

# South of Scotland Regional Land Use Framework

## Consultation Report

April 2024



## 1 Introduction

The purpose of this short Consultation Report is to summarise the feedback received in consultation response to the draft Regional Land Use Framework (RLUF) and how this has been responded to. Thank you very much to all those who took time to review the RLUF document and submit comments.

The consultation on the draft RLUF ran for a 12 week period between 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023 to 23 February 2024. It was intended that following this consultation, we would review the feedback and recommend any changes required to the RLUF for the approval of the Councils and also submit this report to Scottish Ministers.

This latest consultation builds on earlier engagement activities. This included one to one interviews with stakeholders, focus group meetings and an online survey in phase 1 (the Consultation Report can be viewed in full [here](#)) and an extensive programme of stakeholder engagement across the region in Phase 2. The latter included 20 stakeholder events during September to November 2022 and a further 10 events during January-February 2024 and an additional workshop with Borders College. The final stakeholder engagement report is available [here](#).

The development of the draft RLUF was coordinated by SOSE, Dumfries & Galloway Council and Scottish Borders Council and was overseen by the Regional Economic Partnership (REP), supported by an RLUP Advisory Group, and approved for full public consultation by the Economy & Resources Committee of Dumfries & Galloway Council and the Full Council of Scottish Borders Council in November 2023.

## 2 Summary of the consultation process on the draft RLUF

The Draft RLUF was posted on the REP website for a 12 week period from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023 to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024. A link to the document was emailed to all those who had participated in the consultation to date (807 contacts). It was also sent via the two Councils, the BBC, SUP and others (including to the venues of the live events for local promotion).

The link was also shared with a wide range of partner agencies and via a range of social media and partner networks. All Community Councils were sent information in both December and January.

A consultation response form was created – asking for views in response to 8 key questions. The link to this was promoted at the same time.

Other means of promoting the consultation included the following:

- Press release was issued on 1<sup>st</sup> December and was reported in a number of local papers in the region.
- Radio interviews. Dr Tharme was interviewed for BBC Radio Dumfries which was featured on 5 December and West Sound Radio which was featured on 26<sup>th</sup> January.
- Social media. All the events were promoted via social media.
- Twitter – 4 posts from SOSE 1 Dec to 23 Jan, total of 1,411 views, 12 shares, 15 likes.
- Linked In – 4 posts from SOSE 1 Dec to 23 Jan, total of 3,763 impressions/views, 190 engagements (likes, shares etc).

In addition, a series of events were held to promote the consultation.

- Two live events were held to raise awareness of the document and to encourage people to read it and comment on it. These took place in Tweedbank on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December and in Dumfries on the 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Two further live events took place in Duns on the 17<sup>th</sup> January and Newton Stewart on the 7<sup>th</sup> February. In addition, an on-line event was held on the 31<sup>st</sup> January.
- 123 people attended these sessions.
- Further events were offered to specific interest groups and presentations were subsequently made to both the National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS) (on 14<sup>th</sup> December) and to Scottish Land & Estates (SLE) on the 5<sup>th</sup> February).

Further details of these consultation events are included in Appendix B.

### 3 Summary of main issues raised in consultation responses

In total, 61 people submitted formal responses to the consultation, one of which was spoilt and, therefore, discounted. There was a relatively even split between responses from Dumfries & Galloway (30) and responses from the Scottish Borders (26), the remainder were from outside the region. Approximately two thirds (41) of responses were from individuals and one third (19) on behalf of organisations, including environmental NGOs, estates and community groups.

The main issues raised in the formal consultation responses are summarised below, organised by the key themes included in the consultation survey:

- A need for more and better stakeholder engagement, including less use of technical terminology
- Concerns about one's own views not being reflected in the RLUF
- Concerns about private funding of land use change not taking into account local communities' interests
- Concerns about the impacts of renewable energy development, particularly wind turbines, on landscapes, ecology and food security
- Concerns about the deliverability of the RLUF's vision and objectives, especially given that funding for actions is unclear
- A desire for finer grained, more interactive mapping and more mapping (e.g. of flood risk, forestry, nature, land ownership)
- Concerns about the impacts of commercial forestry and support for more native forestry
- A desire for more empowerment of communities so that they can shape land use change in their areas
- Concerns about the ability to monitor progress against the vision and objectives, including the independence of the monitoring process
- There were a range of suggestions for adding new case studies or amending existing ones

Appendix A sets out further details of the consultation responses received. Comments on the RLUF are grouped into themes/issues. For each comment, a summary is provided of the pilot's proposed response along with the pilot's recommendation regarding any proposed changes to the final version of the RLUF.

Many interesting and useful comments were received and reviewed. Whilst a number of recommendations for non-significant amendments are identified (summarised below), there were no recommendations for significant amendments. However, please note that many of the comments will be used to inform our approach in follow-on work.

The recommendations for non-significant amendments were:

- Amendment to 'funding sources' section to reference Renewable Land Use Fund.
- Amendment to text at bottom of p.33 to explicitly reference significant concerns from some stakeholders about the environmental impacts of renewable energy development, particularly wind turbines.
- Add a reference to the SLC's advice to Scottish Government on establishing the RLUPs, which form the basis of the pilots, and making use of good practise including SLC guidance in any implementation phase.
- Amendment to provide text alongside maps to explain non-interactivity.
- Amendment to strengthen reference to community engagement to facilitate resilient woodland creation.
- Amendment to broaden the types of renewable energy referred to in the renewables actions.
- Correction required to description used for the Propagate project.
- Amendment to make it clearer in the Introduction that the pilot project was coordinated by SOSE in partnership with DGC and SBC, development of RLUF overseen by REP.
- Amendments to page 36 to explicitly reference the strength of feeling on the negative impacts of commercial forestry from many stakeholders at consultation events.

- Amendments to page 36 to highlight the significant economic benefits of and demands for forest products from the region. Also consider changing term from commercial forestry to productive forestry.
- Add a reference to collaborative forest design and planning in the actions.
- Seek to add more data on the economics of agriculture across the region.
- Minor edits to Figure 6 and figure numbering.
- Replace Visitor Charter with Events Charter on p.40.
- Add a reference to the GSA Biosphere to Table 5.
- Add additional funding opportunities to Appendix 8.

Note that in preparing a revised version of the RLUF document, we will refer to the original representation forms in the Consultation log, and have not relied on the summary information included within this Consultation Report.

In addition to responding to the qualitative survey questions, consultees were also asked to respond to a series of yes/no questions. Summary statistics on the responses to these questions are included in Appendix C. Feedback was mixed, with respondents sometimes responding “no” to questions because they felt their specific views haven’t been addressed. The challenge has been to seek to hear a wide range of different views on land use across the South of Scotland region and reflect these in the document, whilst also taking into account available data and the latest national and regional policy context.

### **Summary of issues raised at the events to promote the RLUF consultation**

A range of issues were raised by participants at the in-person and on-line events held to consider the draft RLUF; many of the same issues were raised through the formal consultation responses. All the questions/comments were recorded and can be used alongside the formal consultation responses to help shape any future phase of the RLUF. Issues raised related to the policy & process, collaboration, data and evidence and the balance between economic, social and the environmental:

- *Policy & process:* Participants queried how the proposed RLUF related to other policy development (e.g. NPF4, Agriculture and Communities Bill, Place planning, housing and infrastructure planning, land reform etc); how it might be delivered; had the pilot sufficiently engaged with the public, landowners and with farmers; what influence it might have on future statutory planning decisions; what influence it might have on funding and on the freedom of land managers to make plans; and how it would engage with young people. There was interest in how a less-centralised approach to setting priorities might be developed.
- *Collaboration:* There was interest expressed in the RLUF as a mechanism for bringing people together to seek solutions to local issues. Several people commented on the positive discussions that had taken place during consultation events between people with quite different interests who do not normally meet. Giving more consideration to the likely impacts of land-use change was recognised as beneficial by many, including for water management, wildlife conservation, tourism or access. Better integration of some land-uses was requested by some (e.g. renewable energy and local food production and forestry and flooding).
- *Data:* The value of data was raised many times, including data on existing land-use or on issues such as flood-risk, biodiversity, climate, carbon-rich soils or cultural heritage. Some questioned whether there was data to evidence a biodiversity crisis. Information allowing better comparisons between various natural capital benefits and auditing could improve decision making. The maps included in the draft RLUF were welcomed, but the large scale questioned and the need for more local scale maps raised. Some of the data included in the RLUF was questioned (e.g. the number of jobs supported by freshwater fisheries; area of land already afforested).
- *Drivers:* The balance between the three main “drivers” of the RLUF (economy, climate crisis and nature recovery) came up a lot. Some felt that the importance of the economy had been given too little emphasis with value of farming and forestry being under-stated. Others felt that the climate crisis was given too little urgency and some felt that land-use change was happening so fast that any mechanism to apply a more strategic approach may be too late.

The Committees of the Local Authorities also raised a number of issues including providing further information on the benefits of and employment in freshwater fisheries in the region, how the RLUF might inform the Agriculture and Rural communities bill, the need for demonstration sites and events to showcase good practice, how it needs to inform action at an individual site level, the need to engage with young people, how the RLUF might inform the Local Development Plan (as part of an Evidence report), how the RLUF will link to Local Place Plans, how it fits with local authorities Forest & Woodland Strategies and Biodiversity strategies and how the assessment of success will be measured.

### **Next steps**

Following approval of the recommended changes to the RLUF by the two Local Authorities and subject to the endorsement of the REP, it is planned that the final version of the RLUF will be submitted to Scottish Ministers before the end of June 2024.

Thanks again to everybody who has engaged with the development of this first RLUF for the South of Scotland, we are very grateful to you for sharing your time and views which have been critical to shaping this pilot.

## Appendix A: Recommended Responses to Consultation Comments:

### Process undertaken to produce the RLUF

Main issues	Response	Recommendation
<b>Need for more engagement</b>		
A respondent feels that more effort to engage with local voluntary groups should be made (such as Facebook groups like saving Scottish squirrels) (#3 line 4)	Noted. We publicised events via multiple communication channels including press releases, social media, website, radio interviews. Details are summarised in section 2 of this consultation report.	No change required
Two respondents felt the stakeholder engagement sessions were not as widely promoted as they should be and as a result some were unaware. Additionally, one respondent felt the table discussions were limited / siloed, restricting discussion categories that could be contributed to (#6; #14). One respondent questioned if and how communities across the South of Scotland were invited to the stakeholder engagement session (#11)	Noted. We publicised events via multiple communication channels including press releases, social media, website, radio interviews. Details are summarised in section 2 of this consultation report. Others feedback that they enjoyed the wide ranging discussions. For future events should consider scope to allow participants to choose discussion groups.	No change required.
It was felt that this meeting was a bit 'random' and the group/local people had no financial investment in the changes and ideas proposed. (#20 line 21)	Noted, the aim of the pilot and stakeholder engagement events was to reach as wide a range of local people as possible, including those directly involved in using/managing the land and wider stakeholders who are impacted in various ways by it.	No change required
A respondent proposed on street consultations moving forward. (#21 line 22)	Noted, we will consider that option for future engagement.	No change required.
A respondent found that there were not enough consultation events across the region and efforts should have been made to engage with specific groups by seeking them out rather than hoping they will attend (#38 line 39)	Noted. There were multiple face to face and online engagement events. We publicised events via multiple communication channels including press releases, social media, website, radio interviews. Details are summarised in section 2 of this consultation report	No change required
It was felt that farmers and land managers were not engaged sufficiently. Farmers who are critical for any land use change will need to be brought on this journey (#47 line 48)	Noted. We publicised events via multiple communication channels including press releases, social media, website, radio interviews. Details are summarised in section 2 of this consultation report. Agriculture was an interest at all but 2 of the 20 events held in 'phase 2'; 16% of phase 2 participants said agriculture /farming was their interest. Specific events were also arranged for NFUS and SLE members.	No change required
<b>Technical terminology</b>		
A respondent identified an opportunity to educate on Natural Capital, the Just Transition and financial costs / potential returns (environmentally and financially) (#4 line 5)	Noted. The RLUF includes information on this and signposts where more information on said topic(s) can be found. Follow-on work should seek to raise awareness of these key concepts further whilst minimising use of jargon.	No change required.
A respondent identified that there have been numerous opportunities to contribute during the process of the project; however, terms	Noted. We tried wherever possible to avoid the use of jargon that would create barriers to engagement.	No change required.

such as, Natural Capital and Just Transition are used only to tick boxes.(#5 line 6)		
A respondent commented that the process of developing the framework limited community engagement; and that the engagement sessions were jargon heavy. A recommendation included having more staff available for smaller group discussions, recording what was said and more accessible language for the presentations (#15 line 16).	Noted. Please see response above. We tried wherever possible to avoid the use of jargon that would create barriers to engagement, or to explain technical terms where they were used. For follow-on work consider using more facilitators for discussions where resources allow.	No change required.
<b>Views not included in RLUF</b>		
Two respondents felt that the draft RLUF does not take account of the strength of feeling over additional Sitka forestry and the range of negative impacts it can have on landscape, walking routes, tourism, wildlife, flooding, roads, archaeology/ historical interest, food growing etc. (#17; #1)	Noted. We have aimed to reflect the wide range of views heard through the consultation events in the final RLUF. For example the need for "improved planning and design of commercial forestry expansion" is identified as one of five priority land use changes; p.33 references the strong preference from stakeholders for a higher proportion of native woodland and for the extent and design of commercial forestry to be more sensitive to local concerns; there is also a specific action identified on commercial forestry (table 6).	No change required.
A respondent raised the issue that their points of view and worries regarding land use changes in the region have been ignored. They are reluctant to spend time and energy in any future land use change consultation. (#18 line 19)	Noted. We have aimed to reflect the wide range of views heard through the consultation events in the final RLUF. An individual response has also been provided to the constituent's MP.	No change required.
A respondent feels that whilst the engagement was reasonable, it was not sufficiently linked up. The vision and objectives do not align with the views reflected in the meetings - feeling disenfranchised. (#29 line 30)	Noted. We have aimed to reflect the wide range of views heard through the consultation events in the final RLUF.	No change required
<b>Accurate Representation</b>		
This respondent felt that it should only be the public consulted, not stakeholders with vested interested. There should be far more online events which reach more of the general public and wider publicity. (#8 line 9)	Noted. We included both face to face and online events given the remit of the pilot to ensure that all stakeholders with an interest in land use had the opportunity to contribute. Events were publicised via multiple communication channels including press releases, social media, website, radio interviews. Details are summarised in section 2 of this consultation report.	No change required
A participant raised the point of attendance – the combined meetings has a total of 500 attendees but if one was to attend more than one they would be classed as separate attendees. 500 is an optimistic number. (#24 line 25)	Noted, but our data suggests there were very limited numbers of repeat attendees across events.	No change required
There is disappointment that other regions did not produce a document suitable to their area and the south of Scotland is diverse, yet the outcome is based upon 500 people engaging. (#25 line 26)	Noted. The South of Scotland RLUF has been developed as part of a pilot project, if considered to be successful then more may be implemented across other parts of Scotland.	No change required

Commercial forestry was felt to be singled out but it should be 'sustainable forest management' as all forest must comply with UKFS. Commercial agriculture or commercial windfarms were not singled out. (#27 line 28)	Noted, however stakeholder events highlighted significant concerns about commercial forestry and the RLUF sought to provide a balanced view, without singling out land uses but acknowledges where issues are of some concern.	No change required
This respondent felt that all aspects of agriculture should be represented for a balanced viewpoint to implement sound change (#31 line 32)	Noted, but the RLUF gives significant coverage to issues of agricultural sustainability and viability, including in the actions.	No change required
Engagement work delivered reasonable representation at meetings (#36 line 37).	Noted.	No change required
The engagement events were found to attract the 'usual suspects'. Hence the domination of nature and climate drivers over production (#41 line 42)	Noted. We did publicise events via multiple communication channels including press releases, social media, website, radio interviews. Details are summarised in section 2 of this consultation report. The process has provided for a range of interests including communities to participate.	No change required
This respondent felt that there was a lack of engagement with the agricultural community in the region – the agriculture community should be involved in this process (#51 line 52)	Noted. We did publicise events via multiple communication channels including press releases, social media, website, radio interviews. Details are summarised in section 2 of this consultation report. This included events with NFUS and SLE members.	No change required.
The representation of land owners/managers or agricultural businesses have been incorrectly represented in the consultation process. The report is felt to have a slightly anti-agricultural tone which fails to recognise the good work and positive practices already carried out by regional farmers (#54 line 55)	Noted, the need to maintain sustainable food production and food security is highlighted in the RLUF, as are issues of agricultural viability and sustainability.	No change required.
A respondent feels that there has been a one-sided push for answers that fit a narrative (#2 line 3)	Noted, but we profoundly disagree. We have sought to be open to all views.	No change required
<b>Running of engagement sessions</b>		
A respondent noted that the issues were complex and there was a lot to cover in one session. They attended a further session and now feel more au fait with the issues (#16 line 17).	Noted, we sought to balance enabling good discussion of issues with the number of issues covered within time and budget constraints.	No change required.
Stakeholders need to be clear on their role within the project to greater contribute to the plan. For example greater engagement with renewable industry sector re what developers need/can contribute (#49 line 50)	Noted, this is a pilot project but we hope to be able to provide more clarity on further work in the near future if further funding is forthcoming.	No change required
The team have done a good job for the resources they had. However, a more diverse and inclusive engagement	Noted. We did publicise events via multiple communication channels including press releases, social media, website, radio interviews.	No change required



programme is desired as it is a large region (#57 line 58)	Details are summarised in section 2 of this consultation report. The place-based engagement process was as extensive and inclusive within the constraints of the funding available.	
The engagement sessions did not provide an understanding of how the RLUP/RLUF will be used in practice. More moderation was needed to ensure everyone can ask a question and the sessions. The RLUF may not deliver the needs of those working within rural industries (#58 line 59)	Noted. This is a non-statutory document developed as part of a pilot project. How the RLUF could be used in practice is briefly outlined in the latter chapters of the document but will be determined after the pilot scheme has concluded. It is a dynamic process and the RLUF will continue to develop, and will take into account new factors as they emerge and seek to provide space for stakeholders, including rural industries to discuss and raise their own issues and proposed solutions.	No change required.
As a community organisation it is often felt that we are mined for our information, there needs to be more payback for the communities that you mine your information from. You might get feedback from those that can afford to come to meetings, rather than those that have most important information to give. (no.1)	Noted, we did engage people through a range of different channels including face to face meetings across the region and online events for those who could not attend in person. As this is a pilot project the 'payback' is uncertain but we hope that participants will be satisfied with the final product and that this becomes the start of a longer process of change.	No change required
We recognise that SOSE and other parties have endeavoured to establish an accepting environment for the exchange of views and the sharing of information, both of which are essential to any effective consultation process.	Noted.	No change required
<b>Support for Local Communities and Charities</b>		
A respondent highlighted the need for local communities and charities to get support through resources and planning policies to advance their plans e.g. constructing trails in the Tweed Valley; more native woodland creation. Government support, possibly through the Renewable Land Use Fund, is crucial; grants or matching funds from wind farm installations could also help, as well as government facilitation of renewable energy projects alongside significant community initiatives. (#13 line 14)	The funding opportunities are noted. Funding opportunities and involvement have been covered in the latter sections of the RLUF document, including dedicated appendix which references funding from wind farms.	<b>Non-significant change to 'funding sources' section to reference Renewable Land Use Fund.</b>
There should be a specific role for community councils (#35 line 36)	Noted, we will consider this in the next stage of work and through further engagement.	No change required
With what is happening around the world, more farmland cannot be taken up as there is a need for farmers (line 47)	Noted, the need to maintain sustainable food production and food security is highlighted in the RLUF.	No change required
<b>The origin of and how to use the RLUF</b>		
The online meeting felt like a pilot but not something that had funding or teeth (#26 line 27)	Noted. The South of Scotland RLUF is a pilot project, but the aim is to show how this can usefully inform policy and funding.	No change required
Afraid it seems a bit woolly (#30 line 31)	Noted.	No change required
It is not clear how individuals can be involved in the change (#32 line 33)	Noted, this is a pilot project but we hope to be able to provide more	No change required

	clarity on further work in the near future if/when further funding is forthcoming.	
A respondent has raised concern about conflict on interests as many board directors are endorsing net zero policy, effectively writing off the region for blanket commercial forestry (#37 line 38)	Noted, the governance structure provided tripartite representation: public sector, land use sector and communities.	No change required
One respondent queries how this piece of work came about as it is not clear (#39 line 40)	Noted. This is described in the Introduction.	No change required
The aims could have been more ambitious and wide ranging. "Time is not on our side for biodiversity loss and global warming" (#55 line 56).	Noted, we have sought to reflect a range of views.	No change required.

## Vision and objectives

Main issues	Response	Recommendation
<b>Funding concerns</b>		
A respondent suggested that greater mention of the evolving financial models and private capital returns is needed (no.4).	Noted, nature market opportunities are referenced in 'making use of the framework' and the funding appendix.	No change required.
A respondent thought there should be support via resources and planning policies to help push forward plans from local communities/ charities (no.13).	Noted, but this is a local issue which isn't considered to fit with the regional focus of the RLUF.	No change required.
A respondent supported the aim for integrated land use and agrees with the need for land use change to meet net zero and biodiversity targets (no.15). However, they believe the emphasis on utilising financial markets to deliver these is out of keeping with the vision of a Just Transition and Community Wealth Building (including community ownership).	Noted, there are risks associated with seeking private funding of nature restoration. However, as highlighted in Appendix A8 Private Funds there are a range of initiatives from UK and Scottish Governments to try to mitigate these and secure community benefits.	No change required.
<b>The scope of the objectives</b>		
A respondent notes that the objectives are to be applauded but the whole world needs to see the vision and objectives (no. 30).	Noted.	No change required.
A respondent believes that some objectives may require change in national legislation (no. 34).	Noted, it is hoped that this RLUF could influence Scottish Government policy.	No change required.
A respondent thinks the vision and objectives are right for this first iteration. They note they depend on the extent to which landowners choices are informed by economic opportunities. In their opinion, linking the incentives regime for agriculture and forestry expansion to the principles in the RLUF will be crucial (no. 36). They also note that the document recognises urgent deadlines yet somehow lacks a sense of urgency.	Noted, it is hoped that this RLUF could influence Scottish Government policy. Key content such as the sections on targets and climate change seek to communicate the urgency of action. We will consider how to more clearly convey a sense of urgency in follow-on work	No change required.
A respondent (no.60) agrees with the objectives in principle. However, there are elements which have been missed, including recreation, renewable energy, housing and young people. They also felt it would be beneficial to outline the interplay between the RLUP/ RLUF and existing good practice such as those from Scottish Land Commission.	Noted. The vision and objectives are relatively high-level, but these elements are all picked up through the document (including some in the targets section) and are covered via aims regarding net zero and supporting a wellbeing economy.	<b>Non-significant amendment – add a reference to the SLC's advice to Scottish Government on establishing the RLUPs, which form the basis of the pilots, and making use of good practise including SLC guidance in any implementation phase.</b>
A respondent (no.61) noted that the Vision and Objectives set out in the Framework appear to be acceptable and commendable, though this depends on the outsourcing of resources are also environmentally sustainable and acceptable. They would like to see emphasis on organic farming initiatives.	Noted. The vision and objectives are high-level and thus do not directly mention specific measures such as organic farming.	No change required.
<b>The scope of the vision</b>		
A respondent (no.42) noted that they particularly liked the visions for each region and about community involvement. They note there is a lot in	Noted.	No change required.

them and that this could form the basis for a community mandate, either via endorsement by local Councillors and/or at broader community consultation.		
Respondent 43 noted that the vision focuses on Natural Capital being appreciated and delivering improved benefits for all, but they believe that the quality of nature and the land is so central to this that it is worth expressing clearly that the RLUF aims to deliver multiple benefits through a more strategic, collaborative and sustainable management of the land. However, they see how the current wording nods to multiple objectives of Scottish Government.	Noted, we agree on the need for land use to deliver multiple benefits. This is highlighted in key section such as the executive summary and introduction.	No change required.
Respondent 47 commented that there is no long term vision for the 16 million trees cut down in Scotland already.	We were not clear on the specific point being made here, but the RLUF makes extensive references to commercial forestry.	No change required.
Respondent 48 questions if the vision should more explicitly capture the overarching ethos, such as resetting the relationship between businesses and communities and their natural environment to deliver a sustainable rural economy that works for both people and nature and meets the 30 x 30 goals in Scotland. They note that linking incentive schemes for agricultural and forestry to the principles laid out in the RLUF will be crucial. Additionally, the respondent notes that the apparent heavy reliance on private sector funding is a concern, as they believe there is no assurance that private interests will deliver the RLUF's objectives in the absence of a regulatory framework.	Noted. The 30x30 goals are considered in the targets for the RLUF. We agree that ideally the RLUF would inform wider funding decisions. We also agree that there are risks associated with seeking private funding of nature restoration, but as highlighted in Appendix A8 there are a range of initiatives from UK and Scottish Governments to try to mitigate these and secure community benefits.	No change required.
Respondent 50 is partly satisfied with the Vision and Objectives set out in the Framework, but believes there needs to be a realignment between the RLUF and the National Planning Framework 4, which revolves around how Scotland is going to reach Net Zero by 2045. They note that whilst achieving net zero is mentioned in the Vision, they believe it should be the guiding principle for the RLUF, helping to direct the other ambitions. They found it pleasing to see the objectives including the need to deliver "multiple benefits of value to society" from the land, instead of identifying single uses for areas of land in the South of Scotland.	Noted. The RLUF has been prepared with consideration of National Planning Framework 4. Achieving net zero is also considered in the targets for the RLUF, but arguably needs to be considered alongside other objectives such as food production and nature recovery.	No change required.
Respondent 57 believes there is too much emphasis on woodland planting targets and not enough on conservation of other habitat types and integration of these. They comment that the challenge is to look at everything holistically and that in the countryside, everything is linked and a change can have far reaching impacts elsewhere. They believe that our greatest asset is the land itself.	Noted. The vision and objectives considers the importance of natural capital, biodiversity and nature-positive outcomes in general and land uses such as peatland restoration. The objectives also outline aims to identify and understand competing pressures on land and positively influence land use.	No change required.
A group of respondents (4, 5, 7, 58) believed the wording of the vision and objectives need to be revised. Respondents 4, 5, 7 and 58 all felt that the wording is too high-level and simplistic. Respondent 7 also felt that the objectives should be more plainly worded.	Noted. The vision and objectives are intended to be high-level and strategic to guide the RLUF. The document makes multiple references to regenerative agriculture.	No change required.

<b>Renewable energy issues</b>		
<p>A number of respondents (8, 9, 23, 60) made comments regarding renewable energy, including wind. Both respondents 23 and 60 think that the Vision and Objectives do not adequately address renewable energy, including their development in and effect on the rural environment. Respondent 8 thinks that too much land is being used for renewable energy projects, impacting on food security and that this should therefore be part of the first objective. They welcome references to peatland restoration, but believe this would be unnecessary if the land disturbed for wind farm construction was left alone. Respondent 9 believes wind power is industrialising the Scottish landscape and decimating birds, bats and insects as well as negatively impacting on people living nearby.</p>	<p>Noted. The vision and objectives are relatively high-level and thus do not mention such elements in detail, though such challenges are covered by objectives such as the need to understand competing pressures on land. Renewable energy is also explicitly referenced in the targets and through the document. The RLUF aims to ensure plans and decisions about land use deliver improved and enduring benefits for all, and to positively influence land use.</p>	<p><b>Non-significant change to text at bottom of p.33 to explicitly reference significant concerns from some stakeholders about the environmental impacts of renewable energy development, particularly wind turbines.</b></p>
<b>Support for native forestry</b>		
<p>A group of respondents (5, 8, 28, 36, 13) noted their support of native forestry. Respondent 8 commented that they believe that native forestry should be promoted as commercial forestry already enjoys too much subsidy and land use. Respondent 28 noted that they think that the rapid expansion of commercial spruce forestry has damaged the region, and the reputation of forestry. They suggest that foresters have become addicted to Sitka and are ripping up Scotland. Regarding the delivery of more native woodland, respondent 13 notes that from a planning perspective, there is massive want from the local mountain bike community for more native woodland to be planted around trails. They believe support from government to help deliver will be crucial, given this would put extra strain on FLS to change their land management plans and plant native woodlands within their current commercial forests. More resources must be given to FLS. However, Respondent 5 noted that they are unhappy at the duality of native woodland and commercial conifer forestry. They believe this is too simplistic and that other options are available. Respondent 36 commented that they think that the vision and objectives depend on the extent to which landowners' choices are informed by economic opportunities. In their opinion, linking the incentives regime for agriculture and forestry expansion to the principles in the RLUF will be crucial. Respondent 36 appreciates that it is a government decision that has yet to be made.</p>	<p>Noted. Increasing native woodland is included in the vision and references are made to this through the document, as well as to concerns about commercial forestry. The RLUF is a non-statutory document developed as part of a pilot project. How the RLUF will be used in practice is outlined in the latter chapters of the document, but will be determined after the pilot scheme has concluded and by how Scottish Government responds.</p>	<p>No change required.</p>
<b>Concerns about delivery</b>		
<p>A group of respondents (6, 7, 36, 48, 58) questioned the method of delivery of the vision and objectives.</p> <p>Respondents 36 and 48 outlined that there is little explanation on how the vision and objectives would be delivered other than through existing plans and procedures, 36 notes that therefore the role of the RLUF is unclear. Respondent 7 commented that the first objective means little in practice and that this version of the RLUF does not have specific targets.</p>	<p>Noted. Specific targets for land use change have not been set in this first version of the RLUF, but relevant targets set by Scottish Government are referred to. More robust targets will be set out in future versions. The South of Scotland RLUF is a pilot project, but the aim is to show how this can usefully inform policy and funding and thus delivery.</p>	<p>No change required.</p>

<p>Respondent 58 noted that they believe that what matters is how the vision and objectives are achieved and what resources are added to current spending to do this.</p> <p>Respondent 6 questioned how land use will deliver a wellbeing economy with the government, including the civil service, in its existing form. They believe the vision and objectives should acknowledge the realities and challenges posed by how the government operates in practice.</p>		
<p>Respondents 48 and 49 believe that there is a need for integration between scales of action and the country level vision and objectives should provide the overarching driver and the government should be much more directive in its requirements for regional action. Respondent 49 commented that if this was the case, the purpose of the RLUP and RLUF would be much more obvious. The RLUF would effectively be a delivery mechanism for national objectives. However, since the government has given all the pilots a great degree of latitude in taking their own RLUF forward, each has had to create its own vision and objectives. Respondent 49 believes that while it is right that each region will deal with different issues because of the differences between regions and therefore may have different ways forward, the over-arching vision is effectively the same - reducing emissions and enhancing biodiversity through land use change whilst continuing to support a sustainable land use sector. Respondent 48 commented that it's not clear how much opportunity there actually is for regional variation.</p>	<p>Noted, the vision and objectives of the RLUF have been directly informed by Scottish government policy, amongst other things. For example, explicit reference is made to key Scottish Government targets. At this stage the national targets have not been disaggregated to regional targets, but the RLUF suggests that these could be used to inform the setting of regional targets in the next version of this RLUF.</p>	<p>No change required.</p>
<p><b>Wider comments</b></p>		
<p>A respondent believes that the south of Scotland's farmers and landowners have been doing a good job of managing the land for years (no.23).</p>	<p>Noted.</p>	<p>No change required.</p>
<p>A respondent feels there is a lot of crossover with other Scottish Government policy such as the National Planning Framework. They believe this should also give decision makers the ability to engender Climate Change and Biodiversity loss in approved applications. They also note that there is no indication on how the extra bureaucracy or funding to deliver change will be met (no.25).</p>	<p>Noted, this is a pilot project. More detail regarding targets and funding will be included in future iterations of the plan, informed by the policy/funding decisions of Scottish Government.</p>	<p>No change required.</p>
<p>A group of respondents (6, 9, 15) questioned the validity of a "just transition" and its delivery. Respondent 6 noted that a "just transition" to Net Zero is predicted to cause massive social upheaval. They also questioned the validity of a just transition, suggesting the means by which it is to be achieved do not look "just", "fair", or good for "wellbeing". In addition, Respondent 9 believes that a just transition to net zero will not produce a nature positive outcome. Respondent 15 believes that the emphasis on utilising financial markets to deliver on net zero and biodiversity targets is out of keeping with the vision of a Just Transition and Community Wealth Building. They also believe that community ownership is a key pillar of Community Wealth Building and vital to a Just Transition, but is under threat by encouraging investment in land by large external corporations.</p>	<p>Noted. Scottish Government has set out policy on a Just Transition, which relates to greening the economy in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind. A just transition does not directly address nature positive outcomes, though mitigating climate change will indirectly. The Scottish Government has also published Interim Principles for Responsible Investment in Natural Capital and will draft a market framework.</p>	<p>No change required.</p>

<p>Related to the targets, one respondent asked: If the South of Scotland already exceeds the Scottish Government target for woodland cover, why keep creating more plantations? If the South of Scotland is already a net exporter of energy, what is the rationale for doubling it? Regional targets could be a good approach if the Scottish target is based on current standing as well as aspirational (no.48)</p>	<p>Noted. A wide range of factors needs to be considered when setting targets, for example some of argued that the region's climate is particularly well suited to timber production and that demand is high and increasing.</p>	<p>No change required.</p>
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## Mapping

Main issues	Response	Recommendation
<b>Need for more engagement / information</b>		
A group of nine respondents (no's. 3, 5, 14, 28, 36, 42, 49, 50, 58), stated that the mapping is of too large a scale and the lack of a zoom function renders the maps as non-specific/ not detailed enough. For example, respondent 36 states that the mapping offer a strong visual 'big picture', but that their purpose and relevance to the RLUF is not clear.	Noted. The mapping is intended to provide an overview of key data across the region – the 'big picture' - consistent with the broad, strategic focus of the RLUF. This provides an indication of the location of natural capital assets and broad opportunity areas. Data resolution limitations mean zooming into a finer scale is often not appropriate. However, some higher resolution mapping was made available in an interactive format on the Consultation Hub. With better data we would hope to do more of this in future. We can investigate including additional datasets on the Consultation hub in the next stage. Further mapping will be required at the next stage to inform more local decision making.	No change required.
22 respondents stated the mapping data is not specific enough for the purposes of the RLUF.	Noted. The mapping is intended to provide an overview of key data across the region – the 'big picture' - consistent with the broad, strategic focus of the RLUF. This provides an indication of the location of natural capital assets and broad opportunity areas. Data limitations mean zooming into a finer scale is often not appropriate. However, some higher resolution mapping was made available in an interactive format on the Consultation Hub. With better data we would hope to do more of this in future. We can investigate including additional datasets on the Consultation hub in the next stage. Further mapping will be required at the next stage to inform more local decision making.	<b>Non-significant change - provide text alongside maps to explain non-interactivity.</b>
Seven respondents (no's. 11, 24, 26, 42,49, 52, and 59) state that the mapping data would benefit from the use of an interactive format to better view the illustrated information.	Noted. The mapping is intended to provide an overview of key data across the region – the 'big picture'. Data limitations mean zooming into a finer scale is often not appropriate. However, some higher resolution mapping was made available in an interactive format on the Consultation Hub. With better data we would hope to do more of this in future.	No change required.
<b>Maps not included in the RLUF</b>		
Several respondents (no's. 17, 20, and 21) stated a map illustrating latest forestry cover/impacts should be included.	Noted, it is our view that maps referenced in the RLUF including the interactive Scotland Habitat and Land Cover Map (p.13), Figure 9 (Native woodland habitat network) and Figure 10 (Woodland Expansion Advisory Group) provide a sufficient high level map of the area's existing and planned woodland, based on the best available data.	No change required.
A respondent suggests the mapping should include information of the current context, and anticipated future context for each dataset (no.1) .	Noted. The figures are intended to provide a high-level view of the data, including both existing context and future opportunities. For example, the interactive Scotland Habitat and Land Cover Map (referenced on p.13) provides useful data on current land cover. We hope to have access to better quality data going forwards.	No action required.
A respondent (no.3) states a figure identifying flood risk areas would be welcomed, particularly where land use changes would reduce flood risk.	Noted, flood risk is mentioned several times during the RLUF, particularly in relation to woodlands and planting. A figure illustrating the potential reduction in flooding could have value	No change required.



	but we were unable to source appropriate mapping for this RLUF version.	
Some respondents (13, 17, and 21) stated the figures should provide more data on woodlands.	Noted, it is our view that maps referenced in the RLUF including the interactive Scotland Habitat and Land Cover Map (p.13), Figure 9 (Native woodland habitat network) and Figure 10 (Woodland Expansion Advisory Group) provide a sufficient high level map of the area's existing and planned woodland, based on the best available data.	No change required.
Respondent 15 suggests a figure illustrating land ownership data would be welcomed.	Noted, unfortunately this was outside the remit of the current RLUF but would be something to seek for more detailed planning.	No change required.
A respondent (no.59) would welcome mapping illustrating areas of high-biodiversity interest, particularly in reference to bird migration and habitats.	Noted, we have sought to draw on the best, most up to date and freely available data. Figure 5 maps a range of designated sites for nature. We hope to have access to better quality data going forwards.	No change required.
Respondents 47 and 49 request further mapping is provided on renewables, nature conservation and enhancement, analysing where native and commercial forestry could be appropriate – such as an overlay of figures 9 and 10.	Noted, an overlay map to provide greater detail and crossover between related datasets would be a useful comparison tool. We will explore the creation of more interactive mapping allowing such comparisons of datasets in future iterations of the RLUF.	No change required.
<b>Suitability of the mapping</b>		
A respondent (no.53) questions the suitability of the mapping data for the Scottish Borders, noting the exclusion of most of the Borders as areas suitable for woodland creation and silvo-pasture as an oversight.	Noted, we have sought to draw on the best, most up to date and freely available data. The JHI maps give an indication of the scale of land use change that might be required to address the climate and biodiversity crises; the land use change maps were explicitly described as for illustration only (p.29). We hope to be able to access to better quality data going forwards.	No change required.
<b>Other comments</b>		
A large group of 20 responses supported the fact that the mapping helps to provide an overall high-level overview / point of reference for each subject, offering clarity and highlighting local implications.	Noted, the purpose of the mapping data is to provide an overview of the information provided in the RLUF.	No change required.
Two respondents (20 and 28) suggested that the data illustrated in the maps is out of date.	Noted, we have sought to draw on the best, most up to date and freely available data. We hope to have access to better quality data going forwards.	No change required.
Two respondents (no's 31 and 32) suggested that the mapping data is too detailed and should be simplified for the public's consumption.	Noted. The figures are intended to provide a high-level view of data as a reference point for the information provided within the RLUF. Others have suggested the data lacks detail.	No action required.
Respondent 11 suggests the mapping data is too selective in what it details. However, the respondent accepts they offer a good visual indication of the key statistical data.	Noted. The figures are intended to provide a high-level view of the data as a reference point.	No action required.
One respondent recommended three edits: Please add the GSA Biosphere boundary on Figure 5: Tourism and Recreation as it is referenced in the text. In the Recreation and Tourism section, it would be helpful to mention	Noted, these are helpful suggestions for edits to improve the clarity of the mapping. The biosphere boundary is included in the figure on page 22. We will review the available data on coastal paths and update where we can; and amend the figure numbering and legend.	<b>Non-significant amendment – minor edits to Figure 6 and figure numbering.</b>

and map the coastal paths. The second Figure 5 needs to be renamed Figure 6: Nature. Please include in the legend what the river designation colours indicate. Please remove the "Reserve" in the legend for the Biosphere (that term is not used) (no.48).

## Actions

Main issues	Response	Recommendation
<b>Need for more information on delivery</b>		
Implementation should be trackable from community feedback all the way through to land use change and specific outcomes. It feels like the audience engaged has been selective, and much more like a communication than a consultation. (no.11)	Noted, we have aimed to be transparent in the process to date. With regard to audience, we did engage a wide range of people through multiple channels including face to face meetings across the region and online events for those who could not attend in person. We publicised events via press releases, social media, website, radio interviews. Details are summarised in section 2 of this consultation report.	No change required.
Four respondents (22, 38, 42, and 60) have suggested that funding for the changes proposed within the RLUF are unclear. More information is required such as accountable budgets to ensure public consultation, recognising local capacity and expertise. An indication of whether the RLUF takes precedence over existing statutory bodies and organisations would also be welcomed.	The South of Scotland RLUF is a pilot project, but the aim is to show how this can usefully inform policy and funding. We hope to be able to provide more clarity when policy on RLUFs is clarified.	No change required.
A large group of respondents, seven in total (7, 26, 38, 42, 47, 49, and 54), believe the RLUF is too vague in several areas. Namely referring to a lack of clear guidance as to how the information will be implemented; an insufficient focus on key areas, with focus being spread too widely and potentially limiting effectiveness; deliverability; a need for an action plan to prove viability; and the number of short-term actions being considered unrealistic.	Noted. In relation to the focus, the RLUF intends to raise awareness of the many issues impacting on the region to inform long-term decisions about land use to meet national, regional and local needs. The RLUF is a pilot project and currently has no powers or funding for an implementation phase. Implementation is in part reliant on the decision of Scottish Ministers and will be detailed in further reports – it is therefore outside of the RLUF's scope to detail full implementation methods. The actions are at a higher strategic level, to develop programmes and to bid for funding and to facilitate the discussions that will be required at a local level that can lead to implementation on the ground. The reality of implementing a number of short-term actions at once will be reviewed to ensure viability of the plans.	No change required.
There is no indication of how biodiversity and climate change outcomes will be incentivised or financed. (no.25)	The RLUF is reliant on support from external bodies including the Scottish Government to incentivise and finance the actions set out.	No change required.
<b>Suggested additions</b>		
A respondent noted the draft is a good start however the commercial forestry design should include a wider variety of species. More needs to be said on how to implement nature friendly farming or regenerative agriculture. Encouragement for accessibility and tourism should be pushed further. (no.5)	Noted, these issues are all covered in different parts of the draft document and the actions section also includes actions on commercial forestry, regenerative agriculture and access and tourism.	<b>Non-significant amendment – add a reference to collaborative forest design and planning in the relevant action on p50.</b>
There are too many actions deemed short term, so insufficient focus - the prioritisation should be more granular. (no.7)	Noted, there are multiple short term actions, but this is principally because there is an urgent need for action. We will review and short-list a set of priority actions from the list in the next phase.	No change required.

<p>The Next Steps section represents a challenging list which we hope partners in the Local Economic Forum with resources are able to facilitate. We welcome the intention to use the work done over the last two years to move forward to tackle the challenges in the South of Scotland. We wonder whether the actions would benefit from each having an identified lead partner. (no.36)</p>	<p>This is under consideration and however further information on the specifics of identifying partners is currently outside of the scope.</p>	<p>No change required.</p>
<p><b>Funding concerns</b></p>		
<p>Two respondents were concerned that private investors will extract revenue from nature capital without considering local communities and community wealth building (no.6, no.15)</p>	<p>Noted. The Scottish Government has published Interim Principles for Responsible Investment in Natural Capital and will draft a market framework which will aim to manage such risks and ensure projects deliver benefits for local communities.</p>	<p>No change required.</p>
<p>A respondent was worried about more woodland creation on productive land, focused on money without any real interest in communities or environment. If more people owned smaller pockets of land, there would be a massive increase in biodiversity, and a much more resilient landscape (no.1).</p>	<p>Noted, similar views were shared by many stakeholders engaged during development of the RLUF. The draft RLUF highlights strong support for greater community involvement in forestry planning, regulation, consideration of cumulative impacts and better design. See also separate proposed amendment to reference collaborative design of forestry.</p>	<p>No change required.</p>
<p><b>Views not included in the RLUF</b></p>		
<p>A respondent suggested we need a bigger push towards integrated farming which is better for the earth biome and uses less chemicals. To take away arable and grazing land for either wind turbines or solar farms is counterproductive (no.2).</p>	<p>Noted, the draft RLUF includes a section on moving towards more sustainable agricultural practices; and also highlights the importance of planning renewable energy carefully so that opportunities to enhance our natural capital assets are considered, at the same time as negative impacts are avoided or mitigated.</p>	<p>No change required.</p>
<p>Five respondents (1, 6, 14, 17, and 49) have voiced concerns over the RLUF having too much of a focus on economics and commercially driven infrastructure. They suggest this comes at the expense of environmental wellbeing and tourism. In addition to these respondents, a number of responses suggest a strong feeling amongst the community that commercial forestry is undesirable and unwanted. The respondents suggest the community have not been listened to in this regard.</p>	<p>Noted. The delivery of the RLUF is linked to the Regional Economic Strategy but the focus clearly extends to environmental challenges including climate change and biodiversity loss (e.g. see vision and objectives). The RLUF seeks to reflect a range of views as well as existing and emerging policy and strategy. p.33 references the strong preference from stakeholders for a higher proportion of native woodland and for the extent and design of commercial forestry to be more sensitive to local concerns; there is also a specific action identified on commercial forestry (table 6).</p>	<p><b>Non-significant amendment – strengthen reference to community engagement to facilitate resilient woodland creation.</b></p>
<p>A respondent suggested community education and involvement should be a priority, potentially by independent experts and combined with local Place Plans (no.4)</p>	<p>Noted, we agree this is important. The recommendations and actions cover catchment plans, enabling local communities to develop local land use visions and capacity building. We will consider use of independent facilitators for follow-on work with communities.</p>	<p>No change required.</p>
<p>The plan as adopted has not reflected a fully collaborative process that has listened and incorporated the view of productive forestry. As such it is not possible to establish a plan of priority actions. We note with concern comments</p>	<p>Noted, we have sought to provide multiple opportunities for all stakeholders to shape the content of this draft RLUF. We publicised events via multiple communication channels including press releases, social media, website, radio</p>	<p>No change required.</p>

around "restructuring" with no detail on why this is required, what improved outcomes will this deliver and most importantly what elements will be considered as requiring restructuring. (62)	interviews. Details are summarised in section 2 of this consultation report. We recognise the ongoing need for engagement with productive forestry stakeholders.	
Six respondents (1, 23, 28, 29, 31, and 53) voice a disagreement with the land use changes proposals. The respondents take a particularly negative view of the use of government / tax payer money for funding of the forestry industry.	Noted. Land use changes are a necessary intervention to effectively balance the economic, natural, and social environments of the region. The RLUF identifies principles to support decision making and existing funding opportunities to enable land use change. The funding behind commercial forestry businesses is outside of the RLUF's scope.	No change required.
Three respondents (5, 21, and 61) stated that habitat management is not given enough consideration and further detail is necessary.	Noted. Where possible, the RLUF details good management practice guidance. However, it is outside of the scope of the document to provide specific management plans.	No change required.
Respondents 16 and 42 state social housing should be a consideration.	Noted: social housing is an important consideration for the region. However, it is outside the scope of the RLUF but does link to other initiatives under the Regional Economic Strategy.	No change required.
<b>Renewable energy</b>		
A respondent suggested we need to consider other renewable energy in addition to wind and solar, especially small scale hydro for small communities (no.3).	Noted, we agree that small hydro can also be relevant and there are references to this technology through the RLUF including in the 'vision realised' section.	No change required.
Three respondents (3, 50, and 51) have provided suggestions and queries related to renewable energy. One respondent (no.3) states considerations should be made for additional generation types (i.e. hydro). The other respondents lean towards querying the commitment, highlighting that no mention of onshore wind or other renewable energy technologies are listed in the RLUF actions.	Noted. Renewable energy development is listed as a priority land use change and references are made to onshore wind. Denoting locations for such infrastructure lies within the remit of statutory planning and is not within the scope of the RLUF. The renewable energy actions focus on additional guidance which could help inform the statutory planning process, including sub-catchment plans to inform opportunities for hydrogen and other renewable developments.	<b>Non-significant amendment - to broaden the types of renewable energy referred to in the renewables actions.</b>
Respondent (no.61) provides an alternative argument to that of the above. They state the increased extent and scale of renewable energy schemes and associated infrastructure is damaging to the environment, community, and tourism interests.	Noted. There is little evidence to support this argument. All renewable energy development will be sensitively located and subject to strict planning legislation to avoid damaging the environment, community and tourism interests.	No change required.
Four respondents (2, 8, 9, and 18) have voiced concerns over the plans for new renewable energy infrastructure and name concerns such as pollution and safety.	Noted. These matters are for consideration by statutory planning and other statutory bodies and are outside the scope of the RLUF.	No change required.
<b>Need for more engagement / information</b>		
A large number of respondents, fifteen in total (2, 11, 13, 15, 17, 27, 28, 32, 33, 35, 39, 48, 49, 59, and 60) have stated that the interest of individuals and the community need to be better maintained. This refers to a multitude of factors, namely, giving agency to locals to ensure economic and social impacts benefit their	Noted. The intention of this consultation stage of the RLUF is to ensure the local community are given agency over the framework. In completing this we hope to keep the RLUF guidance consistent with the wants and needs of the community and other stakeholders.	No change required.

communities, helping to bring forward local plans and supporting charities. Respondents state land managers and residents want more engagement with the process and say over land use.		
Two respondents (7 and 50) request for a clearer timeline of the targets and actions set out within the RLUF to be provided. This would ideally be presented alongside an integration plan.	Noted. We endeavour to make the targets of the RLUF as tangible as possible and set out, where possible the timeline for achieving the proposed changes. The RLUF is not yet at a stage where an Implementation Plan could be provided with enough certainty to ensure accuracy of information. This is dependent on stakeholders and can be investigated further in an implementation phase.	No change required.
Further information on the implementation and funding of actions is requested by four respondents (26, 39, 55, and 57). In addition, a method of monitoring the improvements is suggested.	Monitoring is suggested within the RLUF as an appropriate method of evaluation within the 'Making use of the Framework' section. This could be expanded upon. The sources of funding and methods of implementation are not available for discussion at this point in time, but will be further developed as part of an implementation phase.	No change required.
Respondent 34 states that more information should be made available on flooding. In doing so, they suggest that land use management could be informed by hydrological modelling data.	Flood risk has been considered in the RLUF. Hydrological modelling data is currently unavailable; however, this will inform later stages (more in-depth) analysis of areas e.g. sub-catchments in the future.	No change required.
Further detail on the location and specification of renewable energy clusters are requested by respondents 45 and 48. They note that the area already has a large population of wind turbines, comparatively to other regions.	The specifics of renewable energy sites and infrastructure are within the remit of statutory planning and are outside of the scope of the RLUF. Accurate locations for these clusters cannot be provided until plans are made available by developers.	No change required.
<b>Other comments</b>		
Two respondents (5 and 16) hold concerns in relation to forestry proposals. The lack of diversification in species being planted is questioned, particularly with information on the proportion that will be native species.	Noted, forestry diversity is limited by the requirements of commercial forestry, and where this is not the case, Riparian woodland creation is preferred as it provides significant benefits for biodiversity, providing additional shading to support the survival of key species. Local species are therefore prioritised.	No change required.
I cannot see how these priorities move South of Scotland forward other than encouraging more commercial woodland with few native species and more wind farms. The report needs to find a better balance and some suggestion as to how these different and competing land use options can be achieved. (no.29)	Noted. We have sought to communicate a balanced view based on the evidence reviewed and views heard.	No change required.
Why have the carbon emissions of aeroplanes not been included in the carbon emissions negatives list? (no.31)	This is outside of the scope of the RLUF.	No change required.
Overpopulation of deer is resulting in a lack of tree regeneration; current deer population control measures are insufficient. (no.34)	This is outside of the scope of the RLUF.	No change required.
Positives of nature restoration, biodiversity and regenerative farming, and rightly calls for a balance to be struck	Noted. These views have been considered and a balanced approach between including sufficient and	<b>Non-significant amendment – seek to add more data</b>

<p>over future land use. However, there is some economic reality missing and an anti-agriculture undertone alienating locals. The report has a very anti-agriculture undertone and seems to portray our regions farmers and land managers as people who care only about financial profit and nothing about nature or soil condition. This shows a lack of knowledge and awareness of the values and practices of farmers currently and could be dangerous.</p>	<p>moderated areas for all land uses. However we acknowledge that more could be added on the economics of agriculture. Soil conditions will be considered where necessary in future legislation.</p>	<p><b>on the economics of agriculture across the region.</b></p>
<p>There isn't much reference to the Scottish Borders RLUF Pilot work undertaken in 2015. (no.56)</p>	<p>Noted.</p>	<p>No change required.</p>
<p>Need also to plan land use changes within Galloway Forest Park. Need a more ambitious 30-year transition towards native woodland and peatland restoration. We need something more like the New Forest. (no.28)</p>	<p>Noted. This can be considered further in the next phase, in discussion with Forestry &amp; Land Scotland.</p>	<p>No change required.</p>
<p>Basic rights to roam and path and rights of way marks generally cease to exist with forestry plantation. As does access to historic sites within them, and parking facilities. Paths should be genuinely maintained and created, as should landscape viewing site lines through the forestry. (no.37)</p>	<p>Noted. The intention of the RLUF is to set out a concise vision and objectives for land use across the region before providing information on existing land use and drivers for change. The points raised have been considered.</p>	<p>No change required.</p>

## Monitoring and assessment

Main issues	Response	Recommendation
<b>More/better targets</b>		
A respondent feels that the draft framework needs to be more target focused, identifying specific actions and providing a structure on how they will be implemented and measured (participant 3)	Noted. A clear and proportionate monitoring framework, drawing on readily available datasets, will be developed for monitoring the impacts of the South of Scotland RLUF pilot. This will include targets were relevant.	No change required
A respondent believed that there is no metric which can measure if the outcomes are achieved or improved (participant 25).	It is hoped that a clear and proportionate monitoring framework, drawing on readily available datasets, will be developed for monitoring the impacts of the South of Scotland RLUF pilot	No change required.
A respondent feels that the document is an example of 'greenwashing'. The only two targets that they feel are measurable are the 'state of the nature measurement' and the 'measurable targets for land use' (participant 7)	Noted. We trust that implementations of these monitoring arrangements will help to develop lessons from the RLUP/ RLUF process to inform future iterations of the South of Scotland RLUF, as well as for other RLUFs across Scotland. Clearer targets and indicators will be developed in an implementation phase as action planning is taken forward and supporting policy is clarified.	No change required.
<b>Independence of the monitoring</b>		
A participant believed that the framework needs more independent monitoring with a balance of views and experience (participant 37).	Noted, the monitoring is likely to be undertaken by SOSE in support of the REP. The aim will be to report on this in an objective and transparent way so the data can be interrogated by all.	No change required.
A respondent notes that it is not clear whether the monitoring and assessment will be independent or internal. They note that it would be most appropriate for it to be independent (participant 15) .	Noted, the monitoring is likely to be undertaken by SOSE in support of the REP. The aim will be to report on this in an objective and transparent way so the data can be interrogated by all.	No change required
A participant stated that they doubt that the interpretation of the monitoring will be undertaken by 'free thinking people' (participant 9).	Noted, the monitoring is likely to be undertaken by SOSE in support of the REP. The aim will be to report on this in an objective and transparent way so the data can be interrogated by all.	No change required. .
A respondent noted that the monitoring and assessment is both costly and subjective and depends on the integrity and impartiality of the assessor (participant 45).	Noted, the monitoring is likely to be undertaken by SOSE in support of the REP. The aim will be to report on this in an objective and transparent way so the data can be interrogated by all.	No change required.
There is insufficient detail to make informed comment. Who and how will "a clear and proportionate monitoring framework" be established? Who will choose the "indicators" who decides "the relationships between inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes". The essential concern we have is the individuals, mechanisms and process for the establishment of monitoring arrangements are not articulated. It is recommended	Noted, the monitoring is likely to be undertaken by SOSE in support of the REP. The aim will be to report on this in an objective and transparent way so the data can be interrogated by all.	No change required.



that the monitoring and assessment framework be established through a secondary process that not only has an open consultation process but that also integrates into the processes established for the other regions of the country and integrates into established Scottish Government processes. (62)		
<b>More information needed</b>		
This respondent states that little detail on how the framework will be monitored and assessed has been provided (participant 14)	Noted. A clear and proportionate monitoring framework, drawing on readily available datasets, will be developed for monitoring the impacts of the South of Scotland RLUF.	No change required
A respondent queries what the suggested 5 year review interval is based on (participant 6)	The RLUF is based on landscape scale so this is likely to take time to implement on the ground, therefore a 5-year review cycle seems appropriate.	No change required
One participant stated that it will be important to establish a set of measurable outcomes that relate to the driver of reducing emissions to reach net zero e.g. restored peatlands, more farm woodlands or hedgerows, reduced emissions, strengthened local supply chains delivering better returns to farmers etc (participant 49).	A clear and proportionate monitoring framework, drawing on readily available datasets, will be developed for monitoring the impacts of the South of Scotland RLUF pilot.	No change required.
One respondent believed that the current actions in the framework are too difficult measure. Further to this, a concrete commitment for long-term funding is needed in order to have confidence related to monitoring and assessing (participant 45).	A clear and proportionate monitoring framework, drawing on readily available datasets, will be developed for monitoring the impacts of the South of Scotland RLUF pilot subject to securing sufficient funding.	No change required.
One participant stated that it will be important to develop and agree baseline measures quickly so that there are some measures against which to assess progress (participant 36).	Noted. Agree it is important to establish a baseline, we think that the draft RLUF does this, including through the diverse data and mapping included. Ideally more data on the state of nature across the region would be available and we would seek to address this in an implementation stage.	No change required.
<b>Other comments</b>		
One participant stated that monitoring and assessing the impacts of the pilot and framework will be hard as the actions are very hard to measure (participant 48).	A clear and proportionate monitoring framework, drawing on readily available datasets, will be developed for monitoring the impacts of the South of Scotland RLUF pilot.	No change required.
A participant felt that the modes of monitoring and assessment are satisfactory when assessing whether the RLUF objectives/ actions are complying with national outcomes and other policy documents such as NPF4, LDPs, Spatial Strategies, and the Regional Economic Strategy (participant 50).	Noted, we welcome the support for the proportionate approach set out.	No change required.

One participant felt that the benefits will take too long to see in relation to preventing biodiversity loss (participant 56).	Noted, both the implementation of land use change and the realisation of the benefits from that change may take time to deliver.	No change required.
A participant felt that local communities need to be involved in designing the communities aspect of monitoring and assessment (participant 59).	Noted. Please see the Actions chapter which outlines the Framework's approach to community engagement in relation to monitoring and assessment.	No change required.
One participant had concerns that funding initiatives and enforcement breaches will not be effectively followed up or monitored (participant 60).	Noted. In developing the monitoring framework we will consider what data could be captured on funding initiatives and enforcement breaches, though the latter is more of an issue for regulatory regimes such as planning. The RLUF is non-statutory guidance to inform decision making.	No change required.

## Case studies

Main issues	Response	Recommendation
<b>Additional case studies suggested</b>		
Three respondents suggested more examples of native woodland projects or examples of sustainable commercial forestry and primary processing were needed. (3, 27,43)	Noted. We will continue to look for examples to add to future iterations of the RLUF or a case studies webpage.	No change required
A few respondents felt that sustainable tourism was under-represented. The importance of access and cycling and the value of native woods in supporting these was highlighted. (3, 7,13)	Noted. We can add examples of these case studies if specific projects are identified.	No change required
It was suggested that Climate Action Networks and Good Food Partnerships could be added.	Noted. We can add these if appropriate examples are available.	No change required.
A respondent felt that the history of Galloway Forest Park was a useful case study in changing land use. (28)	Noted. We could add something to a future case studies webpage if an appropriate study is available.	No change required.
The potential of the Teviothead Volcanic Complex was mentioned as a topic for study as studies have been commissioned (37).	Noted. To consider for future work.	No change required.
One respondent suggests that there are numerous examples of food and farming types that could demonstrate various possibilities for land use changes, but it notes that the agricultural use section is relatively vague and could be strengthened (42).	Noted. We can add examples of these case studies to a future webpage if specific projects are identified.	No change required.
One respondent suggested reference to the Ethical Dairy (61).	Noted. We will consider including this project in a future good practice case studies online collection.	No change required..
Respondents suggested that Scoop Hill Community Windfarm; RSPB Priority Landscape Areas and Langholm Moor would all be useful additions (51).	Noted. Tarras Valley (Langholm Moor) is already included. We will look at further additions if there are suitable sites to signpost.	No change required.
It is a cause of considerable concern to the forest industry that no clear case study was included that represents a modern, productive forest. The draft demonstrates a lack of understanding regarding how modern, productive forests operate. The lack of an appropriate case study demonstrates a lack of appreciation of the importance of the sector to the region/ country and a lack of interest in building a greater degree of understanding of today's productive forests. If a forestry case study, and better informed data relating to forestry had been included, it may have provided a gateway for the forest industry to engage with this process and allow for constructive conversations for all. It is this bias that we have been challenged with throughout this process. (62)	Noted. We can add examples of these case studies to a future webpage if specific projects are identified.	No change required.
<b>Suggests edits to existing case studies</b>		

Respondent 5 suggested the private investment project and the Crichton Carbon Centre were not appropriate as “case studies”.	Noted. We believe the case studies are relevant and useful.	No change required.
Some respondents felt the case-studies focussed too much on the climate and nature crises (8,9,10, 12,31).	Noted, this focus is important given these crises are key drivers for land use change.	No change required.
One respondent felt the case studies used were not local enough (29).	Noted. Most of the studies are from South Scotland, but inevitably there won't be one from every community.	No change required.
There was a request for more information on farming and water storage (16).	Noted. We have sought to draw on the best available data but will look to add more information on these areas in future if data is identified.	No change required.
It was pointed out that the description used for the Propagate project was not accurate (38) .	Agreed. This will be corrected.	<b>Non-significant amendment - correction required to description used for the Propagate project.</b>
One respondent suggest it would be beneficial to better link case studies to objectives and actions in the RLUF (498).	Noted. Case studies do not always neatly fit against the objectives but we could look to better cross reference them in future versions.	No change required.
<b>Other comments</b>		
The need for better understanding of biodiversity impacts (gains and losses) was raised, including the impacts of the reintroduction of large birds of prey (12,31).	Noted. Something could be added if appropriate research can be identified.	No change required.
A few respondents felt that the case studies were useful, but that a more dynamic approach was needed to maximise their value. A series of visits to such projects would provide useful learning experiences. (36,48, 49)	Noted. Consider opportunities for site visits and knowledge transfer as part of an implementation phase.	No change required.

## Wider comments that went beyond the survey questions responded to

Main Issue	Response	Recommendation
<b>Engagement process</b>		
Presentations could have been more inspiring (4)	Noted.	No change required
A respondent thought the consultation was seeking evidence to support the views it wants to promulgate, not listening to local opinions (12)	Noted. We have sought to hear the views of a wide range of stakeholders and reflect these in the RLUF. We will continue to strive for inclusivity and accurate representations of people's views in any follow-on work.	No change required.
One respondent felt that the RLUF had not consulted widely enough and felt more landowners should have been engaged (24)	Noted, we did engage people through a range of different channels including face to face meetings across the region and online events for those who could not attend in person. As this is a pilot project the impacts are on land use are uncertain, but we hope that participants will be satisfied with the final product and that this becomes the start of a longer process of change.	No change required
Respondent 24 believes that the very small group pushing for this framework are not a representing the interests of the communities involved and the landowners who ultimately this would affect.	Noted. We have aimed to reflect the wide range of views heard through the consultation events in the final RLUF.	No change required
Respondent 26 commented that such yes/no options are too simplistic to be meaningful.	Noted. Options to include additional comments were included. We could consider a choice of more options in future consultations.	No change required
This respondent stated that they believed that landowners are not being consulted as their views will not align with the South of Scotland Enterprise Agency (participant 13).	Noted. We did publicise events via multiple communication channels including press releases, social media, website, radio interviews. Details are summarised in section 2 of this consultation report. Others feedback that they enjoyed the wide ranging discussions. A number of events were held for NFUS and SLE members and landowners are represented in the pilot governance. Agriculture was an interest at all but 2 of the 20 events held in 'phase 2'; 16% of phase 2 participants said agriculture /farming was their interest.	No change required.
One respondent felt the engagement process has neither been collaborative nor provided an environment for the forestry sector to express their perspective in a respectful or productive environment. They highlighted "a degree of hostility" from some community members towards the forestry sector, such that managers were reluctant to get involved in discussions. While they appreciate and recognise that SoSE are taking steps to address this (and acknowledge that in the past the sector has made mistakes and only provided minimal community engagement during woodland creation planning but is striving to improve through ConFor initiatives) they feel the	Noted, we did engage stakeholders with a range of different interests through both face to face meetings across the region and online events for those who could not attend in person. No concerns about hostility were raised with the pilot during the period of stakeholder engagement. From the evidence gathered it was apparent that many stakeholders had significant concerns about the environmental impacts of forestry and wanted to be more involved in forestry decisions and design. Commercial forestry is a widely used and well understood term	<b>Non-significant amendment to page 36 to highlight the significant economic benefits of and demands for forest products. Consider changing term from commercial forestry to productive forestry.</b>

<p>consultation draft and the structure of the RLUF does have significant challenges that must be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Titles and nomenclature are important and carry connotations, both positive and negative - the use of commercial forestry is not an accurate terms for a modern forest. A more accurate term is productive forest.</li> <li>- The RLUF does not provide a comprehensive assessment of the economic structure of the region and how land use decisions must facilitate the growth of this regional economy and national economy. Manufacturers already purchase large quantities of wood from the South of Scotland (which has ideal growing conditions for key types of timber) as well as sawmill by-products such as sawdust and chips. UK imports of forest products represent 81% of the material utilised by the industry at a value of \$11.7 billion; and the projected growth in demand for wood products is substantial (doubling, or possibly quadrupling, by 2050). In addition to the economic opportunity to meet this demand in the UK (which would include generating rural employment along the supply chain) there is also a need to reduce imports as the trade in timber products has been linked with deforestation and forest degradation. The draft RLUF highlights many stakeholders' concerns about commercial forestry's negative impacts on biodiversity, landscape, tourism and water management, carbon-rich soils and farm viability, but the respondent feels this is in no way reflective of modern forestry that complies with the UK Forestry Standard. A modern productive forest can also increase biodiversity, help with landscape restoration and provide recreation opportunities</li> </ul> <p>Tree planting is also critical to achieving the goal of net zero by 2045 and the faster growing conifer plantations soak up the highest levels of CO2. The area of land suitable for forestry/woodland in the region is proportionately higher than other areas of Scotland and therefore the Scottish Forest Strategy is suggesting a proportionate increase over the current 22% in the region. (62) (note this consolidated response also includes additional comments from 2 individual businesses)</p>	<p>describing woodland grown with the main aim of producing a timber crop. However, we can consider revising the term if it aligns with that used in national policy and guidance e,g SFS and UKFS. The information provided on the economics of forest products is useful – if robust research can be identified then we would look to include such data in follow-on work. Similarly, if good practice and robust research can be identified on how 'modern forestry' is tackling the concerns identified by some stakeholders then we would welcome that and can consider it for inclusion in a revised RLUF. We recognise that evidence indicates fast growing conifers do have high carbon sequestration rates. The RLUF also seeks to consider the wider impacts of land use changes and opportunities for multiple benefits.</p>	
<b>RLUF actions</b>		
<p>One respondent suggested that the proposed actions need more discussion (5)</p>	<p>Noted. We would like to expand on the case studies if funding is available to support this.</p>	<p>No change required.</p>
<p>Good report, but action is needed now or it will be too late. A moratorium on renewable energy schemes should be imposed (7)</p>	<p>Noted. Action to tackle climate change is urgent – this is one of the crises driving the needs for the RLUF. Decisions on approval of renewable energy schemes sits under statutory planning and is out of scope for the RLUF.</p>	<p>No change required</p>

"Addressing net zero is too expensive" (8)	Noted. However addressing net zero is a key goal of Scottish Government.	No change required.
<b>Degradation of landscapes</b>		
Two respondents felt that views expressed at live events and the on-line event have not been captured. "Local landscapes are being destroyed" (17, 20).	Noted. The consultation events are in place to capture the range of local views.	No change required.
One respondent felt that planned development was too often highly damaging to local landscapes (18)	Noted. The consultation events are in place to capture the local views.	No change required.
<b>Better data</b>		
One respondent suggested that access to data that allowed comparisons between South the rest of Scotland would help people put local issues in context (22)	Noted. We agree comparative data from other parts of Scotland could be useful to explore in future work.	No change required.
One respondent felt that a full impact assessment should be made for all land use decisions to allow their impact to be fully understood (economic and social) with the aim of maximising local gains (25)	Noted. This is something that can be considered in future phases if the RLUF pilot project is extended.	No change required, but something to bear in mind for future opportunities.
One respondent felt that more needed to be done to better understand what determines land use decisions at present (32)	Noted. This would be an excellent thing to do if the RLUF pilot project is extended.	No change required.
One respondent questioned the accuracy of the land cover statistics in the table in Appendix 5 and relevance in goal setting – noting findings from industry sources and environmental websites suggest higher conifer woodland cover percentages and overall forest cover than those indicated in the table (36).	Noted. We will continue to seek the best available data to inform future iterations of the RLUF.	No change required
The need for more accurate climate modelling at a local scale was raised by one respondent (who also offered to help with this). They felt that necessary decisions would only be made if this info was available. (42)	Noted. This is something that can be considered if the RLUF pilot project is extended.	No change required.
While the background document does address many of the specifics and background encompassed by the pilot we take issue with the fact that it does not provide the appropriate level of context and data to provide a full assessment of the issues the pilot intends to address. (62)	Noted. We will continue to seek the best available data to inform future iterations of the RLUF.	No change required
<b>More support for farmers</b>		
There is a need for help to rural businesses to access private funding. The danger of the benefits of this being "off-shored" was also mentioned (54)	Noted. The RLUF includes some signposting of key funding sources.	No action required.
A respondent was concerned that the RLUF was to some degree unfairly hard on land managers in relation to the nature crisis. It was felt that most farmers were doing good work in this regard (55)	Noted. More discussion will be required to understand this if the pilot is extended; this is not about diminishing the work already done but identifying what else can be done.	No change required
Two respondents pointed out that the RLUF must not unduly constrain farmers and called for more support to allow them to do what was required (58, 61)	Noted, the need to maintain sustainable food production and food security is highlighted in the RLUF, as are issues of agricultural viability and sustainability.	No change required

Respondent 21 questioned the lack of appreciation of what farmers are already doing.	Noted. More discussion will be required to understand this if the pilot is extended; the case studies highlight some good practice. The RLUF is not about diminishing the work already done but identifying what else can be done.	No change required
<b>Climate change mitigation / renewable energy</b>		
A respondent (no.2) questioned the evidence of human caused climate change.	Noted, the scientific evidence on this issue is considered persuasive.	No change required
A respondent felt that the objective to meet 'net-zero' is not taking into consideration the outsourcing of materials and the resulting carbon footprint (line 60).	Noted, however lifecycle carbon accounting was beyond the scope of this study.	No change required.
A respondent (no.8) believes that renewable energy generation already features too prominently in planning policy, does not provide any energy security or 24/7 production, is very poor value for money, unfairly subsidised and does not provide any carbon saving when all the lifecycle carbon emissions are calculated.	Noted, however government policy is strongly supportive of renewable energy generation to help achieve net zero.	No change required
Respondent 32 commented that the need is caused by climate change and that it is difficult to see how myriad individuals can be persuaded to change their work practices.	Noted, stronger policy and incentives from Scottish Government will be critical to support land use change.	No change required
Respondent 10 commented that as this Strategy has to operate within the Scottish Government's policies they will not address the wholly illogical SG 'green' strategy which is driving the proliferation of wind farms. They believe that these deliver zero energy generation when the wind doesn't blow and far too much (resulting in £m's paid to developers to switch off the generation) when the wind is blowing. They believe the continued proliferation of applications for windfarms across the South of Scotland requires this Strategy to take a stance on the appropriate locations and/or principles for the siting of wind farms (and solar farms). Suggested principles are set out.	Noted. The appropriate siting of wind turbines is an important issue that needs to be informed by the latest planning policy and up-to-date data to inform rigorous impact assessment, including of cumulative impacts. These are important questions to ask and something which should be considered for future opportunities if the pilot is extended.	No change required
Respondent 7 suggests the document should have a dedicated section for existing / approved / considered renewable energy schemes and their related infrastructure: sub-stations, pylons, access roads, etc. This could include surface area used, number of turbines/panels, etc and production capacity. It would interesting to see areas identified as high biodiversity potential or degraded peat overlaid with planned wind turbines or sub-stations. Renewables seems to be the fastest growing land use in the region at the moment by surface area and this is not reflected in the document as it stands.	Noted. This could be considered in the next phase by linking to online information available through the Planning Authorities.	No change required.
A view was expressed that better measurement of carbon emissions was needed to test where improvements are needed out with agriculture and forestation alone to include industry emissions. (31)	Noted, this is something to bear in mind for future work but was beyond the scope of this work.	No change required.



<b>Concerns about commercial forestry</b>		
Respondent 16 notes that they are concerned about the encroaching development of commercial forestry i.e. Sitka Spruce in rural farming areas; the lack of consultation with the local community around such projects and Scottish Forestry appearing to have omitted significant checks i.e. environmental impact assessment etc. In addition the taxpayer appears to be paying for a significant tranche of the cost of this development.	Noted. The need for “improved planning and design of commercial forestry expansion” is identified as one of five priority land use changes; and there is a specific action identified on commercial forestry (table 6). However, we acknowledge the strength of feeling could be more explicitly referenced.	<b>Non-significant amendment recommended to page 36 to explicitly reference the strength of feeling on this issue at consultation events.</b>
Respondent 17 commented that earlier workshops brought particular concerns of stakeholders into sharper view. They felt that was presented in this framework did not take account of the huge strength of feeling about additional Sitka forestry, lack of walking routes, forestry pricing out farming, impacts on tourism, impacts on wildlife, vertical plantations and resulting flooding, poor roads for locals on strategic roads, impacts on archaeology and areas of literary and historic interest.	Noted. We have aimed to reflect the wide range of views heard through the consultation events in the final RLUF. For example the need for “improved planning and design of commercial forestry expansion” is identified as one of five priority land use changes; and there is a specific action identified on commercial forestry (table 6). However, we acknowledge the strength of feeling could be more explicitly referenced.	<b>Non-significant amendment recommended to page 36 to explicitly reference the strength of feeling on this issue at consultation events.</b>
<b>Other comments</b>		
One respondent felt the RLUF approach was too high-level and that the resources it has used would have been better used supporting current on-the-ground initiatives (26)	Noted. The RLUF in its first iteration is at a regional level, it’s pilot remit was for the whole of the South of Scotland. The ambition is that this will enable better informed development of on the ground initiatives going forward. .	No change required
The Lower Borders, featuring a significant concentration of prehistoric hillforts and the Teviothead Volcanic Complex, must be acknowledged within UNESCO’s Frontier of the Roman Empire, emphasizing the importance of preserving its intangible cultural heritage while safeguarding natural resources, with a call to disqualify any board members with vested interests (37)	Noted, we consider that more work will be needed on cultural heritage in follow-on work..	No change required.
Two respondents gave views on the importance of linking the RLUF to skills development and to rural housing. They also thought ties to NPF4 should be clearer and they raised the issue of land ownership (50,51)	Noted. This would be an excellent thing to do if the RLUF pilot project is extended.	Currently no change required,
Two respondents felt that the importance of farm viability and food production had been ignored. The importance of tourism (and the potential National Park) had also been under-emphasised/ignored (52, 53)	Noted, all comments raised during the consultation process have been reviewed. This is potentially something that can be discussed on a deeper level if the pilot project is extended.	No change required
One respondent (no.1) believed land and housing needs to be provided for more people to be able to be self-sufficient, not just those that can afford the privilege. They highlighted that there is a willingness and an opportunity to trial community buy out, and to build affordable eco-friendly smallholdings for reasonable rent, along with huts for holiday accommodation which are affordable	Noted, however rural housing is largely an issue for the planning system rather than the RLUF.	No change required

for families. They believe this could be an opportunity to repopulate the country with younger people who want to have a connection with the land.		
Respondent 11 would like to see some economic impact analysis and input, and what the already strong community networks think. They believe that economic impact is a key driver for land use and many other things, but this topic seems to be mainly missing from the strategy.	Noted. The RLUF includes multiple references to the economic dimension and drivers of land use. This is an area we would like to explore further if robust data can be identified. For example one respondent has highlighted useful economic data on forestry which we will add in. See also separate proposed amendment to add more data on the economics of agriculture across the region.	No change required.
Respondent 14 feels the framework is unbalanced and biased towards various vested economic interests. It provides a means for business interests to drive land use change at the expense of environmental considerations. The document also appears to be weighted towards providing a means/justification for the expansion of the wind energy sector in a region already overburdened with this type of development.	Noted. We have sought to reflect the best available evidence and the wide range of stakeholder views heard.	No change required
Respondent 18 stated that they do not know enough about the Framework to comment on its validity, and that they would welcome a home visit to talk about your plans so that they could comment.	Noted.	No change required
27 - I've needed to clarify and challenge some of your language, e.g. we will mediate over land use decisions?	Noted, our understanding is this refers to earlier drafts of the document prior to the consultation draft RLUF being finalised and published. We have sought to be clear in our use of language.	No change required.
Respondent 29 noted that they would like to see more recognition of the fundamental conflict between different land uses. For example, wind turbines can damage wildlife particularly bird life and this is not mentioned in the paper. They also noted they would like to see more recognition of the important history and individuals across Southern Scotland which can help the tourist industry. They strongly disagree with the plan to double onshore wind power generation by 2030 (Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan)". This is excessive and unnecessary to meet green targets.	Noted. We have sought to highlight some of the key land use trade-offs and challenges and have referenced concerns about the impacts of renewable energy development.	No change required
Respondent 37 believes that in terms of positive cultural development, this draft shows favouritism to small, isolated regions, and discriminates against the majority of the landscape and the people in it. They feel that much of this landscape, particularly the central lower Borders, is categorised as a 'non development' region other than for forestry and wind energy projects, meaning less opportunity for those living in these regions.	Noted. We have not sought to define areas for development or non-development – that would be a role better suited to the planning system.	No change required.

Respondent 13 refers to the need for further policy and financial support for woodland planting by community groups and construction of trails in the Tweed Valley. There is massive want from the local mountain bike community for more native woodland to be planted around areas of trails; this needs support from the government e.g. grants, matching of the community development fund from a wind farm install by the government, similar to the gift aid scheme. Finally, there is a need for better support from government for granting permission for a wind farm where there is a significant community project going in alongside it or part of it.	Noted, it is hoped that a successful RLUF pilot could help to influence land use policy and funding decisions by Scottish Government, so this issue is likely to be explored further in follow-on work.	No change required.
The respondent stated that they had not informed themselves sufficiently about the framework and as such do not feel able to respond (participant 18).	Noted.	No change required.
A respondent believed that the framework is 'a lot of hot air and waffle' (no.19) and another that it was "lots of fancy talk and soundbites with layer upon layer of bureaucracy" (no.8).	Noted	No change required.
A respondent queried who produced the framework, as they felt it was not clear (participant 28).	Noted, this is a pilot project but we hope to be able to provide more clarity on further work in the near future if/when further funding is forthcoming.	<b>Non-significant amendment, make it clearer in the Introduction that the pilot project was coordinated by SOSE in partnership with DGC and SBC, development of RLUF overseen by REP.</b>
A participant believed that the framework is too vague (no.30), another stated they did not understand it (no.40) and another that it lacks details and need significant development (no.39).	Noted, this is a pilot project but we hope to be able to provide more clarity on further work 'on the ground' in the near future if/when further funding is forthcoming. We would hope that delivery of localised projects would help people to better understand with the RLUF is seeking to deliver.	No change required.
One participant queried how the framework will work in relation to the planning frameworks/ protocols/ best practice models which are already there (participant 59).	Noted. This is a non-statutory document developed as part of a pilot project. How the RLUF will be used in practice, and how it could link to other policies/strategies, is briefly outlined in the latter chapters of the document but will be determined after the pilot scheme has concluded.	No change required.
One participant did not feel that the framework was a priority at this time (participant 52).	Noted, this is part of a government pilot.	No change required.
A participant stated that there is a need for blended policies e.g. how SEPA's objectives could be delivered by the RLUP (participant 54).	Noted, the RLUF has sought to integrate objectives across land use issues.	No change required.

A participant noted that community voices are missing from the framework (participant 11).	Noted. We engaged members of the public via multiple events. These were publicised engagement events via multiple communication channels including press releases, social media, website, radio interviews. Details are summarised in section 2 of this consultation report. The RLUF has sought to reflect the views heard.	No change required.
One respondent would have ticked "in part" if this was an option. They noted much sense in the implementation plan, but also elements they disagreed with, including encouraging sale of land for carbon credits (a highly contested means of meeting net zero and biodiversity targets); and support for large scale renewable developments which only benefit the local community through minimal community benefit payments. To enable a Just Transition and Community Wealth Building, this section should prioritise capacity building for community ownership / shared ownership of renewables and small scale local energy generation (no.15).	Noted. We agree that there are risks associated with securing private investment in carbon and nature, efforts to manage such risks are highlighted in the report. We also acknowledge the need for community capacity building for community ownership / shared ownership of renewables and small scale local energy generation – this could be explored in follow-on work. We will also consider adding an "in part" option to future survey questions.	No change required.
Please check the tree cover and percentage conifer figures in the appendices. (no.48)	Noted.	No change required.
An additional policy document related to land use change in the region is the GSA Biosphere's Natural Heritage Management Plan. (no.48)	Noted.	No change required.
Regarding NPF4, the GSA Biosphere is a crucial environmental asset that can contribute to the area's future sustainability, liveability and productivity, which could be included in Table 5 (no.48).	Noted, we will add a reference to the GSA Biosphere to Table 5.	<b>Non-significant amendment – add a reference to the GSA Biosphere to Table 5.</b>
In the section of prioritisation of land use changes (p34), is it possible to do some prioritisation analysis and show the results? This introduction could also focus on the opportunities/need for prioritisation and highlight the challenges or opportunities in achieving them. (no.48)	Noted, this can be considered in future workstreams.	No change required.
At the end of the section on Recreation and tourism (p40), instead of the Biosphere's Visitor Charter, do you mean the Events Charter. (no.48)	Noted, we will make this factual correction.	<b>Non-significant amendment – replace Visitor Charter with Events Charter (p.40).</b>
Figure 12 about relationships could use a short narrative explanation of the point being shown here. (no.48)	Noted, but there is text introducing the diagram on the previous page.	No change required.
There are other funding opportunities that could be included, such as NatureScot's Nature Restoration Fund, the Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund, the National Lottery Fund and multiple schemes from Woodland Trust Scotland (no.48).	Noted, we will add these sources into Appendix 8.	<b>Non-significant amendment – add additional funding opportunities to Appendix 8.</b>

## **Appendix B: Further details of RLUF public consultation events held between December 2023 and February 2024**

On top of all of the engagement events held during the development of the RLUF, in which 543 people participated from across the South of Scotland region. Once the draft RLUF document had been published for formal consultation we also held four further face-to-face events and one online event to promote the consultation/

Details of the locations, numbers of bookings and numbers of attendees are summarised in the table below.

**Table 1: Consultant event details – Dec 2023 to Feb 2024**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Tickets Available</b>	<b>Bookings</b>	<b>Total Attendees</b>
<b>Tweedbank</b>	11/12/2023	60	37	22
<b>Dumfries</b>	12/12/2023	60	23	18
<b>Duns</b>	17/01/2024	60	40	31
<b>Online</b>	31/01/2024	80	80	38
<b>Newton Stewart</b>	07/02/2024	60	45	14
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>123</b>

It is notable that, as with the earlier consultations, considerable interest was shown in the events when they were promoted (1402 page views) and far more people booked places than attended (225 verses 123 people). This was the case with both live events and the on-line one.

## Appendix C: Summary statistics on the responses to yes/no questions in survey

The consultation survey included a number of closed yes/no questions. Brief summary statistics on responses to key questions are included below.

7. Does the Framework document provide enough background information to explain the pilot project?



9. Are you satisfied with the process undertaken (for example, the stakeholder engagement) to produce the Framework?



11. Are you satisfied with the Vision and Objectives set out in the Framework?



16. Proposed actions

Are you satisfied with the priority of actions for implementation?



20. Are you satisfied with the proposals for the monitoring and assessment of the Framework?

