

**FORESTRY AND WOODLANDS ADVISORY COMMITTEES (FWACs)****Purpose**

1. To provide the National Committee with an overview of the membership situation with the FWACs and to seek a decision on the re-appointment of the Chair and Members who will have served 9 years in November 2018.

**Background**

2. In 2016 the National Committee considered the short term future of the FWACs in the context of possible changes in operational area boundaries as a result of the EA and NE alignment to 14 shared areas. Subsequently, it has been agreed that Forest Services will not change its 5 area structure and the FWACs would retain the existing 9 area arrangement that serves the FS areas and provides for FEE forest district relationships.

3. In 2016 it was also agreed to extend the existing membership, including Chairs, for a period of up to two years or to a 10 year maximum term if this was less than two years. It was also agreed that a number of ad-hoc appointments would be made to fill any existing vacancies and any new vacancies arising due to resignations.

**Membership Renewal**

4. Current membership appointments expire in November and in order to be able to run a full renewal process, if needed, a decision is required now on the approach the National Committee would like us to take. The issues and options are set out below and a summary of the membership position is provided at Annex 1

**Chairs**

5. All the committee Chairs, except one (John Moverley in the West Midland) will have served for 5 years or less in November and can be reappointed for a further 3-year term. In the case of the SW FWAC the appointment of John Wilding in 2017 means he is not subject to performance assessment at this time. All other chairs have been performance assessed and received good or very good overall performance markings. The National Committee is asked to agree that all current chairs (except John Moverley and John Wilding) be approached to ascertain whether or not they would be willing to serve for a further 3 years. This would allow their reappointment to be confirmed at the June or July National Committee meeting.

6. It is not possible to reappoint John Moverley for a full 3-year term. However, he has indicated that he is willing to serve for a further year and his reappointment to take him up to the full ten year limit is supported by the Area Director Keith Jones and the Head of Forest Services Delivery, Richard Britton. The National Committee is asked to agree the re-appointment of John Moverley for a further and final year.

## Members

7. The Forestry Act requires the FWACs (the working title of the Regional Advisory Committees appointed under Section 38(3) of the Act) to comprise not less than seven and not more than twelve members (including the Chair). Of these not less than four must be appointed after consultation with representative organisations as prescribed in the Act.

8. All the current Committees have at least five members that have been appointed after consultation, which involves formally seeking nominations from stakeholder bodies, and which have served seven years or less. All these members have demonstrated good or very good performance and can be re-appointed.

9. Two members will have served the full 10 years by November and cannot be reappointed and two members are considered unsuitable for re-appointment. There are 13 other vacancies across the Committees, of these 6 are filled by co-opted members or can be filled immediately by individuals who could be co-opted. There is good scope for suitable co-opted members to be formally appointed as full members in November, aligning them with the rest of the re-appointment process. The other vacancies would be filled in November through a direct approach using area networks and contacts if a full recruitment exercise is not undertaken.

10. There are 14 members who will have served 9 years and could be re-appointed for a further year, if they were willing to serve. However, they would need to be replaced in November 2019. We do not allow service to extend beyond 10 years, in line with the code and practice for public appointments. The number of replacements in 2019 would not be significantly greater than this year as only one additional member would have reached 9 years in 2019.

11. The Committee is asked to make a choice between re-appointing, where possible, the members that have served 9 years for an additional year, or not re-appointing them and having a full recruitment exercise, with consultation, undertaken during this summer. The issues that the Committee may wish to consider in making this decision include:

- Overall, Area Directors are keen to retain the skills, network links and experience they have on their FWACs from the long serving members for as long as possible.
- All members in scope have received individual performance ratings to demonstrate the value of retaining their services.
- The Governance and Executive Leadership of the FC is changing. This will be in place in time for a 2019 recruitment exercise where new non-executives can be engaged in leadership of a process of FWAC changes, but not for 2018.
- There are key forestry developments in respect to the 25 Year Environment Plan implementation actions and Brexit in the next year or so, and the FWACs' current collective experience should make an important contribution to this.
- There will never be a good time to replace long serving members; we should not simply delay the inevitable.
- Any change in membership gives us an opportunity to address the equality and gender balance issues we have with the Committees, 11 of the 14 are male.

- There may be people who are waiting for the opportunity to become FWAC members and may be disappointed that a recruitment is not taking place, although any that have made their desires known to us could be considered for existing vacancies.

## **Risk Assessment**

12. The risks from re-appointing the long serving members may be less than from recruiting new members, but the difference in risk is not considered to be a material factor in the decision making process.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

13. An EqlA has not been carried out for the re-appointment options, however as recognised in the list of issues to be considered recruitment of new members will give the opportunity to address the equality and diversity issues.

## **Communications**

14. The course of action agreed by the Committee can be communicated to the FWAC Chairs at the meeting on 15 May. Chairs were briefed this month to anticipate this, and were also advised that FCE currently expects to communicate decisions to the Chairs and members following the July and September Committee meetings respectively.

## **Decisions needed**

15. The National Committee is asked to:

- Agree the re-appointment of John Moverley for one year to take his term as West Midlands Chair to 10 years.
- Agree that other Chairs are approached with a view to extending their terms of office for a further three years.
- Decide whether:
  - Members with 9 years' service are (where possible) re-appointed
  - or
  - A full recruitment exercise is undertaken over the next few months to replace the members with 9 years' service and fill the other vacancies.

**Richard Barker**  
**Director's Office**  
**April 2018**

## FWAC Member service and performance summary

Area	Time served Nov 18 (full years rounded up)				Unsuitable for re-appt	Vacant or co-opted
	≤ 7	8	9	10		
South West	7	-	3	-	-	1
West Midlands	8	-	1	-	-	2
North West	8	-	1	-	-	2
East England	6	-	2	-	-	3
East Midlands	7	-	1	2	-	1
London	8	1	1	-	1	1
South East	8	-	1	-	1	2
Yorkshire and Humber	10	-	1	-	-	0
North East	7	-	3	-	-	1
	<b>69</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>