

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Finlay Carson
Convener
Rural Affairs and Islands Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Email: rural.committee@parliament.scot

19 January 2024

Dear Convener

Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill – Summary of progress with developing the Grouse Moor & Muirburn Codes of Practice

I write to provide you with an update regarding the development of the Grouse Moor Management and Muirburn Codes of Practice proposed within the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill.

Approach and membership

NatureScot are taking an iterative, collaborative approach to developing the codes of practice. This process is being managed through two Code Working Groups, with additional input from members of the Moorland Forum. Other stakeholders, with an interest in grouse moor and muirburn will be kept up to date with progress via a Correspondence Group. The full membership list for both groups is set out in Annex A of this letter.

Governance and purpose of the Code Working Groups

Both Working Groups are chaired by a NatureScot Board member and the process is being led and facilitated by NatureScot. The Moorland Forum is taking on the role of an Advisory Group to take a strategic overview of the development of both Codes. The role of the Working Groups is to provide feedback on the practical and technical aspects of the Codes and to ensure that they are applicable and relevant to all users and audiences and that they fit the requirement of the legislation. Terms of Reference have been agreed for both Groups.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

Progress to date

Outline structures have been developed by the Groups for each of the Codes. These structures are being built up around what must be done and/or or not done (i.e. statutory obligations), and actions which should be carried out as they represent best practice. The Groups have each held two meetings and are aiming to hold future meetings on a monthly basis. There is broad agreement amongst the members of each Group as to what should be included in the Codes.

The next stage in developing the Codes will be to develop the content under the sections and headings set out in the draft structure. NatureScot is also planning to test options for developing a methodology to measure the thickness of peat.

I hope this provides a helpful update on progress so far on developing the Codes and I would be happy provide a further update in due course.

Yours Sincerely,



Gillian Martin

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE[™]
We invest in people Silver



Membership of Code Working Groups

Chair - Board member of NatureScot

Member organisations

The member organisations were agreed with input from the Moorland Forum. They aim to represent the key interests in grouse moor management and muirburn. The Groups are deliberately small to allow for in depth discussions. There is scope to draw others in with specific knowledge and or expertise as and when required.

Grouse Code Working Group

- British Association for Shooting and Conservation
- Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust
- Royal Society for Protection of Birds Scotland
- Scottish Countryside Alliance
- Scottish Land and Estates
- Scottish Gamekeepers Association
- Scottish Raptor Study Group
- Scotland's Regional Moorland Groups
- Scottish Wildlife Trust

Muirburn Code Working Group

- British Association for Shooting and Conservation
- Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust
- IUCN UK Peatland Programme
- James Hutton Institute
- National Farmers Union (Scotland)
- Royal Society of Protection for Birds
- Scottish Crofting Federation
- Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
- Scottish Gamekeepers Association
- Scottish Land & Estates
- Scottish Wildlife Trust

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot