

## **Scoping a strategic vision for the uplands – key questions for discussion**

### **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.

BASC fully recognises the complexity surrounding finding a definition for the uplands. However, we prefer the simple approach that has been adopted in the past of uplands being defined as the land lying above the limit of enclosed farmland. In areas where there is no enclosed farmland we would support the additional use of upland vegetation cover which should also address areas such as the north west where such vegetation cover is indeed found down to sea level.

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

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

The key benefits that need to be considered are health and well-being through outdoor recreation in the uplands, the maintenance of traditional farming practices (that help define the landscape and retain local communities), the social and economic benefits from tourism, agriculture, grouse shooting and deer stalking and the environmental benefits from a wide range of these activities that help to deliver eco-system services.

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

Upland land use can mitigate against the impacts of climate change through carbon sequestration and storage through active peatland restoration and management and afforestation, through water storage and management of run-off and through the provision of both on-shore wind and hydro renewable energy.

### **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?

The key word is balance and a vision must address issues such as the desirability to retain open moorland landscapes as opposed to afforestation (and rewilding), the role of grouse moor management for social, environmental and economic reasons and the importance of deer management to all other interests, such as farming and forestry.

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

Support for upland agriculture post-EU.

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

### **How should the vision be developed?**

7. Which stakeholders do you think it would be particularly important to involve, and how? Would particular approaches be needed, for example, to reach particular groups?

Most of the relevant stakeholders are already members of the Scotland's Moorland Forum. We suggest that Scotland's Moorland Forum should have a key role to play in developing the vision.

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

As above, Scotland's Moorland Forum.

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

As above, Scotland's Moorland Forum.

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

Probably a combination of all of the above.

11. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

No.

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