

**If responding on behalf of an organisation please give its name**

Small Woods Association

**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?**

In general, yes, but...

**What further development is needed for the Management organisation?**

....potentially not in terms of the spirit of the GFWPS under public ownership and safeguarding of the publicly owned asset

Further assurance that the PFE will be held safely in Trust by independently elected trustees who are not there by dint of the government of the day.

**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?**

All good.

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

Greater efficiency across the whole organisation by having more hard working, well motivated, skilled people with relevant experience in the right posts at the right level.

This is an opportunity for the new body to work with other existing stakeholder organisations to the benefit of both, but there is also the danger that the new body will move into stakeholder territory and divert resources. Big question: will it be a powerful ally or an unfairly sponsored competitor?

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

They will not comfort the story-searching media or the cynical public who will suspect it might be a back door disposals route.

The public will better understand and trust an area based minimum

threshold that the PFE must not drop below. Values (£) can be manipulated, hectares can't!

**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?**

Forests For England or English Forestry Commission

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

All good, sensible.

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

Remit - fine

Size - not too big, numbers not published so hard to comment

Composition - non executive posts should include at least one appointed solely by independent means.

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

Appointments should be independent, cross party, stakeholder generated.

It should not be possible to be a board member and a Guardian.

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

The cast iron assurance that the PFE will remain in public ownership, primarily for the benefit of the public, in perpetuity.

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

Keep it as simple as possible. The harder something is to understand the easier it is to mistrust it.

**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?**

Unhitch them, two separately managed issues.

**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?**

Single source of information on grants and advice for landowners and managers

**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?**

The Small Woods Association is currently a successful delivery partner to FC/DEFRA and we see the formation of a new body looking after the PFE as an exciting opportunity to further develop this role.

Some views have been expressed that are naturally wary that the move to expand the remit and flexibility of the new PFE management body leads to state assisted competition with the private and third sectors.

**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 sure - devolution is a fact, each administration will set out its own stall so what are/will be cross border functions?

How to equitably carve up EU money between the administrations?

**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?**

Tree health/research/stats etc all best kept UK

**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**

Central as possible.

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

The Small Woods Association is glad to be involved and we welcome the chance to have our say.

It is sometimes hard to comment meaningfully on subjects which are wide ranging, by necessity, and not necessarily on one's everyday radar.

**Response ID**

ANON-69TR-9XSB-U