

Scottish Environment LINK Sustainable Land Use Strategy

MCofS works in partnership with other organisation through Scottish Environment LINK (LINK). “Living With The Land” is 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. It can be read at <http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/LINKReports/LINKReportLivingwithLand.pdf> .

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