

# Briefing on Land Use Policy Coherence for the Land Use Transformations Project

JHI-C3-1.



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## 1 Purpose of Briefing

This is a deliverable from the [Land Use Transformations](#) project (JHI-C3-1) within the Scottish Government's Strategic Research Programme (SRP) 2022-27. The briefing summarises how different Scottish Government policies are coherent. The analysis considers both the policy objectives and the policy instruments through which their objectives are delivered. It is for Scottish Government analysts and policy makers.

## 2 Why does policy coherence matter?

Due to the UK withdrawal from the European Union, Scottish policies associated with land use are being updated, including a replacement for the Common Agricultural Policy. The Scottish Government's [Agricultural Reform Programme](#)<sup>1</sup> is potentially the most radical change to agriculture in many decades, and coincides with other changes in the land use policy landscape. There is an increasing acceptance that responding to climate, biodiversity and socio-economic crises requires a more radical [transformation](#)<sup>2</sup>. Transformation requires policy coherence to ensure that the multiple policies enacted on rural land (farmed, forested, sporting or conservation) are 'joined-up' so they do not undermine each other, work together to deliver the required transformation, and are perceived as effective.

## 3 Land Use Policy Coherence – Connecting across policy domains.

The project understands that land use covers several different policy domains, including production from land (Agriculture, forestry, fishery); Climate mitigation and adaptation (climate); protection and restoration of the environment (environment) and the wider rural economy including renewable energy, tourism, infrastructure and housing (socio-economic). We identified whether policies from different policy domains were interdependent; seeking evidence that they reference one another, suggesting there are formal procedures to consider each other's objectives and instruments. Even with a small sample of steering strategies, primary legislation and instruments, the situation is complex. Figure 1 shows there are 169 connections between all four domains; but there are fewer relationships (n=31) between the environmental policies and the socio-economic policies.

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<sup>1</sup> [Agricultural Reform Route Map \(ruralpayments.org\)](https://ruralpayments.org)

<sup>2</sup> [ScotGov's ambitious rural transformation action agenda | The Scottish Farmer](#)

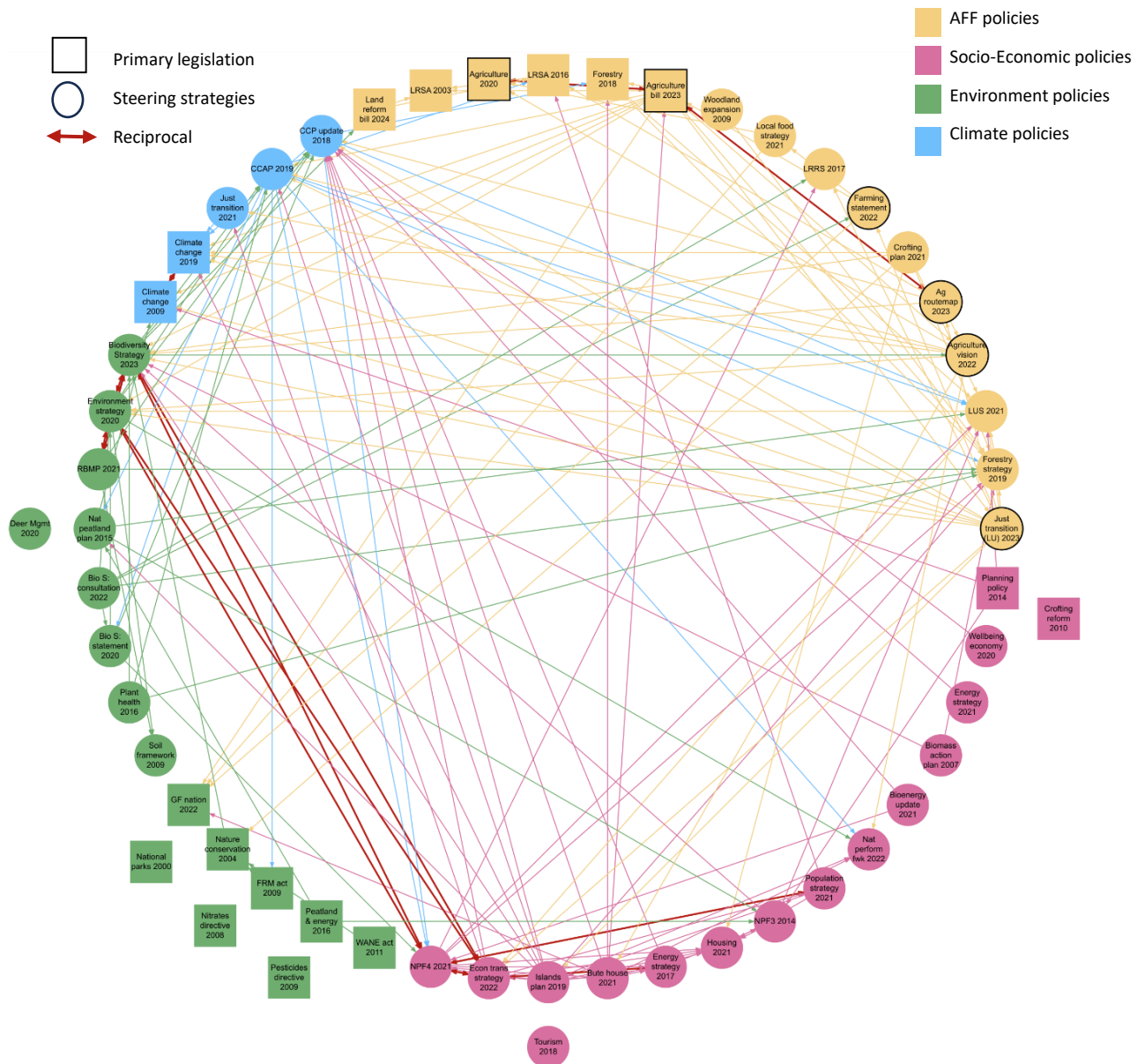


Figure 1: Coherence between the different policy domains. The squares represent primary legislation and circles represent steering strategies. (The sample shown is 54 as it excludes policy instruments). Gold refers to Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry policies; Pink to Socio-Economic policies; Green to Environmental policies; and Blue to Climate policies. The policies in the bold border are further analysed in Figure 2. Coloured arrows show references between the referencing policies and the policies that are referenced. Red arrows show reciprocal relationships. They are listed in section 9.

Overall, we found only 13 reciprocal policy connections (shown by red connectors) and only four of these are between different domains. This can be partly explained by the date of the documents, whereby older documents don't reference future policies. The six entities without connections do not reference the policies in our sample but do reference other policies. Socio-economic policies associated with land use (e.g. tourism) tend to be more 'siloes' and lack stated connections with productive, environmental or climate policies. **Implication for policymaking: Is there a mechanism by which the policies referenced by other policies are made aware and able to respond to these connections? Why aren't more relationships reciprocal?**

## 4 Coherence in Agricultural Policies

To support the Agriculture Reform Programme, we focussed on some of the agricultural policies. We traced how 11 policies connect with each other and with further primary legislation, steering strategies and instruments within our sample, shown in Figure 2.

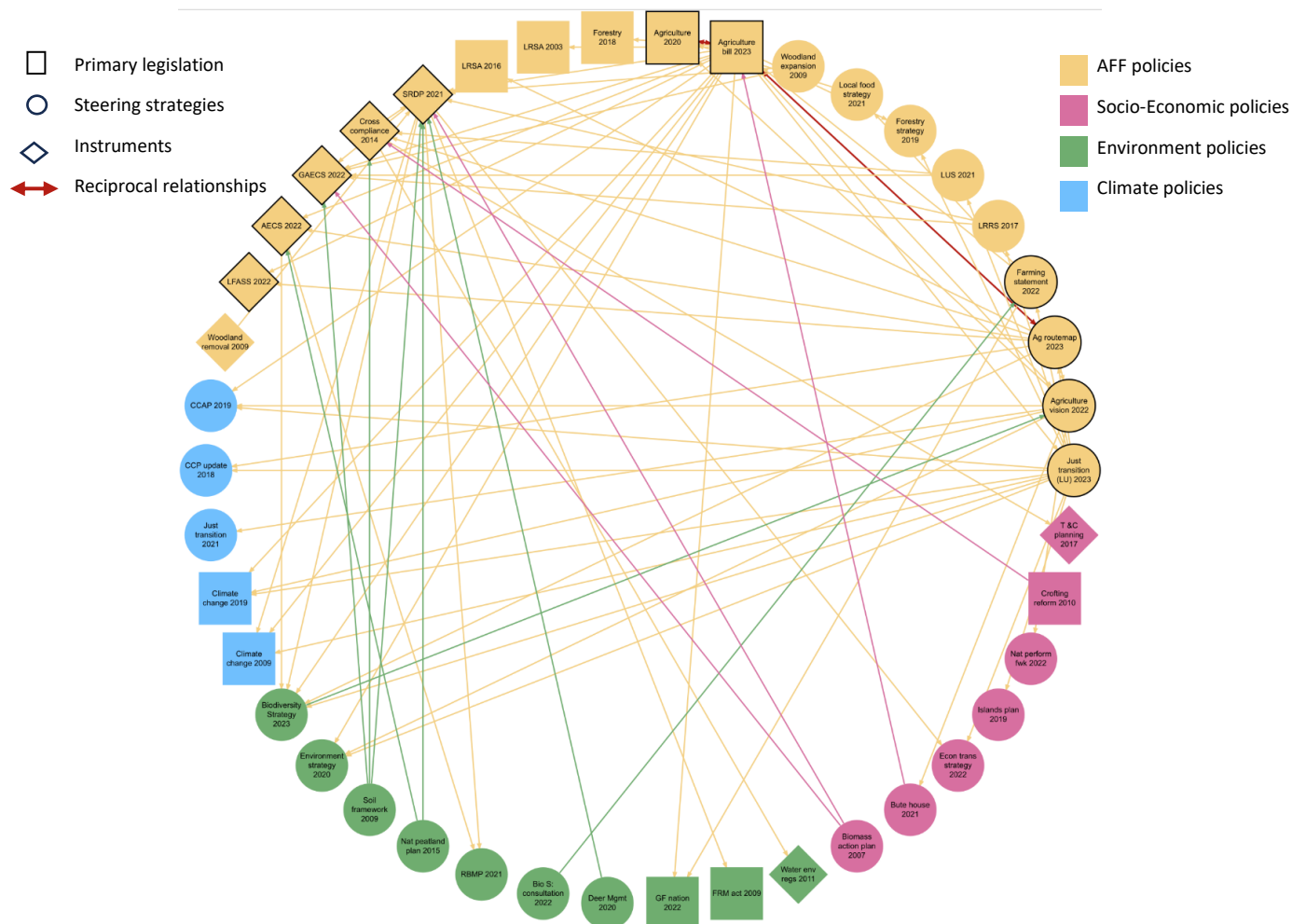


Figure 2: Links between selected agricultural policies and other policies. The diagram now includes policy instruments, shown as diamond shapes, otherwise the colouring and shapes are repeated from Figure 1. Total sample is 41, as we show the connections from the 11 bolded policies shown in Fig 1.

Figure 2 illustrates links between our selected agricultural policies and other policies in all four domains, but there were only two reciprocal relationships, both within the same domain. Cross Compliance, GAEC<sup>3</sup> and the wider SRDP are important instruments for delivering a variety of agricultural, forestry or fishery policies but also for environmental and socio-economic policies. These three agricultural policy instruments also make links to primary legislation in other domains: likewise the new Agricultural Bill links to older climate, environment and socio-economic primary legislation through steering strategies and instruments rather direct links between the Acts. This suggests policy coherence is not limited to horizontal (between policies) or vertical (within domain) connections but includes diagonal relationships from objectives in one policy to instruments in a different policy or policy

<sup>3</sup> GAEC – Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition; SRDP – Scottish Rural Development Programme

domain. **Implication for policymaking: Are diagonal relationships recognised, resourced and agreed by the actors involved?** We found that vertical coherence relationships within agricultural policies are not always explicitly explained in policy documentation. This may hinder understanding by actors in other policy domains who wish to cohere with agricultural policies. **Implication for policymaking: Can documents explain the relationships between agricultural policies to help non-agricultural experts?**

## 5 Coherence between policy directorates

We also considered the policy directorates responsible for each policy. Figure 3 suggests that directorates link to policies beyond their immediate policy domain. Not all policies relating to productive land use originate from the agricultural directorate. This supports our starting contention that land use is a broad and cross-governmental policy issue.

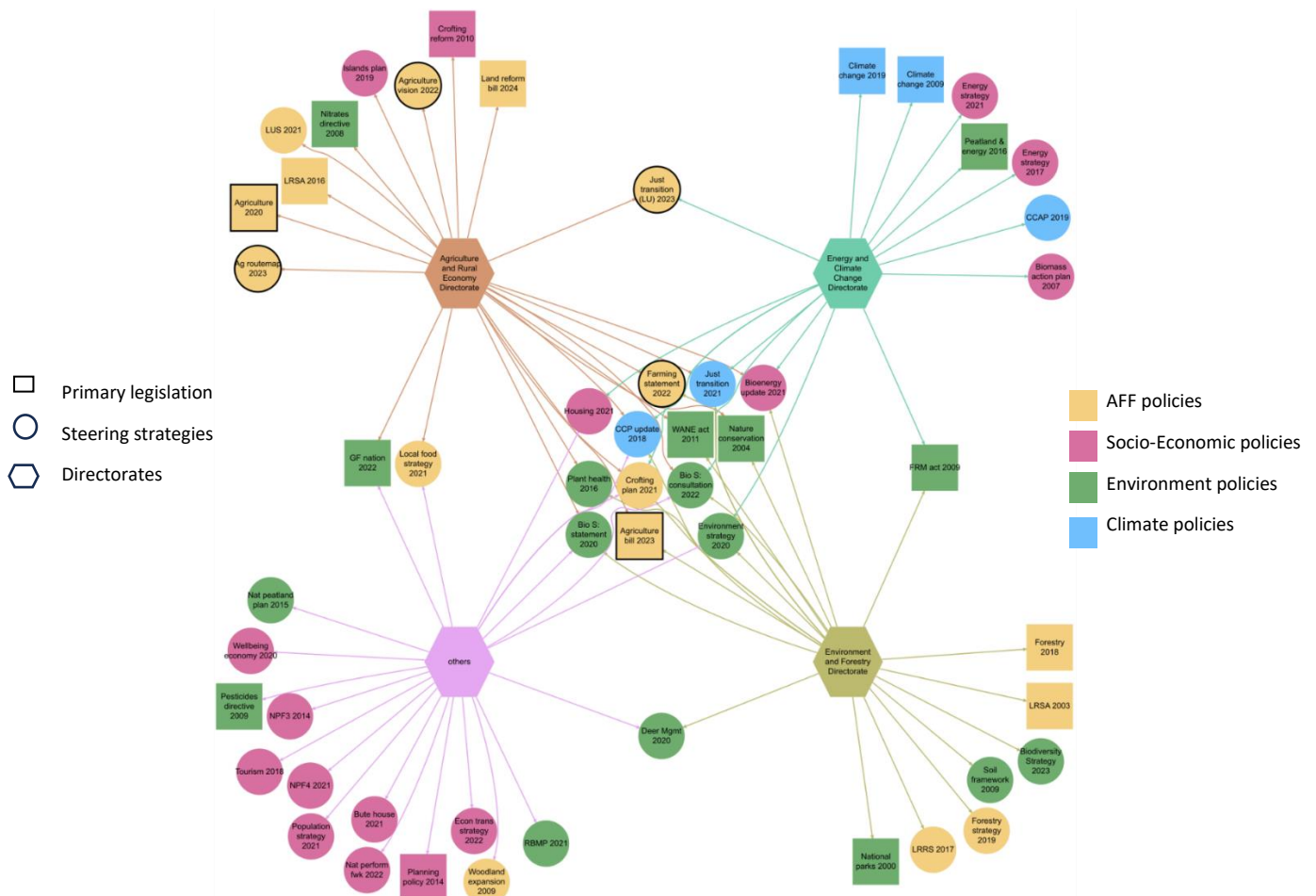


Figure 3: Scottish Government Directorates responsible for the policies in our sample (n=54) The hexagons represent three named directorates and 'Other' representing 17 other directorates and national agencies. The colour scheme and shapes follow the same logic as introduced in Figure 1-2.

We found that many of our policy documents are connected to multiple directorates. These many to many relationships suggest a strong foundation for policy coherence, if these links are active working collaborations. **Implications for policymaking: What mechanisms exist for making these connections, found on paper, work well in practice? What mechanism are available for resolving trade-offs?**

## 6 Methods in Brief

Sixty-six policy documents were selected from a much longer list of potential Scottish Government policies, covering all four policy domains; and consisting of primary legislation (n=18); steering strategies (action plans, vision documents, roadmaps) (n = 36); and secondary legislation or statutory guidance for policy instruments (n = 12). The documents were read and analysed by a team of researchers, recording their objectives, links to other policies, which policy directorate(s) are currently responsible for the policy development/implementation and other variables. Therefore our findings have the following caveats: (1) our data reflects our sample; and does not illustrate all the possible relationships; and (2) our data is based on what is stated in the documents and does not include other sources that provide alternative perspectives nor tacit policy knowledge.

## 7 Supporting Materials

The main findings are summarised in the sister [infographic](#) and there is a fuller explanation of the approach, the methodology and the findings in the [technical report](#).

## 8 Acknowledgements

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## 9 List of Policies referred to in Figures 1-3

In order of Figure 3, with instruments added in alphabetical order at the end of each topic.

Policy	Policy abbreviation	Policy	Policy abbreviation
<a href="#">Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019–2029</a>	Forestry strategy 2019	<a href="#">The Scottish Plant Health Strategy (2016)</a>	Plant health 2016
<a href="#">Just Transition Land Use and Agriculture (2023)</a>	Just transition (LU) 2023	<a href="#">Scottish Soil Framework (2009)</a>	Soil framework 2009
<a href="#">Land Use Strategy (2021)</a>	LUS 2021	<a href="#">The management of wild deer in Scotland: Deer Working Group report (2020)</a>	Deer Mgmt 2020
<a href="#">Delivering our Vision for Scottish Agriculture (2022)</a>	Agriculture vision 2022	<a href="#">Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act (2022)</a>	GF nation 2022
<a href="#">Agricultural Reform Route Map (2023)</a>	Ag routemap 2023	<a href="#">Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act (2004)</a>	Nature conservation 2004
<a href="#">Crofting: national development plan (2021)</a>	Crofting plan 2021	<a href="#">Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act (2009)</a>	FRM act 2009
<a href="#">Sustainable and regenerative farming - next steps: statement (2022)</a>	Farming statement 2022	<a href="#">Peatland and energy: Draft policy statement (2016)</a>	Peatland & energy 2016
<a href="#">Scottish Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement (2017)</a>	LRRS 2017	<a href="#">Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act (2011)</a>	WANE act 2011
<a href="#">Local Food strategy (2021)</a>	Local food strategy 2021	<a href="#">Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive 2009/128/EC</a>	Pesticides directive 2009
<a href="#">The Scottish Government's Rationale for Woodland Expansion (2009)</a>	Woodland expansion 2009	<a href="#">Nitrates Directive: The Action Programme for Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (Scotland) Regulations (2008)</a>	Nitrates directive 2008



<a href="#">Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Bill (2023)</a>	Agriculture bill 2023	<a href="#">National Parks (Scotland) Act (2000)</a>	National parks 2000
<a href="#">Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act (2018)</a>	Forestry 2018	<a href="#">Conservation (Natural Habitats, &amp;c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended in Scotland) (Habitats Regulations)</a>	Conservation regs 1994
<a href="#">Land Reform Act (2016)</a>	LRSA 2016	<a href="#">Interim Principles for Responsible Investment in Natural Capital (2022)</a>	Nat cap investment 2022
<a href="#">Agriculture (Retained EU Law and Data) (Scotland) Act 2020 -</a>	Agriculture 2020	<a href="#">The Conservation of Salmon (Scotland) Regulations (2016)</a>	Salmon regulations 2016
<a href="#">Land Reform Act (2003)</a>	LRSA 2003	<a href="#">The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations (2011)</a>	Water env regs 2011
<a href="#">Proposed new Land Reform Bill (during 2023)</a>	Land reform bill 2024	<a href="#">The Water Environment (Miscellaneous) (Scotland) Regulations (2017)</a>	Water env regs 2017
<a href="#">Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (2022)</a>	AECS 2022	<a href="#">National Planning Framework 4 (2021)</a>	NPF4 2021
<a href="#">The Common Agricultural Policy (Cross-Compliance) (Scotland) Regulations (2014)</a>	Cross compliance 2014	<a href="#">The National Plan for Scotland's Islands (2019)</a>	Islands plan 2019
<a href="#">Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAECs) (2022)</a>	GAECs 2022	<a href="#">The Bute House Agreement) (2021)</a>	Bute house 2021
<a href="#">Less Favoured area Support Scheme (2022)</a>	LFASS 2022	<a href="#">Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation (2022)</a>	Econ trans strategy 2022
<a href="#">Scottish Rural Development Programme (2021-2024)</a>	SRDP 2021	<a href="#">Housing to 2040 (2021)</a>	Housing 2021
<a href="#">The Scottish Government's Policy on Control of Woodland Removal (2009)</a>	Woodland removal 2009	<a href="#">National Planning Framework 3 (2014)</a>	NPF3 2014
<a href="#">Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018-2032</a>	CCP update 2018	<a href="#">A Scotland for the future: opportunities and challenges of Scotland's changing population (2021)</a>	Population strategy 2021
<a href="#">Climate Ready Scotland: Second Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2019-2024</a>	CCAP 2019	<a href="#">National Performance Framework (2022)</a>	Nat perform fwk 2022
<a href="#">Just Transition - A Fairer, Greener Scotland: Scottish Government response (2021)</a>	Just transition 2021	<a href="#">Scottish Energy Strategy: The future of energy in Scotland (2017)</a>	Energy strategy 2017
<a href="#">Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act (2019)</a>	Climate change 2019	<a href="#">Bioenergy Update (2021)</a>	Bioenergy update 2021
<a href="#">Climate Change Act (2009)</a>	Climate change 2009	<a href="#">Biomass Action Plan (2007)</a>	Biomass action plan 2007
<a href="#">Scottish biodiversity strategy to 2045 - Tackling the nature emergency (2023)</a>	Biodiversity Strategy 2023	<a href="#">Scotland's Energy Strategy Position Statement (2021)</a>	Energy strategy 2021
<a href="#">The Environment Strategy for Scotland: vision and outcomes (2020)</a>	Environment strategy 2020	<a href="#">Towards a Robust, Resilient Wellbeing Economy for Scotland (2020)</a>	Wellbeing economy 2020
<a href="#">River Basin Management Plan for Scotland (2021-2027)</a>	RBMP 2021	<a href="#">Scottish Planning Policy (2014)</a>	Planning policy 2014
<a href="#">NatureScot's Scotland's National Peatland Plan (2015)</a>	Nat peatland plan 2015	<a href="#">Tourism in Scotland: the economic contribution of the sector (2018)</a>	Tourism 2018
<a href="#">Scottish Biodiversity Strategy post-2020: A statement of intent. (December 2020)</a>	Bio S: statement 2020	<a href="#">Crofting Reform (Scotland) Act 2010</a>	Crofting reform 2010
<a href="#">Biodiversity strategy: consultation (2022)</a>	Bio S: consultation 2022	The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations (2017) <a href="#">1</a> & <a href="#">2</a>	T & C planning 2017