

Scottish Forestry Forum 26 November 2002

Integration: how can we increase forestry's contribution to rural development?

Integration and Scottish Forestry Strategy (SFS)

- 1 of 5 SFS Guiding Principles: “Scotland’s woods and forests do not exist in a vacuum. Forestry should fit well with other rural activities in Scotland, such as agriculture, conservation, deer management, fishing, recreation and tourism. The overall objective should be sustainable rural development, rather than the promotion of individual activities in isolation from one another.”
- Strategic context: section headed “The challenge of integration” – “It is important to achieve integration between forestry and other sectors and within woods and forests (as exemplified in multi-benefit forestry). Integration also applies at different scales (national, regional and local), with the acid test of effective integration being practical application at the local level. Another facet of integration – important for implementation of the Strategy – is the need for an integrated, or “joined-up”, approach between different Departments and Agencies of the Scottish Executive.” Goes on to refer to agricultural diversification, employment/skills, adding value, shelter, biodiversity, landscape, tourism and recreation, while recognising potential tension over the impacts of forestry on other land uses.

Billed as and I have pleasure of being non-executive Commissioner, FC; Chair, DCS and Macaulay Institute.

Also have privilege of being MD of family-owned Ardtornish Estate, Morvern, Lochaber, which is where passion for integration (and stewardship) started. Reinforced by training and practice in Land Economy.

Integration a complex and sensitive topic – so rather than risk offending colleagues in FC/DCS/MI, will speak from an Ardtornish perspective – can only fall out with self and family!

Ardtornish

(Panoramic aerial photograph)

Originally sporting estate plus hill farm, now diverse land-based rural business.

“The objectives of Ardtornish Estate are to manage the estate, to the best of our abilities:

- to support the strength and prosperity of the community
- to maintain and enhance the natural and cultural heritage
- to sustainably develop the value of the estate for the benefit of both the owners and the community”

Woodlands: production + native; doubling to 15%
Biodiversity: 12% SSSI
21 listed buildings
Designed landscape
Farm: sheep (reducing), cattle (increasing)
Tourism: self-catering
Recreation: access
Deer management
Fishing
Aquaculture
Mining: sand, (neighbours Glensanda)
Renewables: hydro
Employment: 1 of 3 main employers in parish, 31 full and part time jobs, Estate assets underpin 44 FTE ex 121 in parish (over 1/3rd)
Housing
Land release
Community development eg Golf Course

Managed as 1 business

Sectoralism

Public financial incentives to graze or not graze; afforest or keep open; zoned for/against development

eg Ardtornish

- sheep income 2001 (FMD) 100% public money
- cattle greater market demand, more labour intensive, better environment, but less subsidy
- deer same impact as sheep, overgrazing danger, but not yet public incentives for sustainable management
- designated areas: still paid more not to do things than for positive management, not allowed profit element for provision of public goods
- little public money to facilitate public good of access
- woods – SFGS promises grants for woodland expansion, restocking, stewardship (eg native woodlands, deer control, landscape, recreation, community initiatives)

Different public bodies for: agriculture, woods, deer, natural heritage, economic development, housing, services

Different strategies: SFS, agriculture, deer, etc. but no over-arching land use strategy

Government sub-division: encourages expertise, transparency of trade-offs, but needs integration for consistency

Forestry's current contribution to rural development:

- Forestry not homogenous – typologies – public forests, investment, estate, farm, public benefit; 65% non-FE is estate/farm/NGO
- £122 million/year contribution to Scottish GDP, 10,700 jobs (68% within 20 miles of home), 22 million leisure day visits to woods/year, etc.
- Ongoing research to further quantify forestry's contribution to rural development, including tourism. FMD highlighted.
- FfP Panel, FE, Enterprise Bodies, 3 RDF Pilots working with enthusiastic rural communities, monitoring economic progress.
- eg Sunart Oakwoods – restoration of cSAC, tourism, jobs, training, community involvement, wide partnership (including farmers and crofters), EU Life and Structural Funds but not Rural Development Regulation (RDR)

Integrating Themes

Four key themes for progress in increasing forestry's contribution to rural development: connectivity, funding adequacy/transparency, partnership, indicators

Connectivity – land as land, not factor of production of sectoral commodities. eg

- Woods: SFM (UK Forest Standard, UKWAS), multi-objective SFGS to encourage
- Integrated Catchment Management: land use has off-site effects (fishing, flood, water supply)
- National Parks: area focused, integrated remit, Park Plan provides framework for progress
- Land (not just Farm) Management Contracts: big idea of Agric. Strategy, Working Group considering, holding-based integration of support for non-market benefits of agriculture (biodiversity, access, skills, etc.)
- Land Use Code of Good Practice: Land Reform commitment, consensus group made recommendations, but no recent visible progress
- Land Use Strategy: join up current sectoral strategies

Funding – adequacy and transparency. eg

- Substantial public financial support for land use, but CAP dominates
- Private land in agriculture gets approx. 5x annual public support per unit area than woodland, yet negative externalities (diffuse pollution, disease, food safety v. woods biodiversity, recreation, community involvement, albeit timber transport)
- CAP: institutional inertia, RDR opportunities from Mid Term Review
- Public support in all sectors except agriculture open to all with a legal right to manage land
- LEC, FC and SNH payment details published, agriculture confidential

Partnership. eg

- Community Planning: joining up service delivery in specific areas; current legislation; interaction with IFSs and FE District Strategic Plans
- ERAD and SE: slogan “making it work together” - not just aspiration but reality
- National Rural Partnership: genuine integration of public bodies, aligning policies and spending

Indicators. Transparent, objective measurement of progress. eg

- SFS: recently published 24 Indicators spread over 5 Strategic Directions.
- Scottish Sustainability Indicators
- Agriculture: none
- Towards a Development Strategy for Rural Scotland (11.97): commitment to develop indicators of Sustainable Rural Development, nothing emerged

Conclusion

Forestry is already market leader in integrated, sustainable land use and rural development, but much still to learn.

Unprecedented forestry economic pressures – producing a globally-traded commodity in a post-industrial economy (exchange rates, production costs) – mean must continue to develop a new paradigm for SFM, delivering a locally-appropriate mix of market and non-market goods, supported by adequate public finance.

Understanding of integration, and institutional arrangements to support, will be key to progress, a united and solution-oriented forestry sector must fully contribute.

Key role for Scottish Forestry Forum and Steering Group, delivering on brief to “consider how Scottish forestry can best contribute to the wider rural development agenda in Scotland”.