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The Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP
From the Secretary of State

Thank you for your letter of 14 February about the new public forest estate management organisation and the benefits of shooting.

Since the publication of the Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement, Defra and the Forestry Commission have been working in conjunction with stakeholders to determine the financial, governance and legislative requirements necessary to deliver a new, operationally-independent public body. We propose that the new body should have a statutory purpose to manage the estate for the long term social, environmental and economic benefit of the nation. We believe it should also have commercial freedoms allowing it to generate income for reinvestment in the estate from a range of activities, including sport and recreation.

I outlined the ten core principles underpinning the plans for the new body at the recent National Forestry Forum. These are attached for information.

We do, of course, recognise the significant biodiversity and other benefits that managing woodland for shooting can deliver. We intend that the new body should continue and build on the work of Forest Enterprise England in this regard.

THE RT HON OWEN PATERSON MP

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