

Response to the Scottish Government Consultation on the Scotland Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

Consultation Response 2013

The Carnegie United Kingdom (UK) Trust welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation on the Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP) 2014-20.

The Trust works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work. The Trust was established by Scots-American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1913.

We have chosen only to respond to the questions where we have experience and relevant evidence. Further information on our work is available on our website

www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk.

The Carnegie UK Trust's Experience

Our response to this consultation is informed by our research and experience of rural development issues and other areas of complex public policy in Scotland and across the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

In particular:

- Our review of the challenges and opportunities for rural development in the UK and Ireland in times of austerity and changing rural demographics: *Future Directions in Rural Development*;
- Our *Enabling State* project with Sir John Elvidge which is exploring how the state can best support a more active role for communities and individuals in improving their own wellbeing;

- Our international research on wellbeing: *Shifting the Dial*;
- *A Common Rural Development Policy*: the role of the LEADER approach in rural development in the UK and Ireland.

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)?

Natural habitats, land owners, businesses, farmers, voluntary organisations, public servants, infrastructure, public services and rural residents do not exist in isolation- rather they depend on each other for their wellbeing. Similarly, complex areas of public policy such as rural development require a joined up approach from government.

We therefore welcome the moves toward a more

joined up approach to the use of EU funds in Scotland. We believe there is a good opportunity to align this funding with wider national initiatives and local programmes. To explicitly link the use of these resources to achieving the outcomes in the National Performance Framework and, ultimately, to improve wellbeing in Scotland.

In the pursuit of fostering a more coherent approach to improving wellbeing in rural areas of Scotland it may be beneficial to marshal the funds under a single funding stream rather three.

The single fund would seek to improve the wellbeing of people and communities within the target area by addressing the three linked priorities of:

- Competitiveness, innovation and jobs
- Low carbon, resource efficiency and environment
- Local development and social inclusion

A single fund could help ensure that the social, economic and environmental outcomes of the EU funding are well balanced - reducing the risk of one funding stream inadvertently compromising the objectives of another and facilitating the sharing of best practice between specialist agencies.

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)?

We believe that a single Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) operating at a strategic level would be beneficial in terms of ensuring that the funds are successfully meeting shared objectives, contributing to the national performance framework, and overall government purpose and linking to wider government initiatives.

The PMC should ensure that the funds operate on the four principles for improved public services, identified by the Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services:

- services built around people and communities, their needs, aspirations, capacities and skills, and work to build up their autonomy and resilience;
- public service organisations working together effectively to achieve outcomes - specifically, by delivering integrated services which help to secure improvements in the quality of life, and the social and economic wellbeing, of the people and communities of Scotland;
- prioritise prevention, reduce inequalities and promote equality; and
- constantly seeking to improve performance and reduce costs, and are open, transparent and accountable.

In particular the PMC should ensure that the SDRP reflects Scottish Government aspirations for empowered communities.

The Trust believes that sustainable rural development is best delivered by empowered local communities. In order to ensure that the funding best supports communities and that there are good links between the local and national level it is important that the PMC includes representatives from community and voluntary organisations as well as the public and organised third sector. This should include a representative/representatives from LEADER Local Action Groups.

These funds seek to address complex social, environmental and economic problems and we agree that the PMC would benefit from expert advice from specialist agencies and other stakeholders to assess whether outcomes are being achieved effectively.

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?

Our research and experience has highlighted the importance of ‘networked’ action at the local level in delivering sustainable rural development.

The ‘networked’ approach to rural development involves:

- the mobilisation of assets, both within and outwith the locality (see for example the Trust’s 2011 report *Appreciating Assets*);
- the building of citizens’ capacity to act individually and collectively to work towards a shared vision for the future of their local area;
- support for networks which connect people within and beyond the locality.

Rural communities in Scotland however have unequal capacities to act in a ‘networked’ way (see Question 4). There is a real risk that without capacity building and the opportunity for networking that inequalities will grow within and between rural areas.

We therefore recommend that articles that allow for capacity building and networking are retained and prioritised in the SRDP.

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?

Rural areas in Scotland are not equal. Rural areas in Southern Scotland for example, appear to have been harder hit by the economic downturn than other parts of rural Scotland and towns in remote rural areas are more vulnerable than their rural hinterlands. And, while some areas will experience population growth and an increase in the working

age population over the period of the SDRP others will experience a decline.

All rural populations face an aging population and the pressures on services and infrastructure that accompany these trends, however, these are likely to be more acute in some areas of rural Scotland than others.

Some rural communities have good access to the social, financial and bridging capital required to improve their wellbeing in the face of these pressures. Other communities will require additional support and resources to build their capacity to realise their aspirations in a sustainable way.

Targeting additional resource to the areas of rural Scotland that are facing the greatest challenges and pressures (whether these be economic, social or environmental) is therefore vital. This will help level the playing field so that inequalities within and between communities are reduced and not exacerbated.

Care should be taken however to ensure that geographical targeting is sensitive enough that disadvantaged communities and individuals in otherwise affluent areas are not left behind.

Decisions about local targeting are however best made by local communities themselves and there is a real opportunity to empower communities to set their own local priorities and to allocate funding in line with these priorities in partnership with the local authority, relevant agencies and other stakeholders. LEADER is a great example of this approach. There is opportunity to build on the benefits of LEADER and extend the LEADER approach to other areas of the SRDP and related funding streams.

This chance to empower communities to deliver bottom up, holistic development should not be missed. For more information see our report [*A Common Rural Development Policy*](#).

The Carnegie UK Trust works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by changing minds through influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work. The Carnegie UK Trust was established by Scots-American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1913 and we are delighted to be celebrating our centenary in 2013. Please see our website for further information on our centenary plans.

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