



Press Release

1 August 2017

For immediate release

Mountaineers back call for upland strategy **Mountaineering Scotland endorses SNH report**

Mountaineers have welcomed a report which could lead to the development of a strategic vision for Scotland's uplands.

The Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) report 'Scoping a strategic vision for the uplands' explores the potential of developing an overarching upland strategy, which would involve a wide range of interest groups and organisations.

Following an extensive consultation, it includes a number of broad recommendations that could inform the development of a strategic vision if Scottish ministers decide to go ahead with it.

Mountaineering Scotland, which has previously called for such a strategy, has endorsed the SNH report, urging ministers to embrace its recommendations.

David Gibson, Chief Executive Officer of Mountaineering Scotland, said: "Scotland's uplands are of international significance, and a source of public good, providing employment, income, inspiration and pleasure, with resultant economic, social, health, wellbeing and other benefits. This report demonstrates the extent of support from a wide range of sectors for the development of a coherent upland strategy."

"Our main interest is in the mountains and wild land. These open landscapes are under ever-increasing pressure and we believe these must be managed through the development of an agreed and overarching policy."

"Clearly that will require leadership. We urge Scottish Ministers to seize the initiative and respond to the report and its recommendations by appointing an organisation, or perhaps an individual, that would be seen by all sectors as independent and neutral, to lead the process."

Mr Gibson said the eventual strategy would have to balance a wide range of benefits different sectors want from the uplands, including forestry, crofting, carbon capture, renewable energy, biodiversity – as well as recreational interests such as hill walking, climbing and snow sports. Other identified recreational interests identified in the report included deer stalking, grouse shooting and wildlife watching.

Ends

Notes for editors:

The full report, Scoping a Strategic Vision for the Uplands, is available on the SNH website at <http://www.snh.gov.uk/land-and-sea/managing-the-land/upland-and-moorland/scoping-upland-vision/>

Mountaineering Scotland's original response to the SNH consultation can be read here: <http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A2323945.pdf>

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About Mountaineering Scotland:

- Mountaineering Scotland is the only recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers and ski-tourers who live in Scotland or who enjoy Scotland's mountains.
- Mountaineering Scotland provides training and information to mountain users to promote safety, self-reliance and the enjoyment of our mountain environment.
- The Mountaineering Scotland is a membership organisation with over 14,000 members representing hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers, funded through a combination of membership subscriptions, non-governmental grants and investment from sportscotland, which supports public initiatives and services in mountain safety, mountain training and the development and promotion of mountaineering activities.
- Mountaineering Scotland also acts for 75,000 members of the BMC or British Mountaineering Council on matters related to Landscape and Access in Scotland.
- Mountaineering Scotland landscape and access work is supported financially by the Scottish Mountaineering Trust and the BMC
- Mountaineering Scotland has launched the ClimbScotland initiative to encourage young people to participate in climbing and support their progression. It offers a dedicated website and a development team, which will introduce young people to climbing at schools, climbing walls and via youth organisations with a range of activities and events, while developing kids clubs and providing specialist support to parents, volunteers and teachers.
- Mountaineering Scotland is the national governing body for sports climbing. It offers pathways to climbing coaching, organises and promotes a range of regional and national climbing competitions, and manages the Scottish climbing and bouldering teams. It contributes to the management of the GB teams with the ultimate aim of seeing a Scottish athlete achieve a podium position in the Olympic Games.
- Mountaineering Scotland is the new name for the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCoS), which acts to represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering.

- Mountaineering Council of Scotland remains the registered company name.
- The MCoS is a not for profit company limited by guarantee and incorporated in Scotland. Company number SC322717.
- Mountaineering Scotland, The Granary, West Mill Street, Perth PH1 5QP