

Response ID ANON-VEPG-2GP1-C

Submitted to Future Grant Support for Forestry
Submitted on 2023-04-04 11:32:32

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?

Not Answered

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

The grant support for forestry should remain within the forestry portfolio, it should not be part of the agricultural support package.

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.:

There is a lack of knowledge of forestry within agriculture therefore keeping the two schemes somewhat separate is the preferred option.

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.:

What will be the future climate? If this means warmer temperatures and less rainfall then resilience can be built in with the use of the correct tree species. If the climate is warmer and there is less rainfall then there is a much higher possibility of wild fires - therefore the extent of productive planting should be reduced to smaller more manageable blocks.

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 your answer in the text box.:

The current blend of private (owner) and public (Govt) finance works well. Natural capital and carbon schemes place a burden on the property that can be difficult should the land ownership change. If natural capital and/or carbon schemes are part of the equation how does the ultimate land manager manage control of the project?

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 current funding package rates have been undermined by the rapidly rising inflation rate, this has discouraged many would be small farm woodland projects. There are cashflow constraints on any grant aided project and an easily accessible up front capital payment is extremely encouraging for potential small woodland establishment.

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?

Yes

How can the grant scheme support this?:

I do agree with the above statement. However, at this point in time no-one knows exactly what these challenges are going to be 30, 60, 90 years down the line. Warmer, drier conditons - use of correct tree species - yes. Pests and diseases are the unknowns. Tree species breeding is taking into account the know risk factors of today, but the risk factors of tomorrow? Who knows.

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?:

Carbon sequestration advice

Advice on biodiversity effects of forestry v agriculture. Particularly upland and hill ground that is essential for many ground nesting birds.

Planning application support

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.:

Generally small woodlands have higher costs. The ability to access some up-front capital costs are of enormous benefit to assist cash flow. These projects by their very nature are capital intensive and this can be a huge disincentive to small scale woodlands.

A range of consultants is required to find all the information - forestry, planning, agricultural emissions, biodiversity, carbon sequestration

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.:

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.:

In my experience in establishing and growing woodlands there is little opportunity for any community wealth building. Fencers, ground preparation and planters all work as one man bands or teams of contractors that arrive, do the work and will be 100 miles away in another part of the country the next week. The trees then spend the requisite number of years growing, there may be some thinning, otherwise there is very little work until felling when another gang will arrive, fell and depart.

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.:

Providing greater opportunities for communities can be difficult as they are often opposed to change (wind turbines etc), so community involvement is often rather unrewarding.

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.:

Forestry applications have to go through the planning process. Should forestry applications be treated in the same way as development applications and circulated to all the neighbouring properties.

A search of the internet regarding the forestry planning applications for my local

Council Authority, either granted or applied for does not exist. which begs the question where does one go for this information.

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?:

Forestry grants have certainly stimulated rural forestry businesses, from the consultants, nursery men, fencers, fencing suppliers, ground prep men, planters, etc.

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

There is a great need for skills development /apprenticeships in the tree nurseries, fencing contractors, planters. Apprenticeships give people skills that aid their employability and also provides transferable skills.

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.:

Provide help with apprenticeships.

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.:

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?:

Deer control is the only effective management option. The deer population is increasing at an exponential rate.

Small scale mixed land use?:

Deer control is required. In the past we have planted many shelter belts with only stock proof fencing around it and establishment has been excellent. This is no longer possible, the burden of deer grazing is such that any new plantings require to be deer fenced.

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

Please add your comments here.:

Generally if there is enough time there is time to do the research there is established guidance to help land managers identify how best to pursue woodland creation, but a consultant is required to complete the application and who has the knowledge to make the balanced judgement of woodland v. agriculture. The right tree in the right place.

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:

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We may share your response internally with other Scottish Forestry policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Forestry to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

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