



Andrew Marks
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24 January 2025

Dear Mr Thomson,

Thank you for your correspondence to the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands, dated 14th January 2025. As a Scottish Government official operating in the land use and just transition policy area, I have been asked to reply.

Thank you for sharing 'The future of strategic land use planning' report, ahead of publication. The subject and content are very pertinent to ongoing work regarding the Regional Land Use Partnerships (RLUPs).

You may be aware that following on from the experiences of the pilot, the Scottish Government has committed to transitioning 4 of the pilot RLUPs to a formal initiative as we seek to continue to develop our understanding of how partnership work can help to optimise land use in a fair and inclusive way – meeting local and national objectives and supporting Scotland's just transition to net-zero.

The 4 pilot regions that will transition to a formal initiative are:

- NorthWest 2045 region (Highlands)
- Cairngorms National Park
- Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park
- South of Scotland (Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders Councils).

This transitional period means that the partnerships can continue to develop organically whilst allowing us to consolidate the learning from the pilot. We aim to set out the overarching RLUPs strategy for Scotland by the end of the parliamentary term. This work will focus on supporting the RLUPs to build on their identification of regional priorities/opportunities and create the local partnerships and plans which can deliver these opportunities. This does include further exploration of how RLUPs can effectively draw upon public and

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private investment in natural capital to ensure long-term stability and community financial empowerment.

In April 2024, the Scottish Government did announce plans to support a wider national roll-out of RLUPs. Given the current financial pressures faced across the Government, we are working with the current RLUPs through their transition and subject to the lessons learned, we will seek the next stage of partnership delivery from 2026 onwards.

Thank you once again for bringing your report and recommendations to our attention and we look forward to engaging with you further in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Alex Barker

LRRIP : Land Use Strategy and Rural Communities Policy Unit

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