

Terms of Reference

Cross Parliament Expert Working Group 2022/23

December 2022

For the first time ever this newly constituted Expert Working Group will bring together Parliamentarians from each of Great Britain's national parliaments in an effort of cross border collaboration to bring a coherent and consistent approach to forestry policy and the needs of the Wood Panel Industry across mainland GB.

The Expert Working Group will be independently chaired by the former UK Government Energy Minister (2001 - 2003) Rt Hon Brian Wilson CBE. Alastair Kerr, Director General of the WPIF, will be the working group's secretary supported by Invicta Public Affairs.

The other members of the Expert Working Group will be:-

Parliamentary

- Selaine Saxby MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on the Wood Panel Industry.
- Fergus Ewing MSP, Chair of the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on the Wood Panel Industry and former Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy (2016- 2021)
- Ken Skates MS, former Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales (2016-2021)

Industry

- Alastair Kerr, Director General of the Wood Panel Industries Federation (WPIF)
- Steve Roebuck, Director EHS at West Fraser (Formally Norbord)
- John Patterson, Public Affairs Manager, EGGER
- Chris Emery, Timber Procurement Executive, Kronospan

The expert panel will produce a joint report that will be issued to Ministers in the UK Government, Scottish Government and Welsh Government. The report will be presented to the WPIF management board with interim findings before its publication.

Remit

The working group will assess:

1. The challenges facing the wood panel sector due to lack of security of domestic wood supply.
2. How the industry can meet 100% of UK demand for wood panel products.
3. The effectiveness of current Forestry Policy in England, Scotland and Wales in delivering productive forestry as required by industry.
4. Whether the UK Government, Scottish Government and Welsh Government's have met their (a) forestry cover and (b) annual tree planting targets, and whether more ambitious targets need to be set.
5. The economic and employment benefits of the wood panel industry both locally and nationally.

Timeline

The group will meet on at least 3 occasions to have focussed discussions on:

1. UK Government Forestry and industry Policy;
2. Scottish Government Forestry and industry Policy; and
3. Welsh Government Forestry and industry Policy.

These meetings will take place over the months of December 2022 and January 2023.

The first of these meetings will take place in Holyrood with members of the Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Wood Panel Industry on Thursday 15th December.

The second meeting will take place with elected representatives in Westminster on Thursday 12th January.

The third meeting will take place with elected representatives in the Welsh Senedd on either week beginning 16 or 30 January.

The Expert Working Group will also hold bilateral meetings with:

- Forestry England
- Forestry and Land Scotland
- Natural Resources Wales
- Confederation of Forest Industries

The Expert Working Group will meet again to finalise their policy recommendations that will be presented to Ministers in the UK Government, Scottish Government and Welsh Government.

Outcomes

The group will produce a policy paper summarising the impact of the issues above and recommending what course of action can be delivered through policy change. This report will be disseminated to a wide audience in Parliament, Government and Industry. The report will also be launched at a press conference and then issued to relevant UK media. The report will also be made available on the APPG, CPG and WPIF websites.

Specifically as there has not been a cross Parliament report by APPGs and CPGs in the past the report publication has the potential to attract press attention to its key policy recommendations. Given the involvement of former Government Ministers in both the UK Government and devolved administrations there is a weight and credibility carried by the report conclusions.

Further information

For more information on the expert group please contact Rory Chapman at Rory.chapman@invictapa.co.uk