RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE

FORESTRY AND LAND MANAGEMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM STIRLING COUNCIL

1. Does the Bill achieve its aims and are you in favour overall? Is there anything else that you feel should be included or excluded from the Bill?

Too early to tell, hopefully the lessons will have been learned from the experience in Wales. Would have preferred the well respected and established name and expertise of Forestry Commission to have been kept intact.

Potential for expansion of forestry to achieve shared objectives such as landscape scale schemes for flood management etc make sense and could be positive. Equally there are potential negative impacts if forestry is diluted and lost or given less value/ attention in a broader environment division.

2. What are your views on the Bill’s statutory requirement to produce a Scottish Government Forestry Strategy based on sustainable forest management?

Essential element of historic FCS/ FES and new organisation going forward, serves to link and inform users and allied industries and professionals, a key document to guide forestry going forward.

Vital that FCS/ FES drives promotion of forestry and especially planting of additional pure commercial and mixed objective (broadleaf/ amenity/ CCCF etc) forests. Going forward we need to address falling levels of tree planting from previous peaks which we are currently reaping the benefits of with current harvesting.

3. The Bill will provide new powers to Scottish Ministers over subjects such as tree health and the ability to conduct research. What are your views on these powers?

Historic/ current arrangements have worked well i.e. UK wide, going forward it is essential that UK/ European and to a lesser extent the wider world context are fully considered, coordinated. It is essential that research is coordinated, funded and stretches UK wide.

4. The Scottish Government’s intention is that the Bill should provide greater flexibility and wider powers in relation to land management, with a focus on sustainable development. The Bill also contains provisions regarding compulsory purchase. How do you feel this will work in practice?

Greater flexibility could be a double edged sword, good if it is used for the general betterment of forestry/ trees and the wider environment but not if this is to the detriment of forestry.

5. The Bill will update the regulatory regime and enforcement powers for felling and restocking trees. Do you feel it is fit for purpose?

Uncertain, historic legislation has served well, new arrangements will need to bed in and only time will tell if they are effective and how they compare with current.
6. Do you have any comments on the bill in relation to human rights or equalities?

No comment.

Stirling Council
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