The form and function of land use partnerships: insights for Scotland's Regional Land Use Partnerships

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Summary

Meeting climate change objectives in the land sector is likely to rely on effective collaboration that bridges scales and sectors. Many approaches to 'partnership' working have now developed, working at different scales and focussed on different issues. Confusion in concepts and terminology around partnership working could create barriers to the successful implementation of new partnerships and raise differing expectations among stakeholders. This paper aims to help clarify some of these concepts in the context of discussions about new Regional Land Use Partnerships (RLUPs) in Scotland. It sets out a simple approach to classify some of the main attributes of land use partnerships and illustrates this with insights from a desk-based review of thirteen regional scale Scottish land use partnerships, and the wider literature. It ends by setting out a more generic model of partnership working in existing partnerships and highlights some key issues for consideration during the establishment of RLUPs.

1 Land use and climate change in Scotland

Land use change and management are crucial in addressing climate change. Reducing agricultural emissions and enhancing land use related sinks (e.g. tree planting and peatland restoration) will be key in achieving Scotland's ambitious climate change target of net-zero by 2045. In Scotland, agriculture contributes an estimated 18% of emissions, and wider land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) are a net sinks, removing 13% of emissions (Climate Change Committee, 2020). Degraded peatlands are estimated to contribute an additional 14-24% of annual emissions (Climate Change Committee, 2020). Land use change and management also contribute to climate change adaptation. For example, approaches such as natural flood management could help build resilience to projected increases in extreme rainfall events, but they rely on large scale changes to land use planning and farming practices (Wilkinson et al., 2019). However, land management is not just about climate change. Agricultural land, which makes up 72% of Scotland's land mass (Scottish Government, 2020a), will be crucial in addressing the biodiversity emergency, reinvigorating the rural economy and achieving health and wellbeing targets. Finding effective approaches for delivering on these multiple objectives has therefore become a key policy focus.

Delivering these policy objectives is challenging in practice. It amplifies many longstanding issues surrounding land use governance, such as how to align local interests and national priorities, and how to achieve policy coordination. It also forces new thinking at larger geographic scales to account for the increasing interconnectedness of drivers of land use change and management. This has led many to describe this as a 'wicked' problem that extends beyond traditional scales of analysis and management (Freeman et al., 2015; Rouillard and Spray, 2017).

One way of addressing this challenge is to take a broader and more collaborative approach to landscape management. Scotland has put regional scale land use planning and partnership working at the heart of its approach to land management issues in the context of climate change. The updated Climate Change Plan (Dec 2020) commits to "make use" of Regional Land Use Partnerships (RLUPs) by the end of 2021 and related Regional Land Use

Frameworks by 2023 (Scottish Government, 2020b). The concept reinvigorates approaches established in the 1st and 2nd Land Use Strategies (LUS1 and LUS2, 2011-2016 and 2016-2021 respectively). These new institutions aim to contribute to Scotland's climate change targets and help meet other objectives (e.g. biodiversity loss), through collaborative and inclusive approaches to decision making across scales. Five new pilot partnerships have been announced (Scottish Government, 2021), but they are in an early stage of development. There are many options for how these partnerships are established and function, as well as a range of expectations in what they might deliver. Different conceptualisations and confusion around the terminology used in discussions about RLUPs could lead to challenges in implementation, as has been suggested for 'integrated landscape approaches' more generally (Reed et al., 2015).

This paper aims to help provide clarity in these debates in order to support early discussions about the form and function of RLUPs. Specifically it:

- Sets out a simple approach for understanding how land use partnerships work.
- Uses this approach to illustrate how existing Scottish land use partnerships work, drawing on a desk-based review of thirteen partnerships.
- Outlines some of the key challenges in partnership implementation highlighted in literature on partnerships in Scotland and further afield.
- Highlights some key questions and implications for RLUP implementation.

The paper does not seek to evaluate how well different partnerships function, although the approach could form the basis for a systematic approach to carrying out such analysis.

2 Partnership approaches in the land sector

'Partnership' approaches are increasingly used to address the complexities of land use governance, particularly those related to bridging different sectoral interests and scales. These approaches are part of broader debates about "integrated landscape approaches" that have been promoted in various forms since at least the 1980s (Reed et al., 2015). Integrated landscape approaches are broadly defined as "a framework to integrate policy and practice for multiple land uses, within a given area, to ensure equitable and sustainable use of land while strengthening measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change" (Reed et al., 2015). These collaborations fill a niche where "command-and-control" natural resource management policies have failed, and they address complex societal and environmental issues that can no longer be solved by any single institution (Diaz-Kope and Miller-Stevens, 2015).

Different forms of partnership are now common in land use management. For example, catchment partnerships have developed in relation to integrated water resource management, particularly driven in the UK by the EU's Water Framework Directive and through Defra's catchment based approach (CaBa) schemes (Rollason et al., 2018). These aim to manage water quality across river catchments, so include many aspects of agriculture and land management involving multiple land owners and managers. Other partnerships in the UK are more directly focussed on land management. For example, a number of Landscape Partnerships have been funded by the Heritage Lottery Foundation (Dwyer and Hodge, 2016) and there are various large-scale partnerships associated with conservation areas (Adams et al., 2016).

There are many arguments for the use of partnership approaches, including:

- **Increased effectiveness** in achieving results. This may result, for example, from increased buy-in from those involved in managing land and increased sustainability of any changes.
- **Increased efficiency**, for example through improved coordination of policy planning and implementation.

- **More equitable outcomes**, due to greater participation and representation of views, though this is of course highly dependent on power relations etc.
- **Increased legitimacy** of adopted approaches through the democratisation of decision making. This may, for example, help in reconciling top down and bottom up approaches to decision making.

There is now a body of academic research that seeks to understand and evaluate how partnerships work. Given that there are many types of partnership with varying characteristics, researchers have had to develop frameworks for classifying and analysing partnerships. For example, Moore and Koontz (2003) developed a typology based on membership composition, including government-directed, citizen-based and hybrid partnerships. Others have based typologies on concepts such as their timespan and degree of formality, including for example, intermittent coordination, temporary taskforces, permanent coordination, coalitions to achieve a common goal and network structures (Mandell and Steelman, 2003). Some have focussed more on their powers, which may range from "mutual exchange to actually making policy and program adjustments" (Agranoff, 2006).

Whilst these typologies are useful for classifying different forms of partnership and evaluating different approaches, they do not give much insight into how partnerships actually function. Watson et al. (2019) used a more practical approach to compare the history of two large scale and long-running integrated water resource management projects in the US. They define six attributes including: scope, scale, responsibility, engagement, financing and review processes (Table 1). This provides a useful starting point for understanding the different functions and approaches that future RLUPs could take, as well investigating existing Scottish partnerships, and this approach is applied in this paper[1].

Table 1: Core partnership attributes. Adapted from Watson et al. (2019). Note that a seventh attribute ('instruments') has been added for the purposes of this paper.

Attribute	Description
Scope	Scope refers to the range and types of resource-related issues and concerns included and addressed.
Scale	Scale concerns the spatial scale or scales at which governance is intended to operate.
Responsibility	Responsibility refers to how functions, responsibilities, and powers are determined and allocated among governing institutions.
Engagement	Engagement concerns how organizations and groups are involved in governance arrangements, including their participation through cross-scale and inter-jurisdictional relationships.
Instruments	Instruments refers to the approaches the partnership uses to plan and influence land use decision making
Financing	Financing refers to how funding is generated and allocated to enable governance arrangements to operate, and to implement policies, programmes, and projects.
Review	Review processes concern the various ways in which governance arrangements (including delivery of programmes/projects by the partnership) might be assessed. It also includes how they are adjusted on the basis of experience, learning, and changing circumstances and needs.

[1] Further analytical frameworks, such as Dwyer and Hodge's (2016) "social residual claimant" criteria could be added to the framework in order to conduct a critical systematic review, but this would require further research with each of the partnerships and is not the aim of this paper.

3 Existing land use partnerships in Scotland

There is a range of existing land use partnerships in Scotland, operating at local to regional scales. The focus here is on the larger initiatives as they are most relevant to current RLUP proposals, though recognising that many of the smaller initiatives may give valuable insights into how RLUPs influence change on the ground. The following criteria are defined:

- Multiple benefits: Aiming to deliver multiple benefits (economic, environmental and social benefits, as defined by Scotland's 1st Land Use Strategy) linked to land use and management.
- Large scale: large river catchments >100 km^2, possibly straddling multiple local authorities.
- Multi-stakeholder: multiple partners in different sectors and multiple land owners.

Partnerships that meet these criteria cover a broad range of themes, including, for example, catchment partnerships implementing integrated river management plans, green infrastructure networks and rewilding projects. There are also useful extra-sectoral examples that have less direct links to land use. For example, while the focus of Climate Ready Clyde is primarily urban, many of the programmes it works on include elements of land use planning in the Glasgow region and the partnership model it uses is instructive for future RLUPs.

Research on Scottish partnerships is mostly in the grey literature, although there are a few academic case studies. Some of the most detailed work across multiple partnerships was carried out during a review of the 1st Land Use Strategy (Phillips et al., 2014). This looked at how eleven different land use delivery mechanisms delivered multiple benefits "on the ground" through an extensive document review and consultation process. Waylen et al. (2021) and Liski et al. (2018) have conducted research on catchment partnerships, focussed primarily on the River Dee and Spey catchment partnerships. Ponta et al. (2020) conducted a brief review of the strengths and weaknesses of 15 different Scottish partnerships based on telephone interviews, as input to the Scottish Land Commission led RLUP consultation process. Academic studies on the governance of partnerships have focussed mainly on the Dee Catchment Partnership and the Tweed Forum (Cook et al., 2013; Rouillard and Spray, 2017).

Much of this work is not easily transferrable to the design of RLUPs. This paper synthesises findings from existing research and complements this with findings from a desk-based review of thirteen existing partnerships (Fig 1.) to illustrate how existing partnerships function. The selection of partnerships was based on those meeting the criteria above, as well as covering a range of geographic areas and there being sufficient web-based information to gain insights into their operation. The aim is to provide the basis for an approach for thinking about the form and function of RLUP pilots.

1. Cairngorms Connect (CC)
2. Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN)
3. Climate Ready Clyde (CRC)
4. Coigach & Assynt Living Landscape (CALL & CALLP)
5. Dee Catchment Partnership (DCP)
6. Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve (GSAB)
7. Inner Forth Futures (IFF)
8. Landscape Enterprise Networks (LENs)
9. Leven Programme Partnership
10. Loch Lomond and Trossachs NP (LLTNP)
11. North Harris Trust (NHT)
12. Strathard Partnership and Framework
13. Tweed Forum

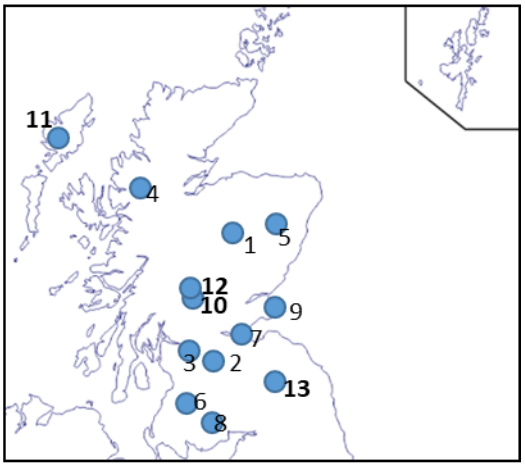

Figure 1: Scottish land use partnerships considered in this paper through desk-based review of partnerships documents.

4 Defining partnership attributes and functions

This section briefly reviews the different attributes and functions of partnerships, drawing on insights from existing Scottish partnerships and from the wider literature.

4.1 Scope and scale

All partnerships reviewed here focus on delivering multiple benefits linked to land use which can broadly be broken down into environmental, social and economic objectives. Most partnerships focus on environmental objectives, such as ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation or water quality and one of these objectives is often the primary goal of the partnership. Many partnerships also include broader social and economic objectives, such as sustainable tourism, active travel, and economic recovery. The scope appears to be primarily defined by the interests of the partners themselves (or their funders) and presumably influences many aspects of partnership implementation, such as the stakeholders involved. There are a number of potential trade-offs to consider around the breadth of scope. Interviews held during a recent review of catchment partnerships, for example, raised concerns that a broader scope may make it more difficult to implement partnership activities (Waylen et al., 2021). However, a narrow scope of activities may result in partnerships that engage less well with the broad range of stakeholders necessary to influence integrated land management, or are not well aligned with existing policies and processes.

The geographic scale of the partnerships reviewed here varies from 200 km^2 to 10,000 km^2. Their boundaries are based either on river catchments, administrative boundaries (e.g. Local Authorities, National Parks etc.) or similarity in landscape characteristics (e.g. similar geology, biodiversity and land use, or areas important for biodiversity conservation). The way in which boundaries are established can have implications for the scope of partnerships. Dwyer and Hodge (2016) for example, note that national parks in the UK purposefully avoid urban areas, making them prone to under-recognition of certain ecosystem services and local socio-economic linkages.

The large scale of many of the partnerships raises a question about how they engage with land managers. Individual land managers may not be represented directly within partnership governance structures, but instead through membership organisations or even sub-partnerships. Partnerships might therefore be thought of as having different levels of operation, with a more strategic partnership at large scales and smaller planning and implementation partnerships operating to implement activities and engage with land owners

more directly. Watson et al. (2019) describe how such an approach has emerged for catchment partnerships in Oregon, where there are now two distinct levels of operation. This is an important consideration in communicating with stakeholders about RLUPs, as they are likely to be much more strategic partnerships given their scale, which may be at odds with stakeholder expectations that they will engage directly with individual landowners.

4.2 Responsibility

Responsibility, as defined here, refers to how functions, responsibilities, and powers are determined and allocated among governing institutions. Four main themes have emerged from the review:

- How the type of partners involved influences the scope and objectives of the partnership and its powers.
- Composition and structure of the Board, Steering Committee and Managing Organisation.
- The form and formality of the partnership agreement.
- Approaches used for objective setting, strategic planning and decision making.

The number of partners ranges from 4 to 16 in the partnerships reviewed here (CSGN lists 84 partners, but its core partners are the four main agency partners, 19 local authority partners and the Scottish Government). The majority of partners are local authorities, public sector agencies or non-governmental organisations. Few of the partnerships have private sector partners. It is not clear in most partnerships how partners have been selected, although in many of the more informal partnerships, partners have originally converged around an issue and/or a funding opportunity. The type of partners involved has implications not just for the scope of the partnership but also for its powers to influence changes in land use. Many of the partnerships involving local authorities and statutory agencies have more regulatory and financial powers. However, as Dwyer and Hodge (2016) note, even these actors can be limited by their lack of land ownership. This can be overcome to some extent by partnerships entering into contracts with land owners – for example, some of the Landscape Partnerships have contracts for maintenance of activities for ten years following the initial funding period (Mount, 2013).

Structures for allocating responsibilities among partners are broadly similar among the partnerships reviewed and similar to standard programme management approaches (Lycett et al., 2004). All partnerships have a Board structure, usually including representatives from the different organisations in the partnership. The selection of Board members varies depending on the nature of the partnership; in larger partnerships with significant financial authority Board members may be elected and include members of the funding organisation (e.g. Scottish Government for National Parks and the Central Scotland Green Network), whereas these processes are often much more informal in smaller partnerships. Partnerships may have charitable status, so their management structure is influenced by Scottish charity law. The Board is often complemented by a Steering Group made up of community representatives and/or more specialist advisors. Further Project Boards may also be established in larger partnerships that are funding individual projects (e.g. Leven Programme). Independence of the Chair of the Board is key to partnership success, so that they can hold the partnership to account (OECD, 2006).

In addition to Boards and Steering Committees, partnerships normally establish a partnership management coordinator. In the partnerships reviewed here, this is often staffed by one of the partners, although in larger partnerships semi-independent management organisations are established (e.g. CSGN). Waylen et al. (2021) found that the “capacity and skills and resources for organising, administering, communicating and connecting – activities that are the responsibility of the coordinator” are the single most important factor for partnership success. The reviews of the pilots implemented during the first Land Use Strategy drew a similar conclusion, highlighting the significant resources required to manage the process of

developing a draft land use framework (Kirkup et al., 2016). Clearly this function needs to be well resourced and ideally semi-independent from the partners so that they are free from political influence (OECD, 2006).

Relationships between partners are usually set out in a partnership agreement. Where these are available for the partnerships reviewed here, most are voluntary agreements with varying levels of detail, ranging from relatively brief informal agreements to more detailed articles of association. Agreements should be based on identifiable responsibilities, joint rights and obligations, and be signed by all relevant partners (OECD, 2006). The main components of a partnership agreement include:

- Shared objectives
- Communication and information sharing procedures
- Financing and accounting procedures
- Staff resourcing
- Change in partners' involvement and procedures for admitting a new partner
- Decision making and conflict resolution processes
- Monitoring and evaluation procedures, both for the partnership and for its activities

The task of establishing partnership structures, agreements and objectives is of course an iterative process. If objectives are broadly agreed and the mechanisms for meeting them known, a more streamlined partnership of delivery agencies may be appropriate where the main aim is to programme and deliver projects in a coordinated way. If objectives are less clear and the delivery mechanisms poorly known, the partnership could be established more as a broad network for discussion of objectives and mechanisms, with the eventual goal of establishing an approach to delivery. A hybrid approach would be to use the steering committee or a stakeholder forum to help set objectives and delivery mechanisms in areas where these are less well defined.

Most of the partnerships reviewed here appear to follow a standard project management approach for outlining how they will work together on delivery, setting out a vision and strategic plan. In some cases the vision sets a long-term objective (e.g. 40 years in the case of CALLP and over 200 years in the case of Cairngorms Connect), which may be necessary for many of the activities promoted by partnerships (e.g. native tree planting). This is accompanied by an annual or multi-year (often 3 or 5 year) Action Plan setting out how the partnership will achieve the Vision.

It is difficult to obtain a clear picture of how decisions are made by partnership Boards and Steering Committees. Some partnerships talk about decision making 'by consensus' (e.g. CALLP), but it is hard to tell what the procedures are if a decision is not reached or if there is conflict over an issue. Research on catchment partnerships has highlighted the opaqueness of decision-making processes, but the strong focus on maintaining a positive ethos of collaboration (Waylen et al. 2021). The risk with this approach is that the partnership avoids addressing some of the more difficult challenges, which are common in integrated land management and possibly where the focus needs to be in order to deliver. It could also affect who the partnership engages with and lead to 'group think' with the partnership taking the path of least resistance (Waylen et al. 2021).

4.3 Engagement

The engagement processes focussed on here surround how partnerships engage with wider stakeholders outside of the partnership governance structure itself (though these may of course overlap). A number of the partnerships reviewed here involve elected bodies, but they do not have a direct democratic mandate. Nonetheless, as Dwyer and Hodge (2016) note for similar partnerships in the wider UK "many have a strong participatory agenda through which the actions of the partnership are expected to be determined collectively and thus 'legitimised' by a wider public." Research on participatory processes often defines a spectrum of

engagement from informing and consulting to more direct stakeholder control (Rollason et al., 2018). This is a useful framework with which to consider engagement processes used by land use partnerships, and highlights a range of approaches that are in use.

All partnerships use approaches to inform stakeholders about their activities, and these are usually accompanied at least by informal information gathering. Examples include town hall meetings, exhibitions, field visits, volunteering programmes and activities with schools. A deeper level of engagement can be achieved through more dedicated stakeholder consultation and this may be a statutory requirement, for example, under planning legislation, environmental regulations or forestry licensing. Consultation could take the form of social surveys or focus groups but some partnerships have more elaborate and iterative stakeholder consultation processes. The Leven Programme Connectivity Project, for example, has carried out an extensive programme of town hall events, field trips, workshops and online events targeting a wide range of stakeholders, including hard to reach groups (The Leven Programme, 2020). Partnerships use a range of different methods during consultation. Some of the more innovative approaches are scenario planning exercises, interactive mapping and films to consider different land use options and how different decisions interact. Through repeated consultation events, the inputs can be fed into the partnership activities in a process more resembling co-design.

Consultation processes raise some significant challenges. These have been highlighted in existing research on Scottish partnerships (Phillips et al., 2014) and are common in the wider literature on participatory processes (Salter et al., 2010). Key issues include:

- Difficulties in bridging local and national interests in consultation processes.
- Representation challenges, particularly in the larger and more rural partnerships.
- Substantial time, effort and funds are involved in consultation but the results may not be particularly useful inputs into the design of projects or programmes.
- Limited skills of people involved in projects around consultation, facilitation and conflict management.
- Danger of processes being co-opted by certain interests and the inability for consultations to resolve deep seated conflicts.
- Lack of clarity in how engagement processes will be incorporated into the approaches partnerships use and lack of reporting back to stakeholders.

Some of these challenges can be overcome through careful design of consultation processes, for example through targeting hard to reach groups or employing an independent facilitator. There are numerous existing resources on best practice engagement, including Scottish Government guidance (Pound et al., 2016) as well as well tested approaches used by local authorities (Scottish Borders Council, 2014). Consideration of these factors in the composition of the partnership is also important, for example through ensuring organisations representing certain interests and with existing networks are represented on the Board or Steering Group. Rouillard and Spray (2017), drawing on the example of the Tweed Forum, highlight the importance of a “trusted intermediary” in successful engagement approaches that can bridge national and local interests.

Only the North Harris Trust has a community ownership model that, according to Rollason et al.’s (2018) model, could be considered the most participatory of the partnership approaches reviewed here. The Trust’s activities are influenced by members of the local community living within the geographic area covered by the Trust. Every resident of the estate, above sixteen years of age, has lifetime membership (for a £1 fee) and voting rights over issues related to the estate. These votes help to steer the decisions of its 13 Directors and 8 staff members.

4.4 Instruments

Many instruments can be used to influence land use and management. They range from voluntary instruments such as education and knowledge exchange, to statutory instruments

such as regulation or levies (Table 2). Most of the partnerships reviewed here are limited to voluntary instruments, although partners often have regulatory powers. A related distinction can be made between partnerships as "steering" processes that help to strategically identify opportunities or going beyond these planning functions to "formally own and deliver activities" (Waylen et al. 2021). Beyond the challenge of partnerships having mainly voluntary instruments at their disposal, evidence from existing partnerships highlights four issues that are particularly important in relation to RLUPs:

- Extent to which steering and strategic planning, versus the implementation of projects are core partnership activities.
- Whether partnerships develop a spatial plan and how this accounts for multiple benefits.
- How and where projects are delivered by the partnership, and constraints on delivery within a strategic framework.
- Extent to which market-based instruments are used.

Table 2: A generic typology of response options (or instruments) for managing environmental change. Source: Brown and Everard (2015).

Response options	Characteristics	Examples
Regulation (statutory)	Legally enforced universal minimum quality standards	Drinking water, bathing water, air quality, food safety, fishing quotas
Levies	Taxes to support environmental standards or improvements	Landfill Tax/Levy (UK, Australia), Waste Levy (Australia), Environment Levy (Ireland), Climate Change Levy (UK)
Protected areas	Defined zones that have restrictions on their use or conservation-based obligations	Natura 2000 sites (EU), Biosphere reserves (UNESCO), Ramsar wetland sites (global)
Common law, civil law or constitutional law	Legal rights and responsibilities based upon precedent (common law); general rules (civil law); or constitution	Conservation covenants, environmental impact assessment
Direct payments and incentives	Payments to support a particular use or management practice based upon service provided	Agri-environment schemes (EU), Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES),
Market-based schemes	Trading of goods and services, through a controlled credit scheme or an open market	Carbon trading, Wetland banking (USA), Biobanking (NSW, Australia), Biodiversity offsetting (UK),
Voluntary quality assurance	Independent schemes that provide accreditation for maintaining minimum standards via a quality marque	Forest Stewardship Council, Marine Stewardship Council
Spatial and integrated planning	Combined cross-sectoral planning instruments to maximise resource efficiencies and opportunities	Green infrastructure, integrated catchment planning, integrated coastal zone management
Investment in science and technology	Investment in new science and technology with associated infrastructure to improve uptake	Precision farming, ecosystem services, renewable energy, water treatment, waste reduction, recycling
Education and knowledge exchange	Formal and informal schemes to communicate and share knowledge	Campaigns, professional development, demonstration projects, citizen science, eco-schools
Networks and partnerships	Formal and informal arrangements of multiple stakeholders based upon a common shared interest	Community woodlands, coastal partnerships, rivers trusts, biodiversity partnerships
Good management practice	Guidelines to share and encourage adoption of best practices	Integrated farm management, natural flood management

All partnerships have some form of steering function. This may be just to raise the profile of certain issues within the area, through education and knowledge exchange. However, it is normally through more strategic planning activities, and this may be the partnership's main area of added value, particularly in the complex landscapes in which they function and their often limited funding. Climate Ready Clyde, for example, is focussed mainly on developing a climate change adaptation plan for Glasgow that is coordinated between different sectors. Much of the first three years of its operation has been to develop a more joined up approach to the integration of climate change across a wide range of sectors, through adaptation planning. However, the trade-off is that it may be harder to demonstrate the impact of the partnership, and this is a question that is actively under consideration as the partnership

considers its future following its initial focus on adaptation plan development (SSN and ConnectedClusters, 2020). The Dee Catchment Partnership is another example of a partnership initially established to develop a River Basin Management Plan through a collaborative process. While it is now also implementing many projects with partners, this planning function still remains at the core of its activities.

An important question in relation to the development of RLUPs and future RLUFs, is the extent to which partnerships engage in spatial planning across their geographic area and how this guides their activities. In some partnerships, strategic spatial planning appears more limited, with the partnership implementing a series of discrete projects that are prioritised by the Board/Steering group and a public consultation process. At a level above this, some use various forms of land use opportunities and constraints analysis to help direct activities. This might, for example, be based on land use zoning defining where project activities are possible. More elaborate approaches include integrated habitat network mapping (e.g. IFF), ecosystem service mapping (e.g. Strathard), and the development of a masterplan (e.g. Leven). These approaches may help to define a more integrated plan for the landscape within the area of the partnership. However, there are a number of challenges in doing this well. It requires stakeholder engagement across a wide range of actors, which is hard to achieve in practice, and in many partnerships the evidence suggests engagement is still quite siloed (Waylen et al., 2021). These steering processes can require significant skills and resources, which means the partnership management organisation has to be adequately resourced. Through focussing only on strategic planning, partnerships may be criticised not delivering changes 'on the ground'.

Many partnerships reviewed here go beyond a steering function and support activities that directly alter land use or management. Often this is achieved through project financing via grant or incentive schemes, or help to broker funding from public or private sources. These may be directed at a set of projects identified in the partnership plan (e.g. in the CALLP Initiative a set of 28 different projects are funded) or opened up to a competitive bidding process. These are often projects in discrete geographic areas covered by the partnership, rather than more programmatic interventions across the whole landscape. Land ownership is often a barrier to these more 'landscape based' approaches – with few partners owning land, there may be constraints on the extent to which they can implement such approaches. This opposite case is illustrated, for example, by Cairngorms Connect. Here, partners own most of the land within the area of the partnership, and it seems likely that this aids the implementation of a broad and integrated rewilding project.

Some of the partnerships are using more market-orientated incentive schemes. The GSAB, for example, has developed a certification scheme that is awarded to businesses demonstrating high standards of environmental and sustainable development within the GSAB. Tweed Forum and LENs are involved in payment for environmental service schemes. Tweed Forum acts as an intermediary in forest carbon offsetting, working with the company Forest Carbon to plant woodlands certified through the Forestry Commission's Woodland Carbon Code. LENs uses a more 'bundled' ecosystem services approach in which groups of businesses operating within a landscape and with a common interest in nature-based solutions broker a financial deal with groups of land managers who can deliver measurable outcomes (3Keel, 2021).

4.5 Finance

Financing refers to how funding is generated and allocated to enable governance arrangements to operate, and to implement policies, programmes, and projects. Four themes have been highlighted by the review, including:

- Dominance of traditional public and philanthropic funding models, that are often short term.
- Lack of funding for core operational costs.

- Barriers to private financing of partnerships.
- Impacts of the funding allocation model between partners on collaboration.

The majority of partnerships reviewed here are publically funded through government budgets, foundations, or charitable grants. However, the funding mechanism varies, and is influenced by the legal structure of the partnership. Some of the largest partnerships such as LLTNP are statutory bodies, with core funding allocation from the Scottish Government (~£7.5 million annual budget). However, additional funding is contributed by partners for specific projects. These partners are largely statutory delivery agencies (e.g. NatureScot contributes funding for Peatland Restoration). There are also a number of agency-led partnership projects, where initial funding appears to be contributed by some of the partners through their existing budget lines. For example, in the Leven Programme, SEPA has signed a voluntary "Sustainable Growth Agreement" with 16 partners, but the only publicly available information on funding suggests that it is from two of these partners. Some partnerships are funded through direct government grants. Climate Ready Clyde, for example, was initially financed with a 3 year grant from the Scottish Government.

Foundation and charitable funds are another key source of support for the partnerships reviewed here. The Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnerships programme funded the CALLP initiative, the initial phase of the Inner Forth Futures Programme (£2.9 million and £1.75 million respectively) and the Callander Landscape initiative within LLTNP. These Lottery Funds provided 5 year block grants to partnerships meeting certain criteria and with detailed activities specified in a proposal to the Fund. Foundation and charitable funding is key in the Cairngorms Connect Partnership, with £3.75 million from a foundation called Arcadia and another ~£5.25 million from partners who include charities and statutory agencies. Charitable funding was also instrumental in the initiation of the GSAB (£~120,000 annual?? budget), but significant new funding of £1.9 million has recently been contributed from South of Scotland Enterprise.

The availability of funding is a key constraint to the operation of many partnerships (Adams et al., 2016). It can be particularly hard to attract funding for core management functions (as opposed to projects that the partnership implements). Much of the public and charitable funding is provided for a limited timeframe (typically 3-5 years), making long term planning difficult and often resulting in those managing partnerships spending much of their time fundraising (Dwyer and Hodge, 2016). While it is not clear in many partnerships how they plan their long term financial model, there are some useful examples. Climate Ready Clyde, for example, has moved to a membership fee based approach, to help it transition from its initial government grant funding. "Legacy planning" has also been a key theme in many of the Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnerships. The main approaches to legacy planning have included: further fundraising; establishing not-for-profit business ventures; establishment of a 10-year maintenance fund; partners or volunteer groups taking on responsibility of individual projects; tying third parties into legacy safeguards (e.g. the Forestry Commission for woodland grant schemes); and ensuring suitable institutional arrangements are in place after the scheme has completed delivery (Mount, 2013).

Private finance could also help to overcome some of these challenges, but it is rare for the partnerships reviewed here. Only the LENs initiative is explicitly financed by private actors contracting with land owners via an intermediary. However, the south of Scotland LENs initiative is still being developed by SEPA and Nestle, and it is as yet unclear how intermediaries will be funded. It is hard to determine this information from existing LENs initiatives, but their case study of the Hampshire-Avon LENs suggests support is mainly from the public sector (Farmer Clusters, 2020). The Tweed Forum also works closely with the private sector, although presently does not receive core funding from private sources (Liski et al., 2018). It is not clear whether it receives finance through its partnership with Forest Carbon. Another example from Scotland is the Spey Catchment Initiative, which includes Diageo and the Spey Fishery Board in its partnership board, and Diageo provides some funding towards

the partnership. There are also a number of initiatives that exist or are in development on single large estates in Scotland (Phillips et al., 2014). It would be useful to understand more about the approaches these individual private investments are taking to partnership working and those that may be taken across developing networks of large estates (e.g. the East-West Wild initiative).

The lack of private investment in partnerships follows a more general pattern in conservation finance. Some of the key reasons include:

- Lack of regulation that helps to incentivise investments in public goods.
- Weak alignment between partnership objectives and commercial goals.
- Lack of private sector expertise in partnership management structures.
- High uncertainties and risks involved in approaches promoted by partnerships (e.g. nature-based solutions).

Some of these factors may present more of a challenge in larger partnerships such as RLUPs (Juarez-Bourke et al. 2021), given their broader remit, which could make alignment with commercial goals more difficult.

Regardless of the source of partnership finance, the funding allocation model between partners is an important consideration as this can have an influence on many aspects of partnership operation and collaboration. There are three broad approaches to funding allocation (OECD, 2006) including: 1) mutual agreement on how each partner will use their own fund to contribute to the common goal; 2) common funding of certain activities where the partners each agree to provide a certain amount to co-fund activities; and 3) partners create a common fund where they will decide together on the use of the money but not allow for individual decisions. The second model demonstrates greater collaboration, but could result in political bargaining between partners. The third is the most integrated but usually requires a standalone organisation to manage funds and may be difficult in practice as partners often have legal obligations under their own budget lines, so cannot easily transfer funds.

4.6 Review

Review processes and mechanisms are defined here as the various ways in which governance arrangements (including delivery of programmes/projects by the partnership) might be assessed. It also includes how they are adjusted on the basis of experience, learning, and changing circumstances and needs.

The design of review systems will be important for the effective delivery of RLUPs. Indeed, this function may be more important than more traditional approaches to programme implementation due to the uncertainties involved in predicting climate change impacts and the complexities of programme implementation in the land sector. Much of the research on collaborative land management and climate change, suggests a need for “adaptive management” due to these factors (Williams and Brown, 2014). The need for robust review systems is likely to be even greater if successful implementation is linked to new national targets (e.g. for emissions reductions) or performance-based systems (e.g. carbon markets), and it is important that these systems are established during partnership formation (OECD, 2006). Unfortunately review systems are often under-resourced and partnerships may not use review processes very frequently despite the benefits (Watson, 2019; Waylen et al., 2021). This can be because of the complexities involved in developing indicators, long time lags in changes to these indicators, the costs and skills involved in collecting and analysing data, or political factors such as where stakeholders resist being monitored.

It is difficult to determine the review mechanisms used in many of the partnerships reviewed here as they are often not clearly documented. Statutory partnerships, such as LLTNP, have sophisticated review systems that are subject to external audit processes. Most partnerships reviewed here and elsewhere in the UK appear to monitor and report their activities using a standard project review approach (Dwyer and Hodge, 2016), assessing actions and outputs

against indicators set out in their strategic plan or action plan. These commonly use proxy indicators, such as the number of events held, or people consulted or trained. While these may be important for understanding how partnerships alter factors such as collaboration between stakeholders, they may have little measurable link to changes in land management across the area covered by the partnership. Examples of indicators with more direct links to outcomes on the ground include the number of projects delivered or the number of hectares planted. However, these indicators may still be a relatively crude measure of the impacts of partnership activities.

Some partnerships have developed more detailed review systems that are closer to outcome indicators, quantifying changes in key environmental indicators in the area covered by the partnership. Cairngorms Connect, for example, is mapping the habitat types in their current state, which they will then use to develop maps of projected restoration actions that they can compare with a business-as-usual scenario. CSGN has also developed a detailed monitoring and reporting system. Initially it developed a 2010 baseline against which to help track progress in delivery up to 2050 across ten key indicators. They are establishing a geographic information system to track activities and help with analysis. They have also divided their monitoring and reporting activities into three areas, focussing on the partnership itself (how CSGN is acknowledged and embedded within partner policies, guidance and practice); the programmes implemented (where a case study approach is used); and the annual work plan (used to monitor the activity of the Board, Partners and Support Unit). A similar approach to the review of RLUPs may be useful to help determine the effectiveness of the partnership as well as its activities.

Whilst detailed review processes are important, there can be significant trade-offs, particularly around the associated costs. Partnership managers with limited funding could quickly become overwhelmed by monitoring and reporting requirements. Developing a more standardised review methodology across different partnerships could help to reduce some of these transaction costs. A more important, though more complex, approach would be capitalise on the 'steering' function of the partnerships, integrating review mechanisms with those of different partners or specific instruments used by the partnership (e.g. incentive schemes). Many of the statutory partners will already collect data that can be used to measure outcomes, such as water quality, agricultural production, and renewable energy provision, although the frequency of reporting will vary. Over the long term partnerships could use these datasets to measure progress and try to establish correlations between their actions and outcomes (Scottish Borders Council, 2014). Monitoring and evaluation frameworks have been developed for a number of multi-site landscape partnership programmes, which provide useful insights on different approaches (e.g. Defra and Natural England, 2015). They also provide valuable ideas for addressing challenges specific to landscape partnerships, such as the development of indicators of habitat connectivity.

5 Regional partnership models and implications for RLUPs

5.1 Partnership models

The review above has illustrated a range of different land use partnership approaches that are in operation in Scotland and the wider UK. Beyond outlining their main functions, it is difficult to define generic 'models' of how these partnership operate. However, there appear to be two broad extremes in the spectrum of existing partnership models, which are illustrated schematically in Fig. 2.

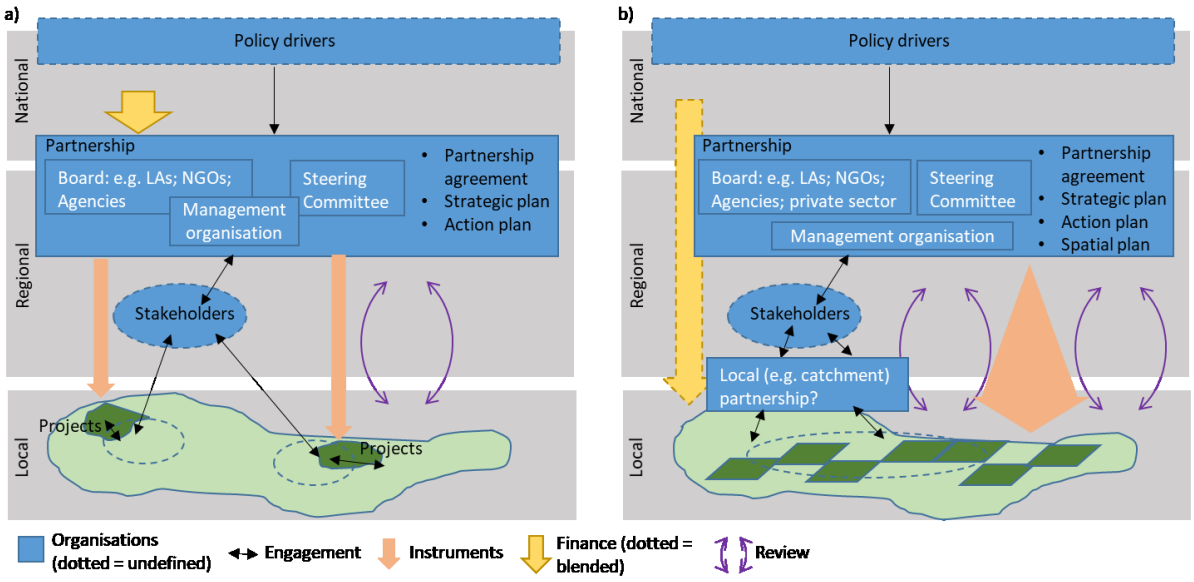

Figure 2: Schematic models of different approaches to landscape partnerships, illustrating the spectrum of approaches used from a more traditional project approach (a) to a more sophisticated programmatic approach (b).

At one extreme are partnerships broadly set up like projects (Fig. 1a), with the following defining features:

- Partnership organisation includes mainly national and regional public sector organisations and NGOs.
- Responsibilities are established in a partnership agreement and activities are guided by a strategic plan and action plan.
- The partnership is often managed by staff from one of the partners.
- Funding is generally short term (3 years) and primarily through public sector or foundation-based grants.
- Engagement through consultation processes primarily with sub-regional representative groups (e.g. NGOs) and/or directly with communities near projects.
- Instruments may include direct project support, not necessarily guided by a strategic spatial plan for the partnership.
- Simple one-off project review systems that focus mostly on activities delivered by the partnership (rather than partnership function itself), and focus mainly on outputs.

At the other extreme are partnerships with more sophisticated programmatic approach (Fig. 2b). Some of the defining features of these partnerships include:

- Partnership organisation includes mainly national and regional public sector organisations, NGOs and private sector organisations. It may be formally or informally linked to partnerships working at more local levels.
- Responsibilities are established in a detailed partnership agreement. Activities are guided by a strategic plan and action plan that is frequently revisited. The planning of activities is guided by detailed spatial planning considerations across the partnership region, including steering coordination with wider stakeholder groups and policy areas.
- The partnership is managed by an independent management organisation that has autonomy from individual partners.
- Funding is long-term (>5 years, or a legacy planning strategy is outlined) and through public sector or foundation-based grants, membership fees, and private sector contributions. The partnership may manage budgets and/or act as an intermediary steering finance towards activities identified in its strategic planning processes.

- Engagement through consultation processes primarily with sub-regional representative groups (e.g. NGOs) and/or directly with communities near projects. These processes are iterative and feed into the strategic planning of the partnership.
- Instruments may include direct project support guided by a strategic spatial plan for the partnership as well as more programmatic funding.
- Reviews are carried out regularly against a baseline established early in partnership development, and evaluate both outputs and outcomes. The review system assesses both the impacts of partnership activities but also how the partnership itself is functioning.

There are, of course, further regional partnership approaches that do not fit into these generic models. The LENs approach, for example, is a more direct partnership between private companies and private land owners, linked by supply and demand side 'aggregators'. This could be one approach facilitated by RLUPs, but LENs does not engage directly in strategic spatial planning and does not fit with many of the defining characteristics of RLUPs that have already been established.

5.2 Key questions and implications for RLUPs

Some of the features of pilot RLUPs have now been defined. They include:

- Regional scale (meaning single or multi-local authority).
- Local authority led.
- (Likely) led by planning teams within local authorities due to links with RSS.
- Predominantly non-statutory powers except through existing powers of partners.
- Low core finance.

Bearing these criteria in mind, key questions and issues that have arisen from this review, and that are relevant in context of RLUP development, include:

Engagement

- *What does meaningful engagement look like at regional scale? How can it be managed?*

  RLUPs will be institutions working at a large, multi-local authority scale in many cases, meaning that they are likely to have engagement processes that more resemble strategic planning processes (e.g. with organisations representing stakeholder groups) rather than direct engagement with individual land owners. This seems at odds with some discussion about RLUPs, which often assumes direct engagement at a local, land owner level. Both scales are important of course – the first Land Use Strategy pilots, for example, suggested that the sub-catchment scale is key to properly engaging stakeholders, but this needs to be set within a much broader strategic approach to land use planning. There is a need to clarify how these two scales can be aligned during RLUP engagement and implementation processes. There are potentially useful precedents from UK catchment partnerships and integrated catchment management more generally (e.g. the two level system in Oregon referred to in section 4.1), that could be further explored. Approaches used in the LUS1 pilot land use frameworks could also be revisited.

Responsibility

- *How are different partner responsibilities agreed and documented? How are decisions made and conflicts addressed by formal decision making bodies within partnerships?*

  There is a large range of approaches to agreeing responsibilities between partners and how these are documented in partnership agreements. To increase the impact of partnership activities, it will be important to clearly define decision making processes within these bodies and particularly how conflicts are overcome in order to avoid partnerships following a path of least resistance.

Instruments

There are a number of questions surrounding the instruments RLUPs can use to influence land use and management. Key among these are:

- Powers of partnerships with limited statutory authority: *How can partnerships have influence when they have limited direct financial or regulatory power? To what extent can they act to coordinate or guide existing instruments (e.g. SRDP funding)?*

  RLUPs are likely initially to have relatively limited financial and regulatory powers. In order to maximise their impact it will be important to establish clear objectives and identify early on where their added value is in different contexts. One area that is likely to be particularly important is identifying how they overlap with other regional policies and planning tools that share similar objectives (e.g. forest and woodland strategies; river basin management plans). Given their limited powers and the number of existing initiatives, focussing partnership activities on steering and convening functions, may help to enhance their added value. An effectively functioning partnership, with strong buy in from partners could help to integrate new approaches within and between partners. This is similar to the Climate Ready Clyde model. The cases discussed here suggest that partnership composition could also help to enhance powers, for example through the inclusion of statutory agencies on partnership boards. It may be useful for RLUP pilots to map out early on, where a new mechanism for partnership working fits in relation to existing strategies and instruments used at the regional level, in order to help define the objectives of the partnership.

- Interaction of RLUPs and RSS processes: *How might RLUPs have influence through the planning system? How could they integrate with an RSS in practice?*

  There has been significant emphasis on aligning RLUPs with the Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) under National Planning Framework 4. It would be useful to set out what such alignment could look like in practice. The RSS should provide a process for regional engagement on a strategic spatial plan that should influence the approach taken in NPF4. Presumably RLUPs and RLUFs could have indirect influence on wider planning reform by feeding into the RSS from a land use perspective. However, RSS's have a non-statutory basis (unlike the National Planning Framework and Local Development Plans), so it is not clear how RSS might help with delivery, or the extent to which Planning Authorities would prioritise actions under the RSS. The Scottish planning system also currently has relatively limited powers over large areas of rural landscapes, so it would be useful to explore further the instruments a reformed planning system is likely to have in influencing environmental outcomes in such areas.

- Spatial planning: *What approaches can be used for developing more strategic spatial plans that take into account multiple benefits?*

  Developing a more integrated spatial land use plan is likely to be one of the core aims of RLUPs. Existing partnerships and other land use planning processes are using a range of spatial planning tools that take into account multiple ecosystem services, connectivity across landscapes etc. There are likely to be significant trade-offs in using different approaches, especially in relation to the resources required (in terms of expertise, data etc.). This was a key finding from the first LUS pilots. It will be important to establish early on what the essential requirements are for spatial planning and to assess existing options and resources.

- New financial instruments: *What 'new' financial instruments could be used by RLUPs? At what scale can these function? What are their implications for partnership governance?*

There is significant interest in 'new' financial instruments for delivering changes to land use and management that have multiple benefits (Blackstock et al., 2018). This terminology often refers to instruments such as carbon finance, biodiversity offsetting, green investment etc. Discussions about RLUPs often refer to the need and potential for RLUPs to tap into funding streams beyond public finance. However, these instruments are still rarely used in Scotland and most of the partnerships reviewed are reliant on public finance for their core operational costs as well as delivery of measures. It would be useful to investigate further how RLUPs, as they are currently envisioned, might need to be structured in order to use or facilitate the use of these instruments.

Finance

- *What approaches can be used to fund the core functions of partnerships? How can sustained long-term finance be generated?*

  Financing the core functions of partnerships over the long-term is challenging, and many partnerships reviewed here have time-limited and minimal funding. However, these core functions, and particularly a well-funded management organisation, are key to successful partnerships. Partnerships have developed various approaches to supporting their core functions and 'legacy planning', which should be considered early in the design of RLUP pilots.

Review

- *How can partnerships assess their impact?*

  This review has highlighted the range in both approaches to, and quality of, review processes for partnerships. The literature on collaborative approaches to land management also highlights how important these processes are for successful implementation, especially when linked to new targets or market-based instruments. Review systems ideally need to assess both how the partnership is functioning and the impact of its activities in terms of outputs and outcomes. Assessing how the partnership is functioning could be particularly challenging. However, there are useful precedents from existing partnerships and research on collaborative approaches to environmental management that could help to develop these aspects of review systems. The monitoring and reporting requirements of some of the 'new' financial instruments (e.g. carbon finance) are now also relatively well known, and there has been considerable work carried out elsewhere on how these can be integrated into regional governance frameworks. Insights from these approaches could help to inform what could be required within RLUP review systems in order for them to facilitate the use of new financial instruments.

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