

Scottish Land Use Strategy – Consultation

Land Use Strategy website ... www.gov.scot/Topics/Environment/Countryside/Landusestrategy

Spokes is grateful for the opportunity to comment on the draft Land Use Strategy.

Whilst doing much to address sustainability issues, it seems to us that the consultation draft needs to be better aligned with the Climate Change Act and do more to ensure that land use planning and decision making take account of the carbon impact and health and wellbeing implications of particular uses. This will ensure the better promotion of sustainable land use planning and practices.

We have no issue with the emphasis of the document being about rural land use but feel that urban or semi urban land use issues need to be better addressed if the document is to be about general land use in a national context.

Given our specialist interest, our comments address the transport implications of land use. In relation to urban and semi urban land we see transport as a key determinant of land use planning and decision making.

We regularly see planning applications on the periphery of Edinburgh where location and the lack of public transport and any local amenities mean that car dependency is virtually built into much new housing developments. And this is often where proposals involve converting prime agricultural land into housing. We believe that such developments should be discouraged or prevented because they are incompatible with the transport hierarchy set out in Scottish Planning Policy and the national targets we have for carbon reduction from the Climate Change Act.

Such proposals would be greatly enhanced if they were properly connected to active travel and public transport networks and where local amenities were provided or were otherwise present to prevent the need for travel to distant, schools, shops and community facilities.

We would like the Land Use Strategy to -

- specifically highlight the need for consideration of transport implications and carbon impacts in land use planning and decision making.
- signal the development of a methodology to consider the transport implications of land use proposals
 - what level of new travel will be generated
 - what its likely modal split will be
 - its carbon impact; and
- encourage developments which minimise transport impacts and offer attractive active travel opportunities.

Such measures would enhance the Strategy's ambition to enable the "...fair, wise and productive use of ..." the nations resources. They would also be compatible with its principle for "informed decision making" and would better align with our commitment to reducing the nation's carbon emissions.

We hope these ideas can be incorporated in the final draft of the Land Use Strategy.

Spokes, January 2016

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