

Highland Community Planning Partnership

Highland Environment Forum

Highland Land Use Strategy Working Group: Terms of Reference

Background

The resource of land is finite and there are competing demands - public and private - for its use. For some of these uses there are established strategies. Examples include the Scottish Forestry Strategy; the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy; River Basin Management Plans under the Water Framework Directive; Wild Deer: A National Approach etc. If anything the criticism of these and the many other plans is that they tend to come from a single sectoral perspective whilst the land resource which has to satisfy all these aspirations is finite.

In recognition of the need to balance these competing demands the Scottish Land Use Strategy was put in place at the Scottish level. It is, however, by definition a very strategic document and of limited use in guiding land use planning at a more regional/ local level. In order to explore how this might be put in place at the local level two pilots were established in Aberdeenshire and the Borders. These are due to be assessed by March 2015 ahead of the review of the Scottish strategy in 2016.

In recognition of these issues the Highland Single Outcome Agreement proposes the development of a Highland Land Use Strategy under its Environment theme. This has subsequently been discussed by the Highland Environment Forum - the thematic working group charged with taking forward the outcomes identified within the Environment theme - which agreed this as one of its priority actions for taking forwards at a workshop in March of this year.

In order to progress this it is proposed to pull together a working group to:

- Consider the benefits/disbenefits of developing a Highland Land Use Strategy;
- Consider the options for taking this work forward
- Make recommendations to the next meeting of the Highland Environment Forum on how this proposal might be progressed, when and who might be involved.

Highland Land Use Strategy Working Group

Methodology

It is proposed that the working group undertake this task through holding a workshop. The workshop would: discuss the Scottish Land Use Strategy; receive a presentation from one of the two current pilots; and, agree what the options for progressing this work within Highland are. The workshop should be held in time to allow for its recommendations to be written up and confirmed with the group before presenting them to HEF at its September meeting.

Proposed Membership

The Working Group should include members from the public, third and private sectors.
The following should be invited to be represented on the group: THC/SNH/SEPA/FCS/NFU/
SLE/SWT/RSPB/HTSI.

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July 2014