



Law Society  
of Scotland

# Consultation Response

Scottish Forestry draft Corporate Plan 2020-2023

February 2020



## Introduction

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The Law Society of Scotland is the professional body for over 12,000 Scottish solicitors. With our overarching objective of leading legal excellence, we strive to excel and to be a world-class professional body, understanding and serving the needs of our members and the public. We set and uphold standards to ensure the provision of excellent legal services and ensure the public can have confidence in Scotland's solicitor profession.

We have a statutory duty to work in the public interest, a duty which we are strongly committed to achieving through our work to promote a strong, varied and effective solicitor profession working in the interests of the public and protecting and promoting the rule of law. We seek to influence the creation of a fairer and more just society through our active engagement with the Scottish and United Kingdom Governments, Parliaments, wider stakeholders and our membership.

Our Rural Affairs Sub-committee welcomes the opportunity to consider and respond to Scottish Forestry's draft Corporate Plan 2020-2023<sup>1</sup>. We do not seek to answer the consultation questions but have the following comments to put forward for consideration.

## General remarks

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We note that it is crucial that there is strong integration between relevant policies and plans – for example, those relating to the management of land, wildlife, moorland, and peatland. The Scottish Government has committed to responding to climate change. It is therefore important that policies and plans are fully considered against the background of achieving the desired climate change objectives.

There are existing legislative duties which must be considered in the context of Forestry Scotland's work. For example, section 1 of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 states:

“It is the duty of every public body and office-holder, in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.”

Section 3 of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 notes that the purpose of preparing a national islands plan is to set out the main objectives and strategy of the Scottish Ministers in relation to improving outcomes for island communities that result from, or are contributed to by, the carrying out of functions of a public nature. Improving outcomes for island communities includes “enhancing biosecurity (including protecting islands from the impact of invasive non-native species).”

An holistic approach to policy and plan making will help to ensure coherence and consistency and allow for an appropriate balance between competing factors to be struck. In the event that policies are not considered in an integrated manner, there is a potential for there to be unintended consequences. Taking

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/consultation-scottish-forestry-corporate-plan/>

account of all relevant factors, we consider that any tree planting must be appropriate both in setting and species.

We note the 50-year vision for forestry in Scotland set out in Scotland's Forestry Strategy<sup>2</sup>. We consider it appropriate that a long-term vision for forestry is formed and that sufficient funding is available to achieve the desired outcomes.

**For further information, please contact:**

Alison McNab  
Policy Team  
Law Society of Scotland  
DD: 0131 476 8109  
[AlisonMcNab@lawscot.org.uk](mailto:AlisonMcNab@lawscot.org.uk)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-forestry-strategy-20192029/>