



Towards A Land Strategy for Northern Ireland

4th May 2015

‘they’re not making it [land] anymore’ – Mark Twain

Land and clean water



WATER

JUST UNDER
30% ▼
OF ALL RIVER
WATER BODIES
in Northern Ireland
are **DEEMED TO BE IN**
'GOOD ECOLOGICAL STATUS'



Land for agriculture



Land for recreation and health



Land for housing

**BETWEEN
2011/12 AND 2012/13
the number of annual
housing completions has
INCREASED BY
28%**



Land for tourism



Double tourism revenue by growing tourism numbers from 3.2 - 4.5m by 2020 (DETI, 2010)

Land for aggregates



Land for Energy

ENERGY

The total %
of electricity
consumed from
**INDIGENOUS
RENEWABLE
SOURCES**
has increased from

1.5%
IN 2001/2 TO
19.5%
IN 2013/14.

The vast majority (over 90%) of
renewable electricity generated within
NI is generated from wind sources.



Land and climate change

Northern Ireland floods cause transport havoc

Environment Minister Alex Attwood has pledged to help home-owners whose properties are flooded during the current bad weather.

Heavy rain has caused flooding and problems for drivers in various parts of Northern Ireland.

The Belfast to Dublin Enterprise train service was suspended due to flooding at Clontarf in north County Dublin.

Roads were closed as rivers overflowed their banks with vehicles having to be towed from the flood water.

Mr Attwood said he was making emergency funds available to cover council costs in tackling flood damage.

Police have warned drivers in Ards, north Down, Castlereagh and Downpatrick to take care on the roads on Monday due to the severe weather.

Mr Attwood said he has been able to cope around the

"In the event of the weather we have households being hit that we can be offered to ensure help is possible," he said.

"I will continue to monitor the situation on an hour basis. This is absolutely to ensure help is delivered as quickly as possible."



The Hillhall Road between Lisburn and Belfast hit by flooding

Floods cause havoc across North West

Nearly 20 people were rescued from their flooded homes in County Tyrone on Tuesday night, as heavy rain caused havoc across Northern Ireland.

In Beragh, the river burst its banks and left people trapped in their houses.

Eighteen people, including two young children, were brought to safety by boat.

In Strabane, fire crews came to the rescue of a disabled person in the Melmount Road area.

Sinn Féin Councillor Jay McCauley said the biggest problem was getting to access to sandbags, and all the emergency numbers seemed to be constantly engaged.

He said he was with one family whose home was flooded.

"We were trying to contact the Housing Executive because people couldn't put on the electric and so we had to get alternative accommodation," he said.

... in the house as well. It's upset that ... is until Christmas, these people don't

... in the house. It was pretty bad and they ...



Some roads subsided due to flooding

Dublin on emergency footing as floods cause chaos

Dublin City Council has activated its major emergency plan as a result of widespread flooding in the city.

Sustained rainfall led to major roads, houses and one of the city's main shopping centres going under water.

An off-duty Irish police officer is missing in County Wicklow, close to where a river broke its banks.



Dundrum shopping mall in Dublin was awash with flood water

Related Stories

[Body is located in garda search](#)

[Flash floods hit UK & Ireland](#)

“

We formed a human chain and passed the sandbags along”

Andy Patton

Community worker

Land – a taken for granted asset

- Land provides the goods and services upon which society depends
- Land under pressure from increasing and often competing pressures and demands
- NI PfG aims to create ‘a vibrant economy which can transform society’
- Need to optimise the use of our land resource to deliver prosperity and well-being while ensuring this vital resource is maintained and enhanced.
- More holistic, overarching vision required – overcome sectoral mentality
- Coordinated policy development and delivery
- Resolve land use conflicts



Northern Ireland councils prepare to take planning plunge

By Mark Devenport
BBC News NI Political Editor

The Scottish Experience

“A Scotland where we fully recognise, understand and value the importance of our land resources, and where our plans and decisions about land use deliver improved and enduring benefits, enhancing the well-being of our nation”

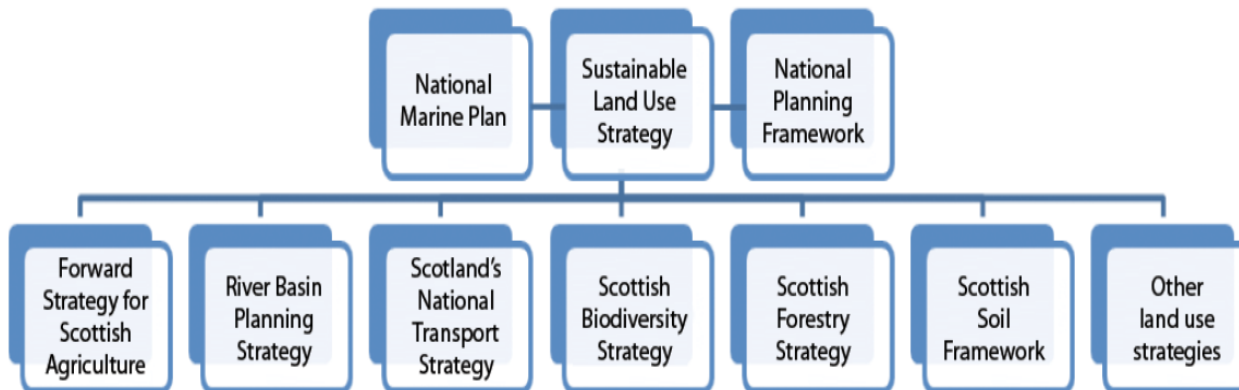
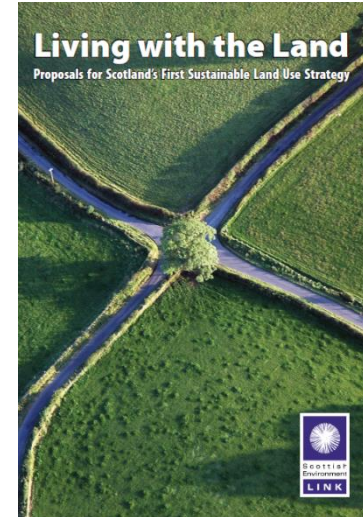


Figure 3 Relationships Between the SLUS and Other Strategies

Towards a Land Strategy for Northern Ireland



GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The report identifies 10 guiding principles that should inform decision making:

- A) Land should be recognised as multi-functional and opportunities for deriving multiple benefits should be encouraged and incentivised.
- B) Regulation should protect essential public interests whilst avoiding placing an onerous burden on businesses and landowners.
- C) Where land is highly suitable for a key primary function (e.g. food production, flood management, tourism and recreation, carbon storage), this function should be recognised in decision-making.
- D) Different ecosystems provide different benefits, albeit they are not discrete entities existing in isolation from each other. It is important to recognise that decisions by individual land managers can have implications at a broader scale which can affect delivery of those benefits.
- E) Decisions regarding land use and management can have dramatic impacts on landscape quality and character, including its cultural history and endowment; decisions must therefore respect the vulnerability of landscapes to change and the deep cultural sensitivities around land.
- F) The opportunities and threats posed by climate change must be central to decisions about how land is used in order to contribute effectively to climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- G) Derelict, vacant or underused land represents a missed economic, social and environmental opportunity, and in some cases an environmental hazard; its utilisation and/or stewardship should be prioritised and incentivised whilst respecting that some land has inherent value in its undeveloped nature.
- H) Where agreed, responsible access to land and provision of green and historic spaces and places for outdoor recreation should be encouraged to deliver health & well-being and opportunities for tourism.
- I) There is a need for greater awareness of, and engagement from, wider civil society in land-related matters; this will promote a broadly based and inclusive approach to policy and decision-making.
- J) Adequate designations, management arrangements and resources should be provided to protect and enhance Northern Ireland's most precious landscapes and sustainably develop their potential to deliver economic and social benefit.

PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATION

To progress the planning, development and implementation of a Land Strategy for Northern Ireland from 2016, for implementation in 2020.

Vision

“Land and landscapes managed to deliver well-being and prosperity, respecting the views of communities, groups and individuals, striving for environmental excellence, and taking advantage of the multiple functions of land”

Towards a Land Strategy for Northern Ireland

- Cross-party support received
- Flagship policy of the new Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DEARA)
- Complex policy to develop
- Good governance key, bottom-up participatory approach
- Draw on Scottish and RoI experience but tailored to NI circumstances
- Cross-sectoral and cross-Departmental input
- Raising the public consciousness around land-related matters

‘When land is degraded, its people and their prospects are degraded too’ (Monique Barbut)