

A back of the envelope programme for putting lights back on in the glens - submission to the Land Reform Review Group by Bill Ritchie , January 2013.

A programme of land reform should be seen as a means of

extending property rights including ownership, leasing and renting thereby tackling inequality; increasing the participation of communities in decision making over land use policy and land use thereby strengthening democracy; using fiscal and taxation measures to promote specific outcomes thereby providing public benefits and delivering the Scottish Government's Land Use Strategy.

Land value tax and land use tax

could provide powerful tools to guide land ownership and land use change, and provide a valuable source of revenue in an independent Scotland.

Reforming the law of succession

to allow all children the right to inherit heritable and moveable property has the potential to create smaller parcels of land and increase the rate of land coming onto the market, especially very large rural land holdings, thereby accelerating land reform.

Crofting

is a secure tenure system for extending sustainable land use, creating diverse livelihoods and small scale low intensity food production. Measures should be introduced to

extend crofting tenure to all parts of Scotland

create incentives for land owners to create new crofts

create planning guidelines for the creation of new croft housing where new crofts are established

create a target of 10,000 new crofts by 2030.

The Scottish Government (SG) should lead the way by creating crofts, including woodland crofts, on SG owned land.

Hutting

can allow the urban and rural population to benefit from Land Reform through access to land for recreational occupation by

providing strong political support for the concept of hutting

incentives to landowners to release land through sale or lease.

changes to the planning law to provide a definition of a hut and reform of the planning law

and the building standards regime to develop a simple process for obtaining consent to construct huts

creating a target of 1,000 new huts by 2020.

Allotments

can allow the urban population to benefit from Land Reform through access to land for growing food by providing strong political support for the expansion of allotments

creating a target of 50,000 new urban allotments by 2030.

The Land Reform Act

turned my hair grey. I strongly support the proposals made in other submissions to the LRRG (Community Woodland Association, Community Land Scotland) that

the processes of the Land Reform Act (LRA) should be simplified and streamlined

the scope of the LRA should be extended

In addition I propose that the LRA be amended to allow access to land and the Land Fund by properly constituted bodies set up with the purpose of establishing new crofts, small holdings and huts.

Similar amendments should be made to the the National Forest Land Scheme .

Resources

The Scottish Government should ensure that there are adequate resources including financial resources to drive forward a comprehensive land reform programme. A new body should be created to ensure effective delivery of the land reform programme.

The devil, as always, is in the detail. Happy to help.