**Fairer Scotland Duty – Draft**

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| **Title of policy/practice/ strategy/legislation etc.** | [**Draft Environment Strategy**](https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781836917670) |
| **Lead Minister** | **Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy** |
| **Lead official** | **Tim Ellis** |
| **Directorate Division team** | **Future Environment Division** |

**Title of policy, strategy or programme**

[Draft Environment Strategy](https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781836917670)

**Summary of aims and expected outcomes of strategy, proposal, programme or policy**

The Environment Strategy fulfils Ministers obligation under section 47 of the UK Withdrawal from the EU (Continuity) (Scotland) Act 2021 to prepare and publish an environmental policy strategy, with section 47 also requiring Scottish Ministers to have due regard to the strategies when making policies, including proposals for legislation.

The [draft Environment Strategy](https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781836917670) sets out a holistic framework for delivering Scotland’s role in tackling the global crises of nature loss, climate change and pollution. The consultation draft of the Strategy can be found [here](https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781836917670). The draft Strategy brings together the Scottish Government’s existing policy response to tackling nature loss, climate change and pollution, highlighting the importance of carefully managing synergies and trade-offs across these goals. It builds on these existing policies by outlining new priorities and proposals. These focus, in particular, on opportunities for supporting the economic and societal changes needed to help tackle these global crises in ways that create wider benefits for Scotland – supporting green jobs and industries, improving people’s health, tackling poverty and promoting social justice.

The draft Strategy sets out It sets out steps for supporting and enabling these changes in ways that will transform our country for the better, improving the lives of people across Scotland. The Strategy is designed to capture the wealth of opportunities that transitioning to a green economy, and shifting towards sustainable lifestyles, will create for Scotland’s prosperity and wellbeing – boosting a wide range of green jobs and industries, improving people’s health, tackling poverty and promoting social justice. It recognises the growing international evidence that tackling these crises will rely on transformative economic and societal change.  It sets out steps for supporting and enabling these changes in ways that will transform our country for the better, improving the lives of people across Scotland.

*Vision and outcomes*

The vision for the Strategy begins by describing our 2045 vision for fulfilling our role in tackling the global crises of nature loss, climate change and pollution, helping to safeguard our shared planet for all life on Earth. We will harness the enormous opportunities this creates for Scotland to flourish as a fairer, greener and more prosperous nation.

The vision recognises that tackling these crises will depend on changes in Scotland’s economy and society. This, in turn, can help to transform Scotland for the better – for example by supporting green jobs and enabling people and communities in Scotland to live sustainably – in ways that also tackle inequalities and poverty and create wider benefits for people’s health and wellbeing.

The Strategy aims to improve the wellbeing of everyone in Scotland. The aim of the Strategy is to ensure that everyone can enjoy the life-supporting benefits the environment provides. This includes improving people’s health and wellbeing, tackling poverty and inequalities, and supporting jobs and businesses in the transition to net zero by 2045.

To achieve the Strategy’s Vision, we have identified a set of outcomes that will contribute to this aim, these outcomes include:

* Scotland’s biodiversity is restored and regenerated
* We have ended Scotland’s contribution to climate change
* We minimise pollution and waste in our environment
* Scotland’s net zero, nature positive and circular economy thrives within the planet’s sustainable limits.

Two outcomes describe the positive transformations in our society and economy that will support these goals, while creating wider benefits for Scotland’s prosperity and wellbeing:

* Scotland’s society is transformed for the better by living sustainably, in harmony with nature.
* Scotland’s global environmental impact is sustainable.

The Strategy also sets out two cross-cutting outcomes, that inform policies across all of government, including:

* We build Scotland’s resilience to climate change and other global environmental risks.
* These transformations are achieved through a just transition and support climate and environmental justice.

The Environment Strategy also presents high-level pathways for driving progress towards the outcomes. These pathways summarise key existing policies while also identifying proposals and priorities to guide future policy development across the breadth of government. The pathways are followed by a summary of arrangements for monitoring and reporting progress towards the outcomes, in order to guide improvements to our approach.

To support the development of the Strategy, we commissioned substantial new research focusing on the economy, society and global outcomes, which have been supported by stakeholder working groups.

**Summary of evidence**

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation[[1]](#footnote-2)shows that 14 areas of Scotland have been consistently among the most deprived in Scotland since the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation. There is evidence to suggest that people living in more deprived areas are less likely to have access to greenspaces and more likely to suffer from poorer air quality than those people living in less deprived areas[[2]](#footnote-3) [[3]](#footnote-4).

The Scotland’s People Annual Report in 2019[[4]](#footnote-5) found that adults living in the most deprived areas were less likely to have made any visits to the outdoors in the past 12 months (19%) compared to those in the least deprived areas (4%). This could indicate why adults in the most deprived areas were more likely to have very low activity levels (57%) than those in the least deprived areas (73%)[[5]](#footnote-6).

Research[[6]](#footnote-7) has also found that the lack of access to greenspaces and poor air quality can cause poor mental health and wellbeing, as well as links to specific mental disorders, including possible links[[7]](#footnote-8) to dementia and cognitive decline. Ill health caused by air pollution is a health inequalities issue as it disproportionately affects the most vulnerable members of society, including the very young, the elderly, people with existing medical conditions and those living in deprived urban areas and deprived circumstances.

As mentioned above the Environment Strategy aims to improve the wellbeing of everyone in Scotland to ensure that everyone can enjoy the life-supporting benefits the environment provides regardless of their background. This directly links to the following outcomes in the Strategy:

* Scotland's biodiversity is restored and regenerated.
* We have ended Scotland’s contribution to climate change.
* Scotland’s environment is free from pollution and waste.
* Scotland’s society is transformed for the better by living sustainably, in harmony with nature.

The Strategy also sets out two cross-cutting outcomes, that inform policies across all of government, including:

* We build Scotland’s resilience to climate change and other global environmental risks.
* These transformations are achieved through a just transition and support climate and environmental justice.

These outcomes and their pathways will help to identify the priorities and action needed to increase access to greenspaces and improve air quality, which if targeted appropriately will create significant health benefits and help to tackle inequalities and poverty.

In addition to increasing health opportunities and equalities, the Environment Strategy can also maximise the wider opportunities to create green jobs and businesses, and equip people with the skills needed to access these green jobs. It will help ensure Scotland’s net zero, nature positive economy positive and circular economy thrives within the planet’s sustainable limits, and harnessing the opportunities this creates for good, green jobs. This can drive significant employment opportunities in Scotland through an increase in the use of renewable energy, such as wind, solar and hydroelectric power. This could provide employment opportunities for those in remote areas, helping to reduce economic inequalities and provide long-term sustainable job opportunities. Moving to a green economy will also help our transition to net zero and reduce emissions to improve air quality in Scotland, which will remove health inequalities in Scotland.

The draft Strategy will also help to take inequalities and poverty by:

* Promoting clean heat and sustainable transport will help to tackle fuel and transport poverty
* Empowering and enabling people to shift towards sustainable lifestyles creates opportunities to save money and reduce bills, for example through home energy efficiency, avoiding food waste, buying second hand and using active travel and public transport.

**Consultation**

This draft Fairer Scotland Duty assessment has been produced to help inform the formal consultation for the draft Environment Strategy.

We are aware that there may be other impacts, either positive or negative, which have not yet been identified, and we would therefore be grateful for any feedback on this draft assessment during the consultation. Following the consultation, we will consider the feedback received during the consultation, and if necessary, this draft will be updated to reflect the feedback received.

The consultation can be accessed via <https://consult.gov.scot/environment-forestry/draft-environment-strategy/> with the consultation opening on 3 July and closing on 29 September. The consultation asks for any further information or evidence that should be considered in this draft Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment.

**Summary of assessment findings**

The Environment Strategy summarises key existing policies while also identifying proposals and priorities to guide future policy development across the breadth of government.

The Environment Strategy will provide a positive impact on everyone in Scotland. There will be a benefit to those individuals who live in more deprived areas through greater access to greenspaces and improved air quality. However, we are aware that there may be impacts, either positive or negative, and opportunities for further action to reduce inequalities which have not been identified to date in this assessment.

We will therefore review this assessment and the Strategy following any feedback received during the consultation.

Further proportionate assessments of the implementation of actions to support the aim of the Environment Strategy will also be undertaken during their design and implementation, to ensure all types of socio-economic disadvantages are considered. This will be taken forward through the Strategy’s governance and delivery framework to enable a wide range of input from key stakeholders and sectors.

1. Scottish Government (2020) Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation - [SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation)](https://simd.scot/#/simd2020/BTTTFTT/9/-4.0000/55.9000/) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [Appendix A. Environmental Baseline - Cleaner Air for Scotland 2: environmental report - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/publications/cleaner-air-scotland-2-environmental-report/pages/10/) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. [Greenspace | Our Place](https://www.ourplace.scot/about-place/themes/20-minute-neighbourhoods-home/planning-and-design/greenspace#:~:text=As%20part%20of%20the%20National,people%20in%20less%20deprived%20areas.) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [Scotland’s People Annual Report 2019 (www.gov.scot)](https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/statistics/2020/09/scottish-household-survey-2019-annual-report/documents/scotlands-people-annual-report-2019/scotlands-people-annual-report-2019/govscot%3Adocument/scotlands-people-annual-report-2019.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. [The Scottish Health Survey 2022 – volume 1: main report - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-health-survey-2022-volume-1-main-report/) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. [Poor air quality found to affect mental health in many ways | University of Oxford](https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2023-07-06-poor-air-quality-found-affect-mental-health-many-ways) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. [Health matters: air pollution - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-air-pollution/health-matters-air-pollution) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)