



Land reform plans ‘divisive and damaging’

Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party press office

Wednesday, June 4, 2014

FAO: all newsdesks

Embargo: for immediate release

A controversial report on land reform in Scotland has been described as “divisive” and “damaging” by the Scottish Conservatives.

The Land Reform Review Group, appointed by the Scottish Government to look at land ownership across the country, has revealed a range of contentious proposals.

It has been revealed that one of the key recommendations stated there should be an upper limit on the total amount of land a private owner should have.

The group also wants to see three new agencies established in a bid to monitor who owns what.

And the report – Land of Scotland and the Common Good – stated the introduction of land value taxation should be considered.

However, the proposals have not been consulted on, and many of them lack any detail.

Scottish Conservative rural affairs spokesman Alex Fergusson MSP said:

“It is now quite clear that some of the recommendations are so divisive they can only cause considerable and lasting damage to the very relationships between rural stakeholders we should be trying to improve.

“What is worse, many of the group’s recommended actions seem to have little or no evidence to back them up.

“That means they have effectively been plucked out of thin air with no thought given to their full consequences.

“For instance, how can you recommend a cap on how much land any individual can own without having any idea of how much is deemed too much?

“The very idea that the Scottish Government should establish three new agencies to decide important questions such as what constitutes ‘public benefit’ in relation to community purpose will come as a complete anathema to most communities in Scotland.

“These decisions should be determined locally through partnerships rather than by state-sponsored agencies at massive cost to the public purse.

“This report advocates land management by Scottish Government dictat, community ownerships through compulsion and a right-to-buy for tenant farmers who already enjoy security of tenure.

“It is divisive, damaging and centralising and – if implemented in full – would damage beyond repair many of the causes it claims to be championing.”

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