

## ***Annex 2 Policy Context***

- **NPF<sup>1</sup>**

In their rich diversity, Scotland's landscapes are a national asset of the highest value. They provide the context for our daily lives and are a major attraction for our tourist visitors. They are settings for outdoor recreation and are valued as a source of refreshment and inspiration by many. Nationally important landscape characteristics include openness, intervisibility, perceived naturalness, and remoteness. Areas considered of national significance on the basis of their outstanding scenic interest are designated as National Scenic Areas.

Our landscapes have been shaped by human activity since prehistoric times. Natural and cultural landscapes and the historic fabric of our cities, towns and rural areas are important aspects of our national identity and the distinctive character of each part of Scotland. Edinburgh's Old and New Towns, New Lanark, St. Kilda, the Neolithic monuments of Orkney and the Antonine Wall have been accorded an international status as World Heritage sites. The Lochaber and North West Highland Geo-parks are part of the UNESCO European Geo-park Network. Natural and historic environments help create a sense of place, contribute to the quality of life and are a rich resource for tourism and leisure, our creative industries, education, and national and regional marketing. They can also provide a focus for regeneration. The Scottish Government is committed to protecting, promoting and supporting the sustainable management of these key assets.

Landscapes evolve continuously in response to climatic, economic, social and technological change. As the European Landscape Convention recognises, their value extends beyond those protected by formal designations to all areas which reflect the interaction of natural processes with human activities. Landscape and visual impacts will continue to be important considerations in decision-making on developments. The cumulative effects of small-scale changes require as much attention as large developments with immediately obvious impacts. Some of Scotland's remoter mountain and coastal areas possess an elemental quality from which many people derive psychological and spiritual benefits. Such areas are very sensitive to any form of development or intrusive human activity and great care should be taken to safeguard their wild land character.

Major urban regeneration projects, the changes taking place in the rural economy, the expansion of woodland cover and the restructuring of our forests offer strategic opportunities to enhance landscape quality and repair past damage. We will see significant changes to some of our landscapes to help deal with contemporary challenges such as climate change. However, even changes which offer clear environmental benefits, such as the expansion of woodland cover, require careful design and management to avoid adverse impacts. The aim must be to build environmental capital and pass well-managed, high quality landscapes on to future generations.

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government, 2009, National Planning Framework 2, p34-35

- **Scottish Planning Policy<sup>2</sup>**

It is stated in the document that local authorities should:

- Clearly identify and protect locally important landscapes
- Clearly explain the reasons for designation, on-going relevance and function of local designations in considering preparation of development plans
- Ensure that the distinctive character and special qualities of the landscapes are designated in such a way that greater understanding is achieved
- Facilitate positive change whilst maintaining and enhancing distinctive character
- Ensure that through careful planning and design the potential conflict can be minimised and the potential for enhancement maximised
- Ensure that locally designated areas of landscape that are particularly sensitive are not developed
- Ensure that potential effects, including cumulative effect of incremental changes, are considered when preparing development plans
- Support opportunities for enjoyment and understanding of natural heritage

- **Policy 1B The Spatial Strategy: Development Principles SESplan Proposed Plan 2011**

Local Development Plans will:

- Ensure that there are no significant adverse impacts on the integrity of international, national and local designations, in particular National Scenic Areas, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Areas of Great Landscape Value and any other Phase 1 Habitats or European Protected Species

- **Policy EP1 National Scenic Areas Scottish Borders Consolidated Local Plan 2011**

Development in National Scenic Areas will only be permitted where:

- i) the objectives of designation and the overall landscape value of the site will not be compromised, or,
- ii) any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the site has been designated are clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance.

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<sup>2</sup> Scottish Government, 2010, Scottish Planning Policy, p26-27

- **Policy EP2 Areas of Great Landscape Value Scottish Borders Consolidated Local Plan 2011**

In assessing proposals for development in AGLVs, the Council will seek to safeguard landscape quality and will have particular regard to the landscape impact of the proposed development. Proposals which have a significant adverse impact will only be permitted where the impact is clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national or local importance

- **SNH & Historic Scotland, 2004, Guidance on Local Landscape Designations<sup>3</sup>**

- To secure a better understanding and support for Local Landscapes Designations...prepare a statement of importance for each designated area.
- Ensure that designation of Local Landscape Designation is part of a consistent policy direction and that there is consideration of measures to further planning and management initiatives.
- Development should therefore generally only be permitted within a Local Landscape Designation when:
  - I. It will not have significant adverse impacts on the special character or qualities of the landscape of the area;
  - II. The social and economic benefits of the development are considered to be more than of just local significance in the context of the local authority area
- For developments that meet these tests, the location, scale, design, materials, and landscaping should be of a high standard and, where appropriate, should seek to enhance the special qualities and character of the landscape

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<sup>3</sup> SNH/Historic Scotland, 2004, Guidance on Local Landscape Designations, p1-32

