

**JOINT MEETING OF THE TWEED FORUM MEMBERS  
 & TWEED AREA ADVISORY GROUP**

**11am Tuesday 8th October 2013  
 in the Salmon Room at The Buccleuch Arms Hotel, St Boswells**

**Agenda**

1. **Welcome, introductions and apologies (5 mins)**
2. **Minutes from the Joint Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2012 and Matters Arising (10 mins)**
3. **Tweed Forum Projects**
  - 3.1. **Eddleston Water Project (10 mins)**
  - 3.2. **Cheviot Futures & Bowmont-Glen Flood Risk Management Strategy (10 mins)**
4. **Tweed Forum Policy/Strategy update**
  - 4.1. **Land Use Strategy (30 mins)**
5. **RBMP update (40 mins)**
  - 5.1. **Update and discussion on Current Condition and Challenges for the Future report**
  - 5.2. **Update on shape of second plans and engagement during 2014/15**
6. **AOCB (5 mins)**
7. **Date of Next Meeting**
8. **Lunch (at 12:45)**

**TWEED FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT LOCAL ADVISORY GROUP**

Item No		Item	Lead	Papers
1	13:30	<b>Welcome, apologies and introductions</b>	Chair	-
2	13:40	<b>Minutes from previous meeting and actions</b>	Grant Vanson, SEPA	Previous Minutes
3	13:50	<b>SEPA / Lead LA update</b>	Kirsten Thorburn, SEPA	SEPA FRM Update
5	14:00	<b>Overview of NFM Screening Outputs</b> An overview of the screening process for Natural Flood Management Potential, how we intend to use outcomes and what feedback we hope to get from today. Including an introduction to the interactive session	Heather Forbes	NFM background briefing paper
	14:20	<b>BREAK</b>		
7	14.35	<b>NFM workshop sessions</b> Interactive session to view final draft outputs on laptops and complete feedback forms. Concluding with summing up of comments on the interactive session	FRM Policy	
8	16:00	<b>Feedback from workshop sessions</b>	Kirsten Thorburn / Heather Forbes	-
9	16:15	<b>Date and purpose of next meeting</b>		
10	16:30	<b>CLOSE</b>		

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE  
 TWEED FORUM MEMBERS & TWEED AREA ADVISORY GROUP**

**11.15am Wednesday 15 May 2013 at  
 The Buccleuch Arms, St Boswells**

**1. Welcome, introductions and apologies**

**Present:**

Bob Kay (Chair) (TForum)	David Green (SBC)	Iain Laidlaw (FCS)
Chris Badenoch (TForum)	Anna Griffin (SEPA)	Derek Robeson (TForum)
Alex Baillie	Tracy Hall ( TForum)	Jane Rosegrant (BFT)
Nicola Bissett (TForum)	Claire Hedley (EMS)	Jamie Smith (FCS)
Ruth Bull (NE)	Simon Henderson	Chris Spray (UNESCO/Dundee Uni)
Hugh Chalmers (TForum)	James Hepburne Scott	Andy Tharme (SBC)
Luke Comins (TForum)	John Hogger	Christina Tracey (FCS)
Bob Cussen (NE)	Norman Howitt	Nick Yonge (TFoundation/RTC)
Angela Foss (SEPA)	Amanda Hutcheson (SW)	

**Apologies:**

Ian Buchanan (SEPA)	Stuart Fraser (Ahlstrom Chirnside)	Ken Oswald (NW)
Nina Clancy (NFUS)	Jim Heslop (EA)	Andrew Panter (SNH)
Charlotte Colver (NCC)	Edward Johnson (SLE)	Stuart Pudney (NW)
Quintin Donald (SGRPID)	Steve Lowe (NWT)	David Reid (SLC)
Alan Elliot (SE)	Jacqueline McPake (EA)	Peter Reith (FBAA)
Heather Forbes (SEPA)	Andy Millar (SBC)	Joan Sanderson (NCC)
Mike Fraser (RSPB)	Andrew Miller (NNPA)	Andrew Seward (EA)

BK welcomed everyone to the joint meeting and round table introductions were made. AG gave Andy Seward's apologies and added that she would relay any questions the group might have for him.

**2. Minutes from the Joint Meeting on 21 November 2012 and Matters Arising**

BK asked the group to approve the minutes of the Joint Meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> November 2012 and these were agreed with the following matters arising:

**Action:** LC to share new invasives data with AG. LC confirmed that this is in progress.

**Action:** TForum to arrange Riverworks meeting for February 2013. **DONE**

**Action:** TForum to circulate Measures Report for comment. **DONE**

**3. Tweed Forum Projects**

**3.1. Eddleston Water Project**

LC and CS spoke to the written report. BK asked if demonstration visits were being actively pursued and CS replied that a fair amount was already happening passively but when more riverworks were completed there would certainly be more emphasis on taking groups round.

**3.2. Ale Water: Working Wetlands**

DR introduced himself to the meeting as the newly appointed Senior Project Officer for Integrated Land & Water Management at TForum before giving a presentation (attached to minutes) on the Ale Water: Working Wetlands project. CB added that the Ale catchment was the most botanically and entomologically rich catchment on Tweed. RB enquired about balancing economic gain against conservation and DR confirmed that balancing these 2 considerations was key and that ecotourism was a vital element. CT asked if the entire Ale catchment was the

focus and DR confirmed this was the case. JHS asked if flood relief was part of the project's remit and DR replied that this was not a specific focus but could be incorporated if/where appropriate. AG asked DR to feedback directly to her on any relevant work to improve/maintain ecological status. CS informed the group that the Ale (and Eddleston) are 2 of 5 subcatchment being scrutinised for historic landuse changes using 1946/48 aerial photographic resources. TFoundation were thanked for a raffle donation.

### **3.3. Collaborative Action Coordinator**

HC gave a presentation (attached to minutes) updating the group on various projects. BK commented that this was an impressive portfolio of work and asked if HC felt there was momentum building in the local community in terms of appetite for environmental improvements. HC replied that it was hard to be sure but that several land managers are spreading the word. JHS added that the Carbon Neutral Co. would be showcasing several TForum projects in the near future. BC enquired if the MSc project on Flow Restrictors in the Middle Burn was available and HC/CS said it would be circulated when complete.

**Action:** HC to circulate MSc project to BC

### **3.4. Cheviot Futures (Phase 2) & Bowmont Glen Flood Risk Management**

TH gave a presentation (attached to minutes) with members also being referred to the circulated written report. BC asked if the Filtrexx filtration system at North Doddington would also strip phosphates and TH replied that this was likely.

## **4. Tweed Forum Working Groups**

### **4.1. Priority Catchment sub-working group**

NB spoke to the written report.

### **4.2. Riverworks**

NB spoke to the written report. LC added that the roundtable discussions between the agencies and SBC were incredibly valuable and it was hoped that Northumberland County Council (NCC) would manage something similar. BC confirmed that NE had a higher level agreement with NCC.

## **5. Tweed Forum Policy/Strategy Update**

### **5.1. Scottish Government NFM contract**

### **5.2. Land Use Strategy**

AT and DR gave a presentation (attached to minutes) on the Land Use Strategy pilot work being carried out on Tweed. AG highlighted the likelihood of overlapping consultation periods (relating to her RBMP work) and it was agreed to ensure streamlining where possible. NY asked for clarification – how can the LUS pilot work be non-regulatory if it informed a planning system which is regulatory. AT replied that there were many other circumstances, such as the Borders Woodland Strategy, in which a non-regulatory process informed a regulatory process.

**Action:** AG, AT and DR to ensure streamlining of stakeholder consultations where possible.

### **5.3. Till Restoration Strategy**

JH gave a presentation (attached to minutes).

## **6. Tweed Forum Financial Update**

LC referred members to the written report and thanked all our funders. BK added that those who had contributed to TForum should be reassured that their contribution supported a large amount of very valuable work.

## **7. Fallago Environment Fund**

LC referred members to the written report with a reminder that the first deadline for applications was 1 September 2013.

## **8. RBMP Update**

AG gave a brief verbal update. SEPA are preparing the 2012 classification results and these should be ready for our next meeting. The classification system is changing in 2013/14 and whilst it is a shame that the baseline for waterbody status is shifting, it is positive that improvements to the system are going ahead. There were 11 Solway-Tweed responses to the "Getting Involved" consultation and TForum were thanked for responding. A digest of consultation responses will be published in the summer. The next report will be Significant Water Management Issues and SEPA are taking a pragmatic approach. Information relating to this process will be shared with the group at our next meeting. The date of our next meeting will need to be moved due to the needs of RBMP and also the FRM Flooding group and a new date will be forthcoming. JH added that he hoped the EA

were continuing to link up plans and processes with SEPA and AG replied that this was the case. CS added that he would be issuing a report in mid-July on how to optimise RBMP using the ecosystems approach.

#### **9. AOCB**

CS informed the group that a new project had just started on Tweed, looking at NFM with particular reference to exploring appropriate fiscal incentives on different types of land. AT added that there would be offset funding at TForum's disposal for riparian enhancement in the Eye Water catchment over the next 2 years. JHS asked that TForum circulate notice of upcoming RSFS meetings in the catchment.

**Action:** TForum to circulate notice of upcoming RSFS meetings in the catchment.

#### **10. Date of next meeting**

**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October** at 10:30am at the Buccleuch Arms, St Boswells.

# **REPORT**

## **3. Tweed Forum Projects**

### **3.1. Eddleston Water Project**

We have been successful in securing a further £80k per annum for the next 2 years from Scottish Government. This will help support all elements of management and monitoring by Tweed Forum, Dundee University and British Geological Survey. It has been a very busy summer on the Eddleston including the construction of log jams on the Middle Burn and re-meandering at Cringletie and Lake Wood. These works have been comprehensively monitored by Dundee University and SEPA, and the Tweed Foundation have carried out fish monitoring on two of the main tributaries. A verbal update on these works will be given at the meeting.

### **3.2. Cheviot Futures & Bowmont-Glen Flood Risk Management Strategy**

This report aims to outline key areas of work that have been completed since the last meeting in mid-May 2013. There will be a verbal update presentation given at the meeting, which will give an overview of the project aims, objectives and targets against actual delivered outputs.

Cheviot Futures is a cross border initiative encompassing north Northumberland and the Borders, utilising funding from both Northumberland Uplands (NU) and Scottish Borders (SB) LEADER groups. The aim of the project is to assist farmers and land managers adapt to, and become more resilient to, a changing climate through development of demonstration works and provision of suitable advice and recommendations.

#### **Resilience Planning**

One further Farm Resilience Plan (FRP) has been completed (August 2013) and due to a student placement being made available through NNPA it has been possible to progress FRPs for a further 4 farm holdings. The visits are underway at the time of writing and reports will be compiled in due course.

This will take the total of farm plans completed to 20, of the target 25 due for completion under Cheviot Futures.

#### **Capital Works Update**

The following projects have seen practical completion of work between May and September 2013:

- Netherton Burn runoff management – re-seeding works, to high flow swale completed late last year, undertaken during May 2013 (NU).
- Mowhaugh phase 2 alternative water supply works – the intention to be the first trial site for the new Papa Siphon pump had to be revised when it became apparent that the site was not suitable for the system after all. There is now a pasture pump installed instead, completed July 2013 (SB).
- Kelsocleuch Large Woody Debris/flow restrictors – 10 features installed on the Elm Sike watercourse (headwater tributary of the Bowmont) to slow down flow rates and capture sediment material, completed July 2013 (SB).
- Trailer mounted alternative watering system – a fully portable watering solution has been developed in partnership with West Fenton Farm and Inherent Energy. The trailer includes a solar PV system to provide energy to a battery bank, in turn powering pumping equipment which draws water from an adjacent water supply to a holding tank and trough integrated into the trailer. Completed July 2013 and used at a number of demonstration events – see below (NU).
- Cringletie re-meandering – Cheviot Futures capital funds were utilised in this ambitious project on the Eddleston Water (SB). Full report and update will be provided by Hugh Chalmers.

#### **The following capital projects are due for completion by December 2013:**

- Alterations to the floodplain fencing demonstration site – works pending (SB).
- Additional storage capacity to the Mowhaugh alternative water system site – works pending (SB).
- Initial maintenance to clear out sediment traps at Elilaw – planned for September/October (NU).
- Plant 35ha native woodland for natural flood management at Halterburnhead, Bowmont - complete by December (SB)

#### **Other Works**

The following projects are also being undertaken as part of the Cheviot Futures approach:

- Resilient cropping research – a desk based research study commissioned by Cheviot Futures and completed by SAC Consulting, September 2013.
- Pest and disease implications research – a desk-based research study commissioned by Cheviot Futures and due for completion by SAC Consulting by the end of October 2013.
- North Doddington filtrex filtration system – water quality testing now underway to ascertain the effectiveness of the system at removing nutrient and sediment loads from yard runoff water. Two

samples have now been collected and sent away for analysis, with one set of results returned to date (NU). Samples will be collected monthly, giving five months' worth of data from August – December.

### **On-going projects:**

This winter feeding season will see the final opportunity to draw together feedback from those farmers trialling the GrassProtecta ground reinforcement system (NU). Cheviot Futures continues to assist the development of winter water storage solutions for Turvelaws (NU).

### **Community Engagement and Knowledge Exchange:**

- Case study visits and updates to partner groups and organisations are on-going
- The project website ([www.cheviotfutures.co.uk](http://www.cheviotfutures.co.uk)) is regularly updated
- A twitter account is available (@cheviotfutures)
- Work is currently underway on the next edition of the project newsletter, anticipated to be published towards the end of the project as a round-up of activity
- A further three case study publications are now awaiting printing – grassland management, alternative watering and Engineered Log Jams (ELJs). Work is underway on additional case study topics, to include North Doddington, Elilaw (Netherton Burn), Natural Flood Management, and Resilient Cropping Advice.
- DEMONSTRATION EVENTS and AGRICULTURAL SHOWS:
  - 21st May: BUAS Bicentenary schools day, attended by 1,200 school children
  - 6th June: Glendale Children's Countryside Day, attended by over 1,700 school children
  - 26th and 27th July: Border Union Show, Kelso, including the solar PV trailer as a demonstration
  - 6th August: Sustainable water management event at West Fenton and Humbleton featuring the solar PV trailer and the K-line sprinkler pod system as a potential grassland irrigation solution. A total of 18 people attended.
  - 21st August: alternative water provision for livestock event at Mowhaugh featuring the Papa pump system, pasture pump, siphon pump and solar PV trailer. A total of 22 people attended.
  - 26th August: Glendale Show, Wooler
- CHEVIOT FUTURES CONFERENCE: It was decided that the delegates attracted to the conference event would be better served by a field-visit based event rather than the intended Newcastle-Gateshead quayside venue. The event is planned for Tuesday 17th September and will include visits to headline sites on both sides of the border.
- Upcoming diary dates: 5th October: Yetholm Border Shepherds' Show.

### **3.3. Ale Water: Working Wetlands**

In February, Scottish Natural Heritage held a workshop that sought to identify aspirations and opportunities for land managers to actively engage in wetland management within the Ale Catchment. Following this, Tweed Forum staff along with other partners (SRUC plus several independent consultants) visited almost 70 farmers in the catchment to seek their views on wetland management. Though interest was high, there is no dedicated budget to carry out practical conservation works, e.g. pond creation, scrub clearance, ditch blocking, and Tweed Forum is currently exploring potential funding opportunities. To retain interest, a second Ale Wetlands Newsletter was circulated to the catchment's farmers in June and a farm 'wetland' walk was held at Whitmuir during the summer to look at wetland management on that site. A significant spin-off from the Ale Wetlands project has been the establishment of an Ale Valley Business Group. This comprises 12 business representatives who are keen to work together to raise the profile of the Ale Valley. It is hoped that funding for wetland management will be accessible in due course.

### **3.4. Invasives Project**

This was our eleventh control season and it proved particularly challenging due to the unusual weather. The long, cold spring suppressed growth until very late on and when the warm weather came, the Hogweed grew quicker than we have ever known and started producing flowering heads almost immediately. Thus initially, our contractors struggled to keep on top of the rapidly maturing plants. However, all the ground was covered in the end although there was a much higher degree of flowering head decapitation rather than the preferred scenario of spraying emerging vegetation. We have also been employing a new piece of kit this year, an unmanned aerial vehicle or "drone", to survey the river corridor. The drone can capture video or still footage and is proving an excellent addition to our control programme.

### **3.5. Gala Water Habitat Restoration for Natural Flood Management**

SRDP funding has been matched to windfarm off-site mitigation funds to create black grouse habitat (SUP and BFT). Around 10ha of additional planting on two holdings are still at the planning stage. Also, a short film featuring several of our restoration sites in this area has been released as part of the launch of the first SEPA NFM

Handbook ([www.vimeo.com/user20906993](http://www.vimeo.com/user20906993)). A recent field visit by the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers was a great success and showcased the work of Tweed Forum and partners.

### **3.6. Ettrick & Yarrow riparian improvements**

TForum is working with SBC Flood Team on NFM aspects of the Selkirk Flood Scheme. This includes work on the Long Philip Burn, a tributary of the Ettrick which runs past the Bannerfield housing estate, and on the Ettrick and Yarrow Valleys. TForum facilitated public consultation on the design of the new channel and flood storage areas on the lower parts of the Long Philip Burn on behalf of SBC, with a good response gained from various public meetings and site visits.

Using off-site mitigation funding from the Glenkerie windfarm in Tweedsmuir (through SBC Planning dept.), TForum has been looking for sites where blanket bog can be restored and riparian woodlands created. Last year we reported on the failure of a large SRDP application to restore around 1000ha of blanket bog on the Wemyss & March estate but we are still in discussion with the landowners and potential other funders regarding this site. A 4ha block of deep peat with (dangerous) eroding drains has been identified in the Ettrick Valley and this will be restored in the next few weeks. At Whitehope in the Yarrow Valley, 7.08ha of riparian woodlands are about to be planted in the next few weeks. Two further riparian woodland sites are under SRDP development, at Singlie and Kirkhope in the Ettrick Valley, totalling around 4ha.

### **3.7. Teviot/Bowanhill**

At Bowanhill farm, a new channel, 400m long, and floodplain woodland of 4ha has been designed. The new channel should be complete by the end of September with the planting taking place at a later date. The works will provide flood storage upstream of Hawick, create new woodland habitat and help drain a vital silage field.

## **4. Tweed Forum Policy/Strategy Update**

### **4.1. Scottish Government NFM contract**

#### **Education and awareness raising:**

- site visits to Portmore, Shiplaw and Cringletie by 18 members of the Royal Scottish Forestry Society, looking at restoring woodlands on floodplains and hillslopes and at re-meandering
- visit by 12 artists from 'Working the Tweed' to Cringletie
- visit by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Mr Paul Wheelhouse, to Cringletie during August highlighted our re-meandering project. Over 50 people were present from government agencies, NGO's and the farming community.
- The ICM/NFM models were taken to the following agricultural shows: Royal Highland Show, Black Isle Show, Peebles Show, Game Fair (Scone), Glendale Show, Glendale Children's Show, Border Union Show (presentations were made to Richard Lochhead and the Duchess of Wessex). Over 3,000 school children saw the NFM models during the BUAS bicentenary schools day and Glendale Children's Show Day.

**Developing communications and influencing policy:** Tweed Forum is working with SRUC on their 'Farming for a Better Climate Programme'. An information sheet on NFM measures and a case study is available from their website. Tweed Forum are keen to work with SRUC and have offered to help their Education Department facilitate NFM and ICM site visits and assist with undergraduate courses. Feedback to Scottish Government regarding SRDP 2014-20 biodiversity and water related land management options has been ongoing since May (see appended consultation response). Scottish Government staff involved with pulling together the next SRDP have been invited to Tweed Forum to view the range of ICM work undertaken and to assist with SRDP functionality.

**Delivering practical NFM projects:** 400m of re-meander was officially opened at Cringletie on the Eddleston Water in August. At Kelsocleuch, on the Bowmont Water, 80m of river bank protection, 70m of grade control logjams, 1ha of riparian planting and 10 bar apex logjams have been realised. At Whitehope, 7ha of native woodland planting are ongoing. At Bowanhill in Upper Teviot 4ha of floodplain woodland planting is being carried out alongside 300m of new channel creation. At Cossarshill in the Ettrick Valley, 4ha of ditch blocking on deep peat has been done. Promotional articles on NFM which have been designed to appear in national magazines have been offered to SNH, SEPA and SWT.

### **4.2. Land Use Strategy**

The Land Use Strategy was launched in April 2013 with the aim of 'Piloting a mechanism which uses an ecosystems approach to consider existing and future land uses in a collective and integrated way and to establish a means to prioritise or guide decisions so as to optimise the use of the land and to resolve competition or conflicts relating to land use change'. The end user will be those involved in land management decision-making. It will be about reducing conflict, negotiating trade-offs and optimising the use of land to deliver multiple benefits for society. The Scottish Government is keen that there is 'buy-in' from local communities in developing a decision-making framework. The LUS will be non-regulatory and non-statutory.

Scottish Borders Council are project managing the Scottish Borders pilot and Tweed Forum are assisting with stakeholder engagement. There are 3 stages to the process: Stage 1 - Baseline and Policy Mapping (to September '13), Stage 2 - Opportunities and Constraints (to March '14), Stage 3 - Production of a draft Framework (to March '15). A project management team meets monthly and a technical team meets quarterly. The technical team is made up of representatives from a range of land management organisations who provide valuable feedback on ideas being developed. Since May, Derek Robeson has been holding monthly meetings with Andy Tharme of SBC and the project management team. A Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and Action Plan has been developed along with a Communications Strategy. In early September, Derek commenced a round of Stakeholder Introductory meetings designed to raise awareness of the project and to encourage buy-in to the process. A series of Stakeholder Engagement meetings/workshops will take place throughout the Autumn, Winter and Spring. GIS mapping consultants (Environment Systems) have been contracted by SBC to produce maps of 'Ecosystem Services provision'. The intention is that the LUS will be map-based and that these maps will be part of the LUS decision-making framework. The framework will be designed to be simple and accessible by a wide range of users including farmers, local authority planners and the wider public.

#### **4.3. Till Restoration Strategy**

The Strategy was completed earlier this year and is available on the Tweed Forum website. The Environment Agency has submitted a bid for funding over the next 3 years amounting to some £300k, with a further £25 likely from Natural England. We have just heard that this has been approved and the current thinking is that the Forum will employ a project officer to work on developing solutions for the priority areas. Tweed Forum will also endeavour to lever in other funding sources such as SITA and Viridor monies.

#### **4.4. Tweed Forum Communications Plan**

A communications plan has been drafted. One of the priority tasks was to produce a small brochure that explained who we were and what we did. This has now been distributed widely and has been well received.

### **5. Tweed Forum Financial Update**

We are currently forecasting a slight surplus. However, this depends on the annual contribution of £25k from SEPA being secured. An MOU has been drafted and we hope this will be signed off in the near future. We also applied for £10k from the Environment Agency's Catchment Partnership Fund and have just found out that this has been successful.

### **6. Fallago Environment Fund**

The first deadline for applications was the 1st September. 12 applications were received amounting to some £1.4 million, with around £420k being requested by applicants. Given that the Fund had only £100k to give out there were bound to be serious limitations on what could be achieved. However, there were a number of applications that were pretty wide of the mark in terms of eligibility and no doubt submissions will be more focused in the future as people become more disciplined in following the funding criteria. It might be possible to give an update on the successful projects at the meeting.





SRDP 2014-2020 Consultation  
D Spur  
Saughton House  
Edinburgh  
EH11 3XD  
[SRDP2014-2020Consultation@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:SRDP2014-2020Consultation@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

27<sup>th</sup> June 2013

Dear Sir/Madam

**Consultation on Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP) 2014–2020 Stage 1: Initial Proposals**

Tweed Forum welcomes this opportunity to comment on the initial proposals for the Scotland Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. It should be stressed that the following comments do not necessarily reflect the views of all members of the Forum.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

The comments below are mostly focussed towards targeting within Rural Priorities. We have three main overarching comments:

1. We welcome the requirement for more strategic targeting and mechanisms for achieving change at a scale that will make a real difference and give multiple benefits.
2. We welcome a more streamlined system but we need to ensure local priorities are adequately supported. This will be helped by a ring-fenced regional budget and case officers that have the information they require to make decisions on more complex applications (in terms of benefits and also intervention rates) in conjunction with other key stakeholders.
3. We welcome the recognition that applicants need better advice. However, in order for more refined and pro-active targeting we need facilitators and trusted intermediaries that can work with land managers to bring about applications that will make a difference on priority issues in the priority areas. This will not happen through support of whole farm plans alone.

**YOUR CONSULTATION QUESTIONS**

**Question 1: Given the EU's Common Strategic Framework approach do you agree or disagree that EU funds in Scotland should be marshalled into three funds (paragraph 27)?**

**Response:** We agree.

**Question 2: Do you agree or disagree with the proposed establishment of a single Programme Monitoring Committee to ensure all EU funds are targeted effectively (paragraph 29)?**

**Response:** We agree that a single PMC should be established but it is essential that this has a balanced membership to ensure all the main relevant sectors are represented adequately.

**Question 3: Given the need to prioritise our spending in the future programme (paragraph 11) which articles do you see as a priority for use within the next programme?**

**Response:** We see the following Articles as important with ones in bold being the top priorities:

Article 15 - vocational training

**Article 16 - advisory service provision**

**Article 18 - investment in physical assets**

Article 20 - investment in farm and business development

**Article 21 - basic services for rural areas**

Article 23 - woodland creation and expansion

Article 24 - agro-forestry measures

**Article 26 - investments improving the resilience and environmental value of forest ecosystems**

**Article 29 - climate change measures**

**Article 31 - Natura 2000 and WFD**

Article 35 - forest environmental and climate services and forest conservation?

Article 36 - investment in co-operation projects

Whilst we understand the need to maximise food and timber production, these articles do seem to place a very strong emphasis on forestry. There are of course a host of other habitats (such as wetlands, peatlands) that provide us with important ecosystem services and these must not get lost in the mix. Clearly there are large overlaps between these articles and the crucial thing is to ensure that we are smarter about how we plan and invest in such measures. Those actions that deliver on a collection of articles should be a prioritised and quality advice and facilitation will be crucial for this.

We also want to avoid spending money on treating the symptoms of more intensive production and we need to build resilience and the ecosystem approach throughout these articles in order to maximise the benefits to the environment, society and the economy.

**Question 4: Do you agree or disagree that we should geographically target our investment to areas where support will make the greatest contribution to our priorities?**

**Response:** Tweed Forum has always advocated getting the right measures in the right place at the right scale and, wherever possible, to achieve multiple benefits. In the past too much money has been spent to little effect or in the wrong place altogether. The likes of the Land Use Strategy and the ecosystem services approach will help target limited resources to best effect. However, in targeting specific areas these need to 'ground-truthed' by local people as often the higher level strategic maps and theoretical zoning exercises do not necessarily reflect the local priority areas on the ground.

We also recognise the need to balance this with wider take-up of measures so that such areas join up and we encourage a degree of resilience building throughout the working landscape which supports a mosaic of habitats and a robust ecological network.

**Question 5: Do you agree or disagree that support for small local businesses should be provided through LEADER?**

**Response:** We agree. However, there needs to be recognition that in the current programme the LAG was asked to preside over applications which were beyond its focus of expertise e.g. when broadband funding was suddenly funded through LEADER. Membership of the LAG may have to change accordingly to accommodate the broadening of emphasis. Equally, we need to be wary of making the group too disparate.

**Question 6: Do you agree or disagree to the proposal to disband RPACs and replace with a more streamlined assessment process as explained in Section 8?**

**Response:** We certainly agree that the process needs to be more streamlined and the RPAC did not perhaps add as much value to this process as envisaged. However, we need to be sure that local priorities and conditions are accommodated effectively. The new system will place increased responsibility on case

officers and we need to ensure they are adequately supported. The Land Use Strategy pilot should help prioritise and clarify such decisions.

**Question 7: Do you agree or disagree that LMOs should be removed from the future programme, given the spending restrictions we are likely to face and the need to ensure maximum value from our spending?**

**Response:** The poor response to uptake of options within SRDP LMO 2009-13 was due to a poor menu of options to choose from. If the list of conservation management and creation options that are easily implemented was expanded (i.e. hedge planting, orchard planting, small scale tree planting (0.24ha), grass margins/buffers trips, ponds, dykes etc.) then there would be more uptake. However we appreciate the budgetary constraints and suggest a broad and shallow (limited fund) and a deeper more focussed (targeted fund) be available to access under a single SRDP RP application process.

**Question 8: Do you agree or disagree that the Forestry Challenge Funds be discontinued with WIAT being funded through Rural Priorities and F4P funding being provided by LEADER?**

**Response:** No comment.

**Question 9: Do you agree or disagree that Food and Drink grants be decided via the wider decision-making process for business development applications or should they remain separate and managed within the Scottish Government as is the current practice?**

**Response:** No comment.

**Question 10: Do you agree or disagree with crofting stakeholders that a Crofting Support Scheme is established in the new programme that will fund all grants relevant to crofting?**

**Response:** No comment.

**Question 11: If a Crofting Support Scheme is developed, do you agree or disagree that crofters (and potentially small landholders) be restricted from applying for other SRDP schemes which offer similar support?**

**Response:** No comment.

**Question 12: Do you agree or disagree on whether support for crofting should extend to small land holders of like economic status who are situated within crofting counties?**

**Response:** No comment.

**Question 13: Do you agree or disagree with the proposed replacement of the Skills Development Scheme with an Innovation Challenge Fund?**

**Response:** We agree in maintaining a training/knowledge exchange/skills share fund in some form.

**Question 14: Do you agree or disagree with the measures proposed by the New Entrant Panel (paragraph 92) to encourage new entrants to farming?**

**Response:** No comment.

**Question 15: Do you agree or disagree with the proposed case officer approach to the assessment of applications?**

**Response:** We agree with the case officer approach for forestry and agri-environment options but make the plea that there is an early steer (i.e. at the SOI stage - which includes a map and spreadsheet of proposed works) on whether the application is either likely to succeed or not. A request too that case officers make an early visit to the site with the farmer and agent/advisor prior to a full application being submitted, or consults with an impartial 3<sup>rd</sup> party who knows the site.

Case officers cannot expect to be experts on every aspect of rural development and cannot know all the other initiatives that are going on or the detailed geography of their area.

We would encourage case officers to consult with local experts in their field to ensure effective targeting and appropriate measures. For example, in the current programme we have sometimes seen the wrong measures happening in the wrong place (trees planted on deep peat and hedges on moorland) as well measures that might not reflect local initiatives - this needs to be avoided at all costs. In the Scottish Borders, there are NGOs such as Tweed Forum that are well placed to help case officers on certain fronts and ensure that they are aware of the wider context of catchment scale initiatives. However, if such organisations are supported to give advice to applicants, this is another way of addressing the issue.

**Question 16: Do you agree or disagree with the proposed single entry route for applications with a two level assessment process?**

**Response:** We agree, as long as the SOI stage becomes more meaningful.....currently it has no value as applications are not screened at this stage and there is little case officer input. A site visit by the case officer following the receipt of a map and spreadsheet of proposed works is desirable at this point. Poor applications/no priority area applications could be sifted out at this juncture.

**Question 17: Do you agree or disagree with the proposed negotiation of variable intervention rates rather than setting fixed intervention rates?**

**Response:** We agree although this perhaps cannot always be done by the case officer alone and will perhaps need some sort of second opinion/peer review for larger applications. We would like to see more collaboration involving groups of farm units in order to achieve more significant impacts, whether this is through an enhanced intervention rate or perhaps some sort of aggregation bonus.

**Question 18: Do you agree or disagree with the proposed setting of regional budgets across Rural Development Regulation (RDR) articles?**

**Response:** We agree with regional budgets being held so true local targeting of priorities can occur. We agree that it will be lot easier to prioritise projects if a regional budget is known. However, will it be possible to vie between priority budgets if underspend becomes apparent?

**Question 19: What support and assistance do you think applicants will need for this application process to work effectively?**

**Response:** A much simpler application process coupled with a part public funded advisory service is to be welcomed. The money spent on an advisory service will be more cost effective as the advice will help ensure the right options are taken up at the right place at the right scale. Part funding the advisory service at fixed rate costs (say between 50-75% of prescribed limits) will help remove the issue of consultants acting as predominantly salesmen in order to maximise private gain for individuals, and foster an era of advisors acting as educators to bring about wider public benefit balanced in conjunction with commercial enhancement.

It is essential that agents offering such advice need to be appropriately qualified. This is more than just advice on maximising production but also how to balance with other ecosystem service provision such as natural flood management or filtering dirty water. There may be benefit in some of accreditation (such as IEEM) to ensure certain standards.

Collaborative applications in particular require dedicated facilitation and advice. The current system relies on land managers being proactive in investing time and money to take forward applications. If we are serious about getting the right measure, in the right place, at the right scale, then this requires a more dedicated facilitation service. This will ensure engagement of those who would not normally apply (in the areas where the work needs to be done) and a level of collaboration that will make a meaningful impact.

**Question 20: Do you agree or disagree with the value of developing a descriptive map of holdings to help farmers and stakeholders understand the potential ecosystem value of specific holdings?**

**Response:** Absolutely agree. This is an essential item/prerequisite alongside a proposed management map and spreadsheet of proposed works (see answers 15 and 16 above).

**Question 21: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow applicants to submit single applications which set out all investments/projects that the applicant would like to take forward on their land?**

**Response:** Yes, we agree with this as it would cut down on the number of woodland/agri-environment applications made from one holding. It would help integrate the plans so case officers could see the bigger picture.

**Question 22: Do you agree or disagree that it would be helpful to allow third party applications for specific landscape scale**

**Response:** We agree but the body/persons applying on farmers behalf would need to have a proven track record, have past advisory/project delivery experience. They need to be seen and recognised as a 'trusted intermediary' between farmers and the system that promotes SRDP, not another agency or arm of government.

**Question 23: Do you agree or disagree with public agencies working together to identify priority areas that could benefit from a co-ordinated third party application?**

**Response:** We agree that the agencies need to work together but also that other stakeholders should be included (depending on what the focus of the application is). The Land Use Strategy pilots should be useful in demonstrating how priority areas can be agreed in partnership.

**Question 24: Do you agree or disagree with the establishment of a separate fund to support collective action at the landscape scale?**

**Response:** On the whole we agree with the establishment of a separate fund as this will give the opportunity for important, pioneering projects to make a real impact on priority fronts; something that that would not have been possible under existing conditions. Tweed Forum has experience of working at the landscape scale to tackle such issues as diffuse pollution, peatland restoration, and invasive non native species and progress on these fronts would have been greatly facilitated by a separate stream that encouraged collaborative action.

**Question 25: Do you agree or disagree with broadening the Whole Farm Review Scheme to include biodiversity, environment, forestry, water pollution control and waste management?**

**Response:** Yes, we agree but the development of a funded advisory service must also be part of this process. The ecosystem approach should be a central tenet of such reviews in attempting to assess and balance the social, economic and environmental dimensions of land management. Whilst Whole Farm Reviews are a useful and necessary element in highlighting appropriate changes, they will not bring about change in themselves and there needs to be advice and facilitation beyond this if we are to really convert such opportunities.

**Question 26: Do you agree or disagree that we allocate SRDP budget to advice provision when we move to the next programme?**

**Response:** Yes we agree and see this as a priority as it offers the best hope for long-term conservation gain. Whilst it may seem a significant expense, it is nothing compared to the value of the grants given out and helps ensure that money is not wasted and we achieve multiple benefits. How this advice is facilitated, maintained and supported needs careful thought and tactics will likely vary from region to region.

**Question 27: What are your views on the merits of providing loans for specific purposes and/or specific sectors?**

**Response:** No comment.

**Question 28: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to maintain the current level**

of transfer from Direct Payments to SRDP in the new programme period?

**Response:** We agree.

**Question 29:** Please tell us about any potential impacts, either positive or negative; you feel the proposals in this consultation document have on any of the equalities characteristics listed in paragraph 136.

**Response:** No comment.

We trust that you will find these comments useful, please do not hesitate to contact me should you require anything further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luke Comins', is displayed within a light grey rectangular box.

Luke Comins  
Director