Question 1 - The table in part 5 provides an overview of the proposals under each of the EU 2020 headings – Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive – matched against the relevant thematic objective and investment priorities. Do you think the investment priorities are the most appropriate ones for the activity suggested?

We support the following proposals set out in the table, as each will help towards the delivery of the Central Scotland Green Network, which is a National Development in the second National Planning Framework (NPF2). The Central Scotland Green Network has been included in the proposed framework for the third National Planning Framework (NPF3) which was recently laid before Parliament.

Proposal 7 – The proposed framework for NPF3 highlights Active Travel as a priority in the CSGN area. As well as active travel hubs, we believe it would be useful to have funding for active travel planning and to support engagement with businesses, schools and communities to embed awareness and behaviour change to move users from cars etc. to walking and cycling. This is likely to require a sustained communications and engagement campaign over the life of the funding programme.

Proposal 10 – The Central Scotland Green Network is already and could continue to provide a setting for significant numbers of employability schemes. We are shaping information to send to Scottish Ministers in the coming months on recent environmental employability programmes run by partners and the scope to deliver more of these in the next few years.

Proposal 12 – The proposed framework for NPF3 highlights the need to address vacant and derelict land within the Central Scotland Green Network area. Funding is currently seen as one of the main barriers to addressing progress so funding through this programme would be most welcome to support advance, permanent and temporary greening.

Proposal 13 – Funding to deliver strategic, large scale Green Infrastructure is critical to the delivery of the Central Scotland Green Network. We would hope to be able to support the lead organisation, SNH, and the delivery bodies in maximising outputs and outcomes from this funding stream.

Question 2 – Section 6 sets out the linkages between Structural, Rural and Fisheries Funds as well as linkages to other EU Funding Programmes. We would welcome stakeholder comments on these linkages in order to help us develop this thinking further

We support the idea of establishing strong read across between the various funds.

Question 3 - Do you think the new proposals will have a positive or negative impact on the protected characteristics and wider issues of inclusion and participation?

The active travel, land remediation and employment and training proposals have the potential to be targeted to areas of greatest need in terms of addressing inclusion and participation.

Question 4 - If you think there will be a negative impact on the protected characteristics or inclusion and participation please provide   suggestions as to what could be done differently to diminish this impact.

No comment.

Question 5 - Please provide your views for improving the process for design, procurement, delivery, monitoring and evaluation to strengthen delivery of sustainable development.

It is important that the requirements for reporting and claiming are known upfront. Difficulties arise when the requirements for records or baseline reporting change after the start of the programme as the new information may not have been gathered at the outset.

Officer time and availability to deal with queries, including on site visits, would be welcomed enabling better applications to be submitted.

A GIS database should be used to collect data for the on-the ground outputs, for example hectares of land remediated to woodland. This should be available to allow initiatives like the Central Scotland Green Network to be able to monitor physical change over time. This would improve the overall reporting of this National Development and aid targetting future resource prioritisation to continuing areas of greatest need.

Question 6 – Do you have any further comments on the proposals outlined in this this document?

No