

## RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE

### DRAFT BUDGET 2017-18; FORESTRY

#### SUBMISSION FROM PATHS FOR ALL

##### Summary

- Forestry Commission Scotland does valuable work promoting physical activity and the health benefits derived from forests.
- Forestry policy should not just focus on timber production but also on social and environmental outcomes.
- It is important that FCS work on outdoor recreation and health is retained and enhanced.
- We would be concerned if budget constraints exerted pressure for disposal of land of recreational value.

##### Background

Paths for All was established in 1996 and is a partnership of 29 organisations.

Paths for All is currently primarily supported by the Scottish Government to promote physical activity and walking for health in Scotland and is a key delivery partner for the Scottish Government's National Walking Strategy, the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework and the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland.

Paths for All champions everyday walking in Scotland and we want to get more people walking - everyone, everywhere and every day. We aim to significantly increase the number of people who choose to walk in Scotland - whether that's leisure walking or active-choice walking to work, school or shops.

##### Forestry

Our experience of Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) is that it is an effective organisation. We have welcomed their approach to multipurpose forestry and the promotion of physical activity and the health benefits derived from forests. We have worked with FCS on a range of relevant projects promoting walking and other outdoor recreation.

Forestry policy should not just focus on timber production but also on social and environmental outcomes. We believe it is important that FCS work on outdoor recreation and health is retained and enhanced.

We would be concerned that in future budget constraints might exert pressure for public land seen as unprofitable, but of value for recreation, to be disposed of. This could result in less environmentally and socially sensitive management.

FCS' work supports Scottish Government objectives on physical activity, health and environment and particularly the National Walking Strategy, the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland and the Long-term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland.

Forestry's economic contribution to Scotland is £954 million GVA:

- £771 million comes from forestry and timber processing
- £183 million comes from forest recreation and tourism.

- Forest recreation and tourism employs 6,312 FTE people in Scotland.

### National Walking Strategy

The National Walking Strategy action plan brings together local government, transport, planning, climate change, education and community sectors to create environments in Scotland which encourage and support walking and cycling for everyday journey's and leisure.

It has three strategic aims:

- To deliver on creating a culture of walking where everyone walks more often as part of their everyday travel and for recreation and well-being
- To achieve better quality walking environments with attractive, well designed and managed built and natural spaces and places for everyone
- To enable easy, convenient and safe independent mobility for everyone

For example, National Walking Strategy actions specific to FCS include:

- 1.1 Deliver agreed outcomes relating to walking within the delivery of the Central Scotland Green Network
- 1.2 Deliver agreed outcomes relating to walking within the delivery of the Natural Health Service Action Plan  
Expand Medal Routes across the whole NHS estate and sign routes in strategic locations
- 2.3 Support infrastructure implementation within SRDP through: Improving Public Access scheme / Agri-Environment Climate Scheme / Forestry Grant Scheme  
Increase the provision of easy grade paths across all the public estates (urban and rural)
- 3.5 Local / Park Authorities / land managers- survey existing routes as part of any management process

Paths for All  
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