but those at the top should be given greater priority and promotion as they carry the least risk of adverse social and environmental impacts.

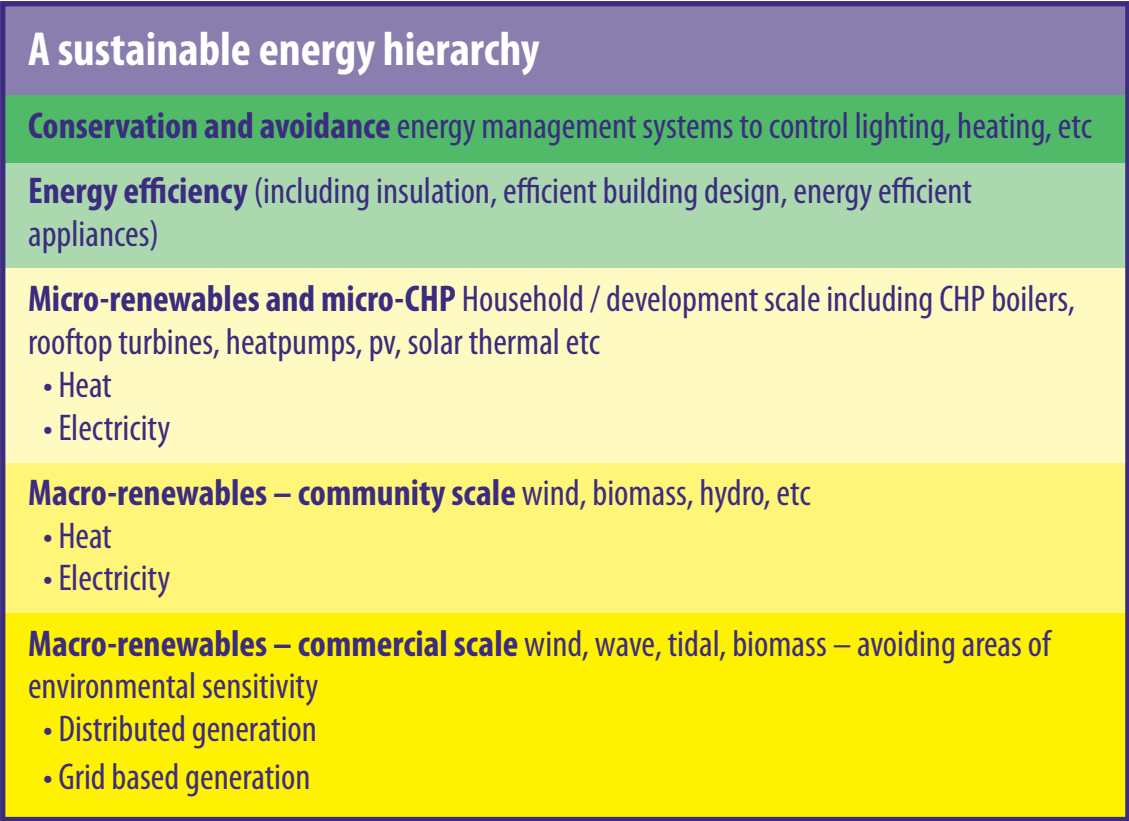


Figure 4 A Sustainable Energy Hierarchy

- 44. Scotland has a much treasured and finite resource of wild land as well as a considerable resource of renewable energy sources including wind, wave, hydro and biomass. The quality of wildness is particularly vulnerable to some forms of energy generation, such as wind turbines on high ridges. Scotland’s important environmental sites, including the small and declining reserve of remote wild land, should be protected whilst delivering renewable energy targets. The SLUS should enable this to happen in practice by avoiding the environmental conflict which undermines the delivery of renewables.

45. Most of the recent debate about land use and energy policy has centred around commercial scale renewables development. However, if carefully planned, there is no need for conflict between delivering renewables targets and safeguarding the environment. The renewables potential in Scotland is so great that the Government's target for 50% of our electricity production to come from renewables by 2020 can surely be delivered without impinging on sensitive areas of land or sea valued for their landscape or biodiversity.
46. **Forestry and woodland management**  
The SLUS will have to accommodate the existing Scottish Forestry Strategy aspiration to increase the percentage of afforested land in Scotland from 17% to 25%. The process of preparing the SLUS needs to establish more clearly the types of woodland to be created and appropriate areas for afforestation. Woodland creation should not be undertaken purely for carbon sequestration purposes, but rather for the established multiple benefits that forestry can deliver. Carbon storage is only a relatively small part of the contribution which forestry can make to tackling climate change; indeed the timescales required to offset carbon released during woodland establishment mean that very little additional forest carbon storage will take place in the critical near future. The SLUS should seek to resolve the potential spatial conflicts that may arise from forestry's impacts on open habitats.
47. The SLUS should support the highest standards of forest management and procurement. UK Woodland Assurance Standard should be mandatory, and all public bodies should be obliged to procure Forest Stewardship Council certified timber and encouraged to develop their use of woodfuel.
48. Scotland's ancient and long-established woodlands are still under threat from built development and inappropriate management. These habitats have evolved over centuries and are irreplaceable. The SLUS should contribute towards removing these threats by giving funding priority to ancient semi-natural woodlands, including restoring native species to those ancient woodlands planted with non-native conifers. We need the right trees in the right place; this may in some cases require the removal of those planted in the wrong place in the past, such as on peatlands or dune systems.
49. **Gardening**  
Large areas of our towns and cities are covered by gardens and allotments, potentially one of the most sustainable land uses. Amateur gardeners can contribute towards climate change mitigation and adaptation at the same time as improving their health and well-being. This applies not only to large and small private gardens but also to community gardens, orchards and allotments. Gardens and allotments also contribute to many other SLUS objectives, including food security, urban greenspace, soil conservation, biodiversity conservation and landscape. However, the continued extraction and use of peat for horticulture needs to be discouraged, given the landscape, biodiversity and archaeological value of peatlands and the importance of peat as a carbon store.
50. **Recreation and access**  
The health and quality of life of communities throughout Scotland are improved by local networks of paths and bike routes giving access to high-quality environments for recreation. The SLUS could help to continue the implementation of the framework established in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 by supporting the further provision of path networks, outdoor education, access staff and local access forums. Transport choices need to be improved so that walking, cycling and using public transport become easy options for people, for essential as well as recreational journeys.

## Principal Issues – Resource Protection and Ecosystem Services

### 51. **Biodiversity conservation**

Scotland is likely to fail to meet the target, agreed at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. It therefore needs to halt the decline in biodiversity, protect the best sites for species and habitats and restore biodiversity across the wider countryside. The agri-environmental schemes delivered by the Scottish Rural Development Plan are likely to remain one of the principal means to achieve this latter aim. Agri-environmental schemes have regularly delivered successful outcomes, but require significantly greater funding to achieve their full potential, requiring a more significant shift in funding away from production support. The SLUS needs to reinvigorate the current biodiversity process in Scotland so that it influences and changes those policies in other sectors which influence biodiversity. Biodiversity is at threat from climate change whilst in its damaged state and needs action to help it survive the changes. There are ways to do this which also bring wider adaptation benefits, such as restoring peatlands, wetlands, coastal marshes or field margins.

### 52. **Landscape**

Landscape is about the relationship between people and place; it defines our experience of the combination of topography, water, vegetation and the cultural environment. Scotland's heritage of natural and cultural landscapes is renowned throughout the world. Our landscapes enhance our quality of life and our well-being; they give us inspiration, refreshment and enjoyment. They contain the record of the achievements and failures of those people who went before us, and form a key part of our national, regional and local identity. They are one of the main reasons why people visit Scotland, and so form the essential basis of our tourism industry, and they provide attractive settings which encourage inward investment. They are therefore of fundamental importance to Scotland's environment, society and economy. Yet Scotland's landscapes are under constant threat from mismanagement, neglect, intensification of agriculture and forestry, poor design and damaging developments.

53. The European Landscape Convention (ELC), signed by the UK in 2006, promotes the better protection, management and planning of all landscapes across Europe. The Scottish Landscape Forum brought together many public and voluntary bodies with an interest in landscape. Its 2007 report *Scotland's Living Landscapes – Landscapes for People* and the draft *Scottish Landscape Charter*, proposed for adoption in 2009, demonstrate how the principles of the ELC could best be applied in Scotland. The SLUS should support the approach set out in these documents and ensure that it is integrated into all aspects of land use planning and decision-making.

### 54. **Water management**

The SLUS can support Scotland's need for a healthy water environment, including wetlands, lochs and rivers and sustainable urban drainage, for the benefit of both the people and wildlife which depend on it and the economic activities it supports. More sustainable flood management approaches should be developed, allowing communities and wildlife to adapt to the increased flooding likely to result from climate change. Implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive needs to continue through encouraging public participation and restoration of damaged wetlands, lochs and rivers. The SLUS also has a role in ensuring that the welcome high-level aspirations of the River Basin Planning Strategies are properly reflected in the final River Basin Management Plans.



## Principal Issues – Processes and Systems

### 55. **Demographic change**

The SLUS will cover a period in which the Scottish population is likely to continue to grow slowly, the average household size continue to fall and the average age of the farming population continue to rise.

### 56. **International issues**

Scotland could work with other countries to promote the approach advocated in this paper. It will be important to strive to ensure that following this approach in Scotland does not displace carbon pollution to elsewhere in the world.

### 57. **Lifelong learning**

The SLUS is likely to have considerable implications in terms of changes needed to the training, education and information provision currently available to land managers, their advisers and planners. For example, it may well be beneficial to support the establishment of new courses covering all aspects of sustainable land use. The changes likely to be brought about by the SLUS might benefit from research carried out as part of the Scottish Government's research strategy.

### 58. **Town and country planning**

The National Planning Framework (NPF), which sits at the head of Scotland's town and country planning system, has a roughly equivalent status to the SLUS given its basis in statute (see Figure 3 above). However, it is reasonable to expect that future versions of the NPF and SLUS will guide and influence each other's objectives and policies, and that Scottish Planning Policy will be influenced by the SLUS as well as the NPF. There are inevitable and important interfaces between the town and country planning system and land use, climate change mitigation and adaptation and sustainable development, through planning's role in managing those aspects of land use which require planning permission. Key priorities for this role will include proposing more sustainable locations for future mixed use development, supporting walking, cycling and public transport development and promoting continued reduction in carbon emissions from the built environment.

## Delivery

### 59. **Conflict resolution**

The history of debate over land use in Scotland has been marked by frequent conflicts between apparently opposing uses, such as forestry versus moorland or landscape protection versus energy generation. Some of these debates are subject to the town and country planning system, whilst others take place in the arena of public subsidy. The SLUS needs to put in place mechanisms for resolving any future conflicts in line with its sustainable development principles. It should establish the relative responsibilities of landowners, tenants and planning authorities with respect to land use planning, and what level of community involvement is realistically possible in land use decision-making. If the strategy can set out a shared set of goals for different agencies and sectors to focus on, it has great potential to promote combined action to solve long-standing problems. For example, all relevant agencies could be encouraged to work together to deliver managed realignment through habitat creation, or fully-functioning peatland catchments with blanket bog restoration.

### 60. **Pilot projects**

The SLUS needs to gain widespread recognition amongst land managers as a real force for positive change on the ground rather than just an academic report of interest only to policy-makers. A powerful way for it to achieve this would be to propose and fund a number of

large-scale showcase pilot projects which would provide clear demonstrations of best practice in integrated multi-benefit land use. Such projects could include, for example:

- coastal realignment;
- integrated catchment management;
- management strategies for National Scenic Areas;
- native woodland expansion;
- peatland restoration;
- an enhanced Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative.

61. Scotland's two National Parks are in a particularly good position to lead such projects, given their unique involvement in influencing both the town and country planning system and the land management sector. Many LINK member bodies also have relevant experience and landholdings and would be willing to be involved in pilot projects which demonstrate the effectiveness of the SLUS approach.

62. **Preparation, delivery and monitoring**

Given its broad cross-cutting scope, the SLUS will need to be prepared by a multidisciplinary team from across the Scottish Government, informed by some form of wider external reference group. LINK has extensive experience of involvement in Scottish Government and agency stakeholder groups working on policy or strategy development. This experience has demonstrated that the most effective groups are those with direct Ministerial involvement, strong leadership and clear requirements for reporting and measuring outcomes. Multidisciplinary working across Ministerial portfolios will be required, involving at least those Ministers responsible for climate change, planning, rural affairs and environment. Measurable objectives and targets will be required so that progress can be clearly assessed. These should focus where possible on outcomes rather than on inputs, ie, on clear results on the ground rather than for example the number of initiatives and advisory groups.

63. The success of the SLUS will depend on all public bodies being required to support its policies and objectives, including local authorities, executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies. The SLUS should be accompanied by an Action Plan which brings all relevant stakeholders and delivery bodies together and commits them to objectives and targets.

64. Given that much of the available funding for implementing the SLUS is likely to continue to come from the Scottish Rural Development Programme and its successors, the SLUS will need to promote a shift in EU agricultural funding towards supporting a wider range of public goods. The Scottish Government will need to work with the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and other EU administrations towards a post-2013 rural development programme derived from a reformed EU Common Agricultural Policy which better supports sustainable development objectives.

65. **Spatial implementation**

Given its complex subject matter, it is likely to be difficult for the SLUS to be specific about the spatial detail of its proposals to anything more than a very general degree. However, it could set out the benefits of a strategic planning approach to land use, in which areas suitable or unsuitable for particular uses can be mapped and integrated with local plans, as has been done for example by indicative forestry strategies (IFSs) or wind farm sensitivity mapping. It might even be possible, after careful consideration and capacity building, to extend the IFS approach to produce indicative land use strategies, perhaps integrated with the new Local Development Plans introduced by the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006.

## Scottish Environment LINK

66. This report was commissioned by Scottish Environment LINK, the collective voice of Scotland's environment movement, and was written by John Mayhew. LINK intends to develop its views on sustainable land use strategy further in discussion with wider interests. LINK is a member-led network of over thirty organisations both large and small, with a combined membership of over 500,000 people, equivalent to about 10% of Scotland's population. LINK member bodies own or manage over 200,000 hectares of land, equivalent to about 2.6% of the total land area of Scotland. LINK helps members to achieve their own aims and collective goals by sharing knowledge, building consensus on key concerns and taking action together. LINK's vision is to secure, through the collective efforts of its members and by inspiring others, the sustainable development of Scotland where all aspects of the country's environment are valued to enhance the quality of life for all. LINK's collective work depends upon the active participation of its member organisations in the network's campaigns and subject-specific task forces. Further information about LINK can be found on its website <http://www.scotlink.org/>.

67. The current members of LINK are:

Archaeology Scotland	Plantlife Scotland
Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland	Ramblers Scotland
Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group	RSPB Scotland
Bat Conservation Trust	Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society
Buglife	Scottish Campaign for National Parks
Bumble Bee Conservation Trust	Scottish Countryside Rangers' Association
Butterfly Conservation Scotland	Scottish Native Woods
Cairngorms Campaign	Scottish Raptor Studies Group
Friends of the Earth Scotland	Scottish Wild Land Group
Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs	Scottish Wildlife Trust
Hebridean Whale & Dolphin Trust	Sustrans Scotland
John Muir Trust	Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society
Living Streets	Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust
Marine Conservation Society	Woodland Trust Scotland
Mountaineering Council of Scotland	WWF Scotland
The National Trust for Scotland	
North East Mountain Trust	



## APPENDIX 1

### Extract from the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009

57 Duty to produce a land use strategy

- (1) The Scottish Ministers must, no later than 31 March 2011, lay a land use strategy before the Scottish Parliament.
- (2) The strategy must, in particular, set out—
  - (a) the Scottish Ministers' objectives in relation to sustainable land use;
  - (b) their proposals and policies for meeting those objectives; and
  - (c) the timescales over which those proposals and policies are expected to take effect.
- (3) The objectives, proposals and policies referred to in subsection (2) must contribute to—
  - (a) achievement of the Scottish Ministers' duties under section 1, 2(1) or 3(1)(b);
  - (b) achievement of the Scottish Ministers' objectives in relation to adaptation to climate change, including those set out in any programme produced by virtue of section 53(2); and
  - (c) sustainable development.
- (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).
- (6) The Scottish Ministers must, no later than—
  - (a) 5 years after laying a strategy before the Scottish Parliament under subsection (1); and
  - (b) the end of every subsequent period of 5 years,lay a revised strategy before the Scottish Parliament; and subsections (2) to (5) apply to a revised strategy as they apply to a strategy laid under subsection (1).

## APPENDIX 2

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