

Scotland's Landscape Charter



The Scottish Landscape Forum



Foreword

Scotland's landscapes, which are renowned throughout the world, show the imprint of countless generations of Scots who have shaped this land, sometimes through deliberate design but more often unconsciously. The current generation of Scots continues to make its mark on this canvas, but in an age when the hand of man is so much heavier than in the past it is important that we do so with care and forethought.

The Scottish Government attaches considerable priority to increasing the value and enjoyment that we derive from our surroundings. Scotland's landscapes underpin our tourist industry and they are one of the things that enable us to retain and attract a skilled workforce. They influence customer perceptions of many of our products and services, and they provide inspiration for much of our music, art and literature. There is good reason to value and enjoy them, but we do not always make as much of these assets as we could. The priority articulated

by government is therefore a challenge to us all. Working together we can make more of the landscapes that we have inherited – for our economy, our health and our sense of who we are.

If we do all derive more benefit from our natural and built environment, then another priority of the Scottish Government – that we should protect and enhance it for future generations – must also surely follow: the golden goose must be cared for. The creation of the Landscape Forum was a useful first step in enabling this to happen more effectively. The signing of this Landscape Charter represents an important second step. But what really matters are the ways in which we actually manage changes to our landscapes as we go forward from here. Just as we now judge our predecessors by what they have left to us, so will we be judged.

Andrew Thin
Chairman
Scottish Natural Heritage

The need for action

Scotland's landscapes are of a richness, diversity and distinctiveness that make them unparalleled in Europe.

But these landscapes are for ever changing in response to natural forces and the needs of society. Change can be gradual and therefore almost imperceptible at first, or sudden and dramatic. Either way that does not mean that we should simply accept whatever happens: our surroundings are too important to us, in too many ways, for that. Instead we must actively seek to guide change so that Scotland's landscapes continue to enrich our lives and benefit our economy. We should aim to retain and reinforce the regional distinctiveness that is so much part of Scotland and to use it to boost communities' sense of identity and self-confidence

But as the European Landscape Convention stresses, a convention adopted by 32 countries, including the UK, it is all landscapes that matter – the degraded, the ugly and the simply neglected included. All must receive our attention. However, we do already have a great deal to be proud of and recognise that we have done much that is

right. We want our land owners and managers to continue to play their vital role in shaping Scotland's landscape, through long-term custodianship, management and investment. But we must continue to be vigilant and build on this good work.

Members of the Scottish Landscape Forum have prepared this, Scotland's Landscape Charter, to draw attention to this vital resource. We invite communities, land managers, developers, local authorities, public bodies and non-government organisations to support the Charter's vision and commit themselves to the action it proposes.

Isabel Glasgow
Chair
Scottish Landscape Forum

The importance of Scotland's landscapes

We believe that the character and quality of our landscapes:

- are an essential aspect of our sense of place and belonging, contributing to our health and wellbeing, and to the high quality of life that is to be found in Scotland;
- are an integral part of our national and community identity, reflecting our history and culture, and must retain their capacity to inspire our art, verse, prose and song;
- are highly valued by visitors from all over the world, generating wealth as the mainstay of the tourism industry; and
- attract individuals and businesses to locate in Scotland, their high quality being fundamental to the marketing of products and services.

“Landscape” means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.

European Landscape Convention



Our vision

Our vision for Scotland's landscapes is that, within a generation ...

...we can be proud of all our landscapes. Landscapes are cared for as a vital national resource, fundamental to our prosperity and wellbeing. We all play an active part in decisions affecting our surroundings, and everyone in a position to help shape them – public bodies, commercial businesses, land managers and individuals alike – is committed to maintaining their quality and distinctiveness.

In support of this vision, five principles should guide future action.

- 1 All landscapes are important and everyone has a right to live in and enjoy the benefits of high quality surroundings.
- 2 Our landscapes are a shared asset and everyone has a responsibility for looking after them to high standards, to make sure each part of Scotland maintains its own distinctive sense of place.
- 3 Landscapes change but change needs to be managed, to ensure the character and quality of the landscape is respected in all land management and development decisions.
- 4 Better awareness of the diversity, distinctiveness, history and character of our landscapes is needed, so that all action affecting them is based on sound understanding.
- 5 Shaping tomorrow's landscapes requires a forward-looking approach to national and local policy that involves people in decisions about change to the character and quality of their surroundings.



What we must do

We believe that, as a nation, we have a shared responsibility for the landscapes and townscapes that surround us, and that collective action for their care and management is essential.

Scotland's Landscape Charter encourages determined action from all sectors of society to fulfil our vision and so ensure all our landscapes are places we would be proud to pass on to future generations.



A. Individuals, communities and non-government organisations

Look around your local area, celebrate its identity and become involved in making it a better place.

- 1 Promote wider understanding of your local landscape: tell others what you value about it, and what gives it a sense of place.
- 2 Agree what is needed to improve it and keep it in good shape.
- 3 Make your voice heard in guiding change, and in the preparation of guidance that will result in well-designed landscapes and townscapes in the future.
- 4 Promote a celebration of your landscape and encourage schools and groups to participate in raising awareness and take action for their surroundings.

B. Land managers

Take pride in your work in maintaining the distinctive character and regional identity of rural Scotland.

- 1 Continue to ensure that land use change is sensitive to the character of the landscape in which it takes place.
- 2 Design new buildings and structures in a sympathetic manner which is in keeping with the surrounding landscape.
- 3 Keep landscape features in a good state of repair and explore opportunities to introduce new elements that will improve what is already there.
- 4 Retain the unspoilt qualities of Scotland's remotest and wildest places, which are rare in a European context.

Case Study

Glencaple Village Design Statement

Residents of Glencaple in Dumfriesshire want to ensure that new development is in keeping with the character and setting of the village. To this end they have prepared a Village Design Statement that will ensure that the historic fabric of the village is retained, while at the same time allowing for good modern design.

Case Study

Atholl Estate, Blair Atholl

This estate with its historic buildings, designed landscapes, farmland, forestry, moorland and wild land is an excellent example of integrated land management - with landscape and its enjoyment at the core. Atholl Estates has published a Forward Plan that shows how this integration can be achieved within a commercial operation.



C. Developers

Meet best practice standards, and ensure new development enhances landscapes and townscapes, and results in high quality surroundings.

- 1 Ensure that the siting, design and use of materials in new development are in keeping with, or contribute positively to, the local townscape and landscape.
- 2 Seek views from the community on development proposals at an early stage, and look to incorporate their aspirations for their local landscape.
- 3 Design the landscape with future climate change in mind, while providing greenspace and maximising opportunities for walking and cycling.
- 4 Ensure that your organisation has access to landscape expertise which, for new development, will deliver integrated design, implementation and management that is sensitive to the landscape.

D. Local authorities, public agencies and government departments

Make sure respect for the landscape is at the heart of decision-making, and, support action by local communities to achieve this.

- 1 Recognise the importance of landscape when making key decisions, and, ensure landscape is included as a key aspect of performance measures.
- 2 Encourage local communities to become involved in decisions concerning landscape change in their localities.
- 3 Recognise that it is essential to have sufficient landscape expertise available to decision-makers, planners and local communities.
- 4 Raise awareness of the role of local and national designations in safeguarding valued landscapes, and use these areas to trial best practice in landscape management.
- 5 Ensure that landscape conditions applied to development are implemented, managed and monitored.

Case Study

Development guidance on the Isle of Gigha

The Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust wishes to provide business accommodation and housing without blighting Gigha's exceptional landscape. The traditional Gigha farm steading has been identified as a design which minimises the impact on the landscape, but which also allows scope for design diversity.

Case Study

Minsca Wind Farm, Lockerbie

This 17-turbine windfarm near Lockerbie has been built without controversy as a result of successful, advance consultation by the developer on landscape impact and other issues. Discussions between the developer (Aitricity), Dumfries & Galloway Council, Scottish Natural Heritage and local communities ensured a final design in keeping with the landscape of the area.

Signing the charter

All organisations and individuals with an interest in Scotland's landscapes are encouraged to sign up to this charter, thereby committing themselves to fulfilling the vision and undertaking the action relevant to themselves.

Information on how to sign, and examples of action that can be taken, can be found at www.snh.gov.uk.

The Scottish Landscape Forum

The Scottish Landscape Forum was established in June 2006, and brought together stakeholders concerned about the future of the Scottish landscape.

Its purpose was to facilitate discussion, prepare advice and promote action for the better care of our landscapes, thereby enabling their diversity, quality and integrity to be maintained for future generations to enjoy. By producing this Charter, it completed its agreed programme of work.

Members of the Forum

Activity Scotland Association, Architecture & Design Scotland, Association of Scottish Community Councils, Black Environment Network, Built Environment Forum Scotland, CoSLA, Edinburgh College of Art, Greenspace Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Homes for Scotland, Landscape Institute Scotland, National Farmers Union Scotland, Royal Town Planning Institute in Scotland, Scottish Council for Development and Industry, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, Scottish Enterprise Scottish Environment Link, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Rural Property and Business Association, VisitScotland

Observers

Forestry Commission Scotland, Historic Scotland, Scottish Government

www.snh.gov.uk

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Scottish Natural Heritage
All of nature for all of Scotland

