

News Release

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LINK publishes proposals for a Sustainable Land Use Strategy -

We must learn to live WITH the land

Scottish Environment LINK today published "LIVING WITH THE LAND", a paper outlining proposed content for the Sustainable Land Use Strategy (SLUS) which the Scottish Government is obliged to introduce by 2011 under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act.

Commenting on the publication, John Mayhew, former chairman of LINK and the author of the paper, said: **"For too long we in Scotland have lived off the land, now we need to live with the land. Instead of land being viewed as simply a resource to be exploited for profit and pleasure, we must learn to nurture and sustain the natural qualities of all of our land because its health is absolutely essential to people's well-being."**

"Of course the SLUS finally came about for climate change reasons – and the land use sector undoubtedly has much to contribute to reducing the degree of climate change and to adapting to its consequences – but it has such potential to achieve so many other objectives:

- It gives our Government the opportunity to show that "world-leading" legislation can lead to real change and improvement – and that economic growth is just a small part of sustainable development.
- It will allow us integrate different land uses – agriculture, forestry, recreation or the built environment for example – and to stop putting each into a policy silo that ends in serious environmental damage.
- If the strategy's scope is drawn widely enough it will join up policy and practice to improve water quality, conditions for wildlife and the very way our country looks."

Peter Peacock MSP, who moved the amendment to the Climate Change Act that brought in the requirement for the Strategy, added: **"I welcome this paper as a valuable contribution to the development of truly sustainable land use policy."**

Full details of the paper can be obtained at www.scotlink.org The summary is printed in the notes to this release.

Contact details

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Editors' Notes

(1) Scottish Environment LINK is the network for Scotland's voluntary sector environmental organisations. LINK has over 30 member organisations spanning interests across the natural environment and associated cultural heritage and supported by around 500,000 people. Further information on LINK is available at www.scotlink.org

(2) John Mayhew, author of the paper on behalf of the LINK Sustainable Land Use Group is a former chairman of LINK and the Director of the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland (APRS).

(3) LIVING WITH THE LAND - Summary

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.

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.

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....

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