



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Appointment of Lead Non-Executive Director of Defra

Briefing pack for applicants

Closing Date midnight 19 March 2023



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About Defra

The Defra group is responsible for improving and protecting the environment. It aims to grow a green economy and sustain thriving rural communities. It also supports our world leading food, farming and fishing industries.

Defra is a ministerial department, supported by 31 agencies and public bodies.

Defra has around 10000 employees who are based throughout England, with major hubs in London, Bristol and York.

This lead non-executive director role is an exciting opportunity to be part of this.

The non-executive directors are members of the departmental Board on appointment. Departmental Boards are advisory bodies that support and challenge ministers and Accounting Officers. Policy will be decided by ministers alone, on the advice of officials. For more information on departmental boards and government non-executives please see:

[Government non-executives - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Equal Opportunities

UK government has a policy of equality of opportunity. We aim to promote equal opportunity policies whereby no one suffers unfair discrimination either directly or indirectly, or harassment, on grounds such as race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or age.

Diversity

We positively welcome applicants from all backgrounds. All public appointments are made on merit following a fair and open competition. Appointing high-calibre people from diverse backgrounds with the relevant skills, knowledge and experience to our board helps us to ensure that our work is more effective, resilient and accountable.

Disability

We guarantee to interview anyone with a disability whose application meets the minimum criteria for the post. 'Minimum criteria' means you must provide sufficient evidence in your application, demonstrating that you meet the minimum level of competence required for each essential criterion, as well as meeting any of the qualifications, skills or experience required. The Cabinet Office and Defra is committed to the employment and career development of disabled people. To show this we proudly display the Disability Confident Leader logo. More information about Disability Confident Leaders is available by clicking the logo above. If a person with disabilities is put at a substantial disadvantage compared to a nondisabled person, we have a duty to make reasonable changes to our processes where possible. If you need a change to be made so that you can make your application, please refer to the ['How to apply and submit your application'](#) section below.

Role specification

Defra is seeking to fill 1 Lead non-executive director position.

The purpose of non-executive directors:

Non-executives bring external experience and expertise to the decisions and processes of Defra's Board by providing collective strategic leadership to the department. Exercising their role through influence, scrutiny, challenge and advice, they act as a trusted sounding board to the Secretary of State and Permanent Secretary, as appropriate, on any specific agreed specialist areas and other matters more generally.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-executive-directors>

Key responsibilities of the lead non-executive Board member:

- Support the Secretary of State in her role as Chair of the departmental Board, enabling the Board to provide effective advice, support, and challenge on departmental delivery and strategy and on the operational, commercial and delivery implications of policies;
- Constructively challenge and contribute to the development of strategy and business planning, including the setting and development of key objectives and targets;
- Work with the Permanent Secretary to scrutinise the performance of the organisation in meeting agreed goals and objectives, and monitor the reporting of performance, including financial targets;
- Support the department to deliver its plan by providing independent scrutiny, support and assurance;
- Attend a minimum of four departmental Board meetings per year, and contribute effectively to its subcommittees as required, including: Delivery Committee, Remuneration Committee and Nominations Committee;
- Provide external oversight and expertise to the departmental Board, underpinned by consideration from an independent standpoint, which informs the department's decision-making process;
- Connect the Board to people and organisations who can provide different perspectives, opinions and expertise which will assist in furthering the business of the department;
- Undertaking (or assisting with) specific project work by agreement with the Secretary of State related to the management of the Board to assess and enhance the department's performance (including annual Board Effectiveness Reviews);
- Work with the Government Lead NEBM, and non-executives across government, to learn from the experiences of other government departments and other comparable organisations, including playing an active role in the cross-government network of lead NEBMs and to feedback views to the Prime Minister;
- Undertake an annual assessment of the Permanent Secretary's performance to inform the Permanent Secretary Remuneration Committee and the Cabinet Secretary;
- Lead the Department's non-executive team, meeting the other NEBMs regularly, ensuring that they are able to fulfil their roles effectively.

Essential skills

Candidates should have the following essential skills/experience:

- Board level senior leadership experience, as an executive or non-executive in large and complex organisations with a specific focus on delivery;
- Extensive business and commercial experience with a strong and proven background in delivery of major programmes such as infrastructure or transformational change programmes (for example digital or cyber);
- Experience of taking high level ideas, turning them into deliverable products or programmes and of monitoring delivery programmes to successful outcomes;
- An engaging and collaborative working style including an ability to work together with other executives and non-executives in the organisation to capture opportunities and solve collective problems with innovative solutions;
- An understanding of the sectors and partners with which the department engages, the key challenges faced by the public sector and the ability to bring experience to bear on these challenges;

Desirable skills

Candidates should have the following desirable skills/experience:

- A strong background in environmental, agriculture or other Defra-specific sectors;
- An understanding of how government works, including the role of departmental Boards, and of the role of Lead NEDs and NEDs in relation to those of executives and Ministers.
- Previous Non-Executive Director experience on a public or private sector Board.
- Experience of risk, performance and financial management.

We welcome applicants from all backgrounds. Appointing high-calibre people from diverse backgrounds with relevant skills, knowledge and experience to our Board will help us to ensure that our work is more effective, resilient and accountable.

Time commitment and term of office

A minimum of 20 days per annum, including attendance of 4 Board meetings per year, in London, with occasional travel in the UK.

Appointments are for three years.

Remuneration and expenses

The Defra lead non-executive director will be remunerated at a rate of £20,000 per annum.

The recruitment process

The closing date for applications is midnight on 19 March 2023. We expect to have completed shortlisting by 31 March 2023, with Panel interviews starting in the week beginning 17 April 2023.

It is essential that your statement of suitability gives full but concise information relevant to the appointment, clearly demonstrating how you meet each of the essential criteria.

The Advisory Assessment Panel will consist of Tamara Finkelstein, Permanent Secretary for Defra, as chair, Michael Jary, government Lead NED at Cabinet Office, and Doug Gurr, Director, The Natural History Museum, senior independent panel member.

Interviews are expected to take place in 2 Marsham Street, London and will last for approximately 45 minutes. Further details about the format will be provided to you in advance.

These are Ministerial appointments and all candidates deemed appointable by the Panel will meet with Thérèse Coffey, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, before a final decision is made.

You will be able to claim reasonable travel expenses incurred travelling to and from the interview (please note you may be asked to justify travelling costs if Defra considers the claims excessive).

Please let Defra know beforehand if you are likely to claim, along with the approximate costs by contacting NEDSupport@defra.gov.uk

How to apply and submit your application

To apply, please send:

- a CV of no more than two sides of A4;
- a supporting statement of up to 1,000 words, setting out how you meet the [essential criteria](#) – make sure you refer to the contents of this document and provide specific examples;
- e-mail addresses for two referees;
- completed diversity and political activity monitoring form;
- completed conflicts of interest, conduct and advertising monitoring form (please note the section on [conflicts of interest and due diligence](#) below).

If you have any questions about the appointments process, please contact Tom Kinsey or Annemarie Thomas, Secretariat and Corporate Governance Team on NEDSupport@defra.gov.uk

For an informal discussion about the role please direct any queries to NEDSupport@defra.gov.uk and we will be happy to organise a time to do this.

**Completed applications should be
emailed to NEDSupport@defra.gov.uk**

Ineligibility criteria

You cannot be considered for a public appointment if:

- you become bankrupt or make an arrangement with creditors;
- your estate has been sequestrated in Scotland or you enter into a debt arrangement programme under Part 1 of the Debt Arrangement and Attachment (Scotland) Act 2002 (asp 17) as the debtor or have, under Scots law, granted a trust deed for creditors;
- you are disqualified from acting as a company director under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986;
- you have been convicted of a criminal offence, the conviction not being spent for the purposes of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (c. 53);
- you become subject to a debt relief order or a bankruptcy restrictions order;
- you fail to declare any conflict of interest.

Conflicts of interest and due diligence

If you have any interests that might be relevant to the work of Defra, and which could lead to a real or perceived conflict of interest if you were to be appointed, please provide details in your application. If you have queries about this and would like to discuss further please contact NEDSupport@defra.gov.uk.

Given the nature of public appointments, it is important that those appointed as members of public bodies maintain the confidence of Parliament and the public. If there are any issues in your personal or professional history that could, if you were appointed, be misconstrued, cause embarrassment, or cause public confidence in the appointment to be jeopardised, it is important that you bring them to the attention of the Advisory Assessment Panel and provide details of the issue(s) in your application. In considering whether you wish to declare any issues, you should also reflect on any public statements you have made, including through social media.

As part of our due diligence checks we will consider anything in the public domain related to your conduct or professional capacity. This will include us undertaking searches of previous public statements and social media, blogs or any other publicly available information. This information may be made available to the Advisory Assessment Panel and they may wish to explore issues with you should you be invited to interview. The information may also be shared with ministers and Cabinet Office.

Data protection

Defra is committed to protecting the privacy and security of your personal information and does so in accordance with data protection law including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). All the information you provide will be used to proceed with the public appointment listed in this information pack and in the case of diversity monitoring information may be anonymised and used solely for monitoring purposes. For more information about the way we collect and hold your information, please read the Privacy Notice accessible through the Cabinet Office's Public Appointments Website (<https://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk>) or request a copy of Defra's Public Appointments Privacy Notice from publicappts@defra.gov.uk.

Annex A – The seven principles of public life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Annex B – 12 Principles of Governance for all Public Body NEDs

1. Expertise

- Consider and act in the best interests of your organisation and its objectives; delivering the outcomes expected by your sponsor department, ministers and ultimately the public.
- Consider the broader mission and duties of your sponsoring Secretary of State, his or her Department and the Government.
- Ensure compliance with statutory duties and the organisation's Framework Document and act within its powers.
- Exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence in the exercise of their authority and judgement.

2. Scrutiny and challenge

- Maintain independence from the executive to allow scrutiny of management and in meetings agree goals and objectives, and monitor performance and the reporting of performance so that the public who use your organisation receive a high quality service.
- Satisfy yourself on the integrity of budget setting to deliver objectives and financial information and reporting against budgets, and that financial controls and systems of risk management are robust and defensible. Meet the requirements of [Managing Public Money](#), including supporting the Accounting Officer in fulfilling their duties to provide propriety and value for money in the use of public funds.
- Champion high standards of risk management by ensuring your organisation has effective risk reporting, controls and governance, risk expertise and risk tolerances to effectively manage risk.
- Represent your organisation to the department and to Ministers, as well as ensuring Ministers' views are considered by the executive team of the organisation, as appropriate.

3. Support

- Support the board in succession planning and be prepared to put yourself up for re-appointment, as well as promoting the need for a diverse board.
- Participate in and promote regular reviews of your organisation, as well as the board's own effectiveness, with particular focus on the organisation's purposes and its efficiency in meeting these purposes. Engage in the appraisal process, including self-reflection on your own abilities.
- Listen carefully to, ask appropriate questions of and support management to encourage discussion in a manner that promotes a culture where all perspectives are listened to, while fulfilling the individual Director's duties and responsibilities and respecting and valuing the expertise of the executive team.
- Promote the success of the entity having regard to the interests of all members and stakeholders, and all risks.

Annex C – Current membership of the Board

Ministers

Rt Hon Thérèse Coffey MP, Secretary of State

Rt Hon Mark Spencer, Minister of State for Food

Rt Hon The Lord Benyon, Minister of State for international environment

Rebecca Pow MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

Trudy Harrison MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Minister for the Environment

Senior Officials

Tamara Finkelstein, Permanent Secretary

Sarah Homer, Director General, Chief Operating Officer

Lucy Smith, Director General for Strategy

Iain King, Chief Financial Officer

Non-Executives

Henry Dimpleby, Lead Non-Executive Director

Colin Day, Non-Executive Director, Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

Elizabeth Buchanan, Non-Executive Director

Lizzie Noel, Non-Executive Director

Alan Lovell, Ex-officio, Chair of the Environment Agency

Tony Juniper, Ex-officio, Chairman of Natural England



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