

If responding on behalf of an organisation please give its name

New Forest Equestrian Association (NFEA)

Does the draft document 'Towards a New Public Forest Estate management body' adequately reflect the conclusions of the government 'Government Forestry & Woodlands Policy Statement'? - If so in what way?

Not Answered

What further development is needed for the Management organisation?

Not Answered

If not, what are your views on the proposed mission and objectives for the new organisation (see Annex A of the draft document)? - What are your views on the significant assets and disposals arrangements set out in the document?

Not Answered

What are your views on how the new organisation could improve the financial sustainability of the Estate?

There are few opportunities for income generation within the New Forest that would not endanger the future of this unique environment. Indeed, we see a strong conflict of interest in income generated, for example, from licences for recreational and commercial activities on the Open Forest, Forest Enterprise activities, and the environmental protection of the Crown Lands.

What are your views on the significant assets and disposals arrangements set out in the document? - Views on assets and disposals arrangements?

Not Answered

It will be necessary to give the new body a new name because Forestry Commission is established in law as a cross-border body. Do you have any ideas on a suitable name? - Suitable new name or organisation?

The Forest Trust may be appropriate, as this might emphasise that the new body has a long-term role in protecting the Public Forest Estate, and has been used elsewhere within the public services.

What are your views on the arrangements proposed for the new organisation's accountability to Parliament? - Views on organisation's accountability to parliament?

Not Answered

What are your views on the proposed Board's remit, size and composition? - Views on Board's remit, size and composition?

Not Answered

What are your views on the Guardians' remit, role, numbers and composition? - Views on Guardians' remit, role, numbers and composition?

Not Answered

What are the most important things to put in a public charter for the new organisation? - Most important things for public charter?

The charter should emphasise the importance of localism within the new organisation. That is must be transparent, open, and locally accountable. The current Minister's Mandate for the New Forest and New Forest Acts would be worthy of citation.

Do you have any general comments that you believe would be of assistance in creating the new organisation? - General comments on new organisation?

Not Answered

The forestry functions review concluded that the current arrangements 'complicate governance and obscure a clearer "line of sight" between forestry and woodland policy and delivery'. What do you think should be done to address this?

Not Answered

What more do you think should be done to improve the efficiency with which government's forestry functions are delivered? - What can be done to improve efficiency?

Not Answered

Would you like to make any other comments about the conclusions of the review of forestry functions in England, including on any impacts of the creation of the Public Forest Estate management body? - Other comments?

Not Answered

Would you like to make any other comments at this early stage about how setting up the Public Forest Estate management body and advancing the conclusions of the review of forestry functions in England might affect: - Cross-boarder functions?

Not Answered

Would you like to make any other comments at this early stage about how setting up the Public Forest Estate management body and advancing the conclusions of the review of forestry functions in England might affect: - Shared services?

Not Answered

Would you like to make any other comments at this early stage about how setting up the Public Forest Estate management body and advancing the conclusions of the review of forestry functions in England might affect: - England's National Office

Not Answered

Would you like to make any other comments about any aspect of this work? - General comments?

The unique circumstances of the New Forest must be carefully accommodated within any new arrangement. The New Forest present very limited revenue opportunities as it is primarily grazed heathland, supportive an active community of commoners. At present the Forestry Commission struggles with significant conflicts of interest in the management of the Crown Lands, which has led to the gradual erosion of the special characteristics of the New Forest, with the development of campsites, golf courses, and other income-bearing infrastructure. Any successor to the Forestry Commission must not be placed under additional pressure towards further development.

Whenever revisions to the status of the New Forest have been considered by Government official advice from the Countryside Commission and others has been that a sensitive and tailored approach would be necessary. It was unfortunate that this advice was not followed when National Park status was placed on the New Forest, causing significant local disquiet. This status alone appears to have increased commercial pressures on the New Forest, and any change to the management of the Open Forest should seek to mitigate this effect rather than reinforce it.

Any legislation to introduce the new system must be sensitive to the New Forest Acts, and avoid further disruption to the delicate balance in the operation of the Forest that has been achieved over generations.

A strong degree of localism will be essential, with considerable transparency in the operation of the new system.

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