

Royal Botanic Gardens
Kew

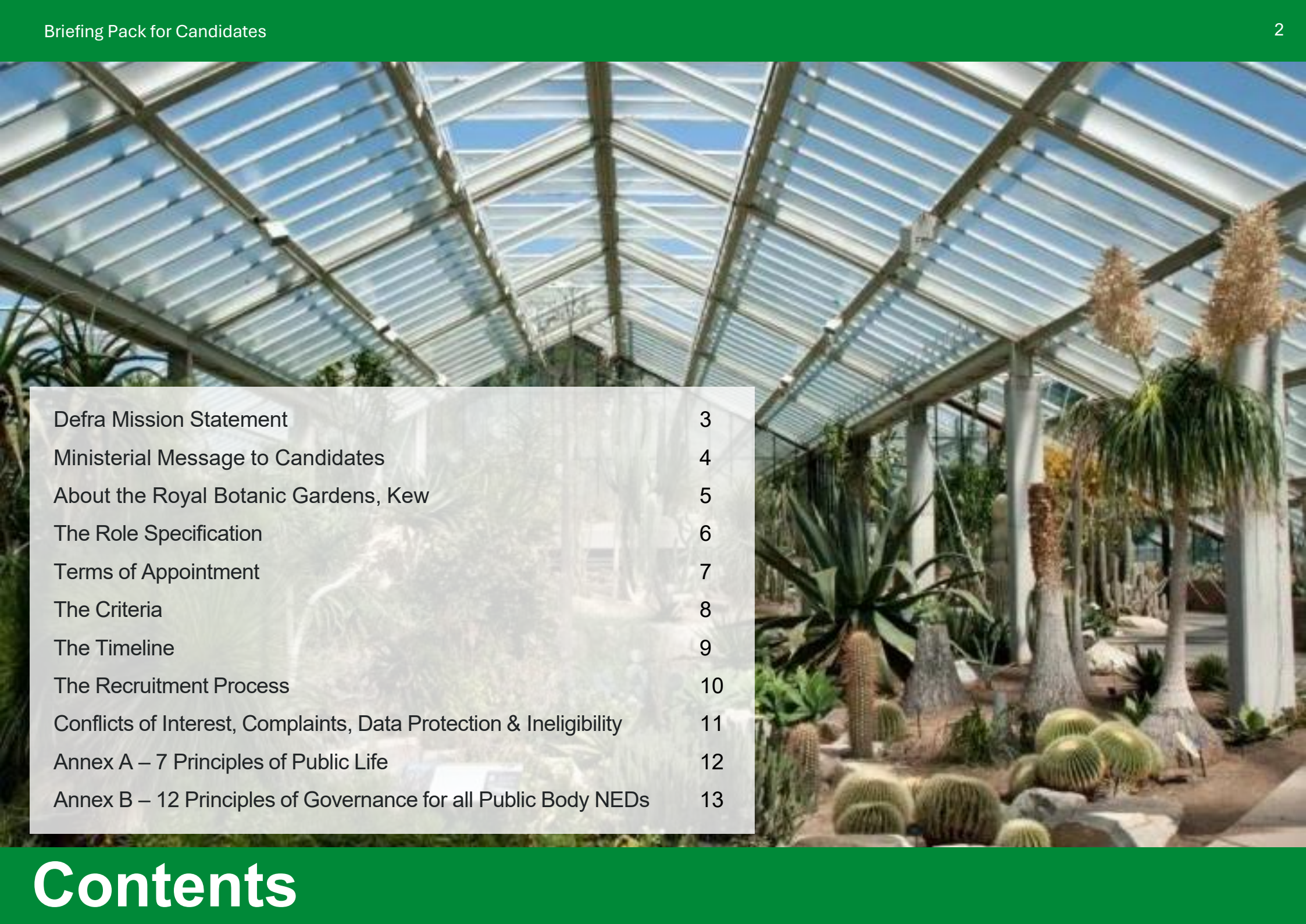
Briefing pack for the appointment of

Chair of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

CLOSING DATE: MIDDAY ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

REFERENCE: 8905





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Defra Group leads on the fundamentals: the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe. It encompasses food, environment, biosecurity, trade and more. Defra is a policy, growth, science, delivery and international department.

Defra's work is fundamental to delivering the government's five missions – by building economic resilience through better flood defences, protecting against biosecurity risk, climate adaptation and nature-based solutions; creating jobs and attracting investment in our water and waste sectors; working with our sectors, such as food and drink; and ensuring that all missions are rural-proofed.

To achieve these goals, we are committed to appointing high-calibre individuals from diverse backgrounds to the boards of our public bodies. By drawing on a wide range of skills, knowledge, and experiences, we can make our work more effective, resilient, and accountable to the public.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

The UK government is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring that no one experiences unfair discrimination or harassment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, national origin, colour, sex, gender identity, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or age.

We actively encourage applications from individuals of all backgrounds and are committed to fostering diversity in public appointments. All appointments are made on merit, following a fair and open competition process regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Disability Commitment

We are dedicated to supporting candidates with disabilities and are proud to hold Disability Confident Leader status. We guarantee an interview for any applicant with a disability whose application meets the minimum criteria for the post.

To ensure an inclusive process, we are committed to making reasonable adjustments where possible for candidates with disabilities. If you require any adjustments to support your application, please refer to the 'How to Apply and Submit Your Application' section below. Further information about the Disability Confident Leader scheme is available [here](#).

Defra Mission Statement

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in becoming the Chair of the Board of Trustees at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Kew is a world-leading institution in botanical research, conservation, and education. Its global impact is driven not only by the excellence of its science and collections, but by the strength and vision of its leadership. As Chair, you will play a pivotal role in guiding Kew's mission and ensuring it continues to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Kew's expertise in plant and fungal science is vital to addressing the urgent environmental challenges we face – from climate change to biodiversity loss. The leadership of the Board is central to ensuring that Kew remains at the forefront of scientific innovation, public engagement, and global collaboration.

With internationally significant assets such as the Millennium Seed Bank and the Herbarium, and bold ambitions set out in its [Manifesto for Change](#), [Science Strategy](#), and [Sustainability Strategy](#), Kew is on an exciting journey to inspire action to protect nature and secure a more sustainable future by 2030.

I am seeking an outstanding individual to lead the Board, working closely with the Director and Executive Board to shape Kew's future. The next Chair must bring strong strategic leadership, a commitment to good governance, and a passion for Kew's mission. We are particularly keen to receive applications from candidates with experience chairing boards, and who are committed to championing equality, diversity, and inclusion at Board level.

We encourage applications from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, including those currently underrepresented in public life.

Thank you once again for your interest in this important role. I look forward to hearing from you.

Steve Reed OBE

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs





Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew: Our manifesto for change 2021-2030

Earth is the only planet in the universe we know for certain supports life. Yet life on Earth is in crisis. Natural resources are being degraded at a rate unprecedented in human history. As a result, we are living through an age of extinction.

We also face a climate emergency. Actions such as burning fossil fuels and clearing wild lands have released greenhouse gases, disrupting natural climate patterns. In a vicious cycle, damaged ecosystems are less able to absorb emissions and mitigate the worst consequences of climate change.

The next decade will be critical if we are to reverse this environmental devastation. Humanity stands at a crossroads. The future of our planet is in grave jeopardy. Action is needed now to end biodiversity loss and repair our world.

The mission of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (RBG, Kew) is to understand and protect plants and fungi for the well-being of people and the future of all life on Earth.

Our aspiration is to end the extinction crisis and to help create a world where nature is protected, valued by all, and managed sustainably.

‘What we do now, and in the next few years, will profoundly affect the next few thousand years.’ - Sir David Attenborough, broadcaster and natural historian

The Chair of the RBG, Kew Board of Trustees plays a crucial role in providing strategic leadership, ensuring effective governance, and strengthening relationships with key stakeholders. They will guide the Board in shaping Kew's future, fostering strong partnerships with government and public bodies, and driving fundraising efforts.

The Chair will also be a key advocate for Kew, engaging with high-profile stakeholders both in the UK and internationally, including HM The King (Patron), Ministers, major donors, and international leaders. The Chair will actively represent Kew in a wide range of international forums, such as COP and other high-profile events, to support the organisation's mission and long-term sustainability.

Working closely with the Director, the Chair will act as a trusted advisor, enabling them to lead effectively and achieve Kew's ambitious objectives, whilst ensuring the Executive Board remains both accountable and well-supported in delivering Kew's goals.

Role Priorities

The Chair's role focuses on four key priorities:

- Working with the Director to liaise with Ministers, Defra, and other government bodies ensuring strong, productive relationships that advance Kew's objectives.
- Actively participate in fundraising efforts, and in some cases lead engagements with major donors, philanthropists, and corporate partners to secure financial support
- Ensure an engaged, diverse, and effective Board, with strong

- governance, clear accountability and adherence to best practices.
- Act as a trusted advisor and constructive challenger to the Director and Executive Board, balancing support with accountability to deliver Kew's strategic vision.

Key Responsibilities

- Provide strategic leadership to the RBG Kew Board and oversee Kew's long-term vision and priorities.
- Approve Kew's strategic direction, budgets, and major activities, ensuring financial health and sustainability.
- Ensure effective governance and compliance with corporate and charitable regulations.
- Advocate for Kew with key stakeholders, including HM The King (Patron), international dignitaries, Government officials and policymakers.
- Lead fundraising initiatives, engaging high-profile supporters and corporate partners.
- Support RBG Kew's Executive Board in working collaboratively with other parts of the Defra Group and across government, facilitating collaboration and removing barriers to joint working.
- Champion diversity, equity, and inclusion within Kew and the RBG Kew Board of Trustees, ensuring diverse representation and inclusive decision-making.
- Conduct annual RBG Kew Board and Trustee performance reviews, ensuring accountability and continuous improvement.
- Oversee the Trustee appointment process in collaboration with Defra, ensuring that the RBG Kew Board has the right balance of skills and expertise.

Remuneration

The role is unremunerated, but essential expenses will be paid

Time commitment

Up to 6 days per month

Term length

Initial appointment for 4 years

Location

Board meetings will be mainly held at Kew Gardens, with some meetings each year at Wakehurst

Terms of Appointment

Essential Criteria:**1. Knowledge of RBG, Kew and an appreciation of its unique contribution**

A clear understanding of the work, priorities and challenges of RBG, Kew and the context within which it operates, along with a genuine appreciation of Kew's unique contribution.

2. Experience of securing significant funding

A strong track record of securing significant philanthropic, corporate, or government funding within the private, public or voluntary sectors.

3. Effective communication and stakeholder engagement skills

Strong ambassadorial and communication skills with the ability to listen, accept challenge, and constructively challenge others in discussions with clarity and respect. Proven ability to work closely with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Executive Board and Director, Ministers, Senior Government Officials, Trustees, VIP visitors (including Heads of State), employees, and philanthropists.

4. Strategic leadership experience

Ability to set strategic vision and drive forward the priorities of a high-profile organisation.

5. Decision-making and critical analysis skills

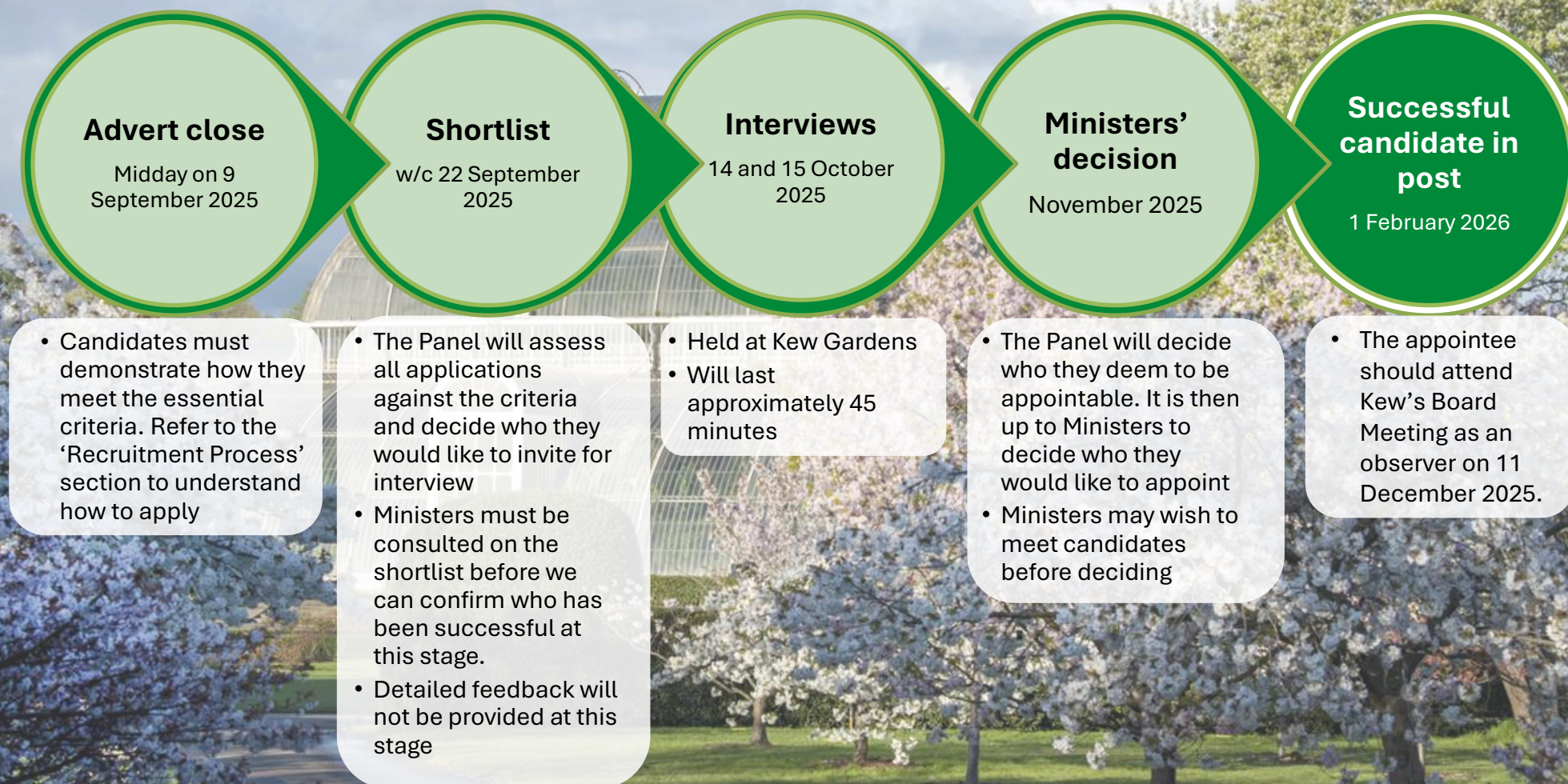
Effective decision-making skills, with the ability to critically analyse a wide range of information to make clear and objective evidence-based recommendations to support the delivery of the organisation's objectives.

6. Governance experience

Strong governance expertise, ensuring transparency, accountability, and sound financial oversight.

Desirable Criteria:

Previous experience of chairing a board, within the private, public, or voluntary sector.



The Timeline

How to apply

To apply you will need to [create an account](#) or [sign in](#) to “Apply for Public Appointment Service” gov.uk by the deadline of Midday on 9 September 2025. Once logged onto your account, click on ‘apply for this role’ and follow the on-screen instructions.

To apply, all candidates are required to submit:

- A CV of no more than two sides of A4 with education, professional qualifications and employment history and the names and contact details for two referees
- A statement of suitability should give evidence of the strength and depth of your ability to meet the essential criteria for this role. Please provide specific examples to demonstrate how you meet each of the criteria (max two pages please).
- diversity information
- information relating to any outside interests or reputational issues

For further information please email:

publicappts@defra.gov.uk

For an informal discussion about the role please contact Balwinder Allen, Kew Board Secretary at

B.Allen@kew.org

Advisory Assessment Panel

- **Edward Barker** – Defra Director of Natural Environment, Trees and Landscapes, Panel Chair
- **Chris Gilligan** – RBG Kew King’s Trustee, Organisation Representative
- **Alice Maynard** – Director of Future Inclusion, Senior Independent Panel Member

Ministers are assisted in their decision making by Panels.

In undertaking their assessment of candidates, the role of the Panel is to decide, objectively, who meets the published selection criteria for the role, in other words, who is appointable to the role.

The names of all appointable candidates must be submitted to Ministers. It is then for Ministers to determine merit and make the final appointment.

Conflicts of Interest and Due Diligence

If you have any interests that might be relevant to the work of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 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.

Complaints

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/>
- [Governance Code on Public Appointments](#)

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.

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 restriction order;
- you fail to declare any conflict of interest.

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.

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



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