

Evaluation of the Regional Land Use Framework Pilots



AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND MARINE

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Bill Kirkup (CAG Consultants)
Tim Maiden (CAG Consultants)
Chris Little (Carvetii Project Services)

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Executive Summary

In 2013, the Scottish Government established two regional land use framework pilot projects to test the practicality of preparing regional land use frameworks as a means of guiding 'local' decision making. The aim of the project was to:

'pilot a mechanism which considers existing and future land uses in a collective and integrated way, and to establish a means to prioritise or guide decisions so as to optimise the use of the land, and to resolve competition or conflicts relating to land use change'¹

The pilots were established in Aberdeenshire and the Scottish Borders and led by the respective local authorities. The development of each pilot was guided by a three stage programme specification (provided by the Scottish Government), but were allowed to develop an approach which best reflected their local circumstances. The pilot projects concluded in March 2015. It is intended that the pilots' experience will inform the 2016 review of the Land Use Strategy.

Each stage of the pilots' development was subject to external evaluation and the insights from this activity have been used to inform this final report. The evaluation was intended to assess both the processes followed in the development and management of the pilots and the final project outputs. More specifically the Scottish Government required that the evaluation review the pilots' activities against a set of pre-agreed criteria. It is important to note that the evaluation did not seek to identify a 'right' or 'wrong' way to deliver a regional framework. Rather the aim was to learn from how two projects, with different local circumstances, might approach the challenges posed by the project brief. Both projects produced a GIS based mapping tool, but the Aberdeenshire pilot opted not to produce a formal regional land use framework, but instead produced a high level 'issues and opportunities' report. The Scottish Borders pilot did produce a framework document.

Evaluation activity included desk based assessments of project outputs and a series of facilitated workshops and interviews with project stakeholders and project teams.

¹ Scottish Government (2013, Unpublished) Project Specification. Regional Land Use Framework Pilots. Scottish Government (p2)

Key Findings

The evaluation found that:

- The approach of the pilots and their final outputs, were found to be largely consistent with the ten LUS Principles for Sustainable Land Use and to take account of relevant national and regional policy.
- The pilots found the scope of the project brief to be extremely challenging owing to the complexity of the issues, the potential for tension between different sectoral interests, the sensitivity of the land use agenda and the required timescale of production. These issues played a significant role in dictating the pilots' approaches to the delivery of the brief.
- Both pilots noted concerns that the projects might be perceived as attempting to impose land use decisions upon local stakeholders. In practice both focused on the development of tools designed to improve local/regional land use decision-making and ensured that this was clearly communicated to stakeholders.
- Stakeholder engagement posed some challenges for the pilots. Both established 'core' stakeholder groups and these played an important role in informing the development of the pilots. Engagement with groups and individuals beyond this core group was identified as a potential project risk by Aberdeenshire - owing to the associated time and resource requirements. In response the pilot confined activity to two local focus group areas (3 workshops in each), this restricted approach attracted some criticism from stakeholders. The Scottish Borders pilot opted to run an extensive programme of engagement activity across six sub-catchment areas. This generated a high level of participation, but proved to be more resource intensive than anticipated.
- Stakeholder feedback from both pilots included concerns about the perceived absence or low level of engagement from some stakeholder groups, including recreation, health, tourism and non-land management rural businesses. Some stakeholders (from both pilots) also expressed the view that farmer engagement had been low, although this contradicted evidence from the Scottish Borders pilot which reported a significant level of farmer participation in their engagement programme. Several reasons for a lack of engagement with the identified groups were proposed, including the lack of a clear incentive to engage, the theoretical nature of the exercise and potentially the language used. In the case of land owner / agricultural interests it was suggested that stakeholders may have chosen to prioritise engagement in other policy

consultations (e.g. CAP reform) over involvement in the pilots.

- Stakeholder interviews provided evidence that both pilots were viewed positively with respondents reporting that overall they (the pilots) had taken an effective and reasonable approach to the development and management of what was perceived as a challenging brief.
- There was evidence from both pilots that the projects had generated benefits for participants, most notably in the form of new and improved relations between organisations who had not previously collaborated on land management issues. There was also some evidence that the pilots will generate future benefits.
- The concept of a more regional approach to land use decision-making was welcomed and endorsed by stakeholders. There was though some uncertainty as to the most effective spatial area for an ecosystems led approach and both pilots indicated that there was a need to be able to accommodate a multi-scale approach. The Scottish Borders pilot reported that a key learning point from their project was that the sub-catchment area was the preferred scale for stakeholders at the 'local' scale.
- There was cautious optimism that the pilots have potential for beneficial impact, tempered with caution that much more development work is required and that great care is needed on how the frameworks are developed. Stakeholders reported that the pilots represented a useful start, but observed that the future direction of national policy would play a key role in determining future success.

SECTION A: Introduction

This report describes an evaluation of two regional land use framework pilot projects; it includes coverage of the background to the evaluation, the methodological approach, findings and key conclusions. The evaluation considered the process by which the regional frameworks were developed and the evidence for their actual and potential impact. It was undertaken by CAG Consultants (CAG) on behalf of the Scottish Government and is intended to help inform the 2016 review of the Land Use Strategy (LUS).

This chapter sets out a brief introduction and context to the aims and objectives of the pilots and the evaluation. Chapter 2 describes the evaluation methodology. Chapter 3 sets out the main findings and Chapter 4 the conclusions.

1.1 Background to the Regional Land Use Framework Pilots

The first LUS for Scotland (Scottish Government, 2011) sets out an agenda for sustainable land use in Scotland. Its aim is to guide and support decision-making with a view to maximising its contribution to sustainable economic growth. The overall objectives of the LUS are:

- Land based businesses working with nature to contribute more to Scotland's prosperity.
- Responsible stewardship of Scotland's natural resources delivering more benefits to Scotland's people.
- Urban and rural communities better connected to the land, with more people enjoying the land and positively influencing land use.

To test and evaluate the practicality of operationalising the LUS approach at the local scale, the Scottish Government established two regional land use framework pilots. It was decided that these should be local authority led and Aberdeenshire Council and the Scottish Borders Council were invited to lead. The regional land use framework pilot concept was developed to complement existing local forestry-centred pilots, in Dumfries and Galloway, Caithness and Sutherland, and Cowal, and address the full range of relevant land uses in accordance with a recommendation by the Woodland Expansion Advisory Group (WEAG).

Aims and objectives

The aims of the pilots were:

- To trial a mechanism which considers existing and future land uses in a collective and integrated way, with a view to optimising the use of the land.
- To establish a mechanism to prioritise or guide decisions about possible competing or conflicting uses.

The objective was to produce a regional land use framework in each pilot area, which would facilitate decision-making in the delivery of policies, strategies and objectives in relation to integrated land use.

The project specification for the pilots² stated that they were required to produce a Regional Land Use Framework for their locality which:

- Reflected Scottish Government policies relevant to land use.
- Had regard to the ten Principles for Sustainable Land Use contained within the LUS and supports the delivery of its Objectives and Vision.
- Expressed regional/local policies relevant to land use.
- Contained sufficient detail to enable grant funding decisions to be made e.g. for Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) funding.
- Considered all major land uses in the relevant area.
- Provided clarity for decision-makers on the opportunities and constraints within a given area.
- Were prepared in partnership with all locally relevant land use sectors and had been consulted upon.
- Took an ecosystems approach.
- Would be a meaningful tool in guiding decisions about land management, land use change and funding.
- Could take account of changing circumstances and the cumulative impacts of land use change.

The pilots ran from April 2013 to March 2015. In accordance with the project specification, each pilot had three stages of activity:

² Scottish Government (2013, Unpublished), Project Specification. Regional Land Use Framework Pilots.

1. Baseline Mapping.
2. Identification of constraints and opportunities.
3. Production of the Framework.

Project governance structures were established in order to manage the pilot process and provide mechanisms for input and steering by a range of key stakeholders (Appendix 1).

1.2 Evaluation research objectives

The Scottish Government stated research objectives for the evaluation were as follows:

- a) To examine and provide evidence on whether there is a role for a 'regional' land use mechanism in guiding land use decisions to meet the overall outcomes of the Land Use Strategy.
- b) To examine the extent to which pilot regional frameworks meet the brief (as provided to the pilots) and to identify strengths, weaknesses and good practice in the pilot regional frameworks.
- c) To examine and provide evidence on whether the process by which the regional frameworks was developed in the pilot areas was appropriate and effective.
- d) To provide evidence on whether the regional frameworks have the potential to make a positive impact on land use decision-making in the local areas.
- e) To provide evidence and views from responsible organisations and stakeholders in the pilot areas on whether the benefits of the regional land use mechanism policy are likely to justify the costs and resources required by the pilot authorities in making it.
- f) To provide evidence on whether the regional frameworks have made a difference to land use decision making in the local areas and assisted in meeting the objectives of the national Land Use Strategy. (This work is provisionally scheduled for the autumn of 2016).

1.3 Evaluation research questions

Following discussion with the Scottish Government and the pilots, the research objectives were re-framed as a series of key research questions, which were:

- Was the process for the establishment and management of the pilot regional frameworks effective?
- To what extent do the regional frameworks meet the requirements set out by the Scottish Government?
- Do the regional frameworks have the potential to make a positive impact on land use decision-making in the local areas?
- How are the frameworks perceived by stakeholders and what lessons have been learned?
- Do the benefits of the regional land use mechanism policy justify the costs and resources required?
- Is there a role for a regional land use mechanism in guiding land use decisions to meet the outcomes of the LUS; and if so, what can be learned about the best geographical scale for such an approach?

These questions were then used to inform the development of an evaluation plan which guided all subsequent evaluation activity.

2. Evaluation Methodology

2.1 Overview of Approach

The evaluation process began in September 2013, with an inception meeting involving CAG Consultants, the project leads from the pilot areas and representatives from the Scottish Government. Following this meeting, a detailed evaluation plan was prepared and agreed with the Scottish Government in January 2014. The evaluation plan set out a primarily qualitative approach, with a focus on process evaluation. Over the course of the evaluation, the following methods were used to gather data and information:

- Desk-based research and analysis of project documentation.
- Semi-structured interviews with pilot project managers and boards.
- Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders.
- Facilitated workshops.

The research was comprised of 4 evaluation stages.

Table 1: Project evaluation stages

Evaluation stage	Activity
Evaluation Stage 1 (completed May 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation plan design • Policy mapping and baseline recording • Board meeting attendance • Stakeholder telephone interviews • Stage 1 Interim report
Evaluation Stage 2 (completed October 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of project documentation • Stakeholder mapping • Board meeting attendance • Stage 2 Interim report
Evaluation Stage 3 (completed March 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops with project management teams • Workshops with key stakeholders • Supplementary telephone interviews with stakeholders • Stage 3 Workshop reports
Evaluation Stage 4 (completed May 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk top review • Clarification telephone interviews with pilot project staff • Final report

2.2 Evaluation Methods

2.2.1 Desk-based research

Desk-based research was undertaken throughout the evaluation. As part of stage 1 of the evaluation a member of the research team worked with the pilots to develop a database of stakeholders in each area. The database comprised the local authority staff involved, land managers (private, public

and third sector), policy makers, user groups (recreational and other special interest groups) and local communities.

This database was subsequently revised (in stages 2 and 3) and updated to produce a database of all of the stakeholders that were involved during the development of the pilots. The database included:

- details of the individuals and organisations involved in the pilot and the nature of their engagement;
- the development stage at which individual stakeholders became involved with the pilot;
- identification of the primary interests of stakeholders; and
- an attempt to classify stakeholders on the basis of how their primary interest relates to the four forms of high-level ecosystem services.

During stage 2, a desk exercise was initiated to record all of the main outputs of the pilots (e.g. reports, stakeholder events) from inception through to the conclusion of the pilot framework development process in March 2015. This product record was prepared as an Excel database and used to identify products and content particularly relevant to the research questions. This record is presented in table form in Appendix 2 of this report.

A final desk research exercise was undertaken in evaluation stage 4 with this being focused on a review of the final reports and GIS tools produced by the pilots, together with other relevant documentation as required to address the research questions.

2.2.2 Semi-structured Interviews with Stakeholders

In stage 1, CAG research team members undertook a series of telephone interviews with stakeholders using a questionnaire designed to explore attitudes, expectations, perceived risks and concerns at an early stage of the pilots' work. The questionnaire was agreed with the Scottish Government and the two pilot projects.

The interviews included a set of questions and statements with multiple choice response options (e.g. strongly agree to strongly disagree) enabling a categorisation of responses (see Appendix 3). The survey also gave the opportunity for respondents to explain and elaborate on their multiple choice responses in their own words, providing further information on attitudes, expectations and experiences of the pilots by respondents.

Each telephone interview lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour, with the interviewer taking notes during the conversation.

The original intention was to interview between 25 and 30 stakeholders in each pilot area. However, in practice, it was only possible to identify 21

potential interviewees in Aberdeenshire and 28 in the Borders. All of the identified stakeholders were invited to participate in the evaluation of the pilots; 20 from Aberdeenshire and 21 from the Borders agreed to be interviewed. Interviews took place between 12th February and 14th March 2014.

2.2.3 Facilitated Workshops

Over the course of the project CAG staff attended a number of meetings involving project management staff and other key stakeholders (including representatives from wildlife, forestry, agriculture, environmental bodies). It had originally been intended that the evaluation would involve a series of stand-alone workshops, but in practice it was decided that this would prove impractical owing to the additional time demand it would impose on project staff and in particular stakeholders. Consequently it was agreed that researchers would look to ‘piggyback’ their sessions either before, after or as part of the regular programme of meetings being run by the two pilots.

During stage 2 of the evaluation, team members attended meetings with the two pilot steering boards in Aberdeenshire on the 25th September in 2014, and in the Scottish Borders on 6th October 2014.

In addition to observing the meetings, the researcher was provided with an opportunity to probe key points and issues arising and to pose a series of questions to board members. These questions were pre-agreed with the Scottish Government, and the pilots advised of the questions in advance (see Appendix 4 for further details).

Following the board meetings, the project leads were able to make themselves available for more in-depth discussion. Project leads subsequently also provided additional commentary and clarification via email and over the telephone.

In stage 3 of the evaluation two workshop sessions were held in each of the pilot areas. These took place on the 5th March 2015 (Scottish Borders) and 20th March 2015 (Aberdeenshire). The first workshop was restricted to members of the project management team (those involved in day to day operational activity or project oversight), the second was attended either by members of the project board (in the case of Aberdeenshire – this includes local authority and external stakeholders responsible for strategic oversight) or members of the pilot’s key stakeholder group (in the Scottish Borders – representatives of various land management interests who acted as a key reference group)³.

Each workshop session focused on three headline topics and related sets of sub-questions (see Appendix 5). The questions were developed by CAG and

³ See Appendix 1 for further details.

informed by the Scottish Government; subsequently they were circulated by the pilots to enable participants to prepare for the sessions. The workshop questions were devised to generate insight in relation to the evaluation research questions and included a series of sub-questions relating to issues that emerged during the first and second rounds of the evaluation. Details of the questions can be found in Appendix 5.

The workshops were facilitated by CAG researchers and were run on an informal basis to encourage an open debate and exchange of views. Key discussion points were recorded by the facilitation team during the workshops and written up following the event. Owing to low attendance rates, particularly from amongst the private sector, researchers offered to hold semi-structured telephone interviews with representatives from the private sector, following the stakeholder workshop. The four participants in the telephone interviews were selected from lists of relevant stakeholders identified by the pilot project management teams.

2.3 Evaluation Risks and Challenges

The Evaluation Plan identified a number of risks for the evaluation, these are outlined below.

Stakeholder consultation fatigue

At the evaluation inception meeting, the pilots underlined the challenge they faced in managing and maintaining stakeholder engagement. In response, it was agreed that contact with stakeholders for the purposes of evaluation should be managed to ensure that the time burden was minimised. This was deemed to be critical, given the importance of stakeholder engagement to the pilot development process.

In practice, it was necessary to amend the Evaluation Plan several times to take account of the restricted availability of stakeholders.

- A proposal for first year evaluation workshops in the pilot areas was dropped. Instead, a telephone survey was conducted during stage 1 and members of the research team observed one pilot steering group meeting in each area.
- Workshops in stage 3 were supplemented by follow-up phone calls owing to the unavailability of some key stakeholders. This was necessary to strengthen input from the private sector.
- The original evaluation time plan was revised to better fit with pilot project plans. The timings of activities were adjusted so that meetings with stakeholders for evaluation purposes would coincide with established board and stakeholder meeting dates. Contact for evaluation purposes was planned to avoid times when consultations on

the frameworks were taking place so that the processes were not confused.

Short Timeframes

All parties recognised that the limited lifespan of the pilots meant that impact would be difficult to deliver and record. This risk was mitigated by an evaluation design that considered the potential for impact. However, as potential is inherently difficult to measure, the assessment of cost and benefit has largely been restricted to a descriptive exercise.

Potential for suppression of innovation

It was necessary that the pilots felt enabled to test and develop solutions to constraints and challenges, and were allowed the freedom to tackle challenging objectives for the partnership. For this reason, the evaluation was designed to avoid the perception of policing and the consequent risk of suppressing innovation.

SECTION B: Findings

This section comprises an evaluation of the pilots assessed against the key research questions:

Question 1: Was the process for the establishment and management of the pilot regional frameworks effective?

Question 2: To what extent do the regional frameworks meet the requirements set out by the Scottish Government?

Question 3: Do the regional frameworks have the potential to make a positive impact on land use decision-making in the local areas?

Question 4: How are the frameworks perceived by stakeholders and what lessons have been learned?

Question 5: Do the benefits of the regional land use mechanism policy justify the costs and resources required?

Question 6: Is there a role for a regional land use mechanism in guiding land use decisions to meet the outcomes of the Land Use Strategy and if so, what can be learnt about the best geographical scale for such a mechanism?

The evaluation considers both the process followed by the pilots and the principal final outputs (see below). In doing so, it draws on field research undertaken by CAG (and the associated reporting outputs) and a range of materials developed by the pilots themselves.

The final main documentary outputs considered by the evaluation were:

- Land Use Change Issues and Opportunities for Aberdeenshire Report and GIS tool⁴
- Scottish Borders Pilot Regional Land Use Framework document and GIS tool

⁴ The Aberdeenshire pilot produced an Issues and Opportunities report as opposed to a framework document. For the purposes of this evaluation it is viewed as a suitable proxy for a regional framework and has been assessed in the same way as the Scottish Borders framework document.

3. Process of establishing and managing the pilots

Research Question: Was the process for the establishment and management of the pilot regional frameworks effective?

The Scottish Government required that the pilots should be led by local authorities, but expected that they should involve the development of robust partnerships. As part of the Scottish Government's specification for the pilots the authorities were given the option to contract out some or all of the preparatory and delivery work.

This section considers the approach of the two pilots to the establishment and management of their projects. In particular it considers the issues of project management and stakeholder engagement.

3.1 Findings from the pilot areas

3.1.1 Approach to Project Management

As required by the Scottish Government, both of the pilots were local authority led. In both cases overall responsibility for delivery of the projects was assigned to a senior individual within each local authority, whilst dedicated project staff were appointed to lead on operational matters.

Aberdeenshire

Aberdeenshire Council appointed an existing member of staff to project manage the pilot (on a part time basis circa 2 days a week) and recruited a new full time project officer to undertake the day-to-day operation of their pilot. To support project delivery and to provide technical GIS support, a partnership arrangement was agreed with the James Hutton Institute (JHI). This took advantage of the expertise within the JHI and the fact that JHI were already involved in Scottish Government research on ecosystem services. In their final report to the Scottish Government, Aberdeenshire noted that this collaboration had been an important cornerstone of their work.

Scottish Borders

Scottish Borders Council (SBC) also opted to allocate operational responsibilities to an existing member of staff (the Ecology Officer) on a part-time basis, supported (also on a part-time basis) by a member of staff from the Tweed Forum. This relationship appears to have worked well and SBC noted that they would not have volunteered to run the pilot without the presence of the Tweed Forum. Professor Chris Spray of the University of Dundee (scientific advisor) and Environment Systems (GIS support) provided additional technical support.

The Borders pilot reported only one project management issue. This emerged in the stage 3 workshop, during which all members of the project management team noted that they had invested significantly more time in the project than had initially been anticipated. This had been accommodated on the basis that the project was a pilot; however it was reported that the demands of the pilot had impacted on the ability of the SBC project manager to undertake their other duties and that this has caused some internal (to SBC) issues. SBC noted that, if starting afresh, they would have appointed a full time project manager.

3.1.2 Stakeholder Engagement in Project Governance

Diagrams showing project governance structures are provided in Appendix 1. Both pilots involved external stakeholders in the governance of their projects.

Aberdeenshire

In the case of Aberdeenshire, the project management team reported to a project board. The board included representatives from Aberdeenshire Council, Cairngorms National Park Authority, ConFor, Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS), National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS), Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Environment LINK, Scottish Land and Estates, and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). Elected members were kept abreast of progress through regular reports to the Infrastructure Services Committee.

Several other bodies were involved in the pilot as non-board affiliates. These included Historic Scotland, Scottish Water, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) and the Scottish Government's Rural Payments and Inspectorate Division (SGRPID). During the final evaluation workshop, the project management team noted that they had found it challenging to secure the level of desired engagement from the non-board affiliates.

Scottish Borders

In the Scottish Borders, project governance was provided through a two-tier arrangement, the first of which was a small Project Team composed of staff from SBC and Tweed Forum, and Professor Chris Spray. The Project Team reported to a Project Board chaired by SBC's Project Executive and including Tweed Forum, University of Dundee, SBC's Forward Planning manager and with Scottish Government as observers. The Project Team was supported by a key stakeholder group (advisory group), whose membership included NFUS, Scottish Land and Estates, FCS, Southern Upland Partnership, RSPB, SNH, Buccleuch Estates, SEPA, Scotland's Rural College, Borders Forest Trust, the Tweed Foundation and an individual farmer member.

Over the course of the project, the key stakeholder group expanded to include representatives from the Scottish Government's Rural Payments and Inspections Division (SGRPID) and Historic Scotland. Both of these organisations had initially declined to participate in the pilot, but both reported

in the final evaluation workshop that they felt that their involvement in the project had been worthwhile.

3.1.3 Wider Stakeholder Engagement

Both pilots provided opportunities for wider stakeholder engagement, although there were marked differences in the scale of activity and the role that it played in shaping the projects.

Aberdeenshire

The approach to stakeholder engagement in Aberdeenshire was shaped by an awareness of the time intensive nature of engagement work; the project management team were keen to ensure that the overall project ran to schedule and therefore developed and ran a tightly defined programme of stakeholder engagement. This commenced with an introductory stakeholder event attended by 38 people in June 2013. Subsequent activity involved:

1. A series of three wider stakeholder workshops⁵; one following each key work stage (baseline mapping, identification of constraints and opportunities and production of the framework). During these workshops JHI presented pre-prepared materials which were then reviewed by workshop participants.
2. Six additional workshops were run in two local focus areas (LFAs) namely Huntly and Upper Deeside⁶. The LFA workshops differed from the review workshops in that participants were asked to focus on broad sets of questions (rather than to consider outputs from the pilots). Insight from the LFA workshops was then fed back into the pilot development process.

A review of the lists of workshop participants shows that the review workshops were almost exclusively attended by representative bodies (as opposed to individuals representing individual commercial enterprises or communities) with public sector representatives being numerically dominant. Many of the same representative individuals / organisations also participated in the LFA workshops, but these also included some individuals representing local business and community interests, particularly in the Huntly LFA.

The pilot's approach to stakeholder engagement attracted some criticism from the participants in the first wider stakeholder workshop, where it was noted that:

⁵ The pilot also organised a fourth workshop for land use practitioners from outside of Aberdeenshire.

⁶ Upper Deeside was an existing JHI research site. Huntly was chosen by participants in the first review workshop based on a list of criteria agreed during the workshop.

‘There needs to be a greater engagement with a wider range of stakeholders in this early stage of work, particularly with local communities and landowners/managers.’⁷

The validity of this point was acknowledged by the pilot at the time and is also reported within the lessons learned section of their final report, where it was noted:

‘With hindsight, stakeholders should have been involved to a greater extent in decisions to focus work.’⁸

Scottish Borders

In the Scottish Borders the decision was made to appoint a dedicated staff resource (via Tweed Forum) to develop and lead a project specific stakeholder engagement programme. This was guided by a stakeholder facilitation and action plan, developed by the Tweed Forum in November 2013.

A programme of workshops was central to the engagement plan. These focused on 6 sub-catchment communities, it having been considered impractical to undertake detailed community engagement across the whole of the Scottish Borders. The 6 study areas were selected to represent a variety of the key land uses within the Scottish Borders – from intensive lowland arable systems through to upland sheep farming and forestry.

During the period from September to March 2014, two sets of workshops were run in each priority sub-catchment area (four in the Etrick and Yarrow sub-catchment). The aim of the first set of workshops was to introduce people to the pilot and to focus on key land use issues within each priority area and consider baseline ecosystem services. The second set of workshops used a series of ‘opportunity maps’ to facilitate stakeholder discussion on land use change and the opportunities, and constraints, for delivering ecosystem services. A third set of maps enabled discussion between stakeholders on the interaction between different land uses and ecosystem services

In total the pilot reported that 205 people participated in the workshops and that they had involved a representative cross section of society⁹. Attendance numbers were however described as disappointing¹⁰, as was the level of

⁷ Aberdeenshire Council (2013) Aberdeenshire Land Use Strategy Pilot: Stage 1 Report. Aberdeenshire Council (p. 9 para, 9.2)

⁸ Davidson J.; Birnie,I.; Irvine,R.J.; Gimona, A.; Blackstock,K.; Baggio, A; Byg, A.; Donnelly, D.; Somevi ,J.; Aalders,I.; Dunn,S.and Sample, J.(2015) Aberdeenshire Land Use Strategy Pilot: Final Report. Aberdeenshire Council (p. 25, para. 13.15)

⁹ Tweed Forum (2014) Consultation Report for Scottish Borders Council on the Tweed Forum-led Stakeholder Engagement (p. 12)

¹⁰ Ibid (p.52)

engagement with the farming community¹¹. It was also noted that there was a need to target the business, tourism and renewable energy sectors¹².

In addition, to the sub-catchment workshops the pilot ran four expert 'key stakeholder' workshops between June 2013 and March 2014. Project team members also attended a range of meetings (13 in total) run by external groups based in the pilot area, where they made presentations on the pilot and its aims and objectives. In a conversation with project staff from the Tweed Forum, it was noted that this approach was felt to be the most resource efficient method of engagement. Finally, pilot project staff participated in 23 one-to-one meetings with a wide range of key stakeholders.

Overall, the pilot reported that they felt that they had been successful in engaging the wider community (in the sub-catchment areas), NGOs, forestry and agricultural representative bodies.¹³ The approach, however, proved far more resource intensive than anticipated with the Tweed Forum noting that:

'One half of one full time staff post was estimated at the beginning of the process. The actual amount of Tweed Forum staff time dedicated was more than twice that.'¹⁴

It was also reported that, despite the level of resource investment, some groups had remained difficult to access, most notably the tourism and rural business sectors. Most stakeholders (in the final evaluation workshop, Scottish Borders) reported that they felt that farmers had not really engaged with the pilot process, the project management team noted (also in final workshop) that they would have liked to have seen greater farmer engagement, but observed that 297 of the 845 people who attended open meetings were farmers.

3.2 Summary

Both local authorities noted the key role of the expert project partners (Tweed Forum and JHI) in project development and delivery. They were seen as bringing technical expertise and capacity, credibility and (in the case of the Tweed Forum) an invaluable network of local contacts and potential partners.

There was significant overlap in the range of organisations involved in project governance in the two pilots. One noticeable point of difference is that there was greater evidence of local stakeholder engagement in the Scottish Borders pilot.

¹¹ Ibid (p.55)

¹² Ibid (p.12)

¹³ Ibid (p. 53)

¹⁴ Ibid (p. 55)

In comparison to the Scottish Borders, the Aberdeenshire pilot involved a smaller number of stakeholders representing a narrower range of interests. This reflects the fact that Aberdeenshire ran fewer stakeholder events and undertook less outreach work than the Scottish Borders pilot.

One suggested reason for this is that the Scottish Borders area hosts several active locally based initiatives, as well as the Tweed Forum itself. It was also reported (final evaluation workshop) that there is a strong tradition of partnership working in the Borders. The benefits of having a strong existing base on which to build the Borders pilot was reported by various stakeholders in each stage of the evaluation, and was reiterated by both SBC and members of the key stakeholder group in the stage 3 evaluation workshop. In contrast, the Aberdeenshire pilot area was reported as largely lacking this supporting infrastructure. It was therefore necessary to create a new partnership, the first step being engagement with the JHI.

One of the requirements of the Scottish Government was that a wide range of stakeholders be involved in the pilots. Whilst there is a clear record of external engagement, given the focus on pursuing an ecosystem approach, it might be argued that there are some notable absentees from the project board/key stakeholder groups; for example, dedicated representatives from tourism, recreation/leisure (non-traditional) and health. The pilots were aware of the potential value of including representatives from these areas and in some cases had attempted (albeit unsuccessfully) or had elected to involve them through their wider stakeholder engagement programmes.

Stakeholder engagement generated challenges for both pilot projects and their experiences offer some useful lessons for the future. The Scottish Borders pilot demonstrated the feasibility of engaging a wide range of stakeholders in the development of a local framework, and their cataloguing of the approach taken may prove useful to future projects. However, their approach was greatly enabled by the existence of strong local networks and carried a high resource cost.

In contrast, the light touch approach adopted by the Aberdeenshire pilot successfully allowed for a more rapid deployment of resources, but was criticised by some stakeholders, primarily for not allowing early engagement and influence in the shaping of the project – a criticism that was accepted by the pilot.

Both pilots reported difficulties in engaging some stakeholder groups. The reasons for this were not always provided, but some views were expressed in relation to farmers, a group that was identified as challenging by both pilots. A lack of clear tangible impacts/benefits was put forward (by two commercial land manager respondents) as a reason for the limited engagement of farmers with the Borders pilot. It was also noted that land owner / agricultural interests

may have chosen to prioritise engagement in other policy consultations (e.g. CAP reform) over involvement in the pilots.

An additional suggestion, also put forward by one of these respondents, was that the language of ecosystems services might represent a barrier, with commercial land managers seen as potentially dismissing the concept as 'woolly' or failing to appreciate how it might be relevant to their interests. The issue of language was also noted as an issue by stakeholders in the Aberdeenshire final evaluation workshop, who noted that they felt the terminology of ecosystems services made it difficult to engage with the health and recreation sectors.

A related suggestion made by some other stakeholders (Scottish Borders) was that they felt it had been difficult to engage wider stakeholders with the concept of ecosystem services. The project management team for the Aberdeenshire pilot expressed the view that

'Some stakeholders were not motivated to engage because the output of the pilot was not clear (felt to be theoretical).'

This observation was echoed by stakeholders who participated in the stage 3 evaluation workshop.

4. Extent to which the pilots met their requirements

Research Question: To what extent do the regional frameworks meet the requirements set out by the Scottish Government?

The Scottish Government's specification for the pilots included a list of ten requirements that each was expected to follow. Specifically the pilots were asked to produce a regional land use framework which:

- Reflects Scottish Government policies relevant to land use.
- Has regard to the ten Principles for Sustainable Land Use contained within the LUS and supports the delivery of its Objectives and Vision.
- Expresses regional/local policies relevant to land use.
- Contains sufficient detail to enable grant-funding decisions to be made (e.g. for SRDP funding).
- Considers all major land uses in the relevant area.
- Provides clarity for decision-makers on the opportunities and constraints within a given area.
- Has been prepared in partnership with all locally relevant land use sectors and has been consulted upon.
- Takes an ecosystems approach.
- Is a meaningful tool in guiding decisions about land management, land use change and funding.
- Can take account of changing circumstances and the cumulative impacts of land use change.

A summary response, explaining the extent to which each of these is considered as having been met, follows. Unless stated otherwise the responses are primarily based on the judgement of the evaluators, with this being based on a desk-based assessment of the core outputs from the pilots, namely the Land Use Change Issues and Opportunities report produced by Aberdeenshire, the Scottish Borders pilot Regional Land Use Framework and the GIS mapping products.

4.1 Findings from the pilot areas

4.1.1 Do the frameworks reflect Scottish Government policies relevant to land use?

Aberdeenshire

The Aberdeenshire pilot focused on what it described as five land use and environment themes namely:

- The low carbon economy.
- Sustainable food production.
- Sustainable water management.
- Halting biodiversity loss.
- Communities connected to the land.

Clear links were made between each theme and Scottish Government policy in these areas. The report and the GIS tool were presented as products that could be used by local/regional stakeholders to help frame debates concerning the implications of policy implementation and potential interactions between different policy objectives.

The report noted however that there were tensions between government policies¹⁵ relating to land use and that one future regional action should be to seek to reconcile and align these at the regional level.

Scottish Borders

As part of the development of the framework the pilot was required to map the policy drivers most relevant to the main ecosystem services within the SBC area. The framework document also makes reference to a wide range of Scottish Government policy relating to land management. This work highlights national policy to local decision makers and provides a mechanism for assessing the potential opportunities and constraints that might arise for a given objective.

It is important to note that the framework is not a strategy and did not look to set targets for the SBC area. Instead it is presented as a means of encouraging and better enabling readers to consider land use in a more holistic fashion with a view to helping:

‘People make better long-term decisions about land use, at a time of rapid environmental, economic and social change.’¹⁶

¹⁵ Aberdeenshire Council (2015), Land Use Change Issues and Opportunities for Aberdeenshire (2015). Aberdeenshire Council. (p.11, para 5.5)

¹⁶ Scottish Borders Council and Tweed Forum (2015) Scottish Borders Pilot Regional Land Use Framework (p.4)

In summary, as set out in the specification provided by the Scottish Government the framework does not attempt to direct land use in the SBC area instead it highlights and draws attention to the multiple policy objectives of the Scottish Government in relation to land management, and in doing so reflects the significance of these to the reader.

4.1.2 Do the frameworks have regard to the ten Principles for Sustainable Land Use contained within the LUS and support the delivery of its Objectives and Vision?

A description of the ten Principles for Sustainable Land Use, and an assessment of how the Aberdeenshire issues report and the Scottish Borders framework document and their GIS tools match against these, are contained in the following tables.

Aberdeenshire

Table 2: Assessment of Aberdeenshire pilot outputs against the Principles for Sustainable Land Use

LUS Principle	Assessment of the Aberdeenshire Issues and Options Paper Report and GIS tool
a) Opportunities for land use to deliver multiple benefits should be encouraged.	The report explores how changes in land use might deliver multiple benefits. When considering future actions it proposes that a more integrated and multi-functional approach to land management be explored within the area. The GIS tool enables users to explore how such benefits might best be attained.
b) Regulation should continue to protect essential public interests whilst placing as light a burden on businesses as is consistent with achieving its purpose. Incentives should be efficient and cost-effective.	The report does not address the issue of regulation, but suggests that a regional/local plan might have a role in influencing the use of public subsidy ¹⁷ .
c) Where land is highly suitable for a primary use (for example food production, flood management, water catchment management and carbon storage) this value should be recognised in decision-making.	The report encourages a multi-functional approach to land management, but recognises that it is often appropriate to identify and prioritise specific forms of land use function. For example woodland expansion was identified as a regional priority. The GIS tool allows users to prioritise through the use of an adjustable weighting function.

¹⁷ Aberdeenshire Council (2015), Land Use Change Issues and Opportunities for Aberdeenshire (2015). Aberdeenshire Council. (Page 25, para 10.6).

<p>d) Land use decisions should be informed by an understanding of the functioning of the ecosystems which they affect in order to maintain the benefits of the ecosystem services which they provide.</p>	<p>The report advocates that the Aberdeenshire region explore a more integrated approach to land use planning and management that takes better account of ecosystem services¹⁸. This is enabled via the GIS tool.</p>
<p>e) Landscape change should be managed positively and sympathetically, considering the implications of change at a scale appropriate to the landscape in question, given that all Scotland's landscapes are important to our sense of identity and to our individual and social wellbeing.</p>	<p>The report notes that there are a number of drivers of landscape change and that some level of change is inevitable. It suggests that such change should be guided to maximise economic and social benefit. In relation to woodland expansion, a priority issue for the pilot, it notes the potential for conflict between woodland and agricultural interests and highlights the role that the prototype GIS tool might play in helping to manage these.</p>
<p>f) Land-use decisions should be informed by an understanding of the opportunities and threats brought about by the changing climate. Greenhouse gas emissions associated with land use should be reduced and land should continue to contribute to delivering climate change adaptation and mitigation objectives.</p>	<p>The report contains several messages relating to the climate change agenda. In particular it advocates that 'Land based business in Aberdeenshire should plan more fully for climate change, considering options for both mitigation and adaptation'¹⁹. The GIS tool allows the user to explore how land use might change under a medium prediction for climate change.</p>
<p>g) Where land has ceased to fulfil a useful function because it is derelict or vacant, this represents a significant loss of economic potential and amenity for the community concerned. It should be a priority to examine options for restoring all such land to economically, socially or environmentally productive uses.</p>	<p>The report notes that the development of housing and infrastructure is a strong driver of land use change in Aberdeenshire²⁰. The issue of derelict land was not considered within the framework.</p>
<p>h) Outdoor recreation opportunities and public access to land should be encouraged, along with the provision</p>	<p>A key message of the report is that recreational access (in the wider landscape) has the potential to generate multiple benefits for society and this formed one of the key themes of the project. A</p>

¹⁸ Ibid (page 27, para RA 1).

¹⁹ Ibid (page13 para 6.0)

²⁰ Ibid (page10, para 4.31).

of accessible green space close to where people live, given their importance for health and well-being.	presumption in favour of access to publicly funded woodland was one suggestion ²¹ . The GIS tool automatically awards a higher positive weighting for the provision of recreational access to woodland.
i) People should have opportunities to contribute to debates and decisions about land use and management decisions which affect their lives and their future.	The report advocates the adoption of a more inclusive approach to rural land use management ²² , potentially via regional land use fora involving communities and other key stakeholders ²³ . The GIS tool could be used to help to facilitate debate on these issues for example through demonstrating the impact of different scenarios on issues such as landscape etc.
j) Opportunities to broaden our understanding of the links between land use and daily living should be encouraged.	The report makes reference to the potential benefits of securing greater understanding (within the general public) of land use ²⁴ and notes that the pilot explored this matter. It is not though explicitly encouraged in the document. The GIS tool could be used as a mechanism for communicating the potential impacts of landscape change.

The Issues and Opportunities report did not describe the LUS objectives or vision but noted the role of the pilot in embedding the LUS.

Scottish Borders

Table 3: Assessment of the Scottish Borders pilot outputs against the Principles for Sustainable Land Use

LUS Principle	Assessment of Scottish Borders Framework and GIS Tool
a) Opportunities for land use to deliver multiple benefits should be encouraged.	The SBC framework makes clear reference to the potential role of the framework in securing multiple benefits and encourages its use in local decision-making. The GIS tool enables users to explore how such benefits might best be attained.
b) Regulation should continue to protect essential public interests whilst placing as light a burden on businesses as is consistent with	The framework acknowledges the role of subsidy and regulation, but encourages a bottom up, voluntary and consensual, rather than top-down approach to land management.

²¹ Ibid (p.26, para 10.7).

²² Ibid (p.29, para RA3),

²³ Ibid (p.25, para 10.6)

²⁴ Ibid (p.8, para 4.23)

achieving its purpose. Incentives should be efficient and cost-effective.

c) Where land is highly suitable for a primary use (for example food production, flood management, water catchment management and carbon storage) this value should be recognised in decision-making.

The framework (and associated GIS) tool aims to assist users to consider the functionality of the wider landscape, a key aim is the promotion of multi-functionality however it recognises the need to identify and prioritise specific forms of service function when circumstances dictate (e.g. flood mitigation). The GIS tool weights data layers thereby identifying high value primary land uses.

d) Land use decisions should be informed by an understanding of the functioning of the ecosystems which they affect in order to maintain the benefits of the ecosystem services which they provide.

A core aim of the framework and the GIS tool is to promote recognition of the multi-faceted nature of land management and to better enable users to account for ecosystem services when making land use decisions. This is a foundation of the interaction and multiple benefit maps and opportunity maps, and maps presented for consultation as part of the final framework.

e) Landscape change should be managed positively and sympathetically, considering the implications of change at a scale appropriate to the landscape in question, given that all Scotland's landscapes are important to our sense of identity and to our individual and social wellbeing.

The framework notes a number of drivers for landscape change, but emphasises the opportunities and benefits for securing multiple benefits from the land and the need to avoid the dominance of any one form of land use at the expense of such benefits. The framework recognises the need for decision making to occur at different scales as appropriate to the issue being addressed - the GIS tool helps enable this.

f) Land-use decisions should be informed by an understanding of the opportunities and threats brought about by the changing climate. Greenhouse gas emissions associated with land use should be reduced and land should continue to contribute to delivering climate change adaptation and mitigation objectives.

The role of climate change as a driver of change is repeatedly referenced within the framework. The document emphasises the threats, but also the opportunities that mitigation activity might generate for land managers, for example flood mitigation and carbon sequestration. The framework and accompanying GIS tool allow for the identification of opportunities and threats and provide a mechanism for targeting interventions to maximise impact.

g) Where land has ceased to fulfil a useful function because it is derelict or vacant, this represents a significant loss of economic potential and

The framework notes the issue of development land but makes no reference to the use of derelict or vacant land. Development was not regarded as a major issue within the SBC area and one that is, in any event, dealt with through the statutory

<p>amenity for the community concerned. It should be a priority to examine options for restoring all such land to economically, socially or environmentally productive uses.</p>	<p>planning process and therefore outwith the remit of the pilot²⁵.</p>
<p>h) Outdoor recreation opportunities and public access to land should be encouraged, along with the provision of accessible green space close to where people live, given their importance for health and well-being.</p>	<p>The framework recognises the importance of outdoor recreation and the role of greenspace in delivering well being, and encourages consideration of how best this might be integrated with other forms of land use. The GIS tool provides a mechanism for enabling this.</p>
<p>i) People should have opportunities to contribute to debates and decisions about land use and management decisions which affect their lives and their future.</p>	<p>The framework is intended for use by a wide range of stakeholders including individuals and communities and is intended to better enable constructive debate between multiple stakeholders. The GIS tool could be used to help to facilitate debate on these issues for example through demonstrating the impact of different scenarios on issues such as landscape etc.</p>
<p>j) Opportunities to broaden our understanding of the links between land use and daily living should be encouraged.</p>	<p>The framework includes a recommended potential (there is no commitment to deliver) action to promote a better awareness of people's relationship with the land²⁶. The GIS tool could be used as a mechanism for communicating the potential impacts of landscape change</p>

The framework document described the LUS vision and strategy and noted the role of the framework as a mechanism for enabling the realisation of the LUS at the local level.

4.1.3 Do the frameworks express regional / local policies relevant to land use?

Aberdeenshire

The report was not intended to set strategic policy or strategy for Aberdeenshire. It makes some reference to relevant policies (principally planning documents), but the report does not advocate their adoption. Stakeholders involved in the stage 3 evaluation workshop noted that the pilot had aimed to avoid being prescriptive and emphasised that the tool was designed as an aid to decision-making.

²⁵ Scottish Borders Council and Tweed Forum (2015) Scottish Borders Pilot Regional Land Use Framework (p.8).

²⁶ Ibid (p.48).

Scottish Borders

In the stage 3 evaluation workshops both stakeholders and members of the project management team noted that in comparison to urban areas there was a relative absence of local/regional land use policy. Local/regional policy interrelationships were considered within the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). This identified a need to consider woodland strategy and this had been done. Issues covered by statutory planning, such as housing and renewables, were largely excluded on the basis that these were covered as statutory issues and as such their inclusion in the framework might generate confusion in the minds of stakeholders and consultees. Overall the framework was considered to be a mechanism to reconcile public policy rather than to express it, and the framework does not attempt to set strategic policy or strategy for the SBC area.

4.1.4 Do the frameworks contain sufficient detail to enable grant funding decisions to be made (e.g. for SRDP funding)?

Aberdeenshire

The pilot reported that the GIS tool does not operate at a sufficiently high resolution to allow for detailed site based targeting such as might be required for many grant aided schemes (e.g. SRDP). It does however allow for broad scale targeting and the report suggests that this would be useful for targeting areas for woodland expansion²⁷. In most instances however use of the tool would need to be supplemented by more detailed site-specific investigations.

Scottish Borders

The Tweed Forum (in the final project management team workshop) expressed the view that the maps developed by the pilots were more sophisticated than those used by the SRDP and could therefore be used to inform grant decision-making. Participants in the final stakeholder workshop were less sure with some suggesting that further development was required and others stating that until it had been trialed it was difficult to offer a view.

4.1.5 Do the frameworks consider all major land uses in the relevant area?

Aberdeenshire

The report considers a wide range of rural land use issues. Stakeholder participants in the stage 3 evaluation workshop however noted that they felt that upland issues had been insufficiently addressed.

The focus of the GIS companion tool was restricted to the issue of native broadleaved woodland expansion, although it included a consideration of other land uses in order to enable consideration of interactions between woodland and other land use types.

²⁷ Aberdeenshire Council (2015), Land Use Change Issues and Opportunities for Aberdeenshire (2015). Aberdeenshire Council (p.18).

Scottish Borders

The SBC framework also considered a wide range of land use issues, but largely excluded consideration of development and renewables on the basis that including issues subject to statutory control in the framework might generate confusion in the minds of stakeholders and consultees.

4.1.6 Do the frameworks provide clarity for decision-makers on the opportunities and constraints within a given area?

Aberdeenshire

The Issues and Opportunities report provides decision-makers with a high level overview of some key land use issues within the Aberdeenshire area. The accompanying GIS tool enables users to explore constraints and opportunities within the pilot area, but only in relation to native broadleaf woodland. In the final evaluation workshop the pilot project management team noted that the GIS tool might have a role in illustrating the interconnectedness of land use issues, for example to communities. Participants in the final stakeholder evaluation workshop were unclear about the potential of the tool.

Scottish Borders

The framework document clearly communicates the fact that one of its key functions is to assist decision makers to consider the wider implications of land use change. The companion GIS tool is the mechanism through which this can be undertaken.

Whilst the pilot has provided the tools to allow decision-makers to consider opportunities and constraints, stakeholder participants in the final evaluation workshop noted that whilst these had potential it was not possible to be sure whether they provided sufficient clarity for decision-makers, as this would only become clear once the tool has been applied.

4.1.7 Have the frameworks been prepared in partnership with all locally relevant land use sectors and have they been consulted upon?

Aberdeenshire

As described in 3.1 the pilot involved stakeholders from a range of land use sectors. Groups identified as missing (during the stage 3 evaluation workshop) included representatives from the recreation and health sectors.

The Issues and Opportunities report was informed by comments from stakeholders, but was not subject to wider public consultation. The GIS tool was made available for testing by external users via a series of workshops run in the winter of 2014/15.

Scottish Borders

As described in 3.1 the framework was developed through an extensive programme of evaluation and consultation involving a wide range of stakeholders. Whilst efforts were made to engage with all locally relevant land

use sectors some groups were reported as being under represented, most notably the tourism / recreation, business and renewables sectors. The framework was subject to public consultation.

4.1.8 Do the frameworks take an ecosystems approach?

In order to review the pilot process and main outputs against this requirement, reference has been made to the Scottish Government's 'Information Note on Applying an Ecosystems Approach' (March 2011) ²⁸. This states that an ecosystems approach can be summarised in three main principles.

- a) Consider natural systems – by using knowledge of interactions in nature and how ecosystems function.
- b) Take account of the services that ecosystems provide – including those that underpin social and economic well-being, such as flood and climate regulation, resources for food, fibre or fuel, or for recreation, culture and quality of life.
- c) Involve people – those who benefit from the ecosystem services and those managing them need to be involved in decisions that affect them. Their knowledge will often be central to success. Public participation should go beyond consultation to become real involvement in decision-making.

Aberdeenshire

The Issues and Opportunities report takes account of natural systems and the range of services they provide within Aberdeenshire including food, timber, climate regulation, water, biodiversity, recreation and quality of life, and emphasises the need to pursue an integrated approach with a view to securing the optimal delivery of benefits. The development of the pilot, and the final products (including the report) were informed by stakeholder engagement and by public participation. The issue of stakeholder engagement in the pilots is dealt with at some length in section 3.1 where it is reported that the pilot was subject to stakeholder criticism for not involving stakeholders sufficiently early in the development process. It is suggested that in this regard the pilot's approach to engagement fell short of that expected of an ecosystem approach.

Scottish Borders

The framework considers natural systems and the interactions between between different ecosystem functions. Users are encouraged and enabled (via the GIS tool) to take account of a range of ecosystem services. A wide

²⁸ Natural Scotland (2011), Applying an Ecosystems Approach to Land Use: Information Note. Scottish Government..Available at <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/03/16083740/1>

range of stakeholders were involved in the development of the framework and it is designed with the intention of better enabling multi-stakeholder approaches to land use decision making. As such it is considered that the framework is consistent with the principles of the ecosystems approach.

4.1.9 Are the frameworks a meaningful tool in guiding decisions about land management, land use change and funding?

Aberdeenshire

Stakeholders were asked (stage 3 evaluation workshop) whether or not they felt the pilot outputs, and in particular the GIS tool, offered a meaningful mechanism for guiding land use decisions. Workshop participants were cautious about offering a view on this matter, when pressed they expressed some uncertainty about whether the tool would actually be used once the pilot had finished.

Scottish Borders

Stakeholders in the stage 3 evaluation workshop noted that it was unclear as yet whether the framework, and more particularly the GIS tool, comprised a meaningful tool for guiding land use decisions. It was suggested that the GIS tool may need further development, but that ultimately it would be difficult to determine until the GIS tool had been applied in earnest.

4.1.10 Can the frameworks take account of changing circumstances and the cumulative impacts of land use change?

Aberdeenshire

The GIS tool allows users to consider land use change in relation to woodland expansion. It is limited to woodland expansion, but the prototype tool allowed users to change ecosystem parameters and observe the theoretical effects on woodland cover. The tool is not readily updateable.

Scottish Borders

The GIS element of the framework presents maps demonstrating interactions and opportunities and has been designed to enable users to consider and plan for the implications of land use change, including cumulative change. The tool has been designed to allow for updating.

4.2 Summary

The written products from both pilots take account of Scottish Government policy with this having been assured through a policy mapping exercise undertaken as part of a Strategic Environmental Assessment process (a requirement of the Scottish Government).

A desk based assessment of the Aberdeenshire issues report and the SBC framework found that the key messages, theoretical approach and recommendations contained within both documents were consistent with eight

of the ten LUS Principles for Sustainable Land Use. Areas where they were not were Principle b - regulation-this was not an issue addressed by the pilots and the use of derelict land (Principle g) – both pilots noted that this issue was covered by existing statutory plans and had therefore elected not to consider it.

The pilots looked to take a wide range of local / regional land use policy into account, but some issues were deliberately excluded. This included issues addressed via the statutory planning regime (e.g. development and renewables). Pilots saw the inclusion of these issues as duplication. In addition the Aberdeenshire pilot made a decision not to include coastal issues and to restrict consideration of upland sporting land use issues – to help avoid over complicating the project.

When responding to questions concerning the relationship between their outputs and policy, e.g. whether they felt that their work ‘expressed government policy’ both pilots were careful to note that their approach had focused on developing decision support tools as opposed to developing local / regional strategy. In short they developed products that can be used to help guide the translation of policy into practice, but which do not attempt to direct local / regional activity.

Both pilots expressed the view that the GIS tools offered the potential to guide grant funding. In the final evaluation workshop, staff from the Tweed Forum felt that the SBC GIS tool provided a more sophisticated set of maps than those currently used by SRDP and advocated the use of the tool in guiding grant funding. Stakeholder participants (in the final evaluation workshop) were more cautious as were participants in the Aberdeenshire workshops. The pilots noted that the tools did not allow for detailed field scale planning, but that they could be used at a broader landscape scale, for example in relation to large scale woodland expansion. The potential role of the SBC tool is currently being assessed.

Another area of uncertainty relates to the extent to which the outputs from the pilots provide clarity for decision makers on the opportunities and constraints within a given area. Stakeholders involved in stage 3 evaluation workshops (both pilots) also noted that it was unclear as to whether the pilot outputs, and in particular the GIS tool, offered a meaningful mechanism for guiding land use decisions. It is suggested that the practical value of the GIS tools will only become clear as and when the tools are applied. Given that the Aberdeenshire GIS tool focuses on woodland expansion it is clear that this will restrict the scope for its future application.

As described in Section 3.1, both pilots looked to involve a range of stakeholders. In the case of the Scottish Borders framework this included a public consultation. The Aberdeenshire Issues and Opportunities report was

not formally consulted on, although stakeholders were provided with an opportunity to comment.

Overall, in terms of the approach required by the Scottish Government, both pilots were found to have operated, and delivered their outputs, in a manner broadly consistent with the requirements of the Scottish Government.

Both pilots looked to follow an ecosystem approach and for the most part their approach accorded with that advocated in the Scottish Government's Information Note on Applying an Ecosystems Approach. It is however questionable whether the approach to stakeholder engagement taken by the Aberdeenshire pilot allowed sufficient involvement in the development of the project and its outputs as would be expected under the ecosystem approach.

Both pilots produced a written document complemented by a GIS decision support tool. The GIS tools allow for consideration of land use change (although the Aberdeenshire tool only allows for consideration of change in relation to woodland expansion). In the final evaluation workshops stakeholders (from both pilots) noted that they felt that these outputs were of value, but were uncertain about whether or not they provided a meaningful mechanism for guiding future land use decision making, suggesting that this could only really be determined through practical application.

5. Potential impact on land use decision making in local areas

Research Question: Do the regional frameworks have the potential to make a positive impact on land use decision-making in the local areas?

As stated in section 1, the aims set for the pilots were:

- To trial a mechanism which considers existing and future land use in a collective and integrated way, with a view to optimising the use of the land.
- To establish a mechanism to prioritise or guide decisions about possible competing or conflicting uses.

Stakeholders and project management staff were asked in the stage 3 evaluation workshops whether they felt that the outputs from their projects, and in particular the GIS tool, were expected to deliver improved local decision making in relation to land management.

5.1 Findings from the pilot areas

Aberdeenshire

In the final evaluation workshop, the project management team suggested that the delivery of practical benefits from the tool was still some way off. Both the project management team and some stakeholders felt that the views and actions of the Scottish Government would largely determine the potential for future impact.

In the final evaluation workshop, the project management team indicated that they felt the pilot approach had helped to fill a current gap in integrated land use management planning and thinking. It was suggested that the tool could play a useful role in helping to 'illustrate' the interconnectedness of issues and potential land use change to communities, thereby helping to promote the principle of ecosystem services and providing a mechanism to explore future consequences.

The project management team suggested that, in the future, the approach could usefully compliment statutory land use plans. The tool could be used, for example, to inform the main issues report of local plans, thereby helping to provide the context for decisions. However, it was pointed out that statutory planning control is limited to built development, which covers only about 2% of the Aberdeenshire area.

Stakeholders (in the stage 3 evaluation workshop) suggested that the tool might be useful in community planning and development, in forestry and in

strategic approaches to river basin management. It was also noted that through providing a mechanism for targeting SRDP funding, the tool could be seen as an investment that might generate future savings through allowing for a more effective disbursement of public money.

In terms of the impact of the pilot's practical legacy, it was reported that Aberdeenshire Council intended to build on the pilot's work when developing a new regional Forestry and Woodland Strategy suggesting that:

'Much of the Pilot's work is highly relevant to the creation of a new [forestry and woodland] strategy, and the broad overview of land use issues, coupled with the tools developed by the Pilot, will aid its production.'²⁹

In addition, the Council is intending to explore how the pilot approach might influence the statutory planning processes, notably Local and Strategic Development Planning.

Scottish Borders

Stakeholders involved in the final evaluation workshops and telephone interviews suggested that they felt the land use decision-making tool had the potential to have a positive impact on land management, not least because of the current absence of an alternative mechanism. Overall, however, they felt that the pilot tool needed to evolve before it could be applied to this end.

One commercial landowner (Scottish Borders pilot telephone interview) indicated that they felt the tool should have a role in guiding SRDP funding to help ensure that it delivered value for money to the public purse. This perceived need to link the tool to SRDP funding was endorsed by many of the stakeholders who participated in the final evaluation workshop and was seen as being a potential future benefit of the tool. A number of respondents to the pilot's final consultation exercise also noted the potential role of the tool in guiding SRDP funding.

A perceived drawback of the tool was that the underpinning datasets were too high-level to allow for a detailed consideration of local areas, thus precluding its application at the farm scale. In short, it could be used for targeting, but there would then be a need for on the ground 'truth checking'. This issue was also identified by a number of respondents in the final consultation exercise run by the pilot.

Another reported data-related challenge was that the value of the tool was limited by the availability and quality of the data. Some types of activity (e.g.

²⁹ Davidson, J.1; Birnie, I.1,3; Irvine, R. J.2; Gimona, A.2; Blackstock, K.2; Baggio, A.2; Byg, A.2; Donnelly, D.2; Somevi, J.1; Aalders, I.2; Dunn, S.2 and Sample, J2. (2015), Aberdeenshire Land Use Strategy Pilot: Final Report, Aberdeenshire Council (p. 23)

woodland/forestry) are much better covered by existing data sources than others. The tool may therefore be more useful when dealing with issues such as woodland strategy and flood management (another area where good data exists). Data for issues such as biodiversity and cultural issues is much weaker. A key learning point is that data needs to be kept up to date if data-based tools are to remain relevant and useful.

The relatively coarse nature of the data was also seen as being problematic when trying to engage wider stakeholders, as it was felt that people were more likely to think in terms of their local area than at a catchment scale.

Overall, stakeholders felt that the framework approach, and the tool in particular, needed to evolve in order to realise its potential. However, several stakeholders noted that the maps and data collected to inform the tool could potentially be very useful in and of themselves, with potential applications that may not yet have been identified.

During the final evaluation workshop, the Scottish Borders project management team noted that the framework had significant potential to deliver benefits, but that for this to be fully realised the framework needed to be able to guide SRDP spending to provide a clear incentive for engagement with the process. The Tweed Forum saw this as something of a 'deal breaker' (in the sense of 'if not used for that, then what is the value?') and suggested that making this link would help to address the current disconnect between strategy and delivery – something which was seen as an ongoing risk for the future roll out of pilot approaches.

The Scottish Government has provided further funding to enable a range of phase 2 work including testing the potential for the framework by developing a methodology that could further inform targeting under SRDP, including the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme and the Forestry Grant Scheme. SBC has commissioned Tweed Forum to undertake this aspect of the phase 2 work.

In terms of more immediate practical applications, SBC noted that the tool was seen as being a viable mechanism for helping to inform flood risk management plans and the management of natural capital on the Council's own estate.

5.2 Summary

Both pilots were supportive of the concept of regional frameworks as a mechanism for guiding land use decisions; this was seen as a means of filling a perceived gap in current land use planning. Although both pilots noted the need for further development of their work, they were able to identify several practical applications for the materials that had been produced. These included informing strategic development planning – including biodiversity offsetting and targeting under the existing Scottish Borders Woodland

Strategy; use in flood risk management planning (Scottish Borders) and the development of a new forestry and woodland management strategy (Aberdeenshire). Given that both lead local authorities stated their intention to build on the work undertaken by their pilots, this suggests that it does have the potential to make a positive impact on at least some aspects of land use decision-making in Aberdeenshire and the Scottish Borders.

Beyond this, there was support from both pilots for the idea of using the GIS tools – one of the principal outputs of the pilot projects – to guide the strategic targeting of SRDP funding. Some stakeholders viewed this as an approach that could yield significant potential benefits, although it was noted that any such approach would be constrained by the limited scope and detail of the datasets that underpin the tools.

6. How stakeholders perceive the frameworks

Research Question: How are the frameworks perceived by stakeholders and what lessons have been learned?

The validity and potential future application of the pilot outputs will depend upon stakeholder perception and their views on this matter were sought in the stage 3 evaluation workshops. Attendance at these was lower than expected and in both cases lacked representation from the private sector. To ensure representation for this group our telephone interviews were held after the workshops to try to ensure that the views of this key group were captured.

6.1 Findings from the pilot areas

6.1.1 Aberdeenshire

Stakeholder participants in the stage 3 evaluation workshop noted that they felt that the pilot had been well managed and that the project team had done a good job, considering the challenges and constraints. It was suggested, however, that there had perhaps been too much emphasis on data collection in the early stages of the pilot (an observation also made by the project management team and referred to in the pilot's final report which suggested that defining key issues should have preceded data collection³⁰).

Lines of communication were felt to have been good, although it was noted that the workshops had perhaps not worked as well as they might have, owing to an overly academic approach.

6.1.2 Scottish Borders

Those stakeholders who participated in the final evaluation workshop for the Scottish Borders pilot (including those involved in the supplementary telephone interviews) were very positive about the pilot and the project management team. They felt that the approach to the development of the framework had been appropriate, with some suggesting that they could not see how else the project could have been developed.

Communication was felt to have been good, with information being effectively and widely disseminated. Some new relationships had been formed as a result of the pilot, and the inclusion of Historic Scotland in the key stakeholder

³⁰ Davidson, J.1; Birnie, I.1,3; Irvine, R. J.2; Gimona, A.2; Blackstock, K.2; Baggio, A.2; Byg, A.2; Donnelly, D.2; Somevi, J.1; Aalders, I.2; Dunn, S.2 and Sample, J.2. (2015) Aberdeenshire Land Use Strategy Pilot Final Report. *Unpublished, prepared on behalf of the Project Board of the Aberdeenshire Land Use Strategy Pilot.* (p.2)

group was seen as important. Overall, it was noted that the pilot had built on strong pre-existing partnerships and the pre-existing network of local contacts and knowledge base held by the Tweed Forum and others.

As required by the Scottish Government, the Scottish Borders pilot ran a wider stakeholder consultation exercise at the end of the pilot, between 18th December 2014 and 16th February 2015, involving a web-based questionnaire (12 questions). The consultation was promoted via targeted emails and four workshops.

A total of 29 responses (including a number of organisations involved in the development of the pilot) were received to the web-based consultation. This level of engagement was seen as disappointing by the pilot. Nevertheless, the exercise generated some useful insights into external perspectives on the framework.

Overall, the responses to both the framework document and the process used to develop it were positive, with 80% of respondents answering 'yes' to the question 'Are you satisfied with the process undertaken to produce the framework?'³¹

6.2 Summary

Those stakeholders involved in the stage 3 evaluation workshop or telephone interviews for both pilots were very positive about the pilot projects themselves and the project management teams. Both pilots were felt to have been taken forward in an appropriate fashion, although it was noted that there had perhaps been an overemphasis on data collection in the case of the Aberdeenshire pilot.

³¹ Scottish Borders Council and Tweed Forum (2015) Scottish Borders Pilot Regional Land Use Framework (p. 2)

7. Do the benefits justify the costs and resources?

Research Question: Do the benefits of the regional land use mechanism policy justify the costs and resources required?

It was noted in the evaluation plan, drawn up at the commencement of the project, that only limited benefits might be generated during the lifespan of the pilots. Consequently, it was agreed that the evaluation would focus on looking for evidence of potential benefits. Any future evaluation should be able to examine this matter more fully. Developing a formal cost-benefit analysis was beyond the scope of the evaluation brief and therefore the evaluation was reliant upon the perceived value of the pilots to stakeholders.

7.1 Findings from the pilot areas

7.1.1 Benefits Delivered During the Lifespan of the Pilots

Aberdeenshire

The process of bringing stakeholders together in a forum to discuss the ecosystem approach was considered to be a benefit in its own right by a number of respondents. Stakeholders noted that this provided a valuable opportunity to learn about other points of view and to consider the complexity of land management and land use.

‘Simply bringing people together and providing them with a non-confrontational environment in which to share their experiences is useful. Helps to generate better shared understanding and appreciation of others views and positions.’³²

The Aberdeenshire pilot team considered that their collaboration with JHI had led to a stronger relationship between the two principal partners, with one reported benefit being an improved understanding (by JHI) of practitioner needs and constraints. It was felt that this improved understanding, would be useful in helping to inform the future work of the JHI and ultimately improve the impact of such work.

The GIS tool and associated datasets and maps were seen as a useful legacy and foundation for future work. Stakeholders thought that the pilot had started to build a composite picture and to identify what is technically possible with the data. In doing so, it had helped people be more aware of, and to learn more about, the ecosystem approach. At the time of writing, the pilot team were considering taking the pilot work forward to inform a new woodland strategy

³² LUS Evaluation Interim Report , CAG Consultants, July 2014. (p. 23) (unpublished)

for Aberdeenshire and were also considering ways in which the work could inform the core strategy process for town and country planning.

Scottish Borders

As with Aberdeenshire, the process of bringing stakeholders together was considered to be a significant benefit by those involved in the pilot. Respondents noted the value of the opportunity the pilot provided to engage in discussions about the ecosystem approach with a wider group of stakeholders than they would otherwise expect to come into contact with.

In the Scottish Borders, the pilot was founded on a long-standing partnership and there was clear evidence of a tradition of partnership working. Even so, some participants in the stage 3 evaluation workshop noted that some working relationships had been further strengthened, and that at least one new and important relationship had been established, this being with Historic Scotland.

The GIS tool and access to the associated maps and datasets were seen as potentially valuable, with some stakeholders suggesting that these assets could be useful in ways not anticipated by the pilots.

The pilot triggered a spin-off project focused on establishing a methodology for assessing Historic Land Use Value as a form of cultural ecosystem service. The project was developed to address identified gaps in the data available for mapping Cultural Heritage services, particularly archaeology, which were identified during the development of the pilot. It is being led by the Council's Archaeologist, Dr Chris Bowles, with a Steering Group that includes Historic Scotland. The pilot also reported that the GIS tool had been subject to a mini-pilot trial in the Upper Tweed, in association with Scottish Water and noted that funding had been secured for a range of additional activity (see below) which would be informed by and build upon the framework and GIS tool.

7.1.2 Potential benefits

The pilots identified several actual and potential forms of future activity which they felt would yield benefits.

Aberdeenshire

- Consideration is being given to the establishment of a Land Use Forum to continue the development of outcomes and issues arising from the pilot.
- The Council intends to retain the pilot project officer and to build on the work of the pilot in the development of a new Forestry and Woodland Strategy.

- It was suggested that the Council would examine opportunities for using the work of the pilot to inform local plan development (at the options and issues stage).
- Potential development of a State of Nature Report for North East Scotland

Scottish Borders

- SBC intend to use the framework maps to inform the development of natural flood management schemes for Hawick.
- SBC have also been funded to undertake further development work to assess how the framework might be developed and used in flood protection and mitigation, biodiversity offsetting, woodland strategy and community resilience. This activity includes SBC commissioning Tweed Forum to investigate whether the tool could be used to inform approaches to the targeting of the SRDP and Woodland Grant Scheme funding.

7.2 Summary

Participants in the end of project (stage 3) evaluation workshops reported that they felt that the pilots had been useful and had provided a firm basis for future activity. Both pilots were able to identify a range of benefits associated with their activities and were able to identify several forms of expected follow-up work and future benefits.

Assigning a monetary or impact value to these benefits is beyond the scope of this evaluation, however the available evidence suggests that both pilots were successful in generating actual and potential value for their local areas. It also seems likely that external organisations, including the Scottish Government, will derive some benefit from the learning and outputs generated by the pilots.

8. Role of a regional land use mechanism

Research Question: Is there a role for a regional land use mechanism in guiding land use decisions to meet the outcomes of the LUS; and if so, what can be learned about the best geographical scale for such an approach?

As with evaluation question 3.4, the response to this question was based on stakeholder and project management team responses recorded during the stage 3 evaluation workshop and a set of four supplementary telephone interviews with representatives from the agricultural sector.

8.1 Findings from the pilot areas

Aberdeenshire

Stakeholder participants in the stage 3 evaluation workshop supported the concept of a regional land use mechanism, going so far as to describe this as 'absolutely necessary'. However, participants were cautious about how this might best work in practice.

It was felt that the regional scale was about right, although there was also some interest in the community planning scale. Specifically, it was suggested that the tool should be used to target SRDP funding.

Some consideration was given to the issue of geographic scale within the project's final report. This suggested that the regional approach offered benefits in terms of setting goals and targets. However, it might be unable to incorporate the level of detail necessary to allow for localised planning. The report noted that a message from wider stakeholder workshops was that a multi-scale approach to planning might be required.

Scottish Borders

The project management team for the Scottish Borders pilot reported (in the final evaluation workshop) that they felt there was a clear role for a regional land use mechanism to guide and inform land use decisions. This view was shared by most of the stakeholders who participated in the final evaluation exercises. The project management team noted that whilst it was felt important that the framework remain non-statutory, given the limitations on partners' ability to directly influence most forms of land use, it was essential that the framework be able to guide SRDP spending to provide a clear incentive for engagement with the process. As noted in the response to Q3.2.3, the need to link the tool to SRDP funding was endorsed by many of the stakeholders who participated in the final evaluation workshop.

The issue of scale was seen as important but complex. It was noted that the ecosystems approach does not recognise administrative boundaries and that the Borders area is an important supplier of ecosystems services to wider areas. For example, at the regional level, the area provides one third of Edinburgh's water, whilst at the national scale it is important in terms of high grade agricultural land, tourism and onshore wind. However, local concerns and priorities could not be relied upon to automatically reflect regional or national priorities; indeed, in some instances they might be seen to be in conflict.

It was suggested that if local areas were required to develop local frameworks, there would need to be an effective mechanism for ensuring that they linked local, regional and national priorities. One issue discussed was whether targets reflecting national policy should be set for local areas, but based on the ability/potential of the area to deliver against such targets. In this scenario, it might then be left to local actors to determine how best to meet the targets.

Some stakeholders (in the stage 3 evaluation workshop) suggested that people were generally unused to, and sometimes uncomfortable with, dealing with land use at the landscape-scale and preferred to focus on individual sites and areas of direct interest to them. The project management team stated that the sub-catchment area had been found to be the most effective level at which to engage people and viewed this as one of the pilot's key findings.

8.2 Summary

Both pilots provided evidence of support for a mechanism to guide land use decision-making. The regional approach was endorsed, but the need to be able to accommodate a multi-scale approach was noted in both pilots. This was seen as necessary both to accommodate the perceived preferences of people to consider landscapes at a more localised level than the region (this was a key lesson from both pilots), but also to accommodate the fact that ecosystems services do not recognise administrative boundaries. It was noted, for example, that the Borders area was an important supplier of ecosystems services at the national scale. An issue noted by the Scottish Borders project management team was that local concerns and priorities could not be relied upon to automatically reflect regional or national priorities and that they might, in some instances, be seen to be in conflict.

Consequently, it was suggested that if local areas were required to develop local frameworks, there would need to be an effective mechanism for ensuring that they linked local, regional and national priorities with this potentially being achieved through the setting of targets for different forms of land use (or outputs) within a given area.

SECTION C: Conclusions

9.1 Conclusions

The two land use pilots were established to test the practicality of preparing regional land use frameworks and in doing so to inform the 2016 review of the Scottish Government's LUS (2011).

No specific definition of what constitutes a land use framework was supplied, but the pilots were provided with a specification document which stated that:

'The aim is to pilot a mechanism which considers existing and future land uses in a collective and integrated way, with a view to optimising the use of the land, and to establish a mechanism to prioritise or guide decisions about possible competing or conflicting uses.'³³

The specification further noted that the objective of the pilots should be to produce a framework which would:

'facilitate the delivery of policies, strategies and objectives in relation to integrated land use.'³⁴

In recognition of the experimental nature of the pilots the specification allowed the pilots the flexibility to develop their own approach subject to them complying with a list of ten requirements.

A stated expectation of the Scottish Government was that the frameworks would have a strong spatial component and if possible use GIS for any mapping work. In response both pilots decided to produce GIS mapping and decision support tools.

To provide context for the GIS tools both pilots developed written companion documents although these differed in tone and intention. Aberdeenshire produced an 'Issues and Opportunities' document which provides a high-level overview document, with the stated intention of stimulating regional debate on land use change and aiding strategic rural land use planning decisions.

The Scottish Borders developed a 'framework' document which provides technical guidance which, when used in conjunction with the GIS tool outputs, allows users to consider the implications of land use change (opportunities and constraints), either as a result of local plans or generated by external drivers such as government policy or climate change.

³³ Scottish Government (2013), Project Specification Regional Land Use Framework Pilots. Scottish Government (p. 4 para 3.1) (unpublished)

³⁴ Ibid (p. 4 para 3.2)

The evaluation of the regional pilots focused on both the process by which they were produced and an assessment of their final outputs. It was guided by an evaluation plan which was developed by CAG and agreed with the Scottish Government and the pilots. The evaluation sought to answer a series of research questions, and the findings of this work are reported in section 3. It is important to note that the Scottish Government did not make any assumptions as to how the pilots might undertake their work, there is not therefore considered to be a right or wrong way to deliver a regional framework against which either pilot might be measured, nor was it intended to compare the two. Rather the aim was to learn from how two projects, with different local circumstances, might approach the challenges posed by the project brief.

The objective and requirements set out in the project specification were regarded by stakeholders and project teams in both pilot areas as extremely challenging due to the complexity of the issues, the potential for tension between different sectoral interests, the sensitivity of the agenda given the wider backdrop of the Land Reform debate and the required timescale of production. These issues played a significant role in dictating the pilots' approaches to delivery.

A desk based assessment of the written outputs from the pilots found that the key messages, theoretical approach and recommendations contained within both documents were largely consistent with the ten LUS Principles for Sustainable Land Use. Of the two Principles not clearly reflected within the documents it might be argued that the absence of reference to regulation (LUS Principle b.) is evidence that the pilots are in line with the Scottish Government's advocacy of a light touch approach. Reference to the use of derelict land (LUS Principle g.) is something that might be expected to have been omitted by the pilots as this matter is addressed through existing local development strategies.

Both the Aberdeenshire Issues and Opportunities report and the Scottish Borders framework take account of Scottish Government policy and local /regional policy and consider a wide range of land uses, but both chose to exclude or limit their focus on certain issues. For example coastal issues were not considered within the Aberdeenshire pilot owing to concerns about over complicating the project. The Scottish Borders pilot largely excluded issues such as development and renewables in order to avoid confusion amongst stakeholders.

Both pilots were concerned to ensure stakeholder buy-in to the process. They therefore elected to focus on the development of decision support mechanisms (as opposed to strategy) and were careful when communicating their work to external audiences, presenting it as being experimental, and designed to enable improved land use decision-making, rather than representing an attempt to dictate it. The context of Land Reform and fears in

the private sector of the framework informing a more regulatory approach was one driver to this approach. Public sector stakeholders were sensitive to these concerns and also mindful that for the pilots to have a future impact, there must be a mechanism for change. Some stakeholders saw the influencing of SRDP targeting as a key test for the development of the pilot approaches.

The adoption of this position informed both the pilot development process and the production of the GIS tools and written materials with the pilots developing products that can be used to help guide the translation of policy into practice, but which do not attempt to set specific objectives for direct local / regional action. This approach and outcome is consistent with the Scottish Government's stated aim and objectives for the pilot (as quoted above), saving that the GIS tool produced for the Aberdeenshire pilot only allows for consideration of broadleaved woodland expansion.

The decision to restrict the scope of the Aberdeenshire tool was made early in the development of the pilot and reflects both the importance of the issue within Aberdeenshire and the careful nature of the pilots overall approach. In interviews with the evaluation team Aberdeenshire Council staff noted that they had identified a risk of project overrun and had therefore elected to constrain their approach to ensure that they would be able to deliver within the resource (e.g. internal staff time) and in particular time constraints of the pilot. There was also evidence of greater uncertainty regarding post pilot activity.

Concerns over resource and time constraints were clearly evident in the Aberdeenshire pilot's approach to stakeholder engagement. Project management staff reported that previous stakeholder and in particular community engagement exercises the council had been involved in had proven highly resource intensive, and expressed concern about the potential impact on project delivery. Consequently the pilot looked to reduce this risk by restricting its investment in this form of activity.

Another time driven decision that impacted upon stakeholder engagement, was that JHI were authorised to commence setting project objectives prior to stakeholder engagement. This was subsequently criticised by participants in stakeholder workshops and was acknowledged as a lesson learnt by the pilot. The failure to engage stakeholders sufficiently early in the pilot development process is regarded as being inconsistent with the ecosystems approach.

The Scottish Borders pilot elected to run an extensive programme of stakeholder engagement with this being integral to the development of the project. The programme was run by the Tweed Forum and engaged a significant number of local stakeholders from a wide range of backgrounds. In evaluation interviews both project management staff and stakeholders reported that they felt that the programme had been successful with this being in large part a result of the involvement of the Tweed Forum and its ability to draw upon its existing networks of contacts within the pilot area. It was

however reported by the Tweed Forum that the approach had involved twice as much staff time as originally anticipated. This provides some evidence in support of Aberdeenshire's concerns about the resource intensive nature of stakeholder engagement.

It is difficult to be clear at this stage what the implication of the pilots' respective approaches to stakeholder engagement might be. Arguably higher levels of engagement might generate higher levels of post project activity and there is greater evidence of this in the Scottish Borders. This, however, may simply reflect the existing tradition of joint working on the land use agenda within this area.

There were some common issues in relation to engagement with stakeholders from both pilots expressing concerns about the perceived absence, or low level of engagement from some stakeholder groups. There was a clear desire to see greater engagement with sectors such as recreation, health, tourism and non-land management rural businesses. Some stakeholders (from both pilots) also noted that farmer engagement had been low although this contradicted evidence from the Scottish Borders pilot which reported a significant level of farmer participation in their engagement programme (297 out of 845 participants in open meetings).

Those expressing concerns about the absence of certain stakeholder groups were keen to note that they did not feel that their lack of engagement was a result of a lack of effort or oversight on behalf of the pilots, but instead suggested that barriers such as the lack of a clear incentive to engage may have been a factor, i.e. the benefits and reward for engagement in the process were not particularly apparent. Linked to this was a suggestion that the theoretical nature of the exercise and potentially the language used, e.g. that relating to the ecosystem approach, might also have deterred some individuals and organisations from becoming involved in the process. It was also noted that land owner / agricultural interests may have chosen to prioritise engagement in other policy consultation (e.g. CAP reform) over involvement in the pilots.

Overall, those stakeholders involved in the evaluation held positive views on both of the pilots and both were regarded as having taken an effective and reasonable approach to the development and management of what was seen as a highly challenging project.

There was evidence from both pilots that benefits had been generated through the development process and some evidence of future potential benefits. Benefits to date included improved relations between different stakeholder groups as a result of being brought together, in some instances with organisations with whom they did not usually engage, to discuss land management and land use in a different way to more conventional fora.

In particular the opportunity to pursue an ecosystems approach, and to do so at a strategic level, was welcomed by stakeholders in both pilot areas. Feedback received during evaluation stage 3 however suggests some uncertainty as to the most appropriate scale for land use planning, with a flexible approach being recommended. The Scottish Borders pilot reported that a key learning point from their project was that the sub-catchment area was the preferred scale for many stakeholders.

Although both pilots noted the need for further development of their work, they were able to identify several practical applications for the materials that had been produced. These included informing strategic development planning; use in flood risk management planning and the development of a new forestry and woodland management strategy.

Data and mapping outputs were also valued in and of themselves by some stakeholders, who suggested that the compilation of this information might yield unanticipated benefits. Weaknesses were recognised in terms of the scope of data availability, quality and resolution and stakeholders in both pilots suggested this might limit the use of the GIS tools in field scale land use planning. It was also noted that using spatial data in an ecosystems approach tends to have an inherent bias against cultural services that do not respond well to a spatial data approach.

Despite the perceived limitations of the GIS tools, there was also a desire to see them play a role in guiding land use planning and in particular it was felt that they could be used to target land use and associated support mechanisms.

Overall stakeholders from both pilots were cautiously optimistic about the potential of the pilots to have a positive impact on local decision-making. The emphasis in stakeholder responses however was on the word 'potential' with a common view being that more work was required to develop the pilot outputs as they were still at an early stage.

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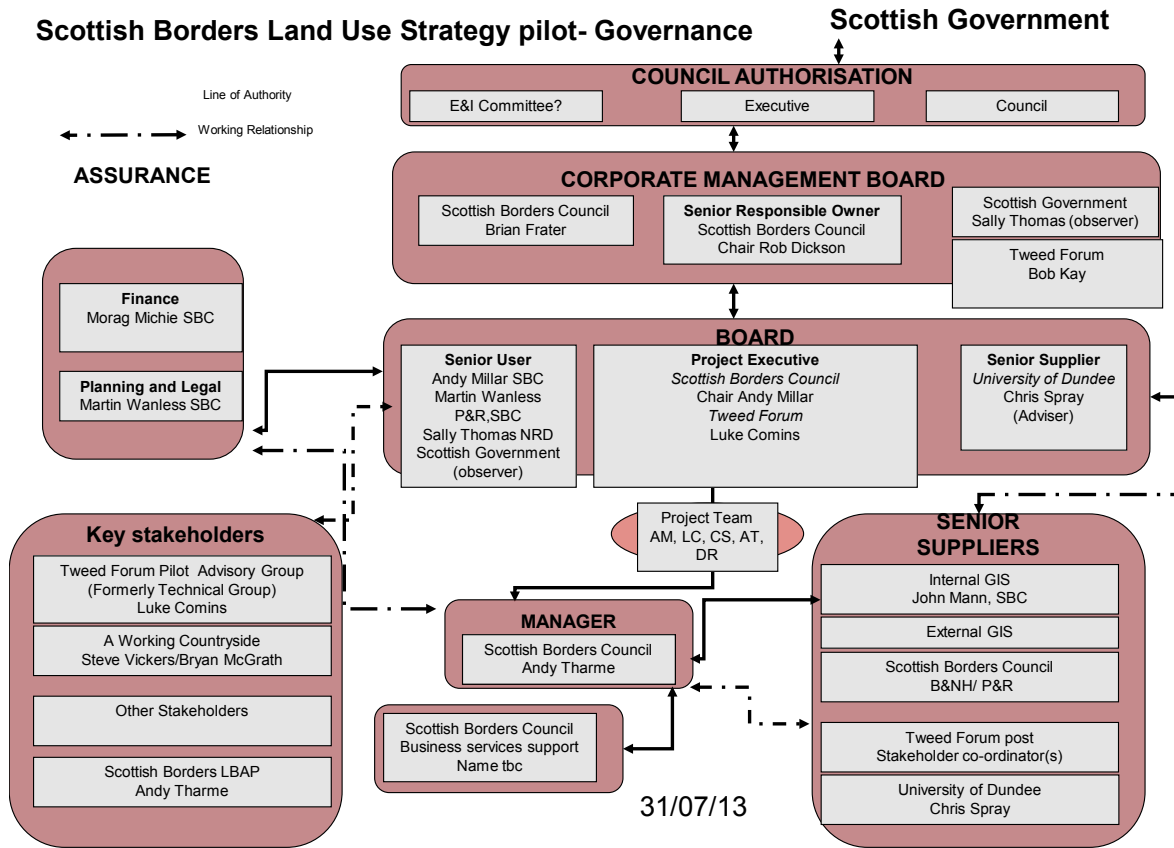
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Pilot Governance Structures

1. Scottish Borders



Key Stakeholder Group (formerly called Technical group) members

1. **National Farmers Union Scotland** - Ian MacDonald (Jonathan Hall)
2. **Tweed Forum** - Luke Comins
3. **Tweed Forum** - Derek Robeson
4. **Scottish Borders Council** - Andy Tharme (Andy Millar)
5. **Scottish Land and Estates** -Teresa Dougal (Andrew Midgley)
6. **Tweed Forum** - Bob Kay
7. **Forestry Commission Scotland** - Ian Laidlaw (John Dougan)
8. **Southern Upland Partnership** - Pip Tabor
9. **Royal Society for the protection of Birds** - Mike Fraser (Vicky Swales)
10. **Scottish Natural Heritage** - Chris Miles (Andrew Panter)
11. **Buccleuch Estate** - Andrew Brough
12. **Dundee University** -Chris Spray
13. **Scottish Environmental Protection Agency** - Angela Foss
14. **SRUC-Scotland Rural College** - Moira Gallagher
15. **Environment Systems** - Katie Medcalf
16. **Borders Forest Trust** - Jane Rosegrant
17. **Tweed Forum** - Alex Baillie
18. **The Tweed Foundation** - Ronald Campbell
19. **Farmer** - Patricia Glennie
20. **Scottish Government** - Sally Thomas (FIO)
21. **Scottish Government** - Ian Davidson (FIO)
22. **Rural Payments Inspections Directorate** - Quintin Donald (FIO)

2. Aberdeenshire

Project Governance and Structure

Lead Organisation: Aberdeenshire Council

Project Executive: Robert Gray, Aberdeenshire Council

Project Manager: Irina Birnie, Aberdeenshire Council

Project Officer: James Davidson, Aberdeenshire Council

Supporting Officers: Linda Mathieson (Aberdeenshire Council)

Project Board at close on 31st March 2015

Robert Gray (Chair), Aberdeenshire Council

Maureen Corley, Aberdeenshire Council

Jamie Farquhar, ConFor

Lorna Paterson, National Farmers Union of Scotland

Andrew Midgley, Scottish Land and Estates

Gina Ford, Scottish Enterprise

Hamish Trench, Cairngorms National Park

Sally Thomas, Scottish Government

Vicki Swales, Scottish Environment Link

Gavin Clark, Scottish Natural Heritage

Jim Dewar, Forestry Commission Scotland

Others who served as Project Board members during project

Neil Langhorn, Scottish Government

Zoe Kemp, Scottish Government

Scott Petrie, Scottish Land and Estates

Delivery partners and GIS support: The James Hutton Institute (JHI)

Justin Irvine, JHI Project Lead

Alessandro Gimona

Andrea Baggio

David Donnelly

Kirsty Blackstock

Anja Byg

Inge Aalders

Sarah Dunn

James Sample

Appendix 2: Project Outputs

1. Aberdeenshire

Please note some outputs are currently retained by the JHI. It is anticipated that these will be made publicly available at or near the end of the project.

Date	Title of Product	Description of Product	Target Audience	Issues information relevant to key research questions. Impact
Jun 13	Ecosystem Approach and Land use Workshop, Banchory Workshop Report	A report of a workshop in Banchory introducing a range of stakeholders to the pilot and exploring the ecosystem approach.	Stakeholders	Technical language of the ecosystems approach identified as a barrier to engagement and understanding. Audience familiar with issues for water due to catchment management planning experience, but struggling in particular with cultural services. Engagement of land managers seen as a key issue given new 'language' around ecosystem services. Limited feedback but value in terms of raising profile of the pilot and ecosystems approach.
Sept 13		Project plan for pilot activities.	Project Team	Evidence of project management and planning
Sept 13	LUS Pilot Governance and Structure	A description of the governance structure and make up of the Project Board and affiliates.	Project Team	Evidence of project management and planning.

Date	Title of Product	Description of Product	Target Audience	Issues information relevant to key research questions. Impact
Sept 13	Risk Register and issues log	Regularly updated risk register and issues log with process risks and issues and mitigation measures.	Project Team	Evidence of project management and planning. Issues include availability and compatibility of data, uneven data sources for different services.
Oct 13	Land Use Benefits workshop Dee Catchment	Report of stakeholder workshop held at Ballater, Upper Dee.	Stakeholders	Active engagement with stakeholder interests. Private sector land and statutory interests. Community groups and some wider interest groups invited but were unable (insufficiently motivated?) to attend. Attempts made to look at non-spatial socio political land constraints such as 'public opinion.'
Nov 13	SEA Screening report	A screening document setting out the need the framework to have a SEA.	Project Team	Evidence of assessment and compliance with SEA requirements.
Nov 13	End Stage 1 Stakeholder Workshop	A workshop at which the products of stage 1 (maps) were reviewed by stakeholders.	Stakeholders	50 maps presented. New local pilot area discussed. Stage 2 commences. 18 attendees. Complexity commented on and the lack of socio economic factors, difficulty of interpreting large amounts of information. Some concern at need to increase engagement with wider stakeholders. Issues around process for priority questions.

Date	Title of Product	Description of Product	Target Audience	Issues information relevant to key research questions. Impact
Dec 13	Stage 1 Report	Summary of findings stage 1.	Project Team	Concerns participants had in relation to the questions approach proposed for the second stage of the pilot. No participant argued against the need to focus down the pilot's exploration of constraints and opportunities by asking key, land use change relevant questions. It was the nature of such questions that was a concern. The pilot responded to these concerns by framing the questions around some of the key policy targets that already exist (e.g. woodland expansion, renewable energy, flood management, food security, halting biodiversity loss, community engagement) so as to try to minimise the risk of bias or subjectivity.
Jan 14	Land Use benefits workshop Huntly local area	Same methodology as Upper Dee Catchment, focussed on the Huntly local area.	Stakeholders	Fair distribution of stakeholder categories in terms of local community groups, businesses as well as statutory agencies.
May 14	Stage 2 Stakeholder workshop	Workshop to review stage 2 of the pilot, constraints and opportunities and to inform stage 3 activity.	Stakeholders	Twenty nine attendees including seven Aberdeenshire Council and James Hutton Institute staff.
Jul 14	Stage 2 Stakeholder workshop report	A review of stage 2 constraints and opportunities work, with stakeholders.	Stakeholders	Strong interest in the mapping process and its potential value. Some lack of understanding of pilot aims for some stakeholders, showing the challenge of communication. Some questions about transparency of weighting.

Date	Title of Product	Description of Product	Target Audience	Issues information relevant to key research questions. Impact
Oct 14	Land Use Change Issues and Opportunities, Draft Report	Summarises significant issues in land use, presents them to stakeholders for feedback, to form the basis of suggested actions and framework.	Stakeholders	This report explores land use change issues and opportunities in Aberdeenshire. It highlights significant factors that are likely to influence land use change and assesses how the region could respond to them. It aims to present a broad overview which stimulates wider stakeholder involvement and further debate on future land use change in the region. It aims to aid strategic rural land use planning decisions. The report ends by suggesting a series of actions and an invitation for stakeholders to get involved.
Oct 14	Land Use Scenarios Workshop Report	Report on third and final local area workshop held at Ballater.	Stakeholders	Report describes workshop activity that presented three possible future scenarios to participants, exploring interaction of variables in ecosystem services. The report concludes that participants valued an opportunity to learn and explore the complex relationship and interaction of issues in land use and land management.

Date	Title of Product	Description of Product	Target Audience	Issues information relevant to key research questions. Impact
Nov 14	Land Use Scenarios Workshop Report	Report on third and final local area workshop held at Ballater.	Stakeholders	Report describes workshop activity that presented three possible future scenarios to participants, exploring interaction of variables in ecosystem services. The report concludes that participants valued an opportunity to learn and explore the complex relationship and interaction of issues in land use and land management.
Dec 14	Stage 3 Report	A report of stage 3 activity and an overview of issues faced by the pilot.	Stakeholders	The report outlines activity of stage 3, in which a web based, interactive tool and gives an overview of land use change issues and opportunities.
Jan 15	Land Use Change Issues and Opportunities, Final Report	Summarises significant issues in land use, presents them to stakeholders for feedback, to form the basis of suggested actions and framework.	Stakeholders	This report explores land use change issues and opportunities in Aberdeenshire. It highlights significant factors that are likely to influence land use change and assesses how the region could respond to them. It aims to present a broad overview which stimulates wider stakeholder involvement and further debate on future land use change in the region. It aims to aid strategic rural land use planning decisions. The report ends by suggesting a series of actions and an invitation for stakeholders to get involved.

Date	Title of Product	Description of Product	Target Audience	Issues information relevant to key research questions. Impact
Mar 15	Habitats Risk Assessment	Assesses theoretical impact of pilot recommendations on policy and European habitat designations.	Stakeholders	Summarises a range of key messages and suggested actions from the pilot. A matrix is provided of the potential impacts of these suggested actions on European habitat sites and a matrix of potential policy impacts.
Mar 15	SEA Environment Report	A report under SEA regulations to identify and address all the effects the plan is likely to have on the environment.	Stakeholders	The report concludes that the overall effects of the pilot plan will be positive on the environment, but that it is difficult to judge because of the nature of the pilot.
Mar 15	SEA Post Adoption Statement	A report outlining responses to the SEA Environment report consultation and response by pilot to SEA findings.	Stakeholders	Evidence of consultation with stakeholders.
Feb 15	Short Note of Aberdeenshire Pilot Event, Banchory, February 2015	A note describing outcomes of the workshop discussion and Q&A session.	Stakeholders	Concern noted by some participants that it is too early for outputs from the pilot to influence the land use strategy. Generally positive about process, but a 'health warning' It needs further development.

Date	Title of Product	Description of Product	Target Audience	Issues information relevant to key research questions. Impact
Mar 15	Final Report	A synopsis of the process and findings, with a description of key findings.	Stakeholders	No overarching framework to guide land use was prepared by the Pilot due to constraints of time, knowledge and data.

2. The Scottish Borders

Date	Title of Product	Description of Product	Target Audience	Issues information relevant to key research questions. Impact
Feb 13	Press release for Launch	Press release timed with ministerial announcement.	Public	Evidence of awareness raising of pilot with stakeholders and wider public.
Jul 13	Borders LUS Communication Strategy	Identifies a range of audience groups, from lead organisations to the general public. The document sets out methods of engagement suited for different audiences, timescales and priorities.	Project Team	Messages developed are for communicating the purposes of the project. Shows effective planning of communications.
Aug 13	Landing Page for Pilot on Scottish Borders Council (SBC) Website	A short description of the pilot.	Public	Evidence of awareness raising of pilot with stakeholders and wider public.
Aug 13	Tweed Forum Pilot Website	A short description of the pilot.	Public	1200 hits
Aug 13	Facebook Page	A social network space allowing comment and interaction with public and stakeholders.	Public	15 followers. Social media included as a means of reaching out to a wider audience, but there is little evidence to suggest that this is a preferred or effective channel for the pilot, given the nature of stakeholders engaged.
Sept 13	Proposed Priority Catchments	A matrix setting out the key environmental, economic and social factors for proposed catchment areas, rationalising prioritisation and explaining this to stakeholders.	Stakeholders	A qualitative approach to prioritising catchments, showing efforts to ensure that the pilot encompasses a range of land use and land management factors to meet the brief.

Date	Title of Product	Description of Product	Target Audience	Issues information relevant to key research questions. Impact
Oct 13	Baseline mapping, constraints and opportunity mapping and final framework. Environmental Systems (Baseline Spatial Mapping).	A report on the methodology for data gathering and mapping, with an assessment of ecosystem services.	Stakeholders	The report summarises the methodology for stage 1 of bringing together available data on ecosystem services, as a basis for identifying constraints and opportunities. With ecosystem services being a new science, the method relies on available data sets, which have an inherent bias to readily quantifiable and existing provision of data. The process of weighting is taken forward through consultation and will be dependent on the views of those stakeholders engaged.
Nov 13	Stakeholder Engagement and Facilitation Meetings programme	A more detailed timeplan for of engagement and facilitation meetings with stakeholders.	Project Team	A more detailed plan and record of activity that tracks engagement activity with identified stakeholders.
Nov 13	Policy Mapping Report	A summary of analysis of policies and strategies to identify existing spatial implications.	Project Team	The summary states that in the vast majority of cases, it is not possible to create a spatial dimension to a policy or plan (except soil erosion and woodland combined with local plan). Identifies the limits to the preferred spatial approach being developed by the LUS pilots.
Nov 13	Appendix 1 Initial SEA Methodology	A document cross referencing requirements of SEA with the requirements of the LUS pilot	Project Team	
Nov 13	Appendix 2 Pilot Phase 1 Mapping	Spatial representation of data, constraints and opportunities maps.	Stakeholders	No additional issues. Mapped representation of data in stage 1 report.

Date	Title of Product	Description of Product	Target Audience	Issues information relevant to key research questions. Impact
Nov 13	RLUF Policy Mapping spreadsheet	Mapping content of plans and strategies against ecosystem services provision.	Project Team	A comprehensive assessment of a wide range of policies against ecosystem services. The analysis is comprehensive, encompassing land use and land management as required in the brief.
Nov 13	Stakeholder Facilitation Strategy and Action Plan	A detailed plan of engagement methods for identified stakeholders.	Project Team	The document establishes a hierarchy for stakeholders, priority, key and important. This is based on level of interest and level of influence.
Nov 13	Stakeholder Engagement Feedback Form	A summary of responses to 9 discussion points at stakeholder meetings.	Project Team	The responses to the discussion points are constructive and positive about the pilot. Respondents comments and priorities were linked to their specific areas of interest/concern. This is to be expected, but perhaps illustrates the challenge for those looking to develop integrated approaches and highlights the importance of representation, i.e. the absence of a subject/issue champion may mean that it does not get accounted for.
Nov 13	End Stage 1 Report	Project management	Project Team	Reports on limits to spatial representation of policies. Reports on difficulty in accessing and utilising data sets. Technical issues with data reported.

Date	Title of Product	Description of Product	Target Audience	Issues information relevant to key research questions. Impact
Nov 13	Stage 1 Exceptions Report	Project management	Project Team	Evidence of project management and planning processes for pilot.
Nov 13	Stage 2 Plan	Project management	Project Team	Evidence of project management and planning processes for pilot.
Apr 14	End Stage 2 Report	Project management document	Project Team	Evidence of project management and planning processes for pilot.
Apr 14	Consultation Report for Scottish Borders Council on the Tweed Forum led Stakeholder Engagement	Full report of the process and findings emerging from the stakeholder events and engagement in stage 2.	SBC	A detailed report on the consultation findings of stage 2. It describes the response to the process, which is positive. There is some suspicion from the private sector that it is linked to land reform. The key land uses are identified and the constraint is identified but does not yet address them.
May 14	SBC Internal Stakeholder engagement consultation report	A summary report of a consultation with SBC departments whose work may be informed by the pilot framework.	Project Team	Identification of potential mechanisms for impact, and inter relationship between LUS and LA policies and services Statutory planning, SRDP and neighbourhood services. Green space management identified as areas of potential opportunity. An important analysis that identifies potential for theoretical routes for the pilot to influence change through local authority practice and policy.

Date	Title of Product	Description of Product	Target Audience	Issues information relevant to key research questions. Impact
May 14	LUS Pilot Issues report	A testing of scope and a direction check on the way forward for the framework and priority land uses. Requests feedback on how to continue or strengthen engagement with stakeholders including communities.	Stakeholders	Evidences the engagement with the key stakeholders and ongoing consultation at a key decision point.
May 14	Summary version of the Consultation Report for Scottish Borders Council on the Tweed Forum led Stakeholder Engagement to Scottish Borders Council	Summary report of the process and findings emerging from the stakeholder events and engagement in stage 2.	Stakeholders	A summary of full report.
May 14	Exceptions report Stage 2	Project management document	Project Team	No significant issues. Slight delay to stage 2. Slight reconfiguration of consultation to bring it forward, but informal and not 12 weeks demanded of final framework.
May 14	Stage 3 Plan	A plan for stage 3 to prepare a draft framework	Project Team	Evidence of project management and planning processes for pilot.

Date	Title of Product	Description of Product	Target Audience	Issues information relevant to key research questions. Impact
Aug 14	Interim Consultation Report	200 stakeholders who were consulted during the LUS pilot stakeholder engagement programme were asked to provide comments on interim findings from that consultation process.	Stakeholders	200 consulted. 51 responses. A thorough document which explores stakeholder views of process and views on key land uses and constraints and opportunities. At this stage, difficult to see how trade offs and decisions will emerge from the different sector responses. Overall positive feedback to the process.
Aug 14	Implementation Plan Questions	A supplementary consultation asking stakeholders to complete a matrix showing constraints/opportunities and conflicts between land uses as well as views on potential use of the framework for their organisation.	Stakeholders	A further in depth consultation with priority and key stakeholders, trying to develop deeper information on interactions between ecosystem services This includes: SEPA, SNH, FCS, SLA, NFUS, Scottish Water, RSPB, SUP and RPID.
Aug 14	Letter to stakeholders	Guidance Letter to stakeholders explaining implementation plan consultation.	Stakeholders	Explanatory note of process for implementation plan consultation.
Aug 14	Matrix of interactions	This accompanies the letter and the implementation plan questions. The matrix of interactions between ecosystem services in Scottish borders (+++ large to + small beneficial interaction / --- large to - small antagonistic effect).	Stakeholders	Evidences activity to understand basis for assessing trade offs and prioritisation.
Oct 14	The Draft Framework	The draft framework, prepared for Committee approval.	Stakeholders	To be reviewed at next stage of the evaluation.
Oct 14	Stage 3 Interim Report	Project management document	Project Team	Evidence of project management and planning processes for pilot.

Date	Title of Product	Description of Product	Target Audience	Issues information relevant to key research questions. Impact
Nov 14	LUS Draft Environmental Report (ER).	The report identifies 3 main interactions in terms of significant potential for negative effects or multiple benefits i) interaction between delivery of ecosystem services and impacts on food production, ii) interaction between delivery of a range of ecosystem services and impacts on timber provision and iii) interaction where opportunities for delivery of multiple ecosystem services arise.	Stakeholders	8 priority land uses are identified through expert rule base, stakeholder and steering group opinion. Main constraint interactions are identified. More work is suggested to explore opportunities of the inter relationships.
Nov 14	ER Appendix 2 Policy Drivers	A matrix of policy drivers and their impacts on SEA topics.	Stakeholders	Evidence of work to assess interrelationship of SEA and LUS scope with a wide range of policy. Assesses impacts and inter relationship with existing policy.
Nov 14	ER Appendix 3 Consultation Authority Scoping Report	Summary of consultation responses to the SEA scoping report.	Stakeholders	
Nov 14	ER Appendix 4 Causal Chain assessments	Causal chain assessment of ecosystem services	Stakeholders	Evidences a complex assessment of the inter relationships of the 8 priority land uses and ecosystem services.
Nov 14	ER Appendix 5 Policy drivers	A matrix of ecosystem services and their inter relationships	Stakeholders	Records complex interactions between the ecosystem services.
Dec 14	Draft Framework	A draft land use framework for consultation.	Stakeholders	Key product of process and subject to detailed analysis
Jan 15	LUS Consultation Questions	A set of questions to frame the consultation on the draft land use framework	Stakeholders	Evidence of consultation with stakeholders

Date	Title of Product	Description of Product	Target Audience	Issues information relevant to key research questions. Impact
Feb 15	LUS SEA Statement Final	A one page summary of the findings of the SEA process and the final status of the framework.	Stakeholders	A key conclusion is the constraints between land use for food production and a range of alternative ecosystems services. Similar constraints are identified for timber production. The SEA acknowledges that there are many opportunities for delivery of multiple benefits through increases in other ecosystems services, but without food production and commercial timber production. Also states that the pilot will not finalise the draft framework.
Mar 15	Consultation Responses to Draft Framework	Consultation responses to draft framework (redacted).	Project Team	Evidence of consultation on draft framework but redacted for data protection.
Mar 15	Land Use Framework Consultation Report	Provides a summary of stakeholder responses to the draft final framework.	Stakeholders	Evidence of consultation and stakeholder responses to the framework.
Mar 15	Stage 3 Final Report	Project management document	Project Team	Reports on the consultation process for the draft framework, SEA summary, a report on final stage products.

Appendix 3: Stakeholder Telephone Survey March 2014

Introductory Script

Introduce CAG Consultants.

Explain contracted by Scottish Government to evaluate the regional land use pilots and help record and learn lessons. Purpose of this telephone survey is to:

- understand your expectations and views on the process.
- assess what you think the opportunities are, to what degree you feel the pilots offer potential for impact and to get your feedback on barriers and concerns.
- record any views you might have on any lessons learnt so far from Pilot establishment.

Length of survey will be 20 minutes

Our standard approach will be to report your feedback anonymously. However, if we feel it may be useful to attribute a particular quote (for example) we will ask your permission. We will also report feedback according to broad categories of stakeholder (e.g NGO, private sector, government, public agency).

SURVEY

Background on Stakeholder Engagement

1. To what extent has your organisation been involved in Land Management/Land Use Partnerships in Aberdeenshire/the Borders before?

- Not at all
- Occasional
- Regularly
- Your core role

2. How do you think the Pilot will influence your level of involvement (in regional land use matters)

- Increase
- Decrease
- Stay same

Comments

Your Experience of the Pilots So Far.

3. How has the Pilot influenced your engagement with the ational Land Use Strategy?

- Considerable increase
- Slight increase
- No change
- Don't know

Comments

1. How clear are you about the aims and objectives of the Pilot after the initial meetings?

- Very clear
- Clear
- Unclear
- Very unclear

Comments

5. Communication is timely, regular and appropriate?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments

6. In terms of the Pilot process and approach to date what have been the strengths?

Comments

7. Are there any areas you would like to see developed or improved as the Pilot develops?

Comments

8. How do you view the Pilot process to date

- Very effective
- Effective
- Neutral/undecided
- Ineffective
- Very ineffective

Comments

Your Expectations of the Pilot

9. How confident are you that the Pilots have potential for beneficial outcomes/impacts

- Very confident
- Confident
- Neutral/undecided
- Not so confident
- Not at all confident

Comments

10. Can you describe what you think would be a successful outcome,

- (a) for Aberdeenshire/Borders?
- (b) for your local area?
- (c) your organisation?

11. What do you think the opportunity/ies are that the Pilot could address?

Do you have a view on how these can be achieved?

12. What do you think will be the key challenges (risks, barriers) for the Pilot?

Do you have a view on how these can be reduced?

13. Although it is very early in Pilot development, is it possible to identify any added value that the pilot has already been able to bring

Comments

Costs and benefits

14. Are you able to estimate your time commitment to the project between first hearing about the Pilot and the current time?

Thank you for your time

Appendix 4: Board and Project Meeting Questions Sept/October 2014.

The following two questions were addressed to board members.

Q1) We would like to understand how you have addressed the issue of 'trade offs' between different land uses using an ecosystems approach. Could you please give us some insight into how the project has managed the issues of prioritisation and trade offs within the development of the framework tool?

Key issues

- How priorities are/were identified and assessed?
- Examples of trade offs between different forms of ecosystem service.
- What factors are taken into account when considering conflicting objectives?

Q2) In the first round of evaluation we identified a number of groups where engagement was reported as being challenging. Can you tell us how the pilot has responded to the challenge of engaging with those groups and organisations and in particular the following?

- The wider community;
- The Scottish Rural Payments and Inspections Division; and
- Stakeholders representing the historic and cultural environment.

These questions were pre-agreed with Scottish Government staff and were designed to help draw out information in relation to stakeholder engagement – this being an issue which had been identified as posing some challenges during stage 1 of the evaluation – and to establish whether the pilots were able to provide any early insight into 'trade offs' between competing land use priorities and to help inform the Land Use Strategy review.

Following the board meetings the project leads were able to make themselves available, for more in depth discussions and in particular to address the following questions:

Q3) Could you please update us on any progress of the pilot since we last had contact with you?

Q4) What lessons have you learnt from the process of developing the regional frameworks to date?

Key Issues

- Barriers and solutions.
- Any identified strengths and weaknesses of the pilots approach?
- Other?

Q5) Is there any early evidence that the process of developing the framework has delivered any early benefits. Particularly, in terms of improving land-use decision making within the pilot area?

Key Issues:

- Benefits might accrue as a result of improved access to data or other project outputs and an improved awareness of participants or their organisations of issues that have arisen during the development of the pilots.
- Benefits may also arise simply through improved relations between organisations that have been brought together through the pilot.
- If benefits have arisen has this generated any additional costs?

Project leads subsequently also provided additional commentary via email, and over the telephone.

Appendix 5: Workshop Questions, March 2015 Workshops

The topic areas and sub-questions posed in the workshops were chosen with the aim of generating insight to help address a series of evaluation research questions (these are described in an Evaluation Plan that was agreed by CAG and the Scottish Government). Some of the featured sub-questions were included with a view to exploring issues that emerged during the first and second rounds of the evaluation. The three topic areas and sub-questions for the workshop are shown below:

A) Stakeholder engagement

Common questions

- Has the pilot provided an effective opportunity for stakeholders to engage on the subject of sustainable land use and land management within the pilot areas? What have been the key lessons learnt?
- Has the process led to the establishment of new working relationships, or new partnerships and/or deepened existing relationships?
- Do you think any local land use interests were insufficiently engaged and if so why?

Questions for stakeholders only

- How effective do you think that the lines of communication between the pilot and external stakeholders have been? Do you have suggestions as to how they might be improved?
- Do you feel that the pilots have effectively utilised existing local/regional knowledge?

Questions for project management teams only

- What lessons have the project management team learnt in relation to stakeholder engagement? (Prompt: e.g. most effective/efficient form of approach).
- Did you find any groups challenging to engage with and if so why and were you able to overcome these challenges?

B) Benefits to date and potential for impact?

- Does the framework effectively express regional/local policy and to what extent does it complement or duplicate other local plans and processes?
- Is there scope for integrating the framework into local planning and decision making processes? If yes what would help or hinder this process? If no why not?
- Do you think that the pilot has effectively considered all of the relevant major land use issues in your area? If not which do you think have not been considered and is there a particular reason why not
- Can you identify any benefits that have resulted from the pilot to date?
- What future benefits and impacts do you think the framework might deliver in your area? What will help or hinder their delivery?

C) Overarching views on the project

What are your overall views on the pilot?

- Was the process by which regional frameworks were developed in the pilot areas appropriate and effective?
- To what extent do you think that the framework provides a meaningful, practical tool that can be used to help guide and shape future local land use decisions? What do you think are its principal strengths and weaknesses?
- What key lessons (other than any previously identified) have you learnt and what would you do differently if starting afresh?
- Overall do you feel that there is a role for a regional land use mechanism for guiding land use strategies to meet the aims and objectives of the land use strategy?
- Are there any other views you would like to offer in relation to the land use pilots? For example key lessons learnt.

How to access background or source data

The data collected for this social research publication:

may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact landusestrategy@gov.scot for further information.



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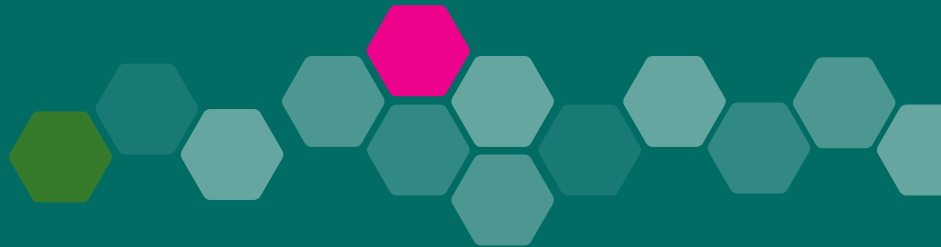
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