

CONSULTATION

Response Document



Scotland's Fourth Land Use Strategy

5th October 2025

Introduction to CIEEM

The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), as the leading membership organisation supporting professional ecologists and environmental managers in the United Kingdom and Ireland, welcomes the opportunity to comment on this consultation.

CIEEM was established in 1991 and has over 9,000 members drawn from local authorities, government agencies, industry, environmental consultancy, teaching/research, and voluntary environmental organisations. The Chartered Institute has led the way in defining and raising the standards of ecological and environmental management practice with regard to biodiversity protection and enhancement. It promotes knowledge sharing through events and publications, skills development through its comprehensive training and development programme and best practice through the dissemination of technical guidance for the profession and related disciplines.

CIEEM is a member of:

- Scottish Environment Link
- Wildlife and Countryside Link
- Northern Ireland Environment Link
- Wales Environment Link
- Environmental Policy Forum
- IUCN – The World Conservation Union
- Society for the Environment
- United Nations Decade of Restoration 2021-2030 Network
- Irish Forum on Natural Capital (working group member)
- National Biodiversity Forum (Ireland)
- The Environmental Science Association of Ireland

CIEEM has over 860 members in Scotland who are drawn from across the private consultancy sector, NGOs, government and SNCOs, local authorities, academia and industry. They are practising ecologists and environmental managers, many of whom regularly provide input to and advice on land management for the benefit of protected species and biodiversity in general.

This response was coordinated by Members of our [Scotland Policy Group](#).

Scotland's Fourth Land Use Strategy Consultation

Question 1

Do you find Map Figure 1 to be a helpful representation of current land cover?

☐ Yes

☒ No

Question 2

How can we most effectively represent housing and renewable energy alongside current land cover maps?

We have contributed to and support the Scottish Environment Link's (ScotLINK) response to this consultation, and refer to that in answer to this question.

Question 3

What sort of information about current land use would you find useful? (and how would you use it?)

We have contributed to and support the Scottish Environment Link's (ScotLINK) response to this consultation, and refer to that in answer to this question.

Question 4

Do you agree that these are the key areas that need to be delivered by Scotland's land?

☐ No

Question 5

Are there any important land uses that you feel are missing or underrepresented in this list?

We have contributed to and support the Scottish Environment Link's (ScotLINK) response to this consultation, and refer to that in answer to this question.

Question 6

How do you think data and mapping can evolve to better support our understanding of future land use and national ambitions—including the impacts, benefits, opportunities and trade-offs of change?

We have contributed to and support the Scottish Environment Link's (ScotLINK) response to this consultation, and refer to that in answer to this question.

Question 7

What tools, data, or approaches would help improve this understanding over time?

We have contributed to and support the Scottish Environment Link's (ScotLINK) response to this consultation, and refer to that in answer to this question.

Question 8

Do you think the description provided captures what is meant by 'integrated landscapes'?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Question 9

Do you agree that integrated landscapes are the most effective approach to addressing Scotland's land use ambitions?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Please give reasons for your answer.

We have contributed to and support the Scottish Environment Link's (ScotLINK) response to this consultation, and refer to that in answer to this question.

Question 10

Have we identified the right factors influencing land use integration?

☐ Yes

☒ No

Question 11

Which of these factors do you feel are the most influential?

We have contributed to and support the Scottish Environment Link's (ScotLINK) response to this consultation, and refer to that in answer to this question.

Question 12

Are there any important factors we have missed?

We have contributed to and support the Scottish Environment Link's (ScotLINK) response to this consultation, and refer to that in answer to this question.

Question 13

Would the inclusion of case studies help to illustrate the practical delivery of integrated land use?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Question 14

Would the inclusion of information on ecosystem services and opportunities for increased benefits help to illustrate the wider value of integrated landscapes?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Question 15

Do you agree that the role of LUS4 should be to influence policy makers and regulators in order to create an enabling environment that incentivises and/or supports land managers, communities and partnerships to further integrate land use/management?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Question 16

Are there other ways in which LUS4 could support alignment and integration?

The Land Use Strategy presents an aspirational vision, but it does not appear to fully engage with the inherent tensions within that vision. For example, the proposal for expanded woodland cover (p.10) raises important questions: what is the underlying purpose of expansion, where should it occur, and what types of woodland are intended? How might such expansion interact with existing peatland restoration objectives or biodiversity goals? Similarly, in relation to agriculture, the Strategy does not clarify whether it envisages a move towards intensification or extensification.

The actions outlined on pages 20–21 do not always demonstrate clear support for genuine integration. It is not evident that these measures have consistently advanced sustainable land use, despite the claims made. With regard to the proposed targets, it remains unclear whether they are mutually reinforcing or potentially in conflict with one another.

Reference is made to the National Marine Plan, but the Strategy does not sufficiently address the interface between land and sea. Stronger consideration should be given to coastal dynamics, including managed realignment and nature-based forms of coastal protection, if the Strategy is to provide a genuinely integrated approach. Likewise, more explicit attention to the role of nature-based solutions—such as those mitigating risks from wildfire, flooding, or landslides—and clarity on where these could be most effectively implemented, would significantly strengthen the Strategy's capacity to support practical planning and delivery.

Overall, the Land Use Strategy would benefit from offering clearer direction on the mechanisms required to deliver its ambitions. Rather than relying on, or adapting, existing instruments such as agricultural and forestry support schemes—many of which have historically been developed in a siloed manner—the Strategy should provide explicit guidance on how integrated land use outcomes are to be achieved.

Some specific recommendations:

- Clarify the rationale, location, and type of proposed woodland expansion, and assess implications for peatland and other biodiversity objectives.
- Clearly articulate the desired direction for agricultural development.
- Ensure that targets are assessed for potential synergies and conflicts to promote coherent and integrated outcomes.
- Strengthen integration with the National Marine Plan, particularly regarding managed realignment and nature-based coastal protection, to fully address the interactions between marine and terrestrial systems.
- Increase consideration of nature-based solutions, identifying geographical areas where these interventions could be most effective and supporting their planning and delivery.
- Move beyond reliance on existing, siloed mechanisms by providing explicit guidance on how new, integrated approaches to land use should be realised.

Question 17

Do you agree with the proposed approach to developing a new vision and integrated set of objectives for the Land Use Strategy?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Question 18

Which approach would you prefer for LUS4?

☐ Removal of the land use principles

☐ Establishment of a refreshed set of principles (if this is your preference, please tell us what you think they should cover and how you envision their application)

Question 19

To what extent do you agree that the draft indicators provide a strong basis for measuring progress toward improved outcomes under the Nature and Climate theme?

☐ Strongly Agree

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Unsure

If you selected "Disagree" or "Unsure", please tell us why

Question 20

Are you aware of other data sources that could be used to monitor progress towards these outcomes?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please highlight them

Question 21

To what extent do you agree that the draft indicators provide a strong basis for measuring progress toward improved outcomes under the Jobs, Skills and Economy theme ?

Strongly Agree

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Unsure

If you selected "Disagree" or "Unsure", please tell us why.

Question 22

Are you aware of other data sources that could be used to monitor progress towards these outcomes ?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please highlight them

Question 23

To what extent do you agree that the draft indicators provide a strong basis for measuring progress toward improved outcomes under the Community, Places, People and Equity theme ?

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Unsure

If you selected "Disagree" or "Unsure", please tell us why.

Question 24

Are you aware of other data sources that could be used to monitor progress towards these outcomes ?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please highlight them

Question 25

Are you aware of any ways in which the proposed vision and objectives need to consider the different experiences, both positive and negative, current or future, of the following groups?

- island communities
- young people, (children, pupils, and young adults up to the age of 26)
- those with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation); and/or
- groups or areas at socio-economic disadvantage (such as income, low wealth or area deprivation)?

Question 26

Are you aware of any potential costs and burdens that you think may arise as a result of the vision and objectives within this consultation? If so please give details?

We have contributed to and support the Scottish Environment Link's (ScotLINK) response to this consultation, and refer to that in answer to this question.