

TimberTransportForum

delivering solutions for a growing UK harvest

**A Response by the Timber Transport Forum
to the Consultation on the
Argyll and Bute Woodland and Forestry Strategy
Consultation Draft**

The Timber Transport Forum is a voluntary partnership “working in partnership with communities, their representatives and the forest industry to promote a vibrant and sustainable timber transport sector and to secure social and environmental benefits.” Members comprise representatives from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, Forest Industries (Confederation of Forest Industries and UK Forest Products Association), Forestry Commission England, Scotland, Wales, Welsh Assembly Government, Welsh Regional Transport Consortia, Highland Council, North Yorkshire County Council, Rail Freight Group, Road Haulage Association, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Government, and the Society for Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland.

More details can be found at www.timbertransportforum.org.uk

Timber Transport Forum www.timbertransportforum.org.uk roland.stiven@confor.org.uk

Confederation of Forest Industries (UK) Ltd 59 George Street Edinburgh EH2 2JG
Tel: 0131 240 1418 Fax: 0131 240 1411 www.confor.org.uk
Registered in Scotland as Confederation of Forest Industries UK (Ltd). No. SC34467

1. The Timber Transport Forum welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the consultation on the Argyll and Bute Woodland and Forestry Strategy.
2. The Forum is aware of
 - the major contribution of Argyll's productive woodland to Scotland's forest industries and the contribution to jobs, gross economic value added and carbon sequestration.
 - the substantial limitations of the road transport network in Argyll for the transport of timber.
3. We welcome the recognition of timber transport issues and the role of the Argyll Timber Transport Group in the consultation draft.
4. The consultation draft of the strategy recognises that:
 - Argyll has the highest forest cover of any Local Authority in Scotland. Almost a third of the region is under forestry, most of it productive forestry.
 - The level of harvest will increase by around 50% over the next decade. In addition there is an expectation that a proportion of the harvest residues currently left on site will, in future, be collected for biomass fuel.
 - Argyll can expect to expand forest cover through further afforestation.
5. If the substantial benefits of forestry to the Argyll economy are to be maintained and to rise alongside the increase in supply, the demands on transport infrastructure will increase accordingly. While there may be opportunities to develop local processing (particularly for biomass fuel from harvest residues), and scope for intermodal solutions with rail haulage and coastal shipping, there is still likely to be increased timber transport on the minor roads close to the forest, where most of the infrastructure limitations apply.
6. While the Argyll Timber Transport Group can advise on priorities for infrastructure improvement and provides a forum for partnership working, it is clear there are significant resource implications in sustaining the roads used for timber haulage. The scale of forestry in the region and its value to jobs and the economy will mean there is a high net benefit from such investment and substantial disbenefit should the roads be allowed to deteriorate to the extent that forestry activities are restricted.
7. The **Strategic Timber Transport Fund** has contributed Scottish Government funding of over £4m to Argyll since 2005 through the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme to invest in timber transport infrastructure. Around another £4m has been used to support the TimberLINK service.
8. The Forum proposes that the strategy:

- **Reinforces the need for close partnership working between the local authority and the forest industry through the Argyll Timber Transport Group.**
- **Makes more explicit the dependence of the forest industries on Argyll & Bute Council's responsibility to maintain a road network fit for the economic activity of the region.**
- **Recognises the scale of resources that are required to invest in transport infrastructure for timber haulage and makes the case for greater resource allocation to timber haul routes.**
- **Recognises the vital importance of the Strategic Timber Transport Fund to Argyll and the need for its continuation over future years.**
- **Recognises the need to provide match funding within the local authority roads budget to draw down this national funding.**

The Forum would be happy to discuss further these proposals and to provide more information as required.

Roland Stiven

On behalf of the Timber Transport Forum

28th May 2010