

Scotland's National Forest Estate – Community Asset Transfer Scheme

Non-Executive Office Holder Recruitment: CATS Evaluation Panel

Background Information

Community Asset Transfer Scheme (CATS)

Forest Enterprise Scotland is an agency of Forestry Commission Scotland, which serves as the forestry directorate of Scottish Government and is responsible to Scottish Ministers. Forest Enterprise Scotland is responsible for managing Scotland's National Forest Estate consisting of the forests, woods, open land and other property owned by Scottish Ministers on behalf of the nation. The Estate is managed on behalf of the Scottish people in line with the Government's Scottish Forestry Strategy, as set out in our strategy, 'The role of Scotland's National Forest Estate and strategic directions'.

We recognise the value to local communities and communities of interest, in getting involved – both through what can be achieved on the Estate, and because involvement can strengthen communities. Since 2005, Forest Enterprise Scotland has supported communities under the National Forest Land Scheme, which allowed local communities to buy or lease land and other assets on the Estate.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 provided a statutory right for community bodies, where they considered they could make better use of public land or buildings, to take more control through asset transfer. The Act and subsidiary Asset Transfer Regulations set out how public authorities in Scotland will assess requests transparently against a specified list of criteria and agree the request, unless there are reasonable grounds for refusal.

Forest Enterprise Scotland has set up the Community Asset Transfer Scheme (CATS), to be launched on 23 January 2017. CATS will build on the successes of the NFLS and meet our obligations under the Act. CATS will set out our processes for handling statutory Asset Transfer Requests, and provide a non-statutory framework to continue to support broader objectives on social housing, conservation and community engagement.

The requirements of the Act also apply to other public bodies, including other bodies responsible for the management of rural land. Each body will develop its own process for asset transfer in line with its specific aims and duties, based on the requirements of the Act and the Scottish Government's asset transfer guidance for relevant authorities.

Purpose of the Job

To become a member of the Evaluation Panel for the Community Asset Transfer Scheme (CATS) for the National Forest Estate, assessing the benefits and impacts of Asset Transfer Requests and providing advice to the Chief Executive of Forest Enterprise Scotland, and other public bodies where requested, to determine best value for public services.

Key Work Areas

The role of the Evaluation Panel Member is to provide independent and impartial advice to Forest Enterprise Scotland on statutory and non-statutory applications to CATS. The role will involve reviewing and commenting on all papers relating to Asset Transfer Requests, including optional visits to the project sites. The Panel will meet no more than 4 times a year, and in certain circumstances applications may also be considered by email or phone. The Panel will advise on all CATS Requests, and may from time to time be asked to consider Requests received by other public bodies, where appropriate.

Evaluation Panel membership is a Non-Executive Office Holder post and appointment is on the relevant terms and conditions, as set out in Annex1. Payment will be at the rate of £230.00 per day. Members' travel and subsistence, and additional childcare expenses will be paid. Appointment of the Chair will be agreed with one of the members appointed to the Panel, approved by the National Committee for Scotland, and will be paid for any additional work they are required to carry out. Panel members will be remunerated for associated site visits and where applications are formally considered by the Panel by email/telephone as well as at meetings. The time spent on Panel business will depend on the number of applications received under the Scheme.

Panel members must act with honesty and integrity, provide impartial advice, and be committed to the principles of public service (for details refer to:

<http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/civil-service-code-2010.pdf>)

Person Specification

Experience and Professional/Technical Expertise

Essential

Experience and knowledge of one or more of the following:

- Land management
- Rural development
- Forestry

- Sustainable development
- Renewable Energy
- Community development
- Financial management
- Housing
- Land reform
- Conservation

Understanding of the Scottish Forestry Strategy, Forest Enterprise Scotland's Strategic Directions and Scotland's National Forest Estate Community Asset Transfer Scheme.

Understanding of the aims of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to empower communities through asset transfer and reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage, and the obligation to make decisions in a manner which encourages equal opportunities.

Core competencies

Essential

You will be able to engage positively in debate and be a full partner on the Panel, acting in the interests of the aims of the Community Asset Transfer Scheme and taking collective responsibility for decisions made.

You will seek constructive outcomes in discussions, challenge assumptions but remain willing to compromise when it is beneficial to progress.

You will be able to analyse and evaluate pros and cons and identify risks in order to make decisions that take account of the wider context, including diversity and sustainability. You will draw together and present reasonable conclusions from a wide range of information and be able to provide advice even when details are not clear.

Other requirements

Essential

Successful applicants must act with honesty and integrity and be committed to the principle of public service.

Successful applicants must be available to attend meetings.

Terms of Appointment

The appointment will last for 3 years, with the possibility of renewal.

The position is remunerated and appointment is on the terms and conditions associated with being an "Official Post Holder" (refer to Annex1). Payment will be at the rate of £230.00 per day. Members' travel and subsistence, and additional childcare expenses will be paid. The Chair will be paid for any additional work they are required to carry out. Panel members will be remunerated for associated site visits and where applications are formally considered by the Panel by email/telephone as well as at meetings.

The time spent on Panel business will depend on the number of applications received under the Scheme. It is likely that the Panel will meet no more than 4 times per year. In addition, individual members may volunteer to undertake associated site visits.

How to apply

Please include in your application:

- a brief covering letter stating why the appointment interests you;
- a completed application form and current CV; and
- completed Equality and Diversity Monitoring form.

Applications should be sent to:

Rebecca Carr
Forestry Commission Scotland
231 Corstorphine Road
Edinburgh
EH12 7AT

Or

rebecca.carr@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Closing date: 9 January 2017

Applications should arrive no later than noon on 9 January 2017

The Forestry Commission is committed to providing equal opportunities for all sectors of the community, irrespective of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, marital status, religion, sexuality and transgender.

Annex 1: FORESTRY COMMISSION INFORMATION NOTE

HM REVENUE AND CUSTOMS: ARRANGEMENTS FOR PAYMENT OF FEES FOR OFFICE HOLDERS OF THE FC.

Appointees to Forestry Commission forums, panels and committees are 'office holders'. Please see the Revenue guidance [here](#), which explains the statutory background on office holders.

'Office holders' are not employees of the Forestry Commission. 'Office holders' have a distinct legal status from that of employee. In the public sector office holders are generally those individuals appointed to official, public or statutory roles that are independent from the person appointed, and likely to continue beyond the current appointee's term. For this reason, office holders are not issued with a contract of employment and are not eligible for any employee benefits/terms.

Payments to 'office holders' are automatically chargeable to Schedule E as employment income and are also subject to Class 1 National Insurance Contributions. Such remuneration paid to individuals will be made via PAYE (i.e. the Forestry Commission's payroll system) in order that the statutory deductions for income tax and NICs are made at source.

Office holders are appointed to their office as individuals - the FC does not and could not appoint firms, other bodies etc to an 'office'. In respect of a Director of a Limited Company, the office holder or their company should obtain appropriate documentation from the appropriate Tax Inspector, if the fees that would be due to the individual office holder are to be deferred to the company as company income. Unless you can provide documentation, fees will be paid via our PAYE system.

If you require any further clarification we recommend that you contact the HMRC (www.gov.uk/contact-hmrc).