

**SALES OF ASSETS  
NOTIFICATION AND SPONSORSHIP**

Purpose

1. This paper explains the Notification and Sponsorship arrangements which are operated by the Forestry Commission in connection with its sales of land and buildings.

Background

2. In June 1989, the Secretary of State for Scotland announced that the Forestry Commission has been asked to dispose of some 100,000 hectares of forestry land and properties by the end of the century. In common with other Government departments, the Commission also sells other land and buildings which are surplus to its requirements.

3. The Commission is a Government department and its sales must be carried out in a publicly acceptable manner. In the normal course of events, this means sale on the open market to the highest bidder.

4. It is recognised, however, that many public and private bodies have a genuine interest in acquiring particular areas of land having a conservation, recreation or amenity interest. The Notification and Sponsorship arrangements have been introduced by the Forestry Commission to take proper account of these interests and apply to:

- a. all areas of woodland where the Commission is in a position to sell to a sponsored organisation;
- b. other properties which have a known conservation, recreation or amenity interest.

Notification

5. Properties falling within the above categories are notified in the Estates Gazette under "Government Surplus Land". Bodies who are interested in acquiring should, without delay:-

at the addresses given on the attached sheet;

c. advise the Regional Director of firm interest in acquiring the property concerned;

d. ensure that the necessary finance to purchase the property is available.

6. The Forestry Commission will acknowledge the expression of interest and will ask the body concerned to apply for sponsorship, as set out in paragraphs 7 to 10.

### Sponsorship

7. Sponsorship should be obtained from Regional Offices of the following agencies:

#### In England

Conservation interest : English Nature

Scenic, recreation or amenity interest :

#### In Wales

The Countryside Council for Wales

#### In Scotland

Conservation interest : Scottish Natural Heritage

Scenic, recreation or amenity interest:

8. The Forestry Commission requires an unequivocal written statement by the sponsoring agency that a sale of a specific named property to the body concerned, to the exclusion of the public at large, would be particularly in the public interest. The underlined form of words should be used in the statement of sponsorship.

9. Advice that sponsorship has been given in the above terms may be sent direct to the Forestry Commission (at the addresses given on the attached sheet) by the appropriate department. Alternatively, the body concerned may itself produce the evidence of sponsorship to the Forestry Commission.

#### Decision on Sale

10. When the Forestry Commission has made a firm decision to sell (which may be up to 2 years from the notification in the Estates Gazette), it will advise the body whether or not the Commission is able to proceed with a sponsored sale. If so the body will be asked to confirm within 8 weeks its firm intention to acquire under the sponsorship arrangements.

11. Once selling agents have been instructed or negotiations opened with say a sitting tenant, the Commission will be unable to make a sponsored sale. Interested bodies will be able to make an offer when the sale is on the open market but this will be considered along with competitive offers received from the public at large.

#### Sponsored Sale

12. Negotiations on the terms of a sponsored sale (except for the price) will be conducted by the Forestry Commission direct with the body concerned. The open market value will be assessed by the District Valuer, who will be instructed by the Commission. The Forestry Commission is not able to give any concession on price.

#### Continued Public Access

13. The Forestry Commission has introduced arrangements for continued public access to woodland which it is selling. Prior to sale, the Commission will offer to enter into an agreement for continued access with the local authority. This agreement will bind subsequent owners.

These arrangements will also apply to sponsored sales unless the local authority considers that an agreement is not necessary having regard to the aims and objectives of the body concerned.

5. It may be that a sponsored body has specific requirements in relation to public access because of its special interest in the woodland concerned. In these circumstances, the body will be given the opportunity of making these requirements known so that they can be taken into account by the Commission and the local authority when the agreement is being finalised.

Director, Estate Management  
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