

IS THERE A FUTURE FOR THE GALLOWAY UPLANDS?

A personal view from **Prof Roger Crofts** on the recent Royal Society of Edinburgh report into Scotland's hills: how does Galloway compare with the rest of hill-Scotland?

STEWARDING THE LAND: FROM SHAMBLES TO SOLUTIONS

Introduction

RSE report and its foci:

- H&Is why?
- need for explicit policy on support of rural population/community viability: certainly difficult to factor this into 'sustainable economic growth' the Scottish Government's policy mantra;
- key aims: socio economic wellbeing, sustainable, diverse and productive use of the land, well managed and cared for natural communities and systems, well maintained landscapes and with vibrant and viable human communities....adopted by all parts of government please
- 3 key areas of economic opportunity: tourism, energy and food will relate these to Galloway later
- 5 key issues on developing viable communities: affordable housing, improved transport services, telecoms, post offices and integrated service delivery, and FE & HE provision...will refer to these in Galloway context
- Need for changed approaches to government delivery: refer in Galloway context

Major issue is future of agriculture and other land uses: dwell on these strategically first specifically CAP not delivering and land use conflict needs resolution, before debating what future for Galloway uplands

1. CAP not delivering

Problem: historic basis of payments, SFP skewed payment and requiring little effort. Many farms in deficit without subsidy, policy of UK government will make H&Is agriculture totally unviable, cross compliance not working

What to do:

Pillar 1 Single farm payment more clearly linked environmental benefit

Active agriculture should be a condition

Area based SFP could lead to some 'flattening' of payments and more support for Hills and Islands

Use special provisions to support for sheep farming

Increased rate of compulsory 'modulation

Pillar 2 Retain LFASS

change definition of LFASS area

Focus LFASS support on agri-environment & climate change

Increase funds for agri-environment schemes

Reduce number and bureaucracy of agri-environment schemes

Post 2013 Move to area based system after 2013

EU Land, Environmental and Climate Change Policy

2. Land use conflict needs resolution

Problems: conflict between uses now and will intensify: food/energy/wildlife/landscape/forestry/climate change. T&C Planning system not adequate

What to do:

Strategic Land Use Policy Framework

Land Stewardship Proofing Test with explicit criteria

Mandatory Codes and changes in practice: e.g. muirburn, tree planting, management and felling practices

3. Future for The Galloway Uplands

1) Stewarding natural resources

- Contributing to the climate change fix: **forestry** right trees in right place with right management and appropriate incentives not there yet;
- Environmentally sensitive exploitation of **renewable energy**: no framework because market knows best so drawn out and NATS & MoD type issues! Use T&C Planning system! Incentives changed please. Community benefits paramount. Grid connections factored in. Carbon markets fix especially for wood fuel products
- Enthralling **tourists with nature**: excellent red Kite trail etc, excellent Caerlaverock geese etc. beware the Trump factor. Beware Ministers who have not a clue about the benefits of wildlife and landscape protection. New status: legislate for NSAs, new NP at coast, BSR ideal mechanism under Seville and Madrid protocols, Geopark potential? Bit missed opportunities in Loch Ken SPA and at Threave for over wintering spectaculars. Better marketing..thank goodness for Tourism Doctor customer and web based approach, need for local guides and local business.
- Adding value to **local food**: good on farmers markets, make sure locals use them and keep large supermarket chains in check (Tesco and CD); need local abattoirs and downstream food processing in area to stop leakage and rebranding: economics against but should be incentives, better branding etc and local sale (CD as food town right approach but needs greater brand image of quality assurance and price competitiveness)

2) Providing customers with the services they need

- Putting the consumer first essential not civil service bureaucratic approach from the know all towers of cities
- Securing basic services: post, telecoms, petrol, government services... why not tax breaks and incentives cf Norway if believe in rural viability, improved infrastructure (Glenkens broadband ideas etc)

3) Putting the learning environment and institutions in place

- Praise for Crichton as centre for learning and support for area, why not the Rural University of the South West
- Need extension services throughout the region, sue schools as community learning facilities
- Engage government agencies in learning process eg SNH

Conclusion

- Easy to be despondent
- Lobby for support along side ideas and initiatives using natural resources
- Take opportunities
- Remember that nature is fairly resilient and we have knowledge to use its resources sustainably