



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

# Appointment of three new Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Chairs: English Severn & Wye, Thames and Wessex

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## Briefing pack for applicants

Closing date: Noon on 9 January 2024



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# Defra mission statement

The Defra group is here to make our air purer, our water cleaner, our land greener, and our food more sustainable. Our mission is to restore and enhance the environment for future generations, and to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.

This matters because enhancing nature and green spaces enhances lives and livelihoods, contributing to a strong economy. Our wellbeing, our physical and mental health, our love of place and landscape, and our intrinsic need for beauty, awe and wonder, are all intimately bound up with a thriving natural environment.

Appointing high-calibre people from diverse backgrounds with relevant skills, knowledge and experience to the boards of our public bodies will help us to ensure that our work is more effective, resilient and accountable.

## 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 as regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

## 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.

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# About RFCCs

## Introduction

Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs) were established by the Environment Agency in 2011, in line with the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, and the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 (“the 2011 Regulations”). They have three purposes:

- to ensure there are coherent plans for identifying, communicating and managing flood and coastal erosion risks across catchments and shorelines;
- to encourage efficient, targeted and risk-based investment in flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) that represents value for money and benefits local communities; and
- to provide a link between the Environment Agency, lead local flood authorities, other risk management authorities, and other relevant bodies to build understanding of flood and coastal erosion risks in its area.

More information can be found in the 2011 Regulations ([link](#)).

There are 12 RFCCs across England ([link](#)) who all work to the same guidelines but consider local priorities.

## RFCC members

The 2011 Regulations provide that each RFCC must consist of at least 11 members and not exceed 25 (or any higher number that the Minister approves). The board membership must consist of:

- a Chair, appointed by Ministers;
- members, appointed by the Environment Agency, including a member with a specific nature conservation and environment remit, and a member with a specific coastal remit (where applicable); and
- members (sufficient to form a bare majority on the RFCC), appointed by or on behalf of constituent lead local flood authorities (local authorities).

The Environment Agency is also currently undertaking a recruitment exercise to recruit Independent Members for six of the RFCCs. If you, or someone you know, is interested please visit the Environment Agency’s dedicated careers website for more information ([link](#)).

## RFCC meetings and working arrangements

RFCCs meet a minimum of four times a year (sometimes virtually) and meetings are open to the public. Some RFCCs also set up working groups, for example to review and comment on policy or to identify locally financed project plans that can contribute towards reducing flood and coastal erosion risks in communities.

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The RFCC Chairs meet at a national level, a minimum of eight times a year (some meetings are virtual), to discuss national and local issues with the Environment Agency Executive Board, nominated Environment Agency Non-Executive Board Member and Defra. There are also meetings with Defra and, where relevant, other government departments throughout the year.

The Environment Agency provides the secretariat and professional support to the RFCCs and their Chairs, and funds and organises meetings and other related activities.

## Vacancies

We are recruiting three new Chairs covering the:

- English Severn and Wye RFCC
- Thames RFCC
- Wessex RFCC

The **English Severn and Wye RFCC** covers an area of approximately 11,500km and a population of 3.3 million. It follows the England-Wales border and covers the counties of, or parts thereof, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire. Whilst it is predominately rural, with 77% of the land being used for agriculture, it also includes major urban conurbations, such as Coventry, Telford, Gloucester, Cheltenham and Worcester.

The RFCC is made up of a Chair, six independent members and eight local authority elected members (or officials).

The **Thames RFCC** covers the river Thames catchment and over a quarter of England's population. It covers the counties of, or parts thereof, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Hampshire, Herefordshire, Kent, London and Oxfordshire. This includes 54 lead local flood authorities, over a third of all the lead local flood authorities in England, which are split into 13 partnership areas.

The RFCC is made up of a Chair, 11 independent members and 13 local authority elected members (representing the 13 partnership areas).

The **Wessex RFCC** covers the eastern part of England's southwest peninsula. It includes the Bristol and English channels, and covers the counties of, or parts thereof, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Somerset and Wiltshire. With a mix of rural and urban areas it includes the major conurbations of Bristol, Bournemouth, Poole, Bath and Weston-super-Mare.

The RFCC is made up of a Chair, eight independent members and 10 local authority elected members. In addition, the three chairs of the regions Coastal Groups are invited to meetings.

Each RFCC region has, to different degrees, all flood risks (rivers (fluvial), tidal inundation, surface water, reservoirs and groundwater) and coastal erosion risks. The vast majority also have coastlines and therefore has, to different degrees, coastal erosion risks. These risks are considerable, can be recurring and in some circumstances high profile.

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RFCCs, working with partners will reduce these risks through a variety of mitigation measures, such as targeted and risk-based investment, nature-based solutions, slowing the flow of water, helping communities become more resilient, delivery of major projects and promoting asset maintenance.

The RFCCs will also need to consider the diverse habitats and biodiversity within their region. This can include sites that are designated locally, nationally and internationally e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Marine Protected Areas, etc.

## Further information

For further information about:

- flood and coastal issues and the role of the EA and RFCCs ([link 1](#) and [link 2](#)).
- the government's FCERM Policy Statement ([link](#)).
- the government's £5.2bn 6-year flood and coastal defence investment programme ([link](#)).
- the Environment Agency's FCERM Strategy ([link](#)).
- the English Severn and Wye RFCC ([link](#)).
- the Thames RFCC ([link](#)).
- the Wessex RFCC ([link](#)).
- the government's Plan for Water: our integrated plan for delivering clean and plentiful water ([link](#)).

## Role specification

RFCCs are an important part of the FCERM community, providing a link between government, risk management authorities and the communities they serve.

The Chairs will:

- provide strong leadership and challenge to the Committee, encouraging and enabling the Committee to effectively carry out its statutory responsibilities;
- enable all Committee members to contribute and play an effective role; ensuring local authority representatives are clear about their annual levy choices and the related levels of flood and coastal erosion risk benefits within the region;
- set the strategic direction for the Committee, where necessary taking account of the government's policy on flood and coastal erosion risk management;
- lead the Committee to effectively contribute towards strengthening delivery of the Government's flood and coastal defence investment and maintenance programmes to meet their intended objectives;
- provides robust and considered advice to local stakeholders and to the Environment Agency (locally and nationally) on the programme of investment, the delivery of local schemes and address concerns raised; and
- ensure that risk management authorities within the region are held to account in delivering their components of the flood and coastal risk management programmes (capital and maintenance).

To that end the Chair will need to be visible and demonstrate local leadership. This includes:

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- **Being visible.** Chairs should be proactive in engaging with local stakeholders such as risk management authorities, local authorities and water companies. Chairs should look for key opportunities to build local understanding about the role of the Committee.
  - **Balancing the interests of the local community/demonstrating local leadership for risk management authorities.** Chairs have a key role in bringing together all local risk management authorities and other local decision makers. They should support the identification and use of appropriate funding streams that enable partnership funding contributions and use their skills to broker agreements, resulting in, sometimes difficult, decisions to prioritise the allocation of resources to flood defence (capital and maintenance).
  - **Locally accountable.** Chairs should use the Committee's communication routes (i.e. websites) to explain/justify to the public what decisions are being taken on investment and why.
  - **Acting as a local figurehead.** People (community groups, media, etc) need to be able to come to the Chair with their concerns and issues and feel listened to. Where the Chair or the Committee cannot resolve, the Chair may then:
    - a. report these concerns to Defra, Environment Agency, Environment Agency Board member or a mixture/all depending on who is most appropriate; and/or
    - b. take the factors into consideration as part of deliberation at the Committee.

RFCC Chairs are accountable to, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' Minister with responsibility for flood and coastal erosion policy, and ultimately the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The day-to-day management, including annual appraisals, of RFCC Chairs is undertaken by the Environment Agency, including the local Environment Agency Area Director in each RFCC region and the Environment Agency's Non-Executive Board Member with responsibility for the RFCC Network.

The successful candidate must abide by the Nolan principles of public service ([Annex A](#)), the 12 Principles of Governance for all Public Body NEDs ([Annex B](#)) and the Code of Conduct for Board Members ([link](#)).

## Criteria

**Candidates must be able to demonstrate that they meet the following criteria:**

- Provide effective leadership to the Committee, bringing together different voices and balancing competing interests, embracing equality, diversity and inclusion and demonstrating high standards of public accountability.
  - Demonstrate clear and effective communication skills, including working effectively in partnership at a senior level, to inspire, empower and lead co-ordinated action.
  - Able to make, and understand the implication of, effective strategic decisions (i.e. prioritising local FCERM schemes) at a senior level, taking into account economic, environmental, political and social factors, alongside financial and value for money considerations.
  - Good understanding of an integrated approach to flood and water management and the catchment approach, including awareness of the government's flood and water priorities, and the wide range of key bodies that need to work in partnership to contribute towards delivery of key flood and water policies in your RFCC region.
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# Terms of appointment

## Time commitment

The successful candidate will be expected to make a time commitment of five days per month, which will include preparation for and participation in Board meetings.

## Remuneration and expenses

The remuneration for this post is £18,927 per annum. Reasonable expenses (including travel, subsistence and other expenses) are payable in line with the Environment Agency's Travel and Subsistence Policy. These roles are non-pensionable.

## Period of appointment

It is anticipated that successful candidates will take up appointment before the end of:

- April 2024, for the English Severn and Wye RFCC; and
- August 2024, for the Thames and Wessex RFCCs.

We will endeavour to ensure that the three successful candidates will have a period of handover with the incumbent Chairs. In line with the RFCC Regulations, a Chair appointment can be for up to four years, with any reappointment subject to a good performance assessment and at the discretion of Ministers.

## Location

RFCCs are specific to the regions they serve, and therefore the Chairs are required to acquire knowledge about the regions' particular flood and coastal erosion circumstances. Committees meet around four times a year through a blend of virtual and in person meetings, agreed by the Committee itself. Therefore, some travel should be expected where the Chair would be required to attend some meetings within the region. It is not essential for the Chair to live or work within the region.

# The recruitment process

The closing date for applications is **noon on 9 January 2024**. We expect to have shortlisted by 31 January 2024 with Panel interviews week commencing 19 February 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 **criteria**.

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The Advisory Assessment Panel will consist of:

- David Cooper (Floods and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Deputy Director, Defra) as chair
- Robert Gould (Environment Agency, Non-Executive Board Member, with responsibility for the RFCC network)
- Jacqui Francis (Independent panel member)

If it is necessary, we may create an additional Advisory Assessment Panel to ensure we can keep to our timetable. When we write to invite candidates to interview, we will confirm who will be on the Advisory Assessment Panel.

At the Shortlist meeting the Advisory Assessment Panel will assess each application against the criteria in order to decide who to invite for interview.

Interviews are expected to take place virtually via MS Teams and will last for approximately 45 minutes. Further details will be provided to you in advance.

These are Ministerial appointments and all candidates deemed appointable by the Advisory Assessment Panel may meet with the Minister 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 the [Defra Public Appointments Team](#) know beforehand if you are likely to claim, along with the approximate costs and by quoting reference number: **APPT RFCC Chair**.

### Role preference

The RFCC regions we are recruiting Chairs to are the [English Severn and Wye](#), [Thames](#) and [Wessex](#). Through the application process you will be able to express, if you wish, a first and second preference for the specific regional Chair vacancies you wish to be considered for. Whilst we cannot guarantee a role in any particular region your preference will be taken into consideration.

## How to apply and submit your application

In order to apply you will need to visit <https://apply-for-public-appointment.service.gov.uk/roles> and either [create an account](#) or [sign in](#).

Once you are logged into your account, click on 'apply for this role' and follow the on-screen instructions. To apply, all candidates are required to provide:

- a Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- a supporting statement or no more than 1,000 words, setting out how you meet the [criteria](#) – make sure you refer to the contents of this document and provide specific examples
- equality information
- information relating to any outside interests or reputational issues

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We will ask you to check and confirm your personal details to ensure your application is accurate.

You will also have the opportunity to make a reasonable adjustment request or apply under the disability confident scheme before you submit your application.

The Advisory Assessment Panel reserves the right to only consider applications that contain all of the elements listed above, and that arrive before the published deadline for applications.

If you have any questions about the appointments process, please email the Public Appointments Team at: [publicappts@defra.gov.uk](mailto:publicappts@defra.gov.uk).

## More information

To support prospective candidates we will be holding two virtual events (via MS Teams) with speakers from Defra, the Environment Agency and a current RFCC Chair.

We will give an introduction on flood and coastal erosion risk in England, the different roles that Defra, the Environment Agency and RFCCs undertake, the appointment process and will answer any questions. These events will be held on 28 November 2023 (10:00-12:00) and 11 December 2023 (14:00-16:00). If you wish to attend either of these events please contact William Harrington at: [william.harrington@defra.gov.uk](mailto:william.harrington@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.

In addition, the 2011 Regulations specify that:

1. The following criteria must be satisfied before a person is appointed as a member:
  - a) the person is of good character and sound financial reputation;
  - b) the person is not an employee of
    - i. the Environment Agency
    - ii. the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, or

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- iii. the Welsh Assembly Government;
  - c) the person is not a Member of Parliament or a Member of the National Assembly for Wales.

- 2. The criterion in paragraph (1)(a) is not satisfied if—
  - a. the person is bankrupt or has an existing arrangement with creditors;
  - b. within the 5 years immediately before the proposed date of appointment, the person has served a sentence of imprisonment for a period of 3 months or more.

## Conflicts of interest and due diligence

If you have any interests that might be relevant to the work of the RFCCs, 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 the [Defra Public Appointments Team](#).

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.

## The Commissioner for Public Appointments

This appointment is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments, to ensure that it is made on merit after fair and open competition. More information about the role of the Commissioner and the Governance Code on Public Appointments can be found on the Commission website ([link 1](#) and [link 2](#)).

Full details of the complaints process for public appointments can be found on the Commission website ([link](#)).

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## 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. 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 ([link](#)) or request a copy of Defra's Public Appointments Privacy Notice from the [Defra Public Appointments Team](#).

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# Annex A: The seven principles of public life

## 1. Selflessness

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

## 2. 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.

## 3. Objectivity

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

## 4. 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.

## 5. 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.

## 6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

## 7. 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.

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# Annex B: 12 Principles of Governance for all Public Body NEDs

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

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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.



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