

Agenda Item 12 Board of Commissioners Meeting Memo No 18/25

31 July 2025

APPOINTMENT OF FORESTRY ENGLAND NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Classification Official

- 1. Purpose**
This paper is to ask Commissioners to approve the appointment of a new non-executive director with a financial and audit expertise to the Forestry England Board. It is intended that the appointed non-executive would also be a member of the FC Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC)
- 2. Recommendations**
The Commissioners are asked to endorse the selection panel's recommendation to appoint Chris Wood as non-executive director to the Forestry England Board.
- 3. Background/Introduction**
The recruitment process was run through the FC preferred recruitment agency, Hays.

In total there were 77 applicants for the position of which Hays considered c.20 to be potentially suitable candidates. A shortlisting panel of Mike Seddon, Amanda Grist, and Chris Simpson completed a paper sift, identifying four candidates who were forward to the interview panel, consisting of William Worsley, Jennie Price, and Hilary Alison.

- 4. Details**
The four candidates were seen in person in the Bristol office on 10 July.

The named candidate, Chris Wood was unanimously the preferred candidate of the panel, c.v. at Annex 1. The other three candidates were deemed non-appointable for a variety of reasons.

The panel requested two areas of further due diligence on the preferred candidate prior to confirming their recommendation. Both these areas

Appointment of Forestry England Non-Executive Director

have been addressed to the satisfaction of the panel;

- a. Confirmation that the candidate had sufficient time to fulfil the commitment required of the post. This has subsequently been raised with the candidate who has reassured that he will be able to manage the time commitment, advertised as around 20 days, with recognition more could be required. He has also updated on three current commitments in his c.v. that are due to end in the next twelve months.
- b. Further due diligence related to woodland management activities of the preferred candidate's employer which triggered local community concerns. It has subsequently been confirmed through conversations with Forest Services colleagues that the reputational issues about woodland management are of a nature that should not prevent appointment.

5. Next steps

On receiving Forestry Commissioner approval, the formal offer of the appointment will be made to Chris Wood.

The start date for the appointment will be 1 October for three years. This will mean that the Chris Wood is able to attend the October combined visit and meeting of the Forestry England Board in October, which will also be Chris Simpson's final meeting as Non-executive Director.

Attachment

Annex 1 Chris Wood c.v.

William Worsley, Forestry Commission Chair
July 2025