



# Scotland's Landscape Charter

## Five Year Action Plan 2026-2031

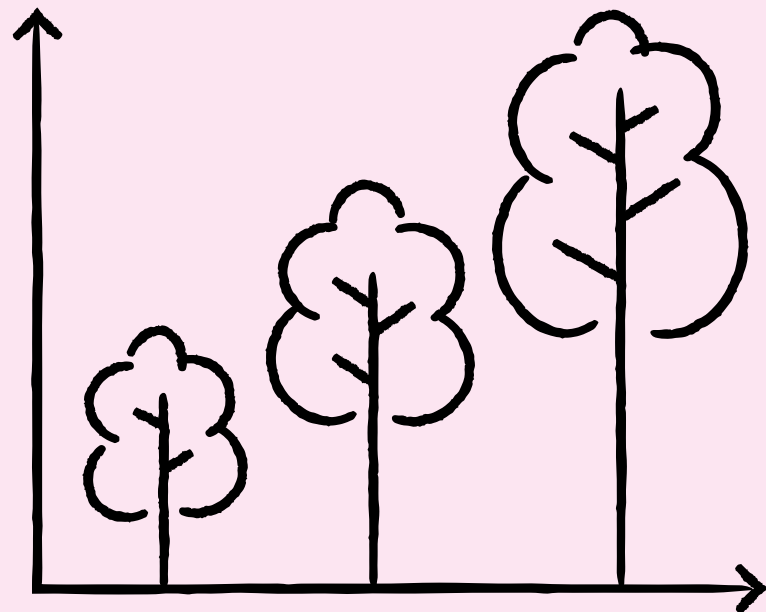
**Scotland's Landscape Charter was launched in June 2025 and highlights the vital contribution of Scotland's landscapes to our lives in terms of our health and wellbeing, climate resilience, nature and biodiversity as well as our economy. The launch coincided with the 25th anniversary of the European Landscape Convention (ELC), the first international treaty dedicated to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe.**

**The Charter and its Action Plan is a mechanism to demonstrate Scotland's significant value and distinctiveness within the UK's commitment to the ELC recognising that all landscapes matter and that they provide an essential shared resource from which everyone should benefit.**

# Purpose of the SLA

The aim of Scotland's Landscape Alliance (SLA) is to collaborate to raise awareness of the importance of Scotland's landscapes to climate resilience and biodiversity, our economic performance and public health and wellbeing. In doing this, we want to gain public and political support for the better care of Scotland's landscapes and places to maximise future benefits.

The SLA works within the remit of its vision and three objectives.



## SLA Vision

Our vision is a Scotland where the benefits of landscape are recognised and strengthened to support delivery of Scotland's National Outcomes, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the principles of the European Landscape Convention.

# Our Objectives

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- 1. An updated regulatory and policy framework that is joined-up in its approach, ensuring the potential of landscape and place to deliver multi-functional benefits to people and our ecosystems, across every area of public policy.**

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- 2. Increased understanding and heightened awareness with stakeholders and the public of the values and challenges facing Scotland's landscapes.**

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- 3. A reinvigorated and connected landscape community acting as a landscape forum able to offer expertise and skills to support positive action on landscape matters.**

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# How the plan was developed

Valuing and taking responsibility for Scotland's landscapes requires a collaborative approach amongst all organisations and people involved in matters that impact on them. This Charter Action Plan has been prepared by the SLA landscape community offering their broad range of expertise and skills to support embedding the Charter into everyday action.

The development of the plan follows on from the annual SLA landscape community event held in October 2025 and the subsequent focussed input from a short term working group in early 2026 who refined the main themes and the associated high-level set of actions. A further second tier of actions were identified. These are included on SLA website which researchers can use as a reference point for work or can be drawn on in future iterations of the action plan.

The plan also links with the NatureScot and Historic Environment Scotland joint 'People Place and Landscape Statement' and its refreshed Action Plan, that sets out the vision and approach for managing change in Scotland's landscape, and which will also support the implementation of the Charter.

# The Action Plan Themes



## **1. Connected, multifunctional and changing landscapes**

All landscapes matter – they reflect how we live and work in and on the land. Actions here aim to support coordinated policy and practice to ensure we take a landscape-focused approach through continuity and change.

### **SLA Objective**

*An updated regulatory and policy framework that is joined up in its approach, ensuring the potential of landscape and place to deliver multi-functional benefits to people and our ecosystems, across every area of public policy.*

### **SLA Objective**

*Increased understanding and heightened awareness with stakeholders and the public of the values and challenges facing Scotland's landscapes.*

## **2. A clear narrative**

Our landscapes are integral to our identity, reflecting our shared past and our connection to the land. These actions will help us to raise the importance of landscape and the role of the SLA with all stakeholders and share the many stories of Scotland's people in their place, now and for the future.

## **3. Community participation and agency**

People live in and with landscapes. These steps will help communities to take action for their place and celebrate the excellence in the everyday.

#### 4. Collaboration and connections

By acting as a convenor, connect stakeholders (including all organisations and communities that impact on or engage with landscape at a local, regional and national scale) and develop shared approaches to landscape-thinking. Actions here will inspire collaboration, build connected stakeholder networks and support best practice.

#### 5. Training and skills

These actions will support good planning, thoughtful design and the skills to make lasting change in our landscapes.

#### 6. Data & monitoring

Evidence is critical to the process – helping us to understand what is working well and where we need to take action. These actions cut across seven themes and help to underpin and embed success.

#### 7. Resources

We can all take action. Success depends on people giving what time they can, but it can also be secured through contributions of other resources, which can be financial or in-kind.

#### SLA Objective

*A reinvigorated and connected landscape community acting as a landscape forum able to offer expertise and skills to support positive action on landscape matters.*

# How we will deliver the plan

Our intent is to deliver this five year Action Plan between 2026 to 2031 and which encompasses the 30th anniversary of the ELC in 2030.

Some actions are time bound, others are annual (like the hosting of the SLA annual landscape community event ) or continuous (like the development and promotion of good practice case studies).

The Executive Committee will lead some actions but would encourage other organisations or individuals who have the time and expertise to come forward to lead actions too. In this way we will be able to achieve more to safeguard Scotland's landscapes. If there is a topic area you are particularly interested in, please get in touch with the SLA Co-Chairs via [info@scotlandslandscapealliance.org](mailto:info@scotlandslandscapealliance.org)

Where required, short-term working groups will be established to progress actions enabling contributors to engage on time-limited specific tasks. In this way, we would hope to engage as many people (in their professional or personal capacities) from across as many relevant sectors as possible in our activities.

The plan will remain flexible to enable actions to be accelerated if funding, external leadership or additional support becomes available. We will use our networking capacities and our monitoring and reporting processes to ensure changes to the plan 'in year' are timely and relevant.

The SLA annual event will be a key point in the year both to report on progress and to explore next steps and emerging work areas.

## Timeframe and priorities

The action plan indicates the timeframe for completing actions within the five year lifespan of the plan and are highlighted as short, medium and long term. It also sets out where the SLA will play a leading role and where the expertise of the rest of the landscape community will be required to support or lead an action.

The SLA Executive Committee, with input from the action plan working group, agreed and announced the initial areas of focus at the plan launch in June 2026 which can be found at [scotlandslandscapealliance.org/the-charter/action-plan](https://scotlandslandscapealliance.org/the-charter/action-plan). As the plan life span progresses the findings from the SLA annual event will be used to shape priorities for the following year. These will be reported at the beginning of the following year in February/March.

## Monitoring and reporting on progress

The Action Plan will be available to all on the SLA website and the Executive Committee will review progress quarterly at its regular meetings.

The SLA website news section and social media channels will be used to disseminate the results of ongoing actions to professional and wider networks including new case studies, press releases or the findings of short-term working groups.

The wider SLA landscape community will be updated on progress at the annual event.

The SLA will publish an annual monitoring and progress report on the status of the plan along with our current year's priorities on the Charter section of the SLA website.

# Annex 1: Scotland's Landscape Charter – Action Plan (page 1 of 2)

**KEY**      **Timeframe for Delivery:**  
 S – Short-term: 0–12 months  
 M – Medium-term: 1–3 years  
 L – Long-term: 3–5+ years

**Lead:**  
 SLA EC – SLA Executive Committee  
 Landscape Community WG – working group of landscape community with SLA EC support

**Status:**  
 Refer to the annual update:  
[scotlandslandscapealliance.org/the-charter/action-plan/](https://scotlandslandscapealliance.org/the-charter/action-plan/)

	Themes / Action	Lead	Timeframe for delivery
<b>Obj. 1</b>	<b>An updated regulatory and policy framework that is joined-up in its approach, ensuring the potential of landscape and place to deliver multi-functional benefits to people and our ecosystems, across every area of public policy</b>		
	<b>Connected, multifunctional and changing landscapes</b>		
<b>1</b>	Review and update SLA 2019 research to generate an overview of landscape-related policies in Scotland and identify any significant gaps in relation to the Charter & priority areas for the SLA.	SLA EC	S
<b>2</b>	Influence the development of more supportive national and local policy and programmes through promoting understanding of the Landscape Charter and the actions required to deliver it.	SLA EC	M-L
<b>3</b>	Establish a short-term working group with a focus on resilience to identify drivers of landscape change and impacts at range of scales and recommend appropriate mitigation or adaption actions to manage change.	Landscape Community WG	M
<b>4</b>	Establish a short-term working group to consider the assessment of landscape quality and input/collaborate with others currently working in this area to support delivery of the Charter.	Landscape Community WG	M-L
<b>5</b>	Establish a short-term working group to explore guidance for a landscape thinking approach to land management across all scales to support integrated, place-based landscape management and decision-making.	Landscape Community WG	M-L
<b>Obj. 2</b>	<b>Increased understanding and heightened awareness with stakeholders and the public of the values and challenges facing Scotland's landscapes</b>		
	<b>Develop a Clear Narrative</b>		
<b>6</b>	Update SLA research and questions from 2019 and develop a clear consistent narrative about the value of all landscapes.	SLA EC	S
<b>7</b>	Collate All Landscapes Matter case studies across all sectors, scales and geographies demonstrating the value of landscapes and how the Charter can support further positive action.	SLA EC	S-L
<b>8</b>	Explore existing story telling initiatives through a landscape lens – consider how SLA can support telling of stories, lived experience and knowledge at local scale and develop into case studies.	SLA EC	S-L
	<b>Community Participation and Agency</b>		
<b>9</b>	Connect with urban and rural communities, including young people and those currently underserved and underrepresented in landscape matters, through existing NGOs and community organisations, and map groups (of place or sector)	SLA EC	S-M
<b>10</b>	Establish a short-term working group to review existing guidance around engagement in the outdoors. Develop specific content to promote the Charter and support the value of landscape-focused and volunteering action / management for communities.	Landscape Community WG	M-L
<b>11</b>	Establish a short-term working group to review the need for and develop landscape-led guidance for local place plans	Landscape Community WG	M

## Annex 1: Scotland's Landscape Charter – Action Plan (page 2 of 2)

	Themes / Action	Lead	Timeframe for delivery
Obj. 3	<b>A reinvigorated and connected landscape community acting as a landscape forum able to offer expertise and skills to support positive action on landscape matters.</b>		
	<b>Collaboration and Connections</b>		
12	Develop an Advocacy and Comms Plan across all sectors including government for 2026–2030 to support the value of all landscapes and promote the Charter.	SLA EC	S–M
13	Conduct a stakeholder mapping exercise and develop an engagement strategy to identify key organisations/communities where knowledge of the Charter and the SLA is most urgently needed, including those hard to reach.	SLA EC	S–M
14	Connect with key stakeholders to both broaden the SLA network and understand issues where different sectors require more support on landscape matters.	SLA EC	M–L
15	Host an Annual SLA event to engage the forum members focussed on work plan priorities.	SLA EC	S–L
16	Speak at /attend stakeholder events to promote the SLA and the Landscape Charter to new audiences.	SLA EC	S–L
	<b>The following themes are cross cutting, and the SLA would seek to collaborate with others that currently lead in these areas and provide input to support positive action on landscape matters</b>		
	<b>Training and Skills</b>		
17	Liaise with the Improvement Service to explore if landscape issues and guidance can be developed for Scottish-based MPs, MSPS and locally elected Councillors.	SLA EC	S
18	Host a short-term specialist working group to identify how the SLA can best promote the benefits of having a diverse, well-trained and educated, and properly paid skills base covering policy, planning, design and management of landscapes and natural resources.	Landscape Community WG	L
	<b>Data and Monitoring</b>		
19	Undertake a desk-based review to explore existing data and tools that can help to monitor landscape outcomes that help deliver the Charter. Then agree any follow up action.	Landscape Community WG	M–L
	<b>Resources</b>		
20	Advocate for the necessary resources, commitment and action from Government, key stakeholders, partners and others to deliver the Landscape Charter	Landscape Community WG	M–L



Scotland's Landscape Charter has been endorsed by the Scottish Government, NatureScot, Historic Environment Scotland, Scottish Land Commission and Architecture and Design Scotland