RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE

SOUTH OF SCOTLAND ENTERPRISE BILL

SUBMISSION FROM ANN JOHNSTONE

SOSE must include building a sustainable responsible resilient economy

My response is based on the questions in the online survey for the South of Scotland Enterprise Bill (SOSE Bill, available here: https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/87WVV/) NB I have also completed the online survey, but my links to references do not remain working in the online survey hence this written submission.

I agree that a South of Scotland Enterprise agency (SoSEA) should be created, because it is evident from the responses during the consultation process (April-June 2018, both the programme of events and the online survey) that there is a shared need and widespread support for a South of Scotland Enterprise agency.

The SOSE Bill survey asks “Do you agree with the proposals for the body’s constitution, purposes, powers and duties?”

I do not agree with some of the proposals.

I presume ‘constitution’ in the question above refers to para 2 of the Bill:-

I think there should be some clarification in the Bill of a commitment to balanced representation – geographically and by sector.

I presume ‘purposes’ in the question above refers to para 5 ‘Aims’ of the Bill:-

I think ‘those charged with developing the new legislation to establish the new agency’ do not appear to have done what Scottish Government and Prof Griggs said they would do i.e. their work is not perceptibly informed by the outcome summary report and analysis report of the SoSEA consultation (April-June 2018).

The draft Bill does not reflect the consultation response/result with regard to environmental and sustainability issues.

The Scottish Government wishes the new body to do more for the area than ‘Enterprise and Skills’: see ‘overarching vision and aim’ in para 13, page 3 of the ‘Policy Memorandum’ which accompanies the SOSE Bill, here Policy memorandum SOSE Bill, and also para 15: “The body will also play a leading role in delivering ambitions for the area and supporting the rural economy. It will work closely with other national and local organisations to align activities behind an agreed economic vision. Transforming the economy in this way will ensure that the area reaches its potential.”

Scottish Government published ‘Consultation on a new Enterprise Agency for the South of Scotland, March 2018’ to inform the consultation process. Included in the ‘Aim of Consultation’, on page 2, in para 1.1, is the statement “Your response will shape the
development of the South of Scotland Enterprise Agency, influence what it will do and inform the legislation needed to establish it.”

Notably, Prof Russell Griggs OBE, Chair, SoSEP, stated that the consultation was “a vital part of the process whereby we develop our understanding of the views and priorities of communities, businesses and organisations operating in the South of Scotland. Importantly, the results will also inform those charged with developing the legislation to establish the new Agency.” See page 3 of the ‘SoSEA consultation outcome summary report’ available here: http://www.sosep.co.uk/sosep_files/images/SoSEA_consultationsummary_OCT18.pdf

In the ‘SoSEA consultation outcome summary report’, ‘Land Use’ is identified as one of 19 ‘key areas of focus’ (page 7). ‘Land Use’ has the fourth highest frequency of response (89 comments) and has more comments by category than ‘Skills and Training’ (72) and ‘Young People’ (47) on p7.

In the ‘SOSEA consultation analysis report’, https://www.gov.scot/publications/south-scotland-enterprise-agency-consultation-analysis-report/, the ‘central messages’ (p3) include:

- “…respondents highlighted … the importance of sustainable approaches …” (under ‘Ambitions for the South of Scotland’) – this means environmental and economic sustainability - see NB’1’, below

And, the eight economic strengths highlighted for “the Agency to build upon” (under ‘The economic context …’) include these four:

- ‘Quality of life’ – this means “natural environment” – see NB’2’, below
- ‘History and cultural heritage’
- ‘Natural capital’
- ‘a range of sectors important to the SoS’ – this includes agriculture, forestry, fishing, land management, Tourism and the Food and drinks industry – see NB’3’, below

NB’1’ ‘sustainable approaches’ are expanded upon in para 3.6 ‘Focus on sustainability’ (p13): “Many respondents said that they would like to see a South of Scotland that has a focus on sustainable development approaches.” with the focus including both environmental (“a sustainable use of natural resources including land use”) and economic sustainability (“Sustainable business growth, Low-carbon economy, …”)

NB’2’ in para 4.2.2 on p17, the economic strength ‘Quality of life’ is defined by: “… the South of Scotland’s natural environment provides a high quality of life.”

NB’3’ the economic strength called ‘a range of sectors important to the SoS’ is expanded upon in para 4.2.7: three of the four important sectors listed are ‘Primary industries (agriculture, forestry, fishing, land management)’, ‘Tourism’, see NB’4’ below, and ‘Food and drinks industry’, see NB’5’ below.
NB’4’ ‘Tourism Scotland 2020’ is the national tourism strategy – in his foreword Stephen Leckie, Chair of the Tourism Leadership Group, asks for the support of Scottish Government and public sector agencies to align their tourism activities with the industry strategy e.g. p14 “Building our capabilities: Sustainable tourism - With sustainable economic growth as our goal, we [the tourism industry] must seek to maximise our operational efficiency and environmental performance, minimise our impact on the local environment and connect with our communities to deliver real benefits.” p18 “Building sustainable tourism: In tandem with shaping a better quality visitor experience, we will also be building a more sustainable industry. Because this is not a strategy for growth at any cost, this is a strategy for sustainable growth – economic, environmental and social.” Full strategy available here:
http://scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/content.php?url=page/ts2020history/

NB’5’ ‘Ambition 2030’ the Scottish food and drink industry national strategy includes a strong theme of ‘responsible growth’ e.g. p7, ‘What Success Looks Like’, para 4: “We will develop our brand values around responsibility and trust. This goes much deeper than marketing – it’s about a renewed commitment to, and defining a culture around, our stewardship of the environment and resource management, our investment in the workforce and our ability and willingness to contribute to the wellbeing of our nation.” Available here: https://www.scotlandfoodanddrink.org/resources/publications/ambition-2030-industry-strategy-for-growth/

In response to the online SoSEA consultation (for Q4 ‘What are the strengths you would like to see the Agency build on?’) both the Scottish Borders and D&G Councils, stated “The South of Scotland has important strengths, and a key task of the Agency will be to develop and exploit these strengths sustainably.” The first two of eleven strengths listed were: - “1. The South of Scotland’s rural landscape and environment is one of our biggest assets. The quality of our natural environment and the quality of our landscape being key drivers behind people choosing to live and work in the area and an important ‘pull factor’ in attracting business investment and visitors to the area. This is supported by excellent access to open space, from lochs to sweeping valleys, rolling hills and dramatic coastline from the North Sea to the Atlantic. 2. Rich natural resources – marine and coastal; freshwater; land including fisheries, agriculture, forestry; and renewable energy.” Available here: https://consult.gov.scot/economic-policy-unit/new-enterprise-agency-for-the-south-of-scotland/consultation/published_select_respondent?uuId=402096245&_b_index=180&sort=submitted&order=ascending

I repeat: I think ‘those charged with developing the new legislation to establish the new agency’ do NOT appear to have done what SG and Prof Griggs said they would do i.e. their work is not perceptibly informed by the outcome summary report and analysis report of the SoSEA consultation in respect to environmental and sustainability issues, and the resulting SOSE Bill shows little ‘understanding of the views and priorities of communities, businesses and organisations operating in the South of Scotland’.
The SOSE Bill appears to me to reflect Highlands & Islands Enterprise’s aims and action plan. The current HIE was created as a result of the Enterprise and New Towns (Scotland) Act 1990. Since 1990, the world has changed and national and global legislation and approaches transformed, perhaps most notably demonstrated by the global challenge of climate change and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The latter available here: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/

The South of Scotland could be a leader in climate adaptation, demonstrating the benefits a region can reap from ensuring they are climate resilient and developing their adaptation economy. It would be desirable to see businesses preparing for climate challenges, effectively addressing business risk and the new business opportunities emerging for climate-related products and services, and thus gaining competitive advantages. Climate Ready business guidance available here: https://adaptationscotland.co.uk/how-adapt/your-sector/businesses

I suggest the SOSE Bill should take the leads from and align with ‘Tourism Scotland 2020’, ‘Ambition 2030’ and ‘Scotland’s Forestry Strategy 2019-2029: consultation draft’ and the ‘Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill’ with their strong themes of sustainable responsible growth, reflecting the UN SDGs and the views and priorities of communities, businesses and organisations operating in the South of Scotland, by revising paragraph 5 (2) e.g.:

(2) Furthering the economic and social development of the South of Scotland includes—
(a) supporting inclusive, sustainable economic growth,
(b) providing, maintaining and safeguarding employment,
(c) enhancing skills and capacities relevant to employment,
(d) encouraging business start-ups and entrepreneurship,
(e) promoting commercial and industrial—
(i) efficiency,
(ii) innovativeness,
(iii) international competitiveness,
(iv) sustainability (economic, social and environmental), and
(v) resilience (climate and business)
(f) supporting community organisations to help them meet their communities’ needs.

Para 5 (1)(b) should be expanded upon, about what is included, in the same way that Para 5 (2) expands upon Para 5 (1)(a). e.g.

(3) Furthering the amenity and environment of the South of Scotland includes-
(a) promoting responsible stewardship of the natural and built environment
(b) encouraging responsible resource management including land use
(c) enhancing access to the natural environment
(d) ??
I presume ‘duties’ in the question above refers to para 4 of the Bill: Please note that not all public body duty acts include a list of organisations to which the Act applies e.g. the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009) so paragraph 4 should be revised e.g.:

4 Application of public bodies legislation
All Public Bodies legislation will apply to South of Scotland Enterprise
Schedule 2 amends other Acts where necessary so that their provisions apply to South of Scotland Enterprise.