

The current Forestry and Climate Change consultation, launched on 4th November, gives you the opportunity to contribute as a member of the public your own ideas, make suggestions and respond to questions raised.

When there is political activity that has potential implications for the Forestry Commission Scotland it is important that everyone within the Commission understands their responsibilities as civil servants.

The Civil Service needs to serve successive Governments of different political parties. Therefore, Ministers and the public must have confidence that the personal views of any civil servant will not interfere with the performance of their duties.

The Conduct and Security policy (chapter 4 of the staff handbook) identifies the duties and responsibilities set out in the Civil Service Code. The aim is to allow the greatest possible freedom to publicly express political views without calling into question the impartiality of the Forestry Commission Scotland and its ability to serve the Government of the day whatever its political persuasion.

As a civil servant you need to be politically impartial however, as an individual, you will have your own views and the policy is concerned with public expression rather than privately held beliefs and opinions.

Whilst on duty or in your official capacity as a Forestry Commission Scotland employee you must not participate in any form of political activity.

It is important to remember that corporate clothing, forestry e-mail addresses, headed notepaper, complement slips, business cards etc all identify you as a Forestry Commission employee therefore, when they are being used, require you to remain neutral towards any political agenda.

Anyone who is considering engaging in any type of political activity should be aware of their responsibilities whilst on duty and familiarise themselves with the Conduct and Security policy to note what restrictions, if any, apply to them.

A link to the policy has been added to the Climate Change e-connect site and if there are any questions, guidance can be obtained from line managers, HR Team in Scotland or HR Policy before any activity is undertaken.