



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Animal Sentience Committee Terms of Reference

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

Date: September 2023

Version: 1.0



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Terms of Reference

Defra is issuing these Terms of Reference as the host Department for the Animal Sentience Committee (also referred to as 'the Committee'). They describe both aspects of the Committee's governance and oversight for which Defra is solely responsible, and day to day operations which are for the Committee to conduct as it wishes.

Animal Sentience Committee

The Animal Sentience Committee is established by the [Animal Welfare \(Sentience\) Act 2022](#) to furnish accountability to Parliament for consideration of the welfare of sentient animals in Ministerial decisions.

Statutory functions

When any government policy is being or has been formulated or implemented, the Committee has statutory powers to produce reports containing its views on whether, or to what extent, the Government is having, or has had, all due regard to the ways in which the policy might have an adverse effect on the welfare of animals as sentient beings.

These reports should also contain recommendations on the steps the Committee considers the Government should take for the purpose of ensuring that, in relation to any further formulation or implementation of the policy, the Government has all due regard to the ways in which that policy might have an adverse effect on the welfare of animals as sentient beings.

In relation to these powers, the term 'adverse effect' applies where a selected policy decision, including a decision to implement and deliver a policy, might harm or have a negative effect on the welfare of animals as sentient beings, such as animals being deprived of one or more of the five "welfare needs" as set out in the Animal Welfare Act 2006. The term 'adverse effect' also relates to the absence of providing for the positive needs of animals as sentient beings.

Aims and purpose

The purpose of the Committee's reports is to support accountability to Parliament in relation to the government policy decision under consideration. The relevant Secretary of State will be required to lay a response in Parliament to each Committee report. It is then a matter for Parliament to decide how to consider such responses.

It may also be beneficial for government Departments to seek advice from the Committee to assist them in understanding the effects of particular policy decisions on the welfare of animals as sentient beings.

The overarching aim of the Committee is to provide assurance that government policy decisions are appropriately informed by an understanding of the impacts of those decisions on the welfare of sentient animals, and that this understanding is duly taken into account alongside all other matters of public interest when final policy decisions are made. The Committee may benefit from engaging with other expert Committees, such as the Animal Welfare Committee (see 'Links with other expert Committees' section below) and other outside expertise.

Scope

The Committee may issue a report on any policy decision for which government Ministers are responsible. The Committee cannot issue a report on any policy decision which relates to legislative provisions falling within devolved competence.

When considering the welfare of animals as sentient beings, the term 'animal' has the same meaning as set out in section 5 of the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022.

Objectives and responsibilities

The agreed objectives and responsibilities of the Committee are set out below:

- The Committee may form an overview of all government policy decisions which have a significant material or possible effect on the welfare of sentient animals. This need not cover every single policy matter, instead the overview could cover policy decisions which are of a higher priority from an animal welfare perspective.
- The Committee will decide which policy decisions to select for the purpose of producing a report. When exercising this choice, the Committee may seek views from other interested parties such as government Departments, Parliament (e.g., the EFRA Select Committee), external stakeholders, and others.
- The Committee may prioritise policy decisions which are more significant in terms of the nature and scale of the effects on animals; or which are more significant in terms of the extent of Parliamentary, Departmental, stakeholder or public interest; or which are more significant in terms of the types of evidential issues they present. The Committee is not expected to consider individual operational decisions (e.g., planning adjudication decisions) nor to consider matters of fiscal policy.
- In order to maximise its value-added, the Committee may take into account the extent to which some policy decisions are already subject to other scrutiny arrangements involving other bodies, in respect to their impacts on animal welfare. For example, recognising existing advisory bodies and scrutiny mechanisms such as the Animals in Science Committee, to avoid duplication of functions.

- The Committee may prioritise current or recent policy decisions. Given the Committee's key purpose of furnishing Ministerial accountability to Parliament, the Committee may wish to prioritise policy decisions made by, or substantially affecting, the current government in place. This does not preclude the Committee from examining policy decisions made by a previous government where this has a significant bearing on ongoing policy decision making, including decisions relating to subsequent policy delivery.
- The Committee can decide what form its reports may take. The Committee may choose to issue more detailed reports in relation to policy decisions which have been made, or smaller ad hoc reports at short notice in relation to a policy currently under formulation.
- In addition to producing statutory reports, the Committee may wish to provide government Departments with non-statutory advice and support. This may comprise both general advice to policy decision makers, and bespoke advice.
- When developing reports, the Committee may also seek input, evidence, and views from external specialists and expert bodies.
- The Committee's reports will provide its views on whether, or to what extent, the Government is having, or has had, all due regard to the ways in which the policy might have an adverse effect on the welfare of sentient animals. The primary focus of the Committee's views is likely to relate to providing an assessment of how well the Department in question obtained and assessed relevant evidence on the animal welfare effects of the policy in question. In this context, a wide interpretation of evidence may apply, and could include externally commissioned research, as well as drawing from other sources of expert advice, amongst other information.
- The Committee's reports may also contain constructive recommendations on the steps the Committee considers the Government should take for the purpose of ensuring that, in relation to any further formulation or implementation of the policy, the Government has paid all due regard to the ways in which that policy might have an adverse effect on the welfare of animals as sentient beings.

Engagement with government Departments

The co-operation of government Departments is necessary for the Committee to be able to operate effectively. The Committee wishes to engage constructively with policy decision makers and may offer to provide guidance for policy teams regarding animal welfare impacts and how to mitigate any adverse effects. Departments are not subject to a legal duty to consult formally with the Committee.

The Committee Secretariat based in Defra will support the Committee in engaging with other government Departments and vice versa.

Government Departments are expected to:

- Engage with the Committee to enable the Committee to form an overview of policy decisions, including prospective future policy decisions relating to both policy formulation and policy implementation.
- Support the Committee as it prepares its reports, including providing the Committee with information when requested and assisting the Committee with its enquiries.
- Where relevant, consider engaging with the Committee about securing ad hoc non-statutory views and advice about the effects of policy decisions on animal welfare. Departments may benefit from doing this at the earlier stages of the decision-making process.

If a Department fails to engage with the Committee or assist it with reasonable requests for information as it prepares a report, the Committee may record this non-cooperation in its report.

Departments will be provided with guidance setting out their responsibilities under the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022, and advice on the process for preparing Ministerial responses to Committee reports.

Engagement with Parliament

The key purpose of the Committee is to furnish accountability to Parliament for Ministerial decision-making.

In light of this, the Committee may engage with Parliament (the EFRA Select Committee), and all other interested groups within Parliament, in relation to a range of matters such as which policy decisions may be subject to a report from the Committee, and the timing and nature of such reports.

Engagement with stakeholders and the public

The Committee may engage with a range of external bodies and individuals, as the Committee sees fit. This could include other animal welfare experts, for example in specialist fields, as well as representatives of welfare and industry groups.

This engagement may also extend to other members of the public who are not necessarily representatives of stakeholder groups but whom the Committee considers may provide valuable input.

Work plan

The Committee is responsible for determining which policies it wishes to consider, and for deciding what form of report it wishes to publish in each case. The Committee will provide advance notice where possible of which policy decisions it intends to consider in future. This will help facilitate effective engagement with key parties.

The Committee may adjust this forward look during the year, for example if the Committee chooses to produce a report at short notice in response to an emerging issue.

Reports and recommendations

The Committee has the statutory power to issue reports giving its opinion on whether, or to what extent, the Government is having, or has had, all due regard to the ways in which a policy might have an adverse effect on the welfare of animals as sentient beings. When publishing its reports, the Committee may include (non-binding) recommendations to the Government on how it could ensure all due regard is had in the future development or implementation of the policy.

The structure of the Committee reports may change depending on the contents. However, each report is likely to contain:

- A high-level outline of the context of the policy decision in question.
- A description and timeline of the policy decision.
- An account of the actions taken by the Department to assess the adverse effects of the policy decision on the welfare of animals as sentient beings.
- The Committee's views on the Department's actions.
- If applicable, recommendations to the Department as to the steps that could be taken to ensure that any potential adverse effects on animal welfare arising from future development or implementation of the policy are given all due regard.

Committee Members will endeavour to reach a consensus on the contents of a report. Where full agreement cannot be reached on the contents of a report, Members will seek a mutually acceptable position. Where applicable, reports will indicate any differences of view. The report's final contents and recommendations will be a matter for the Chair to determine.

Publication of reports

Reports will be issued by the Committee in its own name and are not subject to review or approval by any other bodies.

The secretariat will be responsible for publishing reports on the Committee's GOV.UK website. The Chair will, with assistance from the secretariat:

- Share the report with Parliament via the EFRA Select Committee.
- Inform the relevant Department of the report publication.
- Remind the Department of their statutory duty to submit a written response to Parliament, within the timeframe set out in section 3 of the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022.

Responses to Committee reports

When the Committee issues a report, the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022 requires the relevant Minister to prepare a written response. This response must be laid before Parliament within three months of the report publication (excluding periods of four or more days in which Parliament is not sitting).

Having studied the report and the Ministerial response, Members of Parliament and Peers may, if they wish, pursue further enquiries on the subject for example through Parliamentary Questions and Westminster Hall debates.

Communications

The secretariat is responsible for maintaining the online presence of the Committee. The Committee has discretion to decide what material to place on its public GOV.UK website and to issue press notices in relation to its work plan and reports. Communications activity may include the use of social media, with support from Defra's communications division.

Communications between the Committee and Departments will usually involve the Chair, with support from the secretariat, except on occasions whereby the Chair delegates to an individual Member in his or her place.

Approaches from the media regarding the Committee's work should be directed to the secretariat in the first instance. Approaches may then be referred to the Chair, who will act as spokesperson if necessary.

Committee Members may be approached, including in a personal capacity or as a representative of the Committee, to address conferences and other events. It should be

made clear to the event organisers and the audience whether the Member will be speaking on behalf of the Committee or in a personal capacity.

If representing the Committee at an event, it is important to present the agreed view of the Committee. If a Member is speaking personally but is identified as a Member of the Committee, then it should be made clear that the individual's view is not necessarily that of the Committee.

Transparency

The Committee is expected to promote a culture of openness. It has prepared a publication scheme in accordance with section 19 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and complies with all other requirements of the Act. Reports will be published on the Committee's GOV.UK website.

Committee publications are subject to Crown copyright administered by His Majesty's Stationery Office. Publications may be reproduced free of charge if information is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading context. Material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright with the title and source of the publication specified.

The secretariat will aim to resolve complaints about any aspects of the Committee's work. Where this is not possible, the complainant should address the issue to the Chair (who may refer the matter to the full Committee). If the complainant is not satisfied with the Chair's response, the matter may be referred to Defra's Complaints Adjudicator who will make an impartial assessment of the case. If the matter remains unresolved, the complainant may refer it to the Permanent Secretary at Defra.

Committee Operations

Appointments to the Committee

Members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs through open competition. Although appointments to the Committee are not regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments, the Secretary of State will generally adhere to its guidelines on best practice¹. The Secretary of State seeks to appoint experts with appropriate experience relating to policy decision-making and/or the welfare of animals. The Secretary of State may, at his or her discretion, invite Committee Members to participate in recruitment panels in a personal capacity, but the Committee itself will have no role in the recruitment process.

The Committee is guided by expertise, including on scientific matters. The Secretary of State may seek to promote a diversity of expertise, such that the Committee is able to offer high-quality advice on policy decision-making and its animal welfare implications across the remit of central government.

The Secretary of State appoints Committee Members, working on a part-time basis. They are expected to work on Committee business for 15-20 days per year. Appointments will usually be made for a term of four years, which may be renewed once (eight years in total). However, in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments, extensions may occasionally be sought if the Secretary of State decides an individual's skills and expertise is needed beyond such a tenure.

The Secretary of State reserves the right to terminate appointments if he or she considers that a Member's performance, attendance or conduct has been unsatisfactory. Additionally, the Secretary of State may terminate an appointment if a Member discloses, or is found to have, a conflict of interest which threatens the integrity of the Committee's work or could otherwise bring the Committee into disrepute.

The Committee may find it necessary, at times, to seek views from external specialists to support specific projects if the expertise required is not available from within the Committee. These specialists would provide advice as independent experts and not as Members of the Committee. Although they will not formally be Members of the Committee, they must adhere to the Code of Practice for members of the Animal Sentience Committee.

¹ [Microsoft Word - 20161216 Governance Code FINAL in CO template.docx \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Role of the Chair

The Chair is responsible for providing the Committee with effective leadership. The Chair may act as the Committee's spokesperson, although this function may also be delegated by the Chair to other Members. The Chair of the Committee works on a part-time basis, dedicating at least 20 days per year to Committee business.

In addition, the Chair is responsible for:

- The operation and output of the Committee, including approving final reports and ensuring they are robust and of high quality, and managing the Committee's workload.
- Acting as the public spokesperson for the Committee, and (with support from the secretariat) managing the Committee's public, media and web presence and profile.
- Ensuring that the Committee meets at appropriate intervals, and that the minutes of meetings accurately record the decisions taken.
- Ensuring that every Committee Member has the opportunity to be heard and that no view is ignored or overlooked, using, where appropriate, a structured process which ensures that all views are captured and explored.
- Ensuring that any significant diversity of opinion among the Members is fully explored and discussed and, if it cannot be reconciled, is accurately reflected in the advice.
- With support from the secretariat, liaise with government Departments developing policies that are, or will be, under consideration by the Committee.
- Engaging informally with government Departments after the Committee has issued recommendations.
- With support from the secretariat, engage with Parliament (such as EFRA).
- Engaging with other key stakeholders as required.
- Ensuring that new Members are briefed on appointment and their training needs considered.
- Responding appropriately to complaints, if necessary, with reference to Defra as the host Department for the secretariat.
- Overseeing liaison between the Committee and other expert committees.

- Managing other engagement with other external individuals or bodies who may provide valuable support to the Committee.

It is envisaged that these responsibilities would be included in any advertisements produced by the Secretary of State when recruiting the Chair. The Secretary of State has discretion to vary the description of the role, and any changes should be discussed with the outgoing Chair, where appropriate.

Should the Chair encounter any difficulties fulfilling the responsibilities and commitments associated with the post following appointment, he or she should inform the secretariat or Committee's Senior Responsible Owner promptly (see the 'Governance' section below).

Role of Members

Members of the Committee have collective responsibility for the operation of the Committee. Their responsibilities may include:

- Engaging fully in collective consideration of the issues, taking account of the full range of relevant evidence.
- Ensuring that the Committee works within its statutory remit.
- Ensuring that the Committee's policy on transparency is adhered to.

Members are expected to contribute approximately 15-20 days a year to Animal Sentience Committee work. This includes attending meetings, visits, drafting or preparation work.

These responsibilities and expectations will be included in any advertisements produced by the Secretary of State when recruiting Members. However, the Secretary of State has discretion to vary the description of the role, and any changes may be discussed with the Chair, where appropriate.

Should a Member encounter any difficulties fulfilling the responsibilities and commitments associated with the post following appointment, he or she should inform the secretariat or Chair promptly.

Any Member wishing to resign mid-term should do so by writing to the Secretary of State, copying the Chair. In certain circumstances (e.g., conflict of interests, poor attendance, improper conduct) Members may have their term of appointment terminated by the Secretary of State.

Members' names, a brief pen picture, a summary of their expertise and a register of Members' interests are available on the Committee's public GOV.UK website. The secretariat will adhere to regulations under the Data Protection Act 2018, and any superseding regulations, at all times when handling personal data.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

Committee Members are expected to uphold the standards of conduct set out in the Seven Principles of Public Life² and are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies³. At all times, Committee Members are expected to observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity, and objectivity in relation to the advice they provide.

Failure to adhere to the Code of Conduct could result in suspension or termination of an individual's membership of the Committee. Any suspected breaches of the Code should be reported to the Chair and the Committee's Senior Reporting Officer (SRO). The Chair and the SRO should investigate any such complaint and report their findings to the Secretary of State. It would be for the Secretary of State to determine what, if any, action should be taken.

Register of Members' interests

Annex A provides more details about how Members' interests, and potential conflicts of interest, are managed.

Members' fees and expenses

Annex A provides more details about how Member fees and expenses are covered. Total expenditure on the Committee is not expected to exceed £500,000 per annum. Committee Members must provide the secretariat with information about any expenses related to events or visits ahead of agreeing participation.

Secretariat

Responsibilities of the secretariat include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining proper records.
- Creating and maintaining a register of interests.

² [The Seven Principles of Public Life - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

³ [Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies June 2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

- Correspondence, including managing the mailbox and processing of Freedom of Information Act requests.
- Supporting the Committee in liaising with government Departments (including other Defra officials), with Parliament (EFRA) and with key stakeholders as required.
- Supporting Committee report publication and work planning.
- Ensuring good governance, including secretariat support for Committee meetings.
- Monitoring the Committee's expenditure.
- Processing Members' claims and expenses.
- Recruitment and (re)appointment of Members.

Governance

The Committee may have the following structure and processes:

Work plan review meeting: The Committee may meet once a year to draft a work plan for the next calendar year.

Review meeting: An annual review meeting between the Chair, Committee Members, the Committee SRO and the secretariat to report on progress regarding the Committee's work plan and other activities relating to the Committee.

Working groups: Working groups may be assembled to draft reports, but the final report will be subject to approval by the Chair either in writing or at a Committee meeting. The working groups may include some or all of the Committee Members, depending on the work undertaken.

Chair Committee Meetings: The Chair may have quarterly meetings with other expert committee Chairs, for the purposes of sharing information and co-ordinating work programmes.

Ad hoc stakeholder meetings: The Committee may choose to meet with stakeholders as necessary to gather information about potential areas of interest to the Committee.

Ad hoc policy meetings: Where appropriate, the Committee may hold meetings with policy teams to help them understand the animal welfare impacts of their policy decisions.

The Committee's SRO will be a senior official nominated by Defra. The SRO will be responsible for high-level oversight of expenditure by the Committee (including Members' expenses) and ensuring good governance, such as managing conflicts of interest and complaints.

Links with other committees

Three expert evidence committees provide advice about animal welfare to government policy officials, in particular the Animal Welfare Committee (AWC), the Welfare at Killing Committee (WAK) and the Zoos Expert Committee (ZEC).

All committees are encouraged to draw on each other's expertise when fulfilling their responsibilities (see the 'Joint Working' section for more details). The roles and remits of these expert evidence committees are summarised below.

Animal Welfare Committee (AWC)

The Animal Welfare Committee is a non-statutory expert evidence committee which provides advice to government on animal welfare issues.

AWC issues advice, in the form of published opinions and reports, on specific issues as commissioned by Defra, the Welsh Government and the Scottish Government.

AWC's terms of reference can be found [here](#).

Welfare at Killing Committee (WAK)

The Welfare at Killing Committee is a statutory expert evidence committee which provides substantive scientific advice to the Government on the protection of animals at time of killing.

WAK advises Defra the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive.

Zoos Expert Committee (ZEC)

The Zoos Expert Committee is a non-statutory expert evidence committee which provides advice to the Government on issues relating to zoos.

ZEC issues advice as requested by Defra, the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive.

ZECs terms of reference can be found [here](#).

Membership

Membership of the Committee and of these three expert evidence committees are discrete appointments. Membership of the Committee or of an expert evidence committee does not automatically confer or preclude membership of another.

Where an individual is appointed to more than one body, they may only act in their capacity as a member of one body at any given time. Additionally, any member who has

advised a government Department on a policy issue, via their membership of an expert evidence committee, may not participate in the Committee's scrutiny of a related policy decision.

Suitably qualified members of the expert evidence committees may be invited to contribute to the working of the Committee on the same basis as any other external expert, to contribute to the preparation of Committee reports and/or advice.

The Committee may also seek the contributions of other bodies and individuals who advise Ministers on matters of policy, such as members of the Animal Health and Welfare Board of England.

Cross-referral of issues

Where government Departments approach the Committee for non-statutory advice on how the welfare of animals might be affected by a possible policy decision, the Chair of the Committee may engage with one or more expert evidence committees to determine whether they might be better placed to provide this advice.

An expert evidence committee may wish to accept such a referral where expert advice is being sought on animal welfare matters, and where their governing administrations (which may include Defra, the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government and in some cases the Northern Ireland Executive) agree that the expert evidence committee should consider the issue that has been raised.

In deciding which policy decisions to select for the purpose of producing a report, the Committee may wish to take account of the work programmes of the expert evidence committees. The governing administrations of the expert evidence committees may also wish to take account of the Committee's recommendations when deciding what issues the expert evidence committees should consider.

Joint working

The roles of the Committee and of the expert evidence committees are closest in relation to situations when government Departments wish to seek non-statutory views and advice from the Committee about the effects on animal welfare of policy decisions, including prospective future decisions and policy currently being formulated and implemented.

The Committee may engage closely with the expert evidence committees especially in these circumstances, and the Committee and the relevant expert evidence committee may agree in some cases that the expert evidence committee may be better placed to furnish government Departments with such non-statutory expert advice and support, subject to the agreement of the relevant governing administrations.

Alternatively, in relation to the provision of non-statutory advice, the Committee and the relevant expert evidence committee could jointly provide such expert advice, subject to the agreement of the relevant governing administrations of the expert evidence committee.

Neither the Committee nor the expert evidence committees are under a duty to seek approval from each other to issue a given report or piece of advice.

Members of the Committee may be invited to attend meetings of the expert evidence committees, and vice versa, as observers, to help facilitate mutual awareness and coordination regarding areas of priority interest.

Glossary of key terms

- A **policy** is a decision made or implemented by a Minister which affects the activities of government, business, charities, or members of the public. This includes, but is not limited to, the processes of making regulations, legislating, allocating resources or promoting a course of action.
- **Recommendations** may be issued to government Departments by the Committee in its reports. The Committee is authorised by the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022 to make recommendations for the purpose of ensuring that, in any further formulation or implementation of a policy, the Government has all due regard to the ways in which the policy might have an adverse effect on the welfare of animals as sentient beings. Recommendations are non-binding.
- **Effects on the welfare of animals** are the direct or indirect implications of a policy on the welfare of live animals deemed sentient for the purposes of the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022.
- **Sentience:** The Committee may only scrutinise government policy making with respect to animals defined as sentient under the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022, as may be amended by the Secretary of State by regulations.
- **Individual operational decisions** are decisions for which no bespoke Ministerial direction is sought or required⁴. For example, an official-level decision to grant an individual a licence under a licensing scheme would constitute an operational decision and therefore not fall within the scope of the Committee. By comparison, the establishment and design of the licensing scheme would constitute a policy, and therefore be in the Committee's scope.
- **Adverse effects** are where a policy may have a negative effect on the welfare of animals as sentient beings, such as animals being deprived of one or more of the five "welfare needs" as set out in the Animal Welfare Act 2006. The term 'adverse effect' also includes the absence of providing for the positive needs of animals as sentient beings.

⁴ Additionally, operational decisions include routine or official-level decisions which are subsequently referred to ministers as part of an appeals process.

Annex A

Register of members' interests

The Chair and Committee members will serve as individuals and not as representatives of any organisation or sector.

To avoid public concern that commercial and/or non-commercial interests might affect the advice of the Committee, information on significant and relevant interests of the membership should be on public record. A declaration of interest form should be completed by new members and updated by existing members each year and cleared by the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO). A register of members' interests is maintained by the secretariat and available on the Committee's public GOV.UK website.

To avoid any danger of members being influenced, or appearing to be influenced, by their private interests in the exercise of their public duties, all members should declare any personal or business interest which might, or might be perceived to, influence their judgement. This should include, as a minimum, personal direct and indirect financial interests. The register of interests is maintained by the secretariat and is open to the public on request.

The following is a guide to the kinds of interests that should be declared. Where members are uncertain as to the relevance of a particular interest, they should seek guidance from the secretariat. If there are interests not specified in this guidance but which members believe could be regarded as influencing their advice, they should declare them.

A commercial interest involves payment directly to the member. For our purposes, this relates to interests connected with animal welfare. The main examples are:

- a) **Employment:** In an area directly relevant to the farming industry, animal protection societies, research bodies or veterinary profession.
- b) **Consultancies:** Any consultancy, directorship, position in or work for the farming industry, animal protection societies, research bodies or the veterinary profession which attracts regular or occasional payments in cash or kind.
- c) **Fee Paid Work:** Any work commissioned by the farming industry, animal protection societies, research bodies or the veterinary profession for which the member is paid in cash or kind.
- d) **Shareholdings:** Any holding or other beneficial interest in shares in any of the above. This does not include shareholdings through unit trusts or similar arrangements where the member has no influence on financial management.

There are other positions of influence for which members do not receive remuneration (other than expenses) but which, nonetheless, should be declared:

- e) **Fellowships:** The holding of a fellowship, e.g., endowed by the industry.

- f) **Support:** Any payment, other support or sponsorship by the farming industry, animal protection societies, research bodies or the veterinary profession which does not convey any pecuniary or material benefit to a member personally, but which does benefit their position, for example:
 - i. A grant from a company for the running of a unit for which a member is responsible.
 - ii. A grant or fellowship or other payment to sponsor a post or a member of staff in the unit for which a member is responsible. This does not include financial assistance for students.
 - iii. The commissioning of research or other work by staff employed in a unit for which a member is responsible.

- g) **Trusteeships:** Any investment in the farming industry, animal protection societies, research bodies or the veterinary profession held by a charity for which a member is a trustee. Where a member is a trustee of a charity with investments in the industry, the secretariat can agree with the member a general declaration to cover this interest rather than draw up a detailed portfolio.

- h) **Memberships:** For example, of any organisation relevant to the work of the Committee particularly if a position of influence is held.

Neither the members nor the secretariat are under an obligation to search out links between one company and another. For example, there might be instances where a company with which a member is connected has an interest in another relevant company of which the member is not aware and could not reasonably be expected to be aware.

Some members may be bound by the terms of a contract which require them to keep the fact of the contractual arrangement confidential. Any member so affected should seek to agree an entry for the public register with the other party. If such agreement does not prove possible, the member should seek a waiver permitting them to disclose their interest, in confidence, to the secretariat who will maintain a confidential register of such disclosures which will not form part of the public record.

Committee members are required to declare any direct commercial interest in matters under discussion at each meeting, whether they then decide, in consultation with the Chair of the meeting, to excuse themselves from discussions or not.

Members and applicants must declare any political interests, such as holding an office in a political party or membership of a direct-action group.

In members' public roles, they should be, and be seen to be, politically impartial. Members should not occupy a paid party-political post or hold a particularly sensitive or high-profile role in a political party. Members should abstain from all controversial political activity and comply with the principles set out in Cabinet Office rules on attendance at party conferences and on conduct during the period prior to elections and referendums, whether local or national.

On matters directly related to the work of the Committee, members should not make political statements or engage in any other political activity. Additionally, members should inform the Chair and/or Defra before undertaking any significant political activity.

Subject to the above, members may engage in political activity but should, at all times, remain conscious of their responsibilities as a Committee member and exercise proper discretion.

Committee members who are MPs, members of the House of Lords, members of a devolved legislature, directly elected mayors, local councillors or police and crime commissioners, are exempt from these requirements. There is no bar on such representatives taking a political party whip relating to their political role. Members must, however, exercise proper discretion on matters directly related to the work of the Committee and recognise that certain political activities may be incompatible with the role of the Committee. Members should not allow themselves to become embroiled in matters of political controversy.

In their capacity as members of the Committee, members should be even-handed in all dealings with political parties.

The Secretary of State reserves the right to decline to consider an application from an individual whose previous or ongoing conduct suggests that individual's membership could damage the reputation or credibility of the Committee, for example membership of an extremist organisation.

Members' fees and expenses

Members will be entitled to the same allowances as AWC members. This includes an attendance fee of £300 per day for meetings, and the Chair to £500 per day.

Members can claim the daily fee (or half day) for time spent on Committee business not associated with a particular meeting, e.g., for research or drafting work, with the agreement of the secretariat and within available budgets.

Members can claim an hourly fee of £37.50, and the Chair an hourly fee of £62.50, for time spent on Committee business not associated with a particular meeting, e.g., for research or drafting work, with the agreement of the secretariat and within available resources.

Members can be reimbursed for all reasonable expenditure incurred in connection with attendance at Committee meetings, visits, and representative events. This includes reimbursement of standard-class rail travel or mileage for use of private cars at 45p per mile. First-class rail travel cannot be reimbursed.

In line with Defra's target of reducing domestic flights under Greening Government Commitments, air travel between locations on mainland England, Wales and Scotland is not permitted.

Those needing to stay away from home for Committee business will have reasonable claims reimbursed. Members should be guided by the current Defra rates of allowance for hotel accommodation, which set a ceiling for actual bed and breakfast costs of £160 per night in London, and £100 per night outside London. Members should keep overnight expenses (lunch, dinner, newspapers, telephone calls, etc.) within the current Defra 24-hour rate of £27. No costs relating to alcohol will be reimbursed.

Completed claim forms should be submitted, with an original or electronic signature, to the secretariat within a reasonable timeframe of the work being undertaken and, in any event, before the end of the financial year. Emailed/scanned copies of the claim forms and receipts can be accepted. All forms will be accompanied by receipts for all expenses being claimed. Claims should be submitted on the following forms:

For all meetings held in London:

- **For all expenses** (e.g., fees for meetings and drafting time and any travel expenses) on form NTWK58.

For all meetings held outside of London:

- **For non-taxable expenses** (e.g., travel & subsistence) on form SOP21.
- **For taxable expenses** (e.g., fees for meetings and drafting time) on form NTWK58.

Where members attend meetings, seminars, or conferences as a representative of the Committee, the usual fee will be payable, provided representation has been agreed with the secretariat. If the organisers of an event, and not the Committee, are considered to be the prime beneficiary from a member's attendance, no fee is payable, the expectation being that a fee can be claimed from the organiser.