

## **FORESTRY AND WOODLANDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE CODE OF CONDUCT**

This Code describes the responsibilities of members in relation to their individual conduct. The role of Chair is also described. On appointment all members will be required to declare that they will be guided by the Code.

### **Principles**

The following principle shall guide the conduct of members:

Members should act with integrity.

### **Responsibilities and Conduct of Individual Members**

Members need to draw a distinction between their position as the Commission's appointees and their activity in other capacities. Membership is not an impediment to participation in other forms of public work or in the work of forestry and countryside organisations but the position imposes some obligations. Individual members should at all times act with awareness of their wider responsibilities. They should at all times:

- comply with this Code;
- act in good faith and in the best interests of furthering the aims of the Forestry Commission.

Members should not:

- act in a way which may bring the Forestry Commission into disrepute;
- use information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain;
- disclose confidential information received by virtue of their appointment;
- use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests.

As a general guide members should not take any action which cannot be publicly explained.

Public criticism of the Commission by a member would not be compatible with membership of a Forestry Commission Committee unless the member made it clear that they were expressing a personal opinion, not as a consequence of or in relation to their role as an appointee of the Forestry Commission'

### **Attendance**

Members are expected to attend meetings. The office of a member of a Committee shall become vacant if he/she has been absent from more than two consecutive meetings of the Committee, otherwise than by reason of illness or some other cause approved during the period by the Chair.

### **Declaration of Interests**

#### Formal Business

Any member who has a clear and substantial interest in a matter under consideration by the Forestry Commission should declare that interest at any meeting where the matter is

to be discussed. Such declaration should make clear the interest and whether it carries either direct or indirect financial interest to the individual.

Where such an interest constitutes a direct or indirect financial interest, the member involved should withdraw from any meeting and not seek to influence any decision taken by the Committee relating to the matter under discussion.

In all circumstances, members should ask themselves whether members of the public, knowing the facts of the situation, would reasonably conclude that the interest involved might influence the approach taken or the actions of the Committee. If so, the interest is sufficient for the member to withdraw.

Members who have any queries or concerns about these matters should discuss them with the Chair.

### Informal and other business

Members should apply the same standards regarding the declaration of interests and non-involvement in relevant business in their dealings with the Forestry Commission's staff and in informal meetings of members.

### **Gifts, Hospitality and Fees**

Members should treat with caution any offer of gifts, favours, hospitality or fees arising from their position in the Forestry Commission. Members should consult the Chair in cases of doubt.

### **Role of the Chair**

The Chair has particular responsibility for providing effective leadership on matters such as:

- encouraging high standards of propriety, in particular ensuring that individual members comply with this Code;
- providing an assessment of performance of individual members on request when they are being considered for reappointment or appointment to the Board of some other public body.

The Chair will ensure the Committee meets at regular intervals throughout the year and that the minutes of meetings accurately record decisions taken and, where appropriate, the views of individual members.

### **Resolution of Difficulties**

If members have difficulty in complying with this Code, or believe that their Committee is proposing to act improperly, they should raise the issue with the Chair who will advise on its resolution. If a Committee member remains concerned they may seek guidance from the Chair of the Forestry Commission.