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Submitted to Future Grant Support for Forestry
Submitted on 2023-05-17 11:12:03

Ministerial Foreword - Forestry in Scotland is a sector that we can be justly proud of.

1 - Introduction and Rationale for Providing Grant Support for Forestry

1. Do you agree that grant support for forestry should continue to be improved and developed as a discrete scheme within the overall package of land support?

Yes

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

It is important to continue the success of this scheme. The ultimate goal should be to increase the cover of both commercial and native woodland and to be able to eventually remove public support from the industry. We are still quite a bit away from this so the FGS will be required for a number of years still.

2. Are there any changes that would allow for better complementarity between the forestry and agriculture funding options?

No

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Having worked in both sectors over many years I believe that funding is better delivered separately for each sector.

2 - Forests Delivering for Scotland’s Climate Change Plan

3. How can the support package for forestry evolve to help tackle the climate emergency, to achieve net zero, and to ensure that our woodlands and forests are resilient to the future climate?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

The support has to be targeted to new woodlands and restocking of harvested woodlands so that we can expand the tree cover. It is not possible to plant trees today that will be resilient to climate change in 40-80 years as there is no certainty in what that climate change will be. Foresters should be allowed the freedom to use their own judgement as to what species are suitable for each site.

4. Private investment through natural capital and carbon schemes can make a valuable contribution to climate change. Do you agree that the grant support mechanism should have more flexibility to maximise the opportunities to blend private and public finance to support woodland creation,

No

Please explain you answer in the text box.:

Although I agree that flexibility would generally good for grant support mechanisms I don't think it would be beneficial to spend time on it for this reason. This is not a long term solution to mitigating climate change. The future of carbon markets is too uncertain.

5. How could the current funding package be improved to stimulate woodland expansion and better management across a wide range of woodland types, including native and productive woodlands?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

The level of grant is very generous there is no need to increase funding. The issue is uncertainty and time to get a scheme approved. Consultees have too much influence and the forestry authority is too keen to listen to consultees objections/comments rather than support the scheme. Constraints need to be removed or lightened.

6. Do you agree that it should be a requirement of grant support that woodlands are managed to ensure that they become more resilient to the impacts of climate change and pests and disease?

No

How can the grant scheme support this?:

What will the climate be like in 40 years? It is always good to build in resilience but this is a forest managers option and shouldn't be prescriptive. We don't know exactly what we need to be resilient against. Do we stop planting Norway spruce now as this is the main target species for Ips?
This should not be part of the grant support requirements.

3 - Integrating Woodlands on Farms and Crofts

7. Which of the following measures would help reduce the barriers for crofters and farmers wanting to include woodland as part of their farming business? Please select all that apply.

Are there others not listed above?:

These measures are all there already. Anyone wanting to plant trees has the support they need. I go back to my previous reply regarding uncertainty, time taken to approve a scheme and the constraints/consultee input - this is the biggest obstacle to new planting anywhere.

8. Establishing small woodlands can have higher costs. What specific mechanisms would better support small scale woodlands and woodland ownership?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Scaled grant support.

4 - Forests Delivering for People and Communities

9. How can forestry grants better support an increase in easily accessible, sustainably managed woodlands in urban and peri-urban areas?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

I dont know enough.

10. How can grant support for forestry better enable rural communities to realise greater benefits from woodland to support community wealth building?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Making the grant application process simpler, quicker and more predictable. This would make it easier to create new woodlands. Commercial woodlands at a large scale especially create sustainable long term quality employment. There is now need to target support specifically to help communities as the people living in these communities benefit from commercial woodlands as they are established and mature. This is continuous, sustainable employment that allows local people to invest in their businesses.

11. How can the forest regulatory and grant processes evolve to provide greater opportunities for communities to be involved in the development of forestry proposals?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

There is already the process in place for all interested parties to be involved. This does not help the development of forestry proposals but rather will hold them back as it already does.

12. How can the forestry regulatory and grant processes evolve to ensure that there is greater transparency about proposals and the decisions that have been made on them?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Transparency is already good enough

13. Forestry grants have been used to stimulate rural forestry businesses by providing support with capital costs. Do you agree that this has been an effective measure to stimulate rural business?

Yes

a. How could this approach be used to support further forestry businesses?:

Training, Finance for machinery. Most importantly if commercial forestry is expanded then these business do not need additional support as the secure work will be available and the businesses can invest themeselves.

b. How could this approach be used to support further skills development?:

Providing funding to support apprenticeships and machine training

14. How could the FGS processes and rules be developed to encourage more companies and organisations to provide training positions within the forestry sector?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Make is easier to get schemes approved. Target commercial forestry schemes as these are what providing income and jobs.

5 - Forests Delivering for Biodiversity and the Environment

15. The primary purpose of FGS is to encourage forestry expansion and sustainable forest management, of which a key benefit is the realisation of environmental benefits. How can future grant support better help to address biodiversity loss in Scotland including the regeneration and expansion of native woodlands?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Creating more woodlands of all types is the priority as all woodland improve biodiversity of the country. New woodland planting can quickly help to expand native woodland and tis should be targeted to include areas of existing woodland that are likely to regenerate and thrive as part of the new woodland planting. Fencing all together will allow regeneration where it is not currently taking place and will allow rapid expansion of our woodlands over a relatively short timescale.

16. Herbivore browsing and damage can have a significant impact on biodiversity loss and restrict regeneration. How could forestry grant support mechanisms evolve to ensure effective management of deer populations at:

Landscape scale?:

Only over grazing in certain areas by herbivores cause significant impacts. In some cases grazing contributes to biodiversity. Regeneration can occur when there are deer present in fairly high numbers if there is a suitable seed sources and good ground conditions and this type for woodland does not need any intervention certainly not public money. Where this is not the case then regeneration is difficult if not impossible to achieve to any meaningful extent whether deer are present or not. The safest and most sure way of protecting regeneration where it is not prolific and can not handle even light browsing pressure, is to exclude browsing animals by fencing targeted at the areas where regeneration is more likely. Over time there should be enough of a seed source generated for the woodland to be self sustaining and the fence can be removed and relocated or an new fence erected.

Small scale mixed land use?:

Use fencing to exclude herbivores until woodland is sufficiently mature. If livestock are present then there will be very little regeneration in future so fences will have to be maintained.

If you wish to make any other relevant comments, please do so in the text box below.

Please add your comments here.:

The best way to sustain rural employment is to manage all resources available. Deer are a vital income source to many remote rural businesses and create important cashflow. Commercial Forestry generates income only at certain times (unless you have a wide range of age classes) and native woodlands almost no income at all so to keep rural employment some cashflow has to be generated. Deer provide and year on year income and cash flow that helps to sustain employment. It is important that this resource is not wasted.
It is important that we don't forget that humans are also part of our biodiversity and that we are able to live and work in remote areas.

About you

What is your name?

Name:
[Redacted]

What is your email address?

Email:
[Redacted]

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Individual

What is your organisation?

Organisation:

[Redacted]

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Yes

I confirm that I have read the privacy policy and consent to the data I provide being used as set out in the policy.

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