



PRESS RELEASE

Upland Solutions Project Report Launched

This Report has been launched with the support of the Minister for Environment and Climate Change.

A key aim of the work was to understand and record the challenges and opportunities facing those who live and work in two contrasting upland areas of Scotland. The Moorland Forum with its diverse experience, expertise and interests was in a unique position to achieve a balance of opinion from the various interests involved.

On the 14th July Lord Lindsay, Chairman of Scotland's Moorland Forum, met with the new Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Stewart Stevenson, MSP, and presented the Forum's Upland Solutions Project Report to him. Following this meeting, the Minister agreed the wording of the Foreword that has been included in the Report.

The Minister said: "I value the findings of this report, which has captured the views of people who live and work in parts of the Scottish uplands. The members of Scotland's Moorland Forum are to be congratulated for applying their knowledge and experience in this novel way. The views recorded in this report need to feed into the way that we support and regulate the upland areas of Scotland and we will work with the Moorland Forum to achieve this."

The culmination of two and half years work, this final version of the Report incorporates feedback from members of the Forum and the Community Councils of the two Study Areas at Muirkirk in East Ayrshire and Tomatin in Inverness-shire. The full Report is supported by a high-level Summary Report and a Supplementary Report that provides additional information about how the project was carried out.

Lord Lindsay said: "This Report focuses on how the future of our uplands is perceived by those who live and work in them on a daily basis, how they view opportunities and challenges, where they see solutions and where they feel there are barriers. It provides a solid evidence base of ground-level experience and perspectives that will help inform those delivering policies and regulations that affect our uplands as well as providing key pointers to how upland communities can themselves be more proactive in turning their aspirations into a reality."

Four key findings were identified and are recorded in the Summary Report:

- The views and concerns of communities need to be listened to and understood intelligently;
- Dialogue and engagement at a community level are key and all of a community's interests must be included;

c/o The Heather Trust, Newtonrigg, Holywood, DUMFRIES DG2 0RA

web site: www.moorlandforum.org.uk e:mail: info@moorlandforum.org.uk

Tel: 01387 723201

Chairman: Lord Lindsay

Director: Simon Thorp

Administrator: Anne Stoddart

- Every area is unique and solutions to issues must be sought that are tailored to the needs of the whole community; and
- Both the Study Areas had opportunities that were already being exploited or had potential for development.

The Report has raised a number of challenges for both those living in the communities and for the Scottish Government and its Agencies:

- at a community level, the work has emphasised the value of ground-level solutions and how, through taking ownership and showing initiative and leadership, these solutions can be used to realise aspirations and deliver opportunities; and
- at a Government level, the report has provided an insight into how policies and regulations are interpreted at ground level – where they enable and where they constrain – and how they might be more effectively delivered in the future.

The key to success for the communities and government is improved dialogue, collaboration and integration at every level and between every level. To this end the Moorland Forum intends to actively promote the lessons arising from this Report, involving all who have been involved in this project and other organisations that have experience of working with communities seeking to improve themselves.

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Note to Editors

1. The Upland Solutions Report, together with the Summary and Supplementary Reports, is available to download from the website: www.moorlandforum.org.uk/
2. The Scotland's Moorland Forum was established in 2002 to provide an opportunity for a diverse range of organisations to come together to discuss issues that effect the management of Scotland's moorland and upland areas. 24 organisations founded the Forum and membership has expanded to 30. The Forum has since developed as a vital multi-stakeholder group that is dedicated to understanding the challenges that face Scotland's moorland and upland areas and to identifying and enabling appropriate solutions.
3. The Forum's website at www.moorlandforum.org.uk contains additional information.
4. For photographs or other details, please contact Anne Stoddart, the Administrator of the Forum. E-mail: info@moorlandforum.org.uk Tel: 01387 723201.