



Supporting Scotland's Land Use Transformations: Policy Coherence Findings

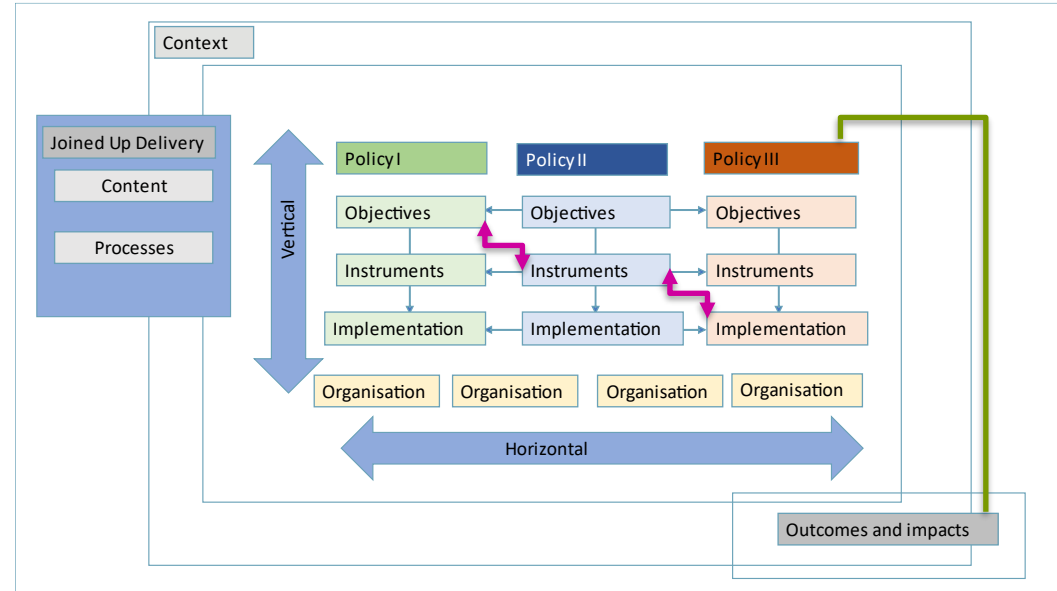


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What is Policy Coherence?

- Policy coherence aims to assess multiple different dimensions of how policies fit (cohere) together.
 - *'attribute of policy that systematically reduces conflicts and promotes synergies between and within different policy areas to achieve the outcomes associated with jointly agreed policy objectives'* (Nilsson et al., 2012)
- Vertical coherence between objectives; instruments delivering the objectives and how the instruments are implemented
- Horizontal is about coherence between objectives OR instruments OR implementation processes
- Diagonal is an emerging phenomenon, shown here by pink arrow – the objective of policy I is delivered by instrument of policy II. It may also rely in implementation actions from policy III.
- Green arrow shows feedback through monitoring and evaluation – this is standard within vertical coherence but more challenging for diagonal and horizontal coherence.
- This was a new part of our analysis, added at the suggestion of an interviewee from Scottish Government.



[Slides from the end of year presentation 2023](#)
[Slides from end of year presentation 2024](#)

Research Purpose & Stage

- Research questions:
 1. Are there synergies, gaps or conflicts in the way current LU policies are supporting LU transformations?
 2. Are there problems of vertical, diagonal and/or horizontal coherence within existing LU policies?
 3. How could policy coherence support land use transformations?
 4. What are the opportunities to improve or sustain coherence?
 5. How can coherence be monitored more effectively in the future?

- Initial screening of 66 documents & interviews September 2022 – March 2023 – horizontal analysis
 - See Nicholson et al. [paper](#)

- More in-depth analysis of subset (11 documents) to support ARP April 23 – Feb 24 – vertical and diagonal coherence
 - See [technical report](#) D5.3 (& [briefing](#), [infographic](#))

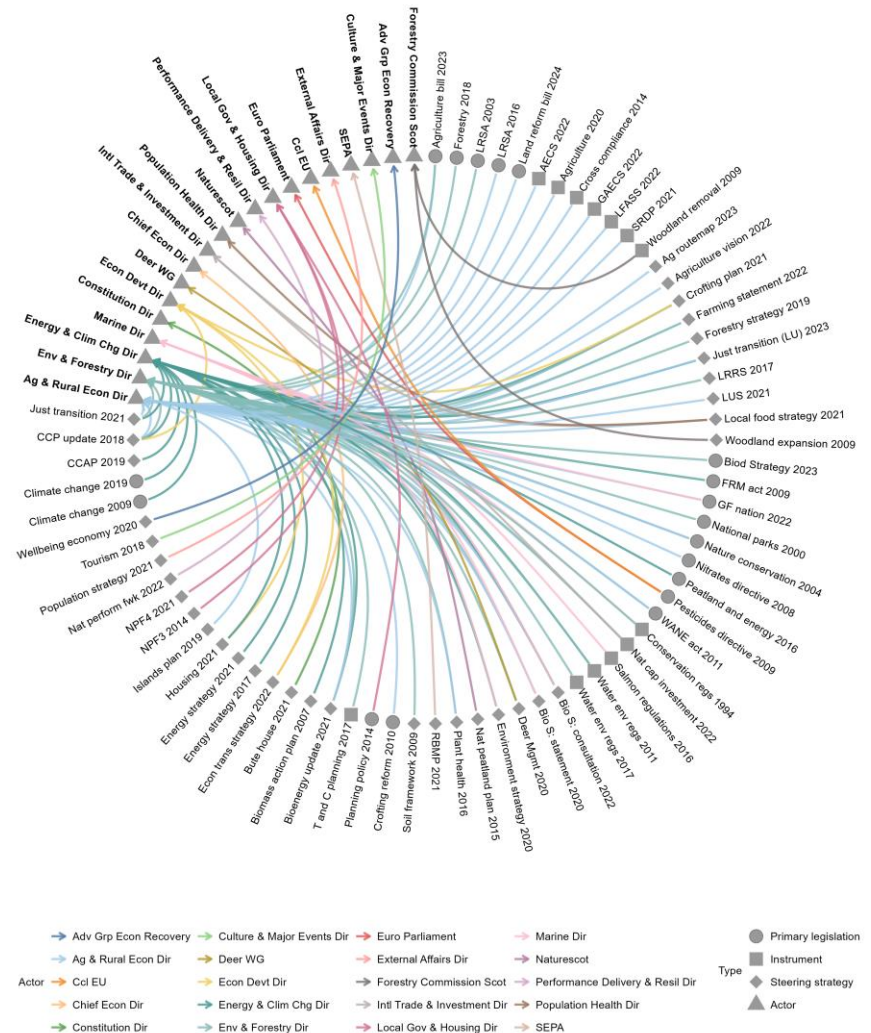
- Following up further perspectives on coherence
 - Deepening analysis of which actors (organisation or types of stakeholders) are named, in which roles, in our sample
 - Exploring what we know about [indicators and targets](#) in our sample of 66 policies
 - Exploring what we know about how the 66 policies are funded
 - Exploring what can be learnt from [international good practice](#) on policy coherence (50 papers reviewed, few empirical examples)

Our focus on publicly available written documents is a limitation. There is a lot of tacit policy knowledge in government, which is not in the public domain. This might make some observations trite to the insider, and insights on what is useful are welcome.

Actor Analysis (1)

Earlier [report](#) identified importance of WHO does coherence. We created a typology of actors (organisations or types of stakeholders) as there are different roles.

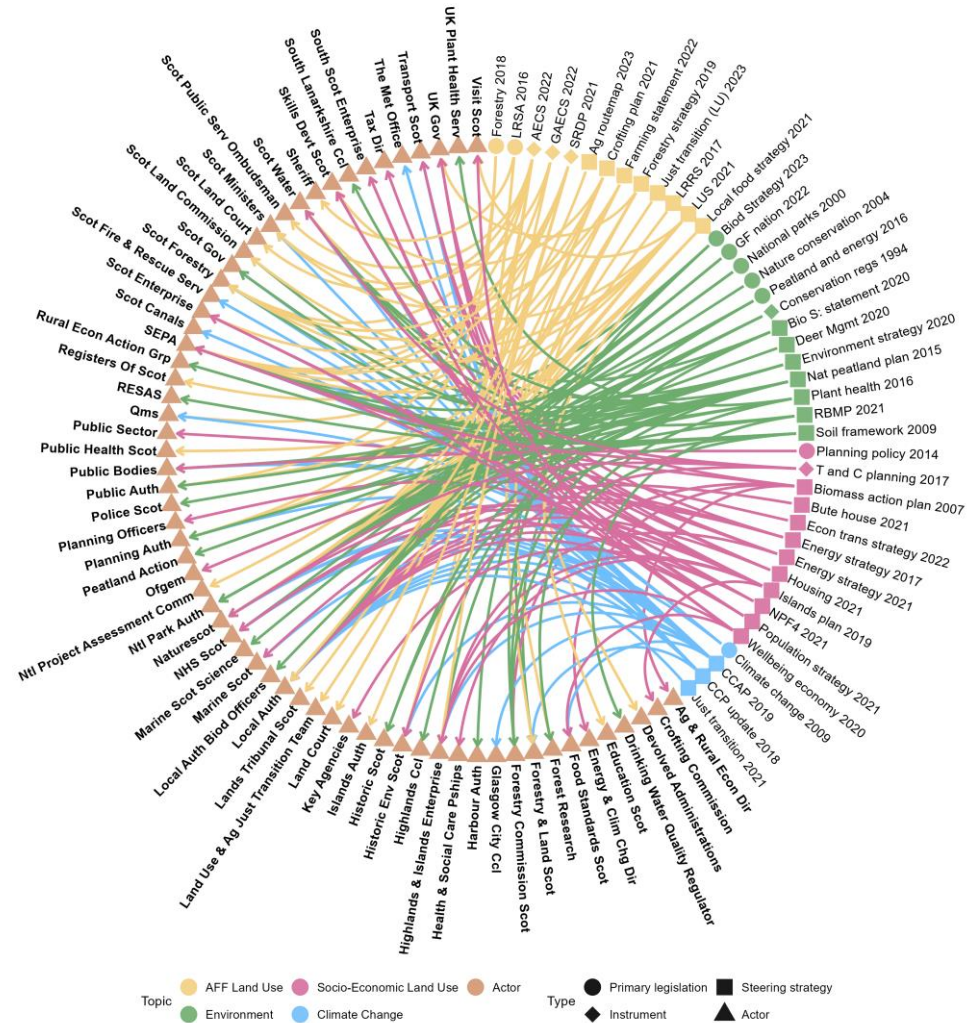
- 'Owns the policy' - refers to actors (usually directorates) who are listed as the owner/developer of the policy.
- 'Making it happen' - refers to actors who have a mandate to ensure the policy is implemented.
- 'Helping it happen' - refers to actors who are either mandated or encouraged to facilitate, or collaborate on, aspects of a policy, but do not have overall responsibility for its management and successful implementation.
- 'Affected/targeted by the policy' - refers to actors (most often non-state actors), whose practices and behaviours may be affected by the policy, or who may be encouraged to act in relation to a policy, but do not have a clear responsibility for its implementation.
- Figure shows the range of government actors **owning** (responsible for) each policy – with concentrations associated with the Agricultural, Environmental and Climate Directorates.



Circos diagram showing **owners** (in bold, with unique coloured arrows) connected to policies

Actor Analysis (3)

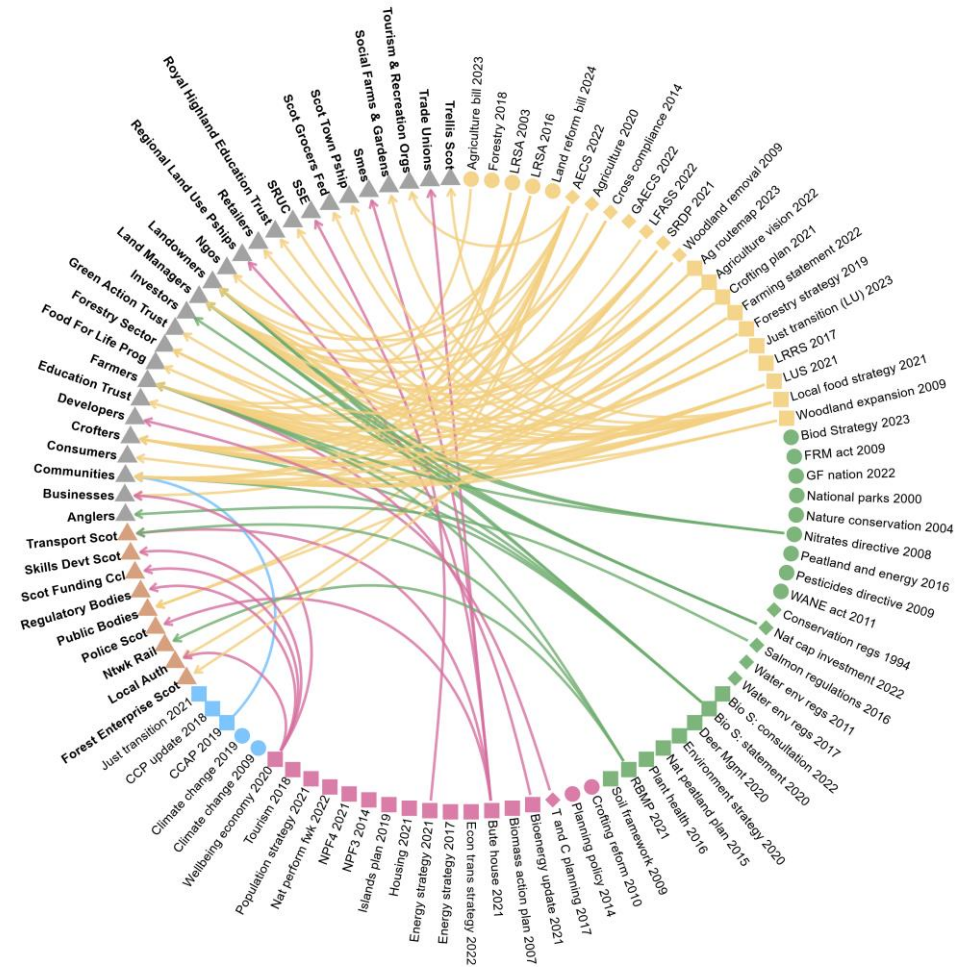
- Figure shows a total of **64** government actors that we have categorised as **'helping the policy happen'**. Policies are coloured, and colour of the arrows relate to the policy domains to show the patterns.
- None of these actors are directorates, which reflects the cascading levels of responsibility running through our categories of actors.
- 27 of these actors are connected to more than one policy with concentrations of policies connected to SEPA, NatureScot and local authorities, as well as Scottish Enterprise.
- 33 of the policies had multiple government actors helping them happen. The diagram shows a particular concentration of government actors associated with Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2019-2024, which has 21 government actors involved in making it happen.
- The diagram does not show 29 policies for which we were unable to clearly identify the actors involved.



Circos diagram showing **government actors** connected to the policies where they are **'helping the policy happen'**.

Actor Analysis (4)

- The figure shows the actors that are 'targeted' or named as 'affected' by 29 policy documents. There are 27 non-governmental actors (grey triangles) and 9 governmental actors (brown triangles).
 - Some non-governmental actors are partnerships that also contain government organisations
- Land Managers, Land Owners and Crofters are targeted in many policies, mainly in the AFF domain.
- Note that many of the policy documents (n=37) in our sample did not clearly identify affected actors.
 - These tended to be environmental, socio-economic or climate policies.



Circos diagram showing **actors** 'targeted' in the policies.



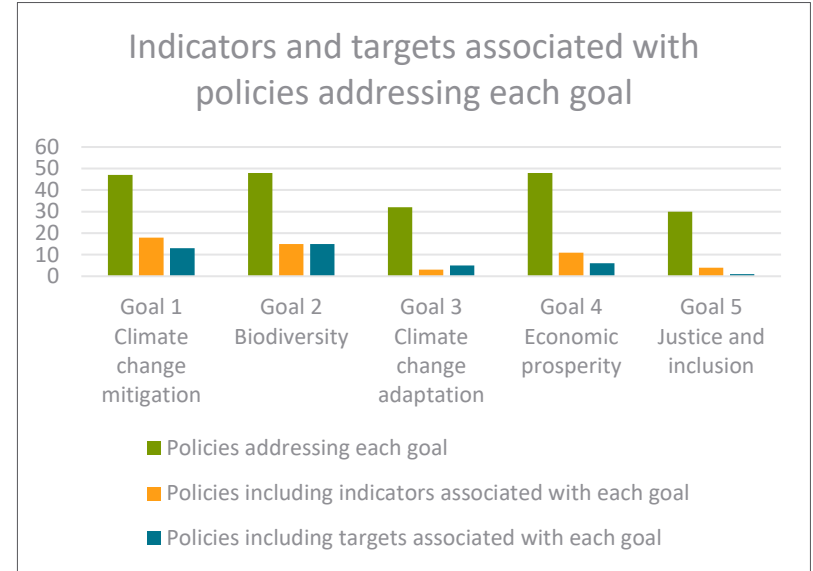
Indicator & Funding analyses

Indicators & Targets ([Policy indicators and targets](#))

- Clear targets and indicators are important both for evaluating individual policies, and for achieving policy coherence.
- It was rare to have clear and explicit indicators and targets addressing specific policy goals (see figure)

Funding

- Having dedicated monetary and staff resources are essential. Furthermore, we identified that agriculture incentives are often relied upon to deliver climate and environmental legislative objectives.
- However, it was very difficult to trace how much funding was available to deliver individual policies or align them.
- Furthermore, there was limited attention to how to align with private investment and market instruments.



- Findings for both indicators and funding suggest that these processes are opaque from the outside yet could be powerful levers for coherence and transformation.
- Targets and indicators could be powerful for vertical coherence and show pathways for diagonal coherence. Funding is often part of diagonal coherence and is a useful check on whether the ambition for horizontal coherence is achievable.

Literature Review (Report)

- Involve all (or most) relevant actors (gov and non-gov)
 - Ensure they all understand the full policy landscape, value multiple forms of expertise
- Coherence requires relationships, clear roles and responsibilities
 - Between and across governance levels, can require conflict resolution, needs to be continually renewed
- Planning is important (not just the plans)
 - Design to consider coherence, but also adaptive governance needed – esp when gaps or conflicts identified
 - Recognise and respond to spatial/temporal differences, align cycles if possible
- Mix of policy instruments is important
 - Regulations, incentives, advice and cooperation institutions, these need both capability and resources to deliver
- Coherence means dealing with complexity – need boundaries and live with uncertainty
 - Needs political support yet much of this is politically unpalatable?
- Ways to monitor coherence include:
 - Empirical studies (mainly analysis of indicators and interviews)
 - Modelling anticipated effects
 - Analysis against multi-criteria framework
- Lack of evidence suggests showing how coherence works in practice remains a **research gap**

Answering the RQs

- RQ1: Synergies, conflicts and gaps
 - Lots of opportunities for synergistic action given shared governmental and non-governmental actors; but also gaps regarding non-gov actors affected by our sample. Gaps in indicators and targets reflect earlier findings gaps for prosperity, justice and inclusion. Alongside gaps in funding data, means that trade-offs may not be visible and therefore not addressed.
- RQ2: Coherence Problems
 - Reinforced finding regarding lack of clarity on actors' roles and responsibilities, yet this is essential to coherence. Gaps in indicators and targets make it harder to trace if coherence is helping with transformations. Unclear if there are sufficient resources to deliver the ambition and limited if any reference to coherence with private finance, if that is expected to fill the gaps.
- RQ3: Supporting Land Use Transformations
 - Literature suggests that coherence should be effective and helps efficiency; should reduce conflict, improve implementation and develop trust. Little empirical research to demonstrate what happens in practice.
- RQ4: Improving Coherence
 - Having coherence as part of policy delivery work. Having a coordinating body to turn potential to actual, avoiding duplication and confusion. Making diagonal coherence visible – particularly in terms of funding and finance pathways. Having explicit targets, indicators and time series for individual policies, and mechanisms for sharing the interpretation and implications of data trends. Identifying roles and responsibilities for adaptive governance. These processes (esp. funding) may not be visible in the public domain to allow governments to adapt and respond to unexpected developments.
- RQ5: Monitoring Coherence
 - Little evidence that coherence is tracked or monitored. This requires more transparent indicators and targets for each element in the coherence process (see RQ4). Explicit theories of change for each policy domain, and across domains, could make clear the expected policy outcomes, and the steps required to achieve them. ARP offers unique chance to start and learn by doing.

There is more detail in an internal working report (M38) which can be shared on request

Summary & Next Steps

- Coherence can be overwhelming, important to focus on pathways
 - Shared strategic objectives
 - Most relevant instruments (with appropriate resources)
 - Clear governance structures and processes – commitment to coherence roles and responsibilities
 - Monitored (need indicators, targets) and Evaluated (what corrective action is needed & by whom?)
- How to make these observations more useful to Scottish Government?
- Research due to finish in Year 4
 - Paper due early 2026
- What should we focus upon?
 - Time to pivot from past policies to supporting current policy development? ARP, Environment Bill
- Possible topics are:
 - Systems mapping & indicator maps for ARP objectives
 - Exploring governance implications
 - Combining with non-governmental land use narratives (see #6)