

GLASGOW CRICHTON/SUP: CHANGES TO LAND USE POLICY & PRACTICE 24/11/11

1. **LUS fundamental new element in natural resource management.** Breaks sectoral mindsets and enables full introduction of internationally developed concepts such as the ecosystem approach and ecosystem services which the land provides. Sets strategic national framework without removing rights of resource holders. Implies new form of special planning.
2. **Royal Society of Edinburgh role:**
 - (1) progenitor of idea in report on Future of Hills and Islands of Scotland September 2008 – proposed Strategic Land Use Planning Framework and a Land Stewardship Proofing Test to move away from the contradictory demands and failure to deliver greatest public benefit recognising that many non-market benefits.
 - (2) Delighted that Scottish Parliament approved the notion in form of Land Use Strategy with clearly defined timescales for production and review
 - (3) Pleased to see that Scottish Government's LUS has substantially improved from the consultation version last autumn to version submitted to Parliament in March 2011.
 - (4) Look forward to seeing Action Plan when published later this year.
3. **Reasons for LUS** are crucial to understand if it is to have meaningful results.
 - (1) Many conflicts between current and potential uses but no means of resolving them through existing mechanisms
 - (2) Two examples of 'the problem'
Peri urban: high quality agricultural land formerly safeguarded + desire for recreational opportunities what we now call green space + demands for new infrastructure + facilities for reducing GHG emissions
Uplands: traditional low intensity livestock rearing + landscape + biodiversity then add demands for tree planting + renewable energy production facilities
 - (3) Currently no single mechanism which can ensure best decision on land use in public interest. Single purpose strategies such as for forestry and woodland, and national town and country planning through the National Planning Framework geared to sustainable economic development rather than wider view of public benefits.
 - (4) Recognise primacy of rights of resource owners but equally need to recognise the legitimate constraints placed on land use for public health and safety, to protect assets of biodiversity and landscape, to secure continuing production of food and fibre (especially wood) and to retain carbon and to reduce emissions of all GHGs, and to meet national and international obligations.

4. **Four outstanding issues to take LUS strategy from high level statement of intent to practical plan:**

- (1) **Defining public benefits:** so that decision making is better informed. Defining and valuing natural assets of land and water in terms of non market benefits to society, and the opportunities available for their use and the constraints imposed upon them, and improving ability to predict effects of potential changes in land use.
- (2) **Grounding the strategy:** what will it mean in practice locally and regionally and how can it help to achieve improved decision making? How to develop meaningful spatial plans at regional level without being too prescriptive and without taking away rights of resource owners and without extending the planning system? Earlier models such as Indicative Forestry Strategies and Fish farm strategies. What about pilot/demonstration studies eg in Southern Ayrshire & Galloway Biosphere and in north east of Scotland and in an island area to test ideas for conflict resolution and for improved decision making on land use clashes?
- (3) **Changing the current regimes:** invoking more multiple purpose rather than single purpose decision making; change policies to achieve maximum public benefit; refocusing the National Planning Framework away from its obsession with sustainable economic development; reform CAP and SRDP to make it more determined at Scottish level and to increase the resources and to rebalance the funding from Pillar 1 to Pillar 2 to reward farmers as stewards of the land and parallel updating of the GAEC to include climate change measures.
- (4) **Dealing with complexity** What we require is to recognise that situation is now much more complex than, for example, in late 1980s where issue was should we have trees or nature, or whether fishing farming or landscape quality. LUS gives us more sophisticated policy framework with clear objectives and timescales and developed through public and political engagement. In addition to more sophisticated decision support tools, need a new breed of experts and policy advisors.

Roger Crofts
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