



Policy Summary

LOCAL NATURE RESERVES

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are areas of land designated by a local authority under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. They provide protection for sites of special local interest for nature and offer opportunities for environmental education, for the benefit of both local communities and visitors. There are currently 29 LNRs in Scotland.

SNH's vision is of Local Nature Reserves which combine protection of the natural heritage with stimulating people's awareness and enjoyment of it and involvement with it. People throughout Scotland should have access to LNRs and new LNRs should be created to respond to the aspirations of local communities to have 'special natural places'.

Background

The responsibility for selecting, acquiring and managing LNRs lies with local authorities. SNH is consulted by local authorities when reserves are declared.

In Scotland, the early LNRs were declared mainly to resolve conflict between competing land users or to give protection to a site's special interest, including the introduction of byelaws. In time, however, LNRs have become recognised as places where people seek the quiet enjoyment of the natural heritage, where local communities can be involved in site management, and where opportunities for environmental education may be provided.

SNH's Position

LNRs contribute to environmental awareness by providing places for people to experience, understand, enjoy and appreciate nature. They contribute to biodiversity by providing for management of green spaces of special importance for nature. They enable such areas to be protected in addition to any safeguard in development plans, and for byelaws to be introduced if required. They contribute to sustainable development by adding to the quality of life in urban areas, providing access opportunities in natural environments, enhancing local distinctiveness, and offering an opportunity for communities to be involved in and responsible for managing their environment. LNRs may form a component of Local Agenda 21 strategies, Local Biodiversity Action Plans, and environmental education strategies.

LNRs occupy an important niche in our system of designations. They complement the national protection for nature offered to sites designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and the management of areas for recreation as Country Parks.

SNH has **two policy objectives** for LNRs. They should:-

- increase awareness of, understanding of, and personal commitment to, the natural heritage; and
- enable protection and enhancement of the natural heritage in special, locally important, places.

In order to meet these objectives, sites should be **selected** which both:-

- provide accessible, positive, current (or potential) informal opportunities for raising people's awareness, understanding and enjoyment of, and involvement with, their local natural heritage; and
- are (or have the potential to be) of special natural heritage interest in the area, through good management and safeguarding of the site.

In assisting local authorities in establishing new LNRs, and improving the quality of existing ones, **SNH will:-**

- in acting as a statutory consultee, ensure that advice is meaningful and consistent, offering guidance on the natural heritage context of proposed LNRs;
- support appropriate provision for LNRs in development plans;
- publish a guide to the selection and declaration of LNRs;
- incorporate all LNRs within an SNH database of designated natural heritage sites, making the information publicly available on request
- encourage innovation, the adoption of good practice and high standards in the management of LNRs;
- support the development of LNRs through locally available, discretionary, grants, and investigate ways to increase support funding to match SNH grants;
- promote the benefits of LNRs in partnership with CoSLA, and develop a basis for monitoring their value and effectiveness; and
- support the development of partnerships between local authorities and environmental voluntary organisations to manage some LNRs.

References:

Scottish Office. Development Department (1999). Natural heritage. National planning policy guideline. (National Planning Policy Guideline (NPPG); 14). Edinburgh : Scottish Office.

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) (2000). [Local Nature Reserves in Scotland: a guide to their selection and declaration](#). Perth : Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).

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