

ZOOS EXPERT COMMITTEE

Government access to independent, authoritative, impartial and timely science and technical advice, and the experts who provide it, is vital to support our policies, priorities and responsibilities. Details are available on Defra's [website](#).

The lead Defra Minister for the Zoos Expert Committee will, in consultation with the devolved administrations (DAs):

- set terms of reference for the Committee;
- agree strategic work plans, receive reports and advice;
- receive periodic reviews of the Committee's functions and value for money;
- consult other Departments as appropriate about the Committee and its work.

The Expert Committee has the ultimate right to escalate matters to UK Ministers¹.

Expert Committee Members are independent appointments made through open competition, in line with OCPA guidelines on best practice for making public appointments. Members are expected to act in accord with the [principles of public life](#).

Terms of reference

The Zoos Expert Committee advises Defra/the DAs on zoo matters. Its remit is to encourage the role of zoos in conservation, education and scientific research; to keep the operation and implementation of the zoo licensing system in the UK under review; and to advise or make recommendations to Defra/the DAs of any legislative or administrative changes that may be necessary.

Its key role is to provide advice and recommendations on measures to encourage the role of zoos in conservation, education and scientific research; and on the operation and implementation of the zoo licensing system in the UK.

The Committee can also, with the agreement of Defra:

- investigate any specific aspects of zoo policy and practice falling within its remit;
- consider any animal-related issue where there is a specific zoo interest and offer advice on animal welfare where no other more suitable body exists through which these views could be more appropriately put;
- seek and obtain advice or assistance from other persons or organisations with knowledge or experience appearing to the Committee to be relevant to its work.

¹ The Ministers referred to are Lord Henley; Ministers of the Scottish Government; Welsh Ministers; and the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development Northern Ireland.

As an Expert Committee of Defra, the Committee will:

- provide advice to, and work collaboratively with, officials and key office holders such as the Chief Scientific Adviser, the Chief Veterinary Officer or the Chief Economist, other delivery partners (eg Network bodies, other departments, other public bodies, EU and international technical and expert groups).
- contribute to developing the evidence base, analysing and interpreting evidence and providing judgements on quality and relevance.
- working strategically, help to: identify future issues of concern; provide advice and interpretation on state and impacts; connect to related agendas both in OGDs and elsewhere in business and civic society.
- input to policy development and evaluation by Defra/the DAs in areas covered by its remit, by helping where relevant to: assess the impacts of different policy options; undertake risk assessment; assess new regulations and deregulation; develop voluntary initiatives.
- assist with technical support for Defra eg EU technical groups, Defra/DA research projects, advising on scope for specific projects and research.
- contribute to best practice advice and formal guidance eg for industry, business, civil society, voluntary organisations, local communities etc as appropriate within its remit.
- help Defra, the DAs and their delivery partners in responding to emergency situations by providing expert advice and opinion as necessary.

In the course of its work the Committee may publish reports and advice. Publication will normally be through Defra channels. The Committee will also be expected to contribute to departmental reports, publications or guidance.

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