



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Appointment of two Defra Non-Executive Directors (NEDs)

Briefing pack for applicants

Closing Date 7 October 2024

Reference: APPT12-24



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A message from Secretary of State, Steve Reed

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining the Board of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. I am pleased to welcome at least two new Non-Executive Directors to bring additional expertise and different perspectives to the Board. The successful applicants will be pivotal in supporting me and the ministerial team to drive forward our priorities:

- Cleaning up Britain's rivers, lakes, and seas
- Creating a road map to move Britain to a zero-waste economy
- Supporting our farmers to boost Britain's food security
- Ensuring nature's recovery
- Protecting communities from the dangers of flooding

You will join Defra at a critical juncture - the work of change has begun. As a Non-Executive Director, you will be at the heart of this change. You will provide invaluable, independent scrutiny and challenge to drive transformational and long-lasting change for the citizens and communities we serve.

Defra has a major contribution to make to the Government's central mission – to grow the economy. From creating jobs and attracting investment in water infrastructure, enhancing economic resilience through better flood protection and nature-based solutions, to boosting food security, Defra is integral to this mission.

I want to build a board rich in the diversity of its members' skills, with Non-Executive Directors who can contribute wide and varied experience and expertise in advising, challenging and supporting the Government to meet its ambitions and to deliver, innovatively and collaboratively, for the whole nation.

I look forward to receiving applications from a wide range of individuals and understanding the unique perspective you could bring to the Defra Board.

Steve Reed
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs



Defra mission statement

At Defra, we are responsible for improving and protecting the environment. We aim to grow a green economy and sustain thriving rural communities. We also support our world-leading food, farming and fishing industries.

Our broad remit means we play a major role in people's day-to-day life, from the food we eat, and the air we breathe, to the water we drink. We are 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 the next generation, leaving it in a better state than we found it..

To advance this mission, we are committed to appointing exceptional individuals from diverse backgrounds who bring the relevant skills, knowledge, and experience to our department and public bodies. High-calibre appointments enhance our effectiveness, resilience, and accountability in fulfilling our environmental goals.

Equal Opportunities

The UK government is committed to equality of opportunity. We uphold a policy ensuring that no individual faces unfair discrimination or harassment based on race, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or age.

Diversity

We actively encourage applications from individuals of all backgrounds. All public appointments are made based on merit through a fair and open competition process regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Disability

We guarantee an interview to any candidate with a disability whose application meets the minimum criteria for the position. The 'minimum criteria' includes demonstrating the necessary competence for each essential criterion and meeting qualifications, skills, or experience requirements. Defra proudly holds the Disability Confident Leader status, reflecting our commitment to the employment and career development of disabled individuals. For more information about Disability Confident Leaders, please click [here](#). If you require adjustments to the application process due to a disability, please refer to the '[How to Apply](#)' section below for details on how we can assist you.

About Defra

Who we are?

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) is the UK government department responsible for improving and protecting the environment.

We are a ministerial department that is supported by and works collaboratively with 34 agencies and public bodies. Together we are the Defra group.

Our structure and business model

Defra is made up of the Core department and a network of agencies and public bodies. Defra's public bodies vary in size, type, budget, remit and level of independence. Core department and delivery bodies across Defra group work together to collaboratively deliver our outcomes. Core department sets the policy and supports delivery bodies to develop capability and to deliver new and ongoing activities. Although we need to clearly align our work in this simplified way for planning, budgeting and reporting, there are complex interactions in the delivery of our outcomes. Our outcomes have many synergies and are delivered in an integrated manner.

Our vision

Defra 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 the next generation, leaving it in a better state than we found it. Our Outcome Delivery Plan, together with the Environmental Improvement Plan

(EIP) (more details below) set out in detail how we intend to achieve this.

Outcome Delivery Plan

1. Improve the environment through cleaner air and water, minimised waste, and thriving plants and terrestrial and marine wildlife.
2. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon storage in the agricultural, waste, peat and tree planting sectors to help deliver net zero.
3. Reduce the likelihood and impact of flooding and coastal erosion on people, businesses, communities and the environment.
4. Increase the sustainability, productivity and resilience of the agriculture, fishing, food and drink sectors, enhance biosecurity at the border and raise animal welfare standards.

Our environmental goals

1. Thriving plants and wildlife
2. Clean air
3. Clean and plentiful water
4. Managing exposure to chemicals and pesticides
5. Maximise our resources, minimise our waste
6. Using resources from nature sustainably
7. Mitigating and adapting to climate change
8. Reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards
9. Enhancing biosecurity
10. Enhanced beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment

Non-Executive Director role specification

Defra is seeking to appoint at least two new Non-Executive Directors

Non-executive Directors bring external experience and expertise to Defra's Board. Exercising their role through influence, scrutiny, challenge and advice, they act as a trusted sounding board to the Secretary of State and Permanent Secretary.

Role of Non-Executive Directors

- Provide independent scrutiny, support and assurance to the department;
- Support, review and challenge the development of and progress against the departmental strategy and plans, including prioritisation decisions and the department's strategic risk framework;
- Provide scrutiny and support to the executive team to deliver the approved strategy and discharge their leadership responsibilities;
- Scrutinise and challenge departmental performance reporting;
- Provide advice on issues within their remit;
- Support, scrutinise and challenge relevant departmental projects;
- Where appropriate, advise on the operational and delivery implications of policy proposals, undertaking deep-dives into potential risks and mitigations, to inform the department's decision-making process;
- Advise and support ministers and senior officials in influencing cross-government initiatives and policies;
- Participate in the Board's annual effectiveness review and ensure the Board acts on recommendations and builds its own capability;
- Attend a minimum of four departmental Board meetings per year, and contribute effectively to its subcommittees, as required;
- Build and maintain effective working relationships with a broad range of networks and stakeholders; and
- Attend occasional government-wide meetings for non-executives to share best practice.

More information on departmental boards and government NEDs can be found [here](#).

Essential criteria

Candidates must be able to demonstrate all of the following essential criteria:

1. The ability to contribute effectively at Board level whilst proactively supporting and challenging the executive on achieving results, with a focus on performance against targets.
2. Strategic thinking with the ability to analyse complex issues, promote innovative thinking and help the Board to think through risks and mitigations.
3. Sound understanding of working with the public sector - including insight into the public bodies landscape - and the key challenges it faces. The ability to adapt quickly to fast-moving situations and handle complex, sensitive issues effectively and pragmatically.
4. Skills and expertise that the candidate is able to demonstrate will add value to and diversify the perspective of the Defra Board

Desirable Criteria

This recruitment will seek to fill at least two vacancies on the Board. Applications are welcomed from a diverse range of backgrounds and applicants are encouraged to apply if they meet the essential criteria above and can bring new skills and expertise to the Board. For example, we are interested in receiving applications from candidates with the following skillsets (this is not an exhaustive list) -

- Senior leaders or chief officers of expert or technical functions, for example in digital, cyber, security, data, sustainability, or major programme delivery.
- Senior leaders with experience in developing customer-centric cultures within large and complex organisations.
- Senior leaders with a professional expertise in public engagement, co-delivery, partnership working, or sector coordination and engagement.
- Senior, collaborative and influential thought leaders in the skills areas highlighted above, for example academics or sector leaders.

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

Time commitment and term of office

The successful candidates will be expected to make a time commitment of a minimum of 20 days per annum, which will include four Defra Board meetings in London.

Appointments will be initially for three years with an anticipated start date in late 2024 or early 2025. A further reappointment of three years may be made subject to satisfactory

performance assessment and will be at the discretion of the Secretary of State.

Remuneration is set at £15,000 per annum. Reasonable travel and subsistence expenses are paid. The role is not pensionable.

The recruitment process

The closing date for applications is 15:00 on 7 October 2024. We expect to have shortlisted by the end of October, with Panel interviews mid to late November.

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 David Hill (Defra Director General for Strategy and Water) as chair, Heather Hancock (Defra Lead Non-Executive Director) and Mike Kapur (National Forest Company Trustee) as the independent panel member.

Interviews are expected to take place at Defra's offices at 2 Marsham Street, London.

Further details about the format will be provided in advance.

These are Ministerial appointments and all candidates deemed appointable by the Panel may meet with the Secretary of State before a final decision is made. Candidates will be informed of interview outcomes as soon as is practically possible.

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 publicappts@defra.gov.uk and by quoting reference number: "APPT12-24"

How to apply

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 of no more than 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
- diversity information
- information relating to any outside interests or reputational issues

You can also 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 elements listed above, and that arrive before the published deadline for applications.

If you have any questions about the appointments process or for an informal discussion about the role, please email the Public Appointments Team at publicappts@defra.gov.uk

Completed applications should be submitted online at <https://apply-for-public-appointment.service.gov.uk/roles> by the closing date: 7 October 2024

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 the [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.

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 seen at:

<http://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/578498/gov

[ernance code on public appointments 16 12 2016.pdf](#)

For full details of the complaints process for public appointments, please click on the following link which will take you to the Commissioner for Public Appointments website

<https://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/complaints/>

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 – Defra Board and ARAC membership

Defra Board

Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP	Secretary of State
Rt Hon Daniel Zeichner MP	Minister of Food Security and Rural Affairs
Emma Hardy MP	Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Water and Flooding)
Mary Creagh CBE MP	Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Nature)
Baroness Hayman of Ullock	Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Lords Minister)
Tamara Finkelstein	Permanent Secretary
Nick Joicey	Second Permanent Secretary and Group Chief Operating Officer
David Hill	Director General of Strategy and Water
Iain King	Chief Financial Officer
Heather Hancock	Lead Non-Executive Director
Colin Day	Non-Executive Director, Chair of the ARAC
Chris Tyas	Non-Executive Director
Nick Folland	Non-Executive Director

Defra ARAC

Colin Day	Non-Executive Director, Chair
Nick Folland	Non-Executive Director
Paul Dillon-Robinson	Ex officio, Rural Payments Agency ARAC Chair
Elizabeth Peers	Ex officio, Animal and Plant Health Agency ARAC Chair
Catherine Dugmore	Ex officio, Natural England ARAC Chair
John Lelliott	Ex officio, Environment Agency ARAC Chair

 **disability**
confident




Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs