

**RURAL AFFAIRS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**  
**SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S DRAFT LAND USE STRATEGY**  
**SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM SE LINK**

Dr Wilson asked about the possible impact of an ecologically coherent network of protected areas on development.

Scottish Environment LINK is aware that the Committee has received evidence previously on ecological coherence from Prof Sir John Lawton CBE FRS, the Scottish Wildlife Trust and Scottish Environment LINK, so the Committee will be familiar with the concept.

SE LINK believes that requiring the network of protected areas to be ecologically coherent would be consistent with the requirements of Article 3 of the Habitats Directive, which is not currently applied satisfactorily in Scotland, and the ethos behind the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 which provides for a plan-led development planning system.

By adding greater clarity to planning requirements – such as where development might be preferable, where compensatory measures are required, where to design in habitat networks or corridors etc - development plans will be more likely to meet the requirements of the National Planning Framework 2 objective for national ecological networks and support local authorities in meeting their biodiversity duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

Both public and private money will be saved by ensuring that development plans are more likely to be accepted at an earlier stage if good practice has been designed in. In summary, ecological coherence would benefit both the public and private sectors. We agree with Sir John Lawton that ecological coherence would enable better land use and development planning and would add biodiversity value to our existing suite of protected areas while simultaneously enriching the wider countryside. LINK therefore wishes to see the LUS promote ecological coherence.

A further matter raised during the evidence session was the Ecosystem Approach. We are conscious that there is a great deal of confusion surrounding the term and it may be of assistance to the Committee to refer to the Convention on Biological Diversity definition of the Ecosystem Approach which sets out 12 key principles. The Ecosystem Approach is an important tool for achieving sustainable development as it is focused on defining the desired relationship between human activities and natural ecosystems, which host them. Increasingly, scientists are advocating approaches which assess the value of ecosystem goods and services.

The 12 principles are:

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| 1: The objectives of management of land, water and living resources are a matter of |
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societal choice. Ecosystems should be managed for their intrinsic values and for the tangible or intangible benefits for humans, in a fair and equitable way.
2: Management should be decentralized to the lowest appropriate level.
3: Ecosystem managers should consider the effects (actual or potential) of their activities on adjacent and other ecosystems.
4: Recognizing potential gains from management, there is usually a need to understand and manage the ecosystem in an economic context. Any such ecosystem-management programme should: (a) Reduce those market distortions that adversely affect biological diversity; (b) Align incentives to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use; (c) Internalize costs and benefits in the given ecosystem to the extent feasible.
5: Conservation of ecosystem structure and functioning, in order to maintain ecosystem services, should be a priority target of the ecosystem approach.
6: Ecosystems must be managed within the limits of their functioning
7: The ecosystem approach should be undertaken at the appropriate spatial and temporal scales.
8: Recognizing the varying temporal scales and lag-effects that characterize ecosystem processes, objectives for ecosystem management should be set for the long term.
9: Management must recognize that change is inevitable
10: The ecosystem approach should seek the appropriate balance between, and integration of, conservation and use of biological diversity.
11: The ecosystem approach should consider all forms of relevant information, including scientific and indigenous and local knowledge, innovations and practices.
12: The ecosystem approach should involve all relevant sectors of society and scientific disciplines.

SE Link

8 December 2010