

# **Review of Scottish Forestry Strategy**

## **Summary of Questions: Response by Scottish Council for National Parks 16 September 2005**

### **Question 1**

*What do you think have been the best things to have happened in forestry since 2000?*

Making good progress on implementing aspects of all strategies.

### **Question 2**

*Has the Forestry Strategy failed to deliver anything important?*

No – not apparent.

### **Question 3**

*Is the broad content of the current Forestry Strategy still relevant and appropriate?*

Yes

### **Question 4**

*Are any changes now required to the Forestry Strategy's Vision, Guiding Principles and Strategic Directions? If so what are they?*

No

### **Question 5**

*Should any of the existing Priorities for Action be dropped? If so, which ones?*

No

### **Question 6**

*Should there be any new Priorities for Action? If so what should they be?*

No. But perhaps more emphasis:

- On improving the quality of forest design in both public and private woodlands e.g. identify eyesores, especially in sensitive areas such as National Parks/National Scenic Areas and eradicate them as quickly as possible.
- More extensive woodland planting in built up areas [especially the central belt] to enhance the setting and individual character and identity of settlements. More woodland, managed for amenity and recreation, could be a key tool in preventing the coalescence of settlements, which is essential to maintain their identity.
- On assisting communities to become involved in creating and developing community woodlands. Sustained help is likely to be needed.

### **Question 7**

*Is an appropriate balance being achieved between the economic, environmental and social aspects of forestry? If not, please give specific examples.*

Yes. Giving equal weight to these aspects is fundamental to achieving a reasonable balance.

### **Question 8**

*Do you agree that the Scottish Forestry Strategy should be focused primarily on increasing the benefits of forestry to the people of Scotland?*

Yes

### **Question 9**

*Should woodlands play a greater role in helping Scotland deal with climate change? If so, how?*

Yes, by:

- Planting more woodlands in key areas that would assist in mitigating the effects of climate change
- Using more of those species that are most effective in sequestering carbon

## **Question 10**

*What should be the role of forestry in sustainable rural development?*

Continuing actions on the last 6 bullet points of Section 5.3

## **Question 11**

*How could forestry become more of an exemplar of sustainable development in Scotland?*

The source definition of sustainable development is given in the Brundtland Report of 1983.

*'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'*

This is amplified by:

*'At a minimum, sustainable development must not endanger the natural systems that support life on earth: the atmosphere, the waters, the soils and the living beings'.*

Clear guidance on the interpretation and application of the Brundtland definitions of sustainable development is given in: Sustainable Development and the Natural Heritage: The SNH Approach 1993. Ensuring that the Brundtland definitions of sustainable development are rigorously applied to all aspects of forestry is essential. Publicising the results of examples of good sustainability in forestry and publishing the equivalent of the SNH guidance for forestry could be a step forward.

## **Question 12**

*How should Scotland respond to the opportunities presented by the increasing supply of timber from Scotland's woodlands?*

It would be desirable to spread out the production peak as much as possible e.g. some premature felling and some delayed felling. The resulting 'old growth' woodlands will benefit both environmental and aesthetic diversity, but some modifications to saw milling technology may be required to deal with larger log sizes.

More emphasis upon the use of timber in the building industry, especially the potential for timber frame build to reduce costs for affordable housing. Unfortunately the building industry does not appear to be passing on the very significant cost savings of timber frame construction to the customer.

### **Question 13**

*How could the overall economic potential of Scotland's woodlands be increased?*

Possibly by:

- Increasing the extent of woodlands.
- Priority for economic forestry on high growth yielding sites.
- More biomass woodlands.

### **Question 14**

*Should the private and public forestry sectors engage further in social issues such as deprivation, health, equality, and disability? If so, how? Where is this a high priority in Scotland?*

Yes. By:

- Continuing to extend woodlands for amenity and public recreation close to settlements, especially in the central belt of Scotland.
- Reverting to more labour intensive forestry techniques to boost employment opportunities. Some financial support for employers would be required.

### **Question 15**

*Has there been sufficient focus on the contribution of woodlands to the enhancement of our natural heritage? If not, what more needs to be done?*

More could be done. See response to Q 6. Also consideration could be given to:

- An audit of the efficacy of implementing landscape design standards in both public and private woodlands
- An audit of the efficacy of implementing biodiversity standards in both public and private woodlands
- An audit of the efficacy of implementing woodland recreation standards in both public and private woodlands

### **Question 16**

*Has there been sufficient focus on the contribution of woodlands to the enhancement of our cultural heritage? If not, what more needs to be done?*

Possibly more could be done to reveal and interpret important aspects of our cultural heritage and to recreate appropriate landscape settings. However, this should not be done to the detriment of the wild character of woodlands.

### **Question 17**

*How can the forestry sector be better integrated with other land uses?*

Hopefully, reform of CAP will provide more incentive for farmers to become involved in different aspects of forestry. Consideration should be given to forestry techniques that could be more easily integrated with agricultural practice, so that the flexibility of agriculture to move quickly to different products according to market demand is not compromised. In this respect, there may be clues in the poplar growing techniques of Bryant & May in the 1960s that were closely integrated with cereals and grazing; pastoral forestry may also prove attractive.

### **Question 18**

*How should we determine the appropriate extent and distribution of woodland in Scotland?*

Consideration should be given to the following examples of issues:

- As in the past, land use surveys should indicate areas of Scotland suitable for woodland expansion that offer the optimum integration with other land uses in support of the forestry strategy
- Woodland expansion on prime agricultural land should not compromise the food producing capacity of such land.

- Woodland expansion around settlements, especially in the central belt and in support of Green Belt policies. Much research and practice on this issue has been carried out in the past, notably by the former Countryside Commission for Scotland and Strathclyde Regional Council.
- More woodland in areas that would assist the mitigation of adverse effects of climate change
- Part of Scotland's natural heritage up to recent times was its extensive tracts of woodland – mainly coniferous. Extensive tracts have been recreated in certain locations, such as Galloway. Perhaps more 'extensive tracts' of woodland in certain locations to simulate the past woodland heritage might be considered?
- More woodland planting at high elevations to mitigate the adverse visual effects of ski facilities.

*How much woodland do we need?*

Perhaps a study of the balance of land uses and their functions in other countries might suggest some indicators for woodland extent. Prima facie, there is scope for considerable expansion, as Scotland's woodland cover is well below that of European countries. As the future [climate change etc] appears very unpredictable, it is very difficult to answer this question. Because of this, no targets for woodland extent should be set at this stage.

*What type of woodland do we need?*

The following issues could be considered:

- Support increased use of native species to Scotland
- Certain non native broadleaves, like sycamore and beech are useful and form part of the landscape heritage of Scotland.
- Perhaps research into the species and types of woodland best suited to climate change would be advisable.
- Present conifers important for wood production will continue to be needed.
- Diverse woodland in species, age, silvicultural techniques, managed for multi purposes and well designed to fit into the landscape is the ideal. However, some monocultures may be necessary e.g. for biomass production, but these woods should still be designed to fit into the landscape.

*Where do we need it?*

See response to first question of Q 18.

## **Question 19**

*Should regional priorities be reflected in the revised Strategy?  
If so, how?*

Yes- for example in National Parks/National Scenic Areas and other key areas such as disadvantaged places. Scrutiny of Development Plans and consultation with local authorities and other stakeholders would also be important

### **Question 20**

*Is the balance of support mechanisms for forestry about right?  
If not, how should it change?*

### **Question 21**

*Could forestry incentives be better focused on key priorities?  
If so, how?*

If resources are limited, it may be necessary to focus on key priorities

### **Question 22**

*Do you have any additional comments that would help us with the review of the Scottish Forestry Strategy?*

SCNP responded to the consultation paper on 'Review of Land Managed by Forestry Commission Scotland' on 26 February 2004. Many of the comments that SCNP made in response to that paper are germane to the Review of Forestry Strategy.

**Please indicate whether you would like us to contact you by e-mail (or post) about the second stage of the consultation process in January 2006**

**YES – by e-mail**

**YES – by post**      Agreed

**NO**