

7 November 2016

Forestry Devolution Team
Natural Resources Division
Scottish Government
1-C North Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ
futureforestry@gov.scot

Dear Sirs

The Future of Forestry in Scotland

Ramblers Scotland welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation and we attach a completed Respondent Information Form as requested. We have already contributed to the response from Scottish Environment LINK and so our comments here are additional to those made in the LINK submission, in response to the final question in the consultation document.

Do you have any other comments that you would like to make, relevant to the subject of this consultation, that you have not covered in your answers to other questions?

There is clear evidence from the Forestry Commission's own research outlined in the consultation document of the significant economic contribution towards the overall value of the forestry sector which comes from recreation and tourism activities. This contribution is especially relevant in terms of supporting jobs which are often of particular value as they are in remote rural areas, and also in supporting the health and wellbeing of the population more generally by enabling people to access and enjoy woodlands across the country. Both the Forestry Commission Scotland and Forest Enterprise Scotland have been at the forefront of formulating best practice in managing public access and have amassed considerable expertise which underpins the ability of the sector to contribute so strongly to the many social, economic and environmental outcomes which are widely supported at a national level. This best practice is regularly shared and disseminated to other land managers, from the public, private and third sectors, to help them to improve management of public access in their own contexts.

Therefore we are keen that the value of the work carried out by this section of the Forestry Commission in Scotland is recognised by the Scottish Government, and that any future governance arrangements do not lead to a reduction in support for this valuable area of work, but rather ensure that it is staffed and resourced appropriately.

We trust these comments are helpful and would be happy to discuss this matter further at your convenience.

Yours faithfully

Helen Todd
Campaigns & Policy Manager

Convener: Alison Mitchell
Vice-Convener: Andy Malby
Director: Brendan Paddy