

## Response from Argyll and Bute Council- 12 October 2016.

### Answers in black.

#### Where are the uplands?

1. What broad characteristics should we use to define the uplands? Some possible approaches are summarised in the annex to this note.

**Broad Characteristics to define uplands:** note that differences in upland characteristics vary from one part of the country to the other- e.g. East to West and North to South- this needs to be factored in.

#### Summary in no particular order includes the following:

1. Altitude but variations in terms of topographical geographical influences- i.e. coastal to that of inland locations,
2. Montane characteristics,
3. Land use- forestry, sporting, livestock, renewables (wind, hydro, photovoltaic cells), flood alleviation
4. Small Upland Settlements- locational for operational need, small population.
5. Land use capability/classification- wild land
6. Access and recreation,
7. Competing interests- habitat restoration e.g. peatlands, Muirburn.

#### What benefits do the uplands provide to Scotland?

2. What are the key social, economic and environmental benefits that the uplands provide for Scotland?

**Benefits: some will be cross cutting.**

<b>Social</b>	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Environmental</b>
Recreational- use	Sheep and cattle- livestock farming	LBAPs and Action Frameworks- Habitat management and restoration including Peatland
Health and wellbeing activities	Forestry	Species management
Paths- maintenance and restoration	Sporting interests- Deer and grouse	Flood management- early interception
Interpretation	Renewable energy	Raptor habitat
Carbon off-setting- Peatland restoration	Tourism	Climate change- carbon storage
	Scenery/visual experience	Academic – UHI Hill and Montane research

3. How can upland land use help to prevent or reduce the impacts of climate change?

- Carbon sequestration – peatland and soil improvement; early flood management.
- Renewable energy locations and types- wind, water and solar/photovoltaic.
- Livestock grazing management; management of deer numbers; muirburn.
- Recognition and management of recreational hotspots.
- Understanding conflicting management objectives- sporting, agricultural, forestry, recreational, renewable energy, designations- SSSI's, Wildland, National Parks. The latter needs careful consideration as they are both a designation and run as a separate planning authority and could be a factor in determining where effort is focussed.

### What should an upland vision include?

4. A strategic vision could inform decisions about the balance between different land uses in different parts of the uplands. What are the key choices that an upland vision should address, and why?

Primarily, the vision should recognise different land uses and variables within the uplands depending on location and topography. Creating a balance between activities is key, but there needs to be a clear aim and objectives, this will help create and inform the vision. There is also an educational role too as this will help off-set any misconceptions.

5. Are there any other topics or issues that should be included in an upland vision, and if so why?

Appropriate management options to generate income and sustain our habitats and species, meaningful communication and partnership working between upland interests.

6. Are there any topics or issues that should be excluded from an upland vision, and if so why?

Excluding topics implies a narrowing/limiting of the vision.

### How should the vision be developed?

7. Which stakeholders do you think it would be particularly important to involve, and how?

Involvement of land managers, businesses (renewables, sporting, recreational) those that live there and recreational (non-business) users. Use specific land managing organisations- SL&E, NFUS and SCF along with local Community Councils and other local groups such as environmental, recreational users etc.

Would particular approaches be needed, for example, to reach particular groups?

Introduction paper in advance of meetings so as to prime stakeholders in advance- this often yields the best results particularly in relation to local insight on issues not considered at national level. A series of workshops to examine all the issues, rate conflicts and investigate opportunities.

8. What are your views on the process that might be needed to bring together the key interests and develop a shared vision?

Everyone with an interest in the uplands has a part to play in supporting and managing the expectations of the vision. This needs to be factored in in a cohesive manner albeit that some will have more of an influence than others. This should be respected. There are many opportunities to improve and manage the uplands but these need to be coupled with clear objectives.

9. Who would be best placed to lead this process?

A combination of Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Agency and RPID- SEARS-

10. What form should a vision for the uplands take (visual or descriptive, maps, diagrams or text)?

Vision should be fit to include a variety of audiences

11. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

The uplands of Scotland are very much a part of our landscape and culture; they are diverse in terms of location, topography, climatic influences, management, cultural and biodiversity interest. The people that work in managing them and those that enjoy them have an unequal managerial influence but equal responsibility in terms of their footprint and how they can alter the landscape to have both a positive and negative effect. For effective solutions to the various challenges to managing uplands, cooperation needs to be promoted and applied in terms with mindfulness, understanding and tolerance.

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