

Confor response to ECCLR Call for Evidence on Draft Budget 2019-20

Confor: Promoting forestry and wood (www.confor.org.uk) is a not-for-profit membership organisation which represents 1500 sustainable forestry and woodusing businesses across the UK. Confor represents the whole forestry and wood supply chain and focuses on strategic issues vital to the success and sustainable future of the sector.

The most cost-effective preventative investments in the ECCLR portfolio and those that contribute most to achieving the Scottish Government's National Outcomes.

Supporting the work of the REC committee to promote productive forestry in Scotland is one of the most cost-effective preventive investments the ECCLR Committee can make to tackling climate change.

Not only do growing trees sequester carbon. The use of Scottish timber in buildings locks up carbon for the long term while new trees grow in their place. The replacement of materials such as concrete or plastic with timber alternatives also means the carbon emissions associated with those materials is avoided.

This multiplication of the carbon benefits of productive forestry is explored in detail in Confor's study of a Scottish forest, *Eskdalemuir: carbon benefit from forestry and timber*¹ which concludes that productive forestry provides carbon benefit of approximately 7.3tCO₂e per hectare per year.

The latest Progress Report to the UK Parliament from the Committee on Climate Change also takes Harvested Wood Products (HWP) into consideration in its calculations.²

Evidence of what spending is achieving in terms of the National Outcomes (via the relevant national indicators)?

Productive forests are designed to comply with the UK Forestry Standard and managed according to a long-term management plan.

This means that, in return for a capital cost of woodland creation of less than £3000 per hectare,³ productive forests provide cost-effective delivery of a huge range of national outcomes and indicators. Some of the most important include:

- Environment

¹ <http://www.confor.org.uk/news/latest-news/eskdalemuir-carbon-report/>

² <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/reducing-uk-emissions-2018-progress-report-to-parliament/>

³ <https://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/images/corporate/pdf/fgs-woodland-creation-booklet.pdf>

- Visits to the outdoors
- State of historic sites
- Condition of protected nature sites
- Energy from renewable sources
- Biodiversity
- Health
 - Healthy life expectancy (through tackling air pollution)
 - Physical activity
- Businesses
 - High-growth businesses
 - Innovative businesses
 - Employees on the living wage
 - Contractually secure work
- Education
 - Work-place learning
 - Skill profile of the population
- Sustainable economy
 - Productivity
 - International exporting
 - Economic growth
 - Carbon footprint
 - Natural capital
 - Greenhouse gas emissions
 - Entrepreneurial activity
- Contribution internationally
 - A positive experience for people coming to Scotland
 - Scotland's reputation
 - International networks
- Communities
 - Access to green and blue space
 - Social capital

The carbon impact of the capital budget to support the delivery of public infrastructure in Scotland, including spending on buildings, roads, rail and digital?

Adequate rural infrastructure, in particular broadband, mobile and transport systems, is essential to underpin the growth of the forestry sector and to unlock the benefits it can bring in terms of delivering national outcomes in a cost-effective way.