

Gove's green light take on Brexit must rely on our natural forestry resources

MICHAEL Gove gave his first major policy speech as UK Environment Secretary at WWF's headquarters, a building made primarily of wood. In the speech, he promised a 'Green Brexit'.

WWF's building is 'green' through its use of wood, but could have been even greener if it hadn't used imported timber. Hopefully Mr Gove's future actions will combine ambition for sustainability with home-grown substance to the benefit of the rural economy and environment - acting on evidence, freed from current strictures like the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

To paraphrase an old saying, if the CAP doesn't fit, don't wear it.

In his speech, Mr Gove drew heavily on his upbringing in north-east Scotland. He reminisced: "My feelings for landscape, wildlife and natural beauty spring from sentiment. Growing up between the North Sea and the Cairngorms, spending weekends in the hills... I grew up with an emotional attachment to natural beauty."

The area he described has been shaped by forestry, a lesson he should take into consideration when planning future rural policy. The famous Deeside railway line, once used by the Royals to visit Balmoral, was built primarily to transport timber from the countryside to markets. The CAP is a straight-



Scotland must take the lead in developing new rural policy and funding mechanisms as we proceed to exit the EU, says **Stuart Goodall**

jacket, a system based in legislation designed for a very different era and set of challenges.

It is a policy that effectively stops at the farm gate. Farming is a very important part of rural Scotland, but not the only part, and the CAP does too little to embrace environmental concerns, not least the need to act to reduce greenhouse gases. CAP has built barriers between farming and other land-uses like forestry, and interminable cycles of CAP reform and implementation have consumed the time and energies of generations of politicians and civil servants.

No wonder the CAP is unloved. In early 2019, the UK will leave CAP when it exits the EU - though the UK government intends to fund agriculture at current levels until 2022, the lifetime (perhaps) of the current Parliament.

It is not clear, if, in 2022, a new system will come into operation - or whether the UK Government will seek to maintain some form of common post-CAP policy after Brexit. There is a view this might be neces-

sary to meet World Trade Organisation rules, under which the UK will operate after leaving the EU.

The Scottish Government has made clear it wants both policy and funding (at the current level) devolved directly to Edinburgh. That argument would be even stronger if Scotland could show its share of the funding will go further, delivering more and wider benefits to society.

Whether a 'Remainer' or 'Brexit-iteer', anyone who cares about a green, prosperous rural economy, or about tackling climate change, should champion Scotland taking a lead in developing new rural policy and funding mechanisms.

Forestry has to be a key part of that, and in Michael Gove's beloved north-east, there are many examples of how that could all work. Multi-purpose forestry combines infinitely renewable wood production with wildlife tourism and outdoor recreation.

Family sawmilling, like James Jones & Sons in Aboyne, processes timber from across the region,



↑ View of the Cairngorm mountains from Lynbreck near Granton-on-Spey. The

employing almost 100 people in secure jobs. Family businesses are at the heart of Scotland's £1 billion forestry and timber success story.

Michael Gove recognised many of the benefits trees can deliver - "a carbon sink, a way to manage flood risk and a habitat for precious spe-

cies". Scotland can show him they are also places for people, providing jobs, growth and investment as well as significant leisure opportunities.

Forestry does not ask for special future treatment, just a fair and level playing-field where all rural

forestry reserves combine infinitely renewable wood production with wildlife tourism and outdoor recreation

land uses have the chance to thrive. Confor calls it, simply, a common countryside policy, and will strive to ensure this integrated approach is central to discussions after Brexit.

Michael Gove has an 'emotional attachment to natural beauty', so I suggest he comes back to Deeside

to see how emotion and good business sense combine to put forestry where it belongs - right at the heart of this new common countryside policy.

Stuart Goodall is Chief Executive of Confor, representing 1500 forestry and timber businesses across the UK



Government must work harder to achieve low carbon future Scots want and need

The Climate Change Bill is an opportunity to do more, says **Gina Hanrahan**

We've been rightly proud of the world leading climate legislation unanimously passed by the Scottish Parliament in 2009, but time has moved on and other countries are going even further in order to meet the targets set in the Paris Agreement.

An ambitious Climate Change Bill is a great opportunity to create jobs, improve health and reduce poverty at home, while also ensuring Scotland plays its part in helping the poorest people in the world cope with the effects of climate change.

However, the proposals the Scottish Government have put on the table fall well short of delivering the low carbon future we not only deserve, but that repeated surveys show the majority of Scots want.

That's why we, and our friends at Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) a diverse coalition of organisations including environment, faith, international development and trade unions, are urging members of the public to get involved and to act for our future by sending a message to the First Minister that they want more ambition in areas such as homes, transport and agriculture which are failing badly to play their part in cutting our emissions.

Indeed earlier this year transport had the dubious honour of becoming Scotland's single biggest carbon emitter. With well over a quarter of emissions coming from this sector, it's clear people need more help to make alternative transport choices, reducing emissions, improving



↑ Over a quarter of emissions come from transport, so alternatives are needed

health and cleaning up the polluted air we breathe. That's why we want to see a target to end the sale of new

petrol and diesel cars by 2030. We also think everyone has the right to a warm, energy-efficient home. This

would require legislation to bring all existing homes up to at least an EPC rating of 'C' by 2025. We know energy efficiency is one of the cheapest, greenest approaches to lowering emissions while also reducing the burden on the NHS by improving health and creating thousands of jobs across the whole country.

Agriculture, which currently accounts for over a fifth of greenhouse gas emissions, must also do its bit by better managing fertiliser use, making farming more efficient while also reducing damaging runoff into our precious rivers.

Finally, if Scotland's to truly enjoy the benefits of a low carbon future, the Scottish Government needs to ensure all future budgets are linked to the Climate Change Plan to show

how it's investing in a cleaner, greener pathway. For this to be truly transparent the Climate Change Bill should include an independent low carbon watchdog to keep an eye on how spending is helping to make a low carbon future a reality.

It's time for Scotland to follow the ambition of other nations such as Sweden, which recently adopted a target to be carbon neutral by 2045, and France recently announced a 2050 carbon neutral target. The new Macron government has also set out plans to end the sale of fossil fuel vehicles by 2040 and by the same year to end all French oil and gas production.

This is at least the level of change required to ensure we stay within a 1.5 degrees warming limit, which Paris commits us to.

Scotland needs to do its bit to act for our future and listen to the thousands of people calling for a stronger and more ambitious Climate Change Bill. You can take action here: <https://www.wwf.org.uk/scottish-climate-change> **Gina Hanrahan, acting head of policy at WWF Scotland**



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