

16/04/02

The Institution of Environmental Sciences

The professional body for environmental scientists
President: His Grace the Duke of Westminster OBE TD DL



**PO Box 16
BOURNE
PE10 9FB**

Telephone & Fax: +44 (0) 1778 394846
E-mail: ies-uk@breathemail.net
Web site: <http://www.ies-uk.org>

Our File Ref: 7.5.10

Forestry Devolution Review

A Response by the Institution of Environmental Sciences

The Institution welcomes the opportunity to present its views and comments on this matter.

In general, the Institution agrees with the present arrangements for devolution of responsibilities to the Forestry Commission and considers that the present administrative functions are working satisfactorily. In particular we feel that the unified approach, albeit with separate and varying policies for Scotland and Wales, is a positive advantage. Our concerns with the administrative arrangements centre on the implementation of policies at local levels and the degree of co-ordination and consultation which occurs. Recent legislation relating to access by the public to the countryside and new government policies for agriculture and the planning of rural affairs will both have an impact on forestry policy and administration. In the main, this will best be co-ordinated at local levels and wide consultation is desirable. Local authorities, farming associations and local stakeholders will have views, wishes and local information whilst the local representatives of DEFRA and the Environment Agency and the Regional Agencies will have a wider co-ordinating contribution. These local contacts should be developed and strengthened.

UK, European and International policies for sustainability all support the preservation of existing forests and the growing and use of timber as a renewable resource. The administration of forestry in Great Britain needs to maintain and develop this policy but to strike a balance with possible competing requirements for bio-diversity. A wider planting of broad-leafed varieties and mixed forestry should be encouraged, probably with longer term programmes.

Finally, all management processes need to be kept up to date and aware of best practice. Emerging techniques need interest, encouragement and support and investment and grant aid should not neglect research. This should be supported both within the Commission operation and in other research establishments (including colleges and university departments).

IES
16 April 2002

C:/My Doc/Response/Forestry Devolution Review 16.04.02