Do you agree that a South of Scotland Enterprise Agency should be created?

BSW Timber Group has a large presence in the South of Scotland region: our headquarters are in Earlston, our subsidiary Tilhill Forestry has several offices across the area and our Dalbeattie sawmill is one of the largest in the UK. It is very encouraging, from the point of view of a business in the region, to see the government committing to such a significant project as the creation of a local Enterprise Agency.

The South of Scotland is a unique area: it is the closest point to Scotland’s largest market (England), it has a vibrant network of businesses, with forestry and farming being particularly successful. It is also a beautiful region, whose landscape, history and natural resources have huge potential to support growth in the tourism and leisure sector.

At the same time, the region faces considerable challenges: the population is ageing, with young people moving away for education and career purposes; the retail offering in most towns is in need of regeneration; the infrastructure and public services need investment and major improvements to attract more and better jobs and new settlers.

A region with such a unique character needs a dedicated agency that builds on the strengths and offsets issues of the area with a tailored approach.

Do you agree with the proposals for the body’s constitution, purposes, powers and duties? If you do not agree with the proposals, please set out specifically what you would like to change.

The agency’s constitution as a public body with a duty to meet standards of accountability, transparency and governance is very positive.

The degree of flexibility that the bill allows the agency is also very important, as it gives the body the possibility to assess its needs and decide what structure and talent best serve its objectives.

BSW Timber Group is fully supportive of the agency’s stated main aim of driving inclusive growth in the South of Scotland.

Is there anything else that should be included or excluded from the Bill?

We hope the agency will also have a mandate to raise the profile of local businesses outside the region, participating in conferences and similar events to advertise the economic potential of the area.
We would also like the bill to include a reference to the agency’s duty to work together with the Borderlands Growth Initiative, which will certainly be an important partner in delivering benefits and inclusive growth for the South of Scotland.