

Briefing pack for the appointment of

Three Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Chairs: Trent, North West and Southern

CLOSING DATE: Tuesday, Noon on 30
September 2025

REFERENCE: APPT02-25



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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 via the Disability Confident logo displayed above.

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](#)) which all work to the same guidelines while considering 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).

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.

The RFCC Chairs also meet at a national level, 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

The [Trent RFCC](#) covers an area of approximately 10,500 km². Land use within the catchment is dominated by agriculture which accounts for roughly 63%. However, it is also home to approximately 6.9 million people and contains many major urban centres namely Birmingham (and the wider West Midlands conurbation), Stoke-on-Trent, Derby, Leicester, and Nottingham.

There is great variation in the physical characteristics of the area, from low lying ground, such as the broad flat flood plains of the Tame and Trent, to steep dramatic landscapes, such as those found in the Peak District National Park. As a result, the response to rainfall and the mechanism of flooding differs significantly throughout the catchment. For these reasons, the Trent RFCC champions Innovation and Natural Flood Management with two dedicated sub-groups to support and explore new ways of working.

The RFCC is committed to reducing flood risk in the area, making communities more resilient and adapting to the challenges of a changing climate, which is ever more critical with Storms such as Babet, Ciaran and Henk causing significant flooding and record-breaking river levels across the Trent Catchment.

In the East Midlands alone, the Environment Agency is working on 52 flood risk projects to return assets to the condition they were before the storms last winter, and in the West Midlands area flood defences protected 8000 properties from flooding in Burton and Tamworth in January 2025, this is in conjunction with flood defence schemes in construction, such as projects in Stoke on Trent to both protect existing homes and businesses and help regeneration in the heart of the City.

The committee consists of a Chair, 9 independent members, and 15 local authority elected members.

The [North West RFCC](#) runs from the Scottish border in the north to Cheshire in the south, from its Irish Sea coast in the west, to the steep rapidly responding Pennine catchments in the east. It has a widely varied geography including the beautiful and sparsely populated areas of Cumbria, the Lake District, and rural Cheshire, flatter drained areas with high quality agricultural land in Lancashire, a changing coastline throughout Cumbria, Lancashire and Merseyside, and the industrialised and urban areas of Manchester and Liverpool.

Over 250,000 properties (residential, commercial and community) are at risk of flooding from rivers and the sea. More significantly, around 600,000 properties are at risk of flooding from surface water. The region is regularly affected by flooding with a recent history of major events having particularly significant and widespread impacts - in 2015 (Storms Desmond and Eva), 2020 (Ciara), 2021 (Christoph), 2022 (Eunice and Franklin) and New Year 2024/25.

As well as delivering a large investment programme of flood risk management schemes to better protect people and property, the North West RFCC has always sought to be a leader in developing and progressing innovative approaches. It has funded pioneering work on natural flood management and on building resilience to flooding within communities. It does this through a programme of projects which forms its business plan.

The committee consists of a Chair, 8 independent members, and 10 local authority elected members. The 10 elected members represent 24 lead local flood authorities and 12 district councils through an underpinning structure of five sub-regional strategic flood risk partnerships. There are also links with two combined authorities.

The [Southern RFCC](#) covers coastal and inland areas from West Hampshire to East Kent and from the Isle of Wight to the London boroughs of Bexley and Bromley. It also includes the unitary authorities of Southampton, Portsmouth, Brighton & Hove, and Medway. We are amongst the regions who receive the largest amounts of government funding (£100m in 2025/26) and deliver more property protection than any other region. Southern has the longest coastline of the 12 English RFCCs, which when including the Thames Estuary totals 300km. Southern RFCC covers the South East and part of the Thames River basin district with over 3,200km of main rivers. These include the Arun, Adur, Sussex Ouse, and Rother as well as the chalk streams of the Test, Itchen, Darent, Cray and Kentish Stour.

There are 6,383 flood defence assets across Southern, including 79 pumping stations, 1,529 water level control structures, 837km of raised tidal embankments and 190km of coastal flood defences. These assets and other defences reduce risk to the natural, fluvial, and coastal floodplains as well as the communities and infrastructure within them.

The committee consists of an independent Chair (appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment), 8 independent members (including experts on conservation and coastal issues), 14 elected members from Lead Local Flood Authorities and a senior representative from the EA. Also invited to attend committee meetings are Officers from the relevant local authorities, Chairs of the South East Coastal Group and the Southern Coastal Group, senior Environment Agency staff and a representative of Southern Water.

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 is investing a record investment to protect thousands of UK homes and businesses. A record £2.65 billion will be committed over two years to build or maintain up to 1,000 flood defences, protecting more than 66,000 properties ([link](#)).
- the Environment Agency's FCERM Strategy ([link](#)).
- the Trent RFCC ([link](#)).
- the North West RFCC ([link](#)).
- the Southern RFCC ([link](#)).

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:

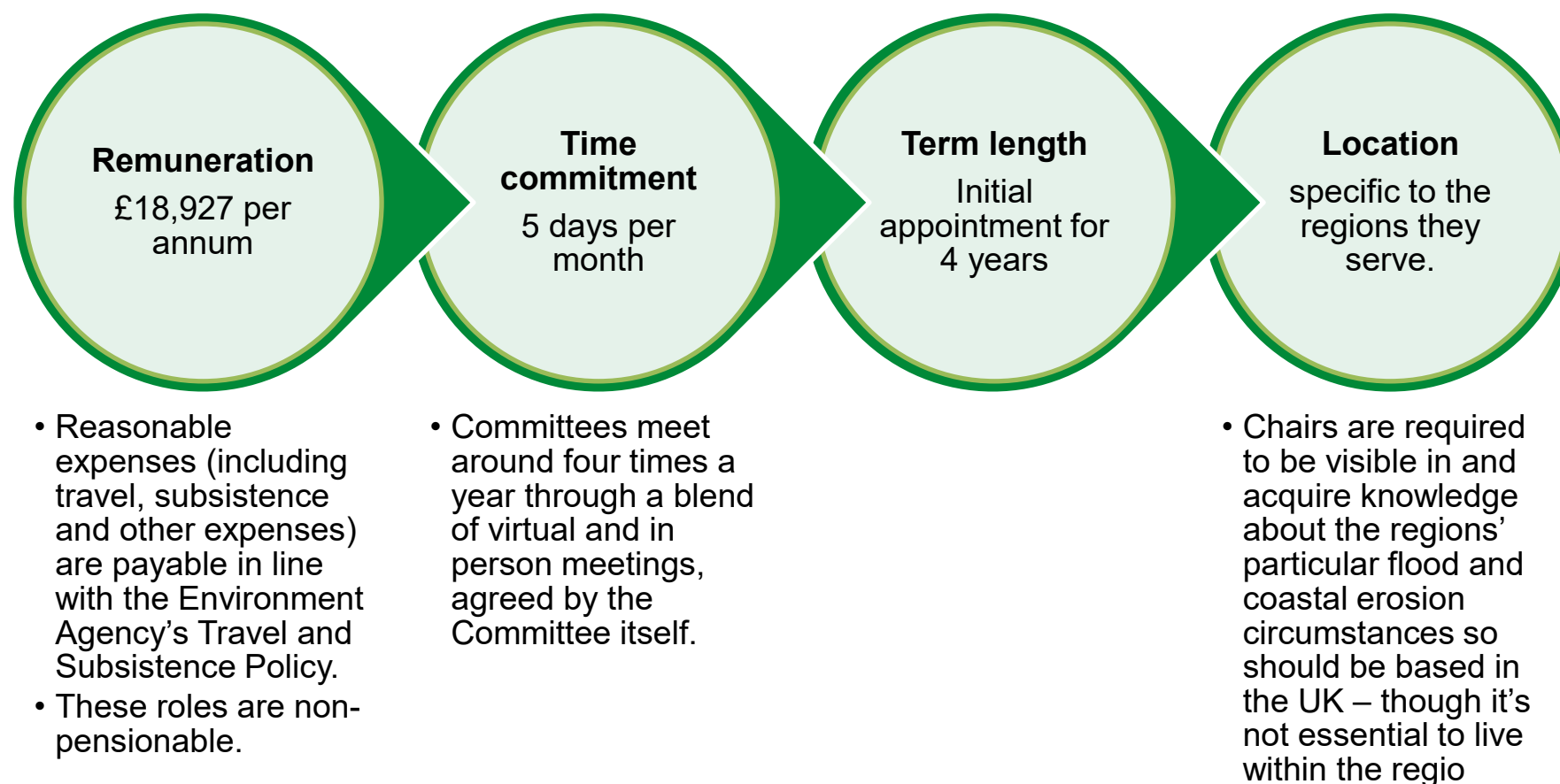
- provide strong leadership and challenge to the Committee, encouraging and enabling the Committee to effectively carry out its statutory responsibilities;
- enable all Committee members to contribute and play an effective role;
- ensure local authority representatives are clear about their annual levy 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 demonstrate strong local leadership. This includes:
 - **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).
- **Being 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 these concerns, the Chair may then:
 - ❑ report these concerns to Defra, Environment Agency, Environment Agency Board member or a mixture/all depending on who is most appropriate; and/or
 - ❑ 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](#)), and the Code of Conduct for Board Members ([link](#)).



Terms of Appointment

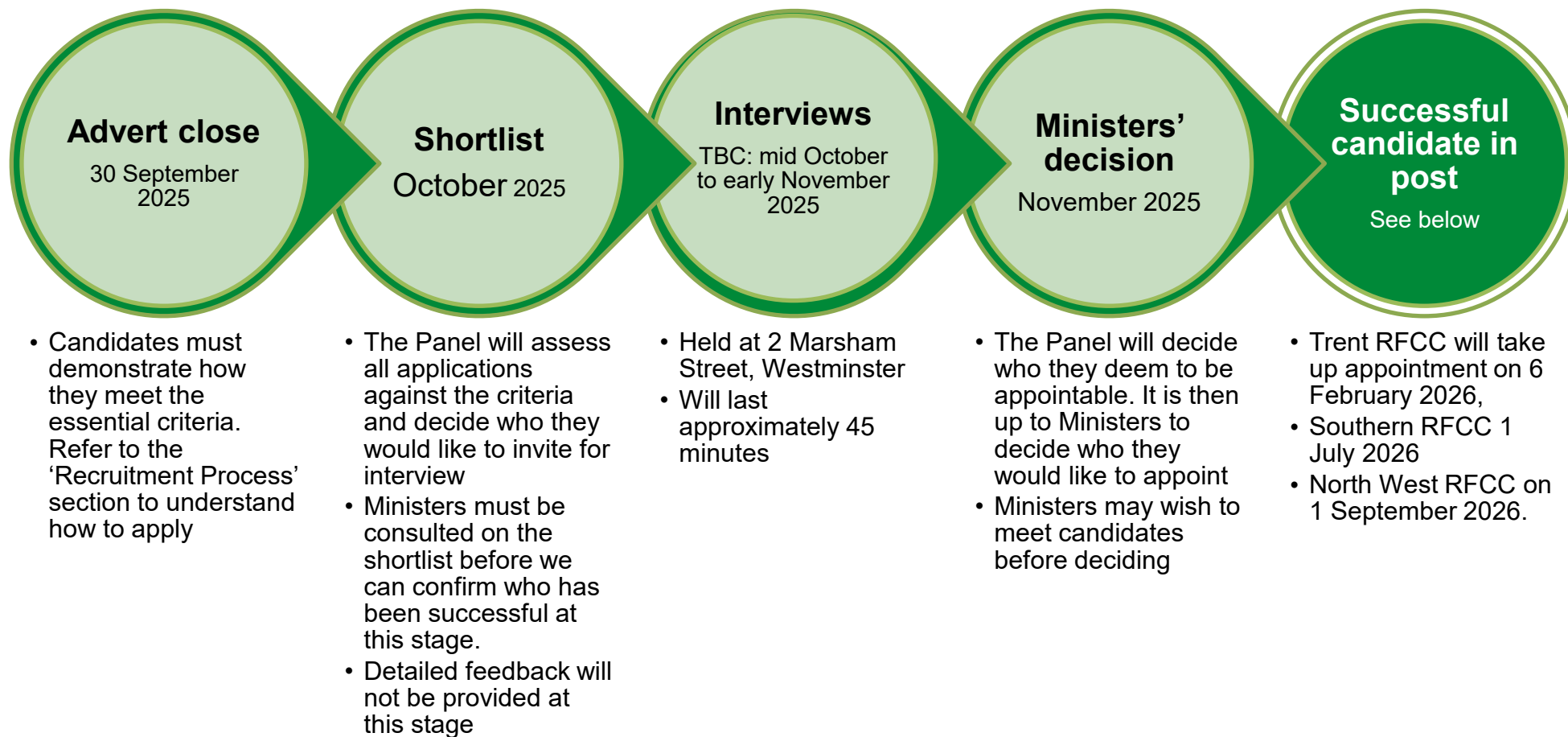
Candidates must be able to demonstrate that they are able to meet the following criteria:

- 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.
- Have a 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.

Role preference

The RFCC regions we are recruiting Chairs to are the **Trent, North West and Southern**.

Through the application process you will be able to express, if you wish, a first, second and third 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

To apply you will need to [create an account](#) or [sign in](#) to “Apply for Public Appointment Service” gov.uk **by the deadline of 30 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 by using STAR (Situation, Task, Action and Result) method approach . (max two pages please).
- diversity information
- information relating to any outside interests or reputational issues

For further information please email:

publicappts@defra.gov.uk

Advisory Assessment Panel

- **Jonathan Baker** –Floods and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Deputy Director, Defra, as Panel Chair
- **Josie Bateman** – Floods and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Director, Environment Agency
- **Jacqui Francis** – Independent Panel Member, AdinaMay Consulting

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.

To support prospective candidates we will hold a virtual event (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. The event is likely to be held in w/c 1st September and w/c 5 September 2025. If you wish to attend, please e-mail: rfcc-correspondence@defra.gov.uk for more information.

We are encouraging a diverse field of applicants, please feel free to join the event to learn more about the role.

If you are unable to join the virtual event, slides will be uploaded after the event in the advert section on the Cabinet Office website.

You may also view slides about the RFCC Chair's role from a similar event that was held earlier this year at the following link: [Intro to RFCCs and](#)

FCERM 2025

You may also contact regional offices at the following addresses to arrange discussions with the current serving Chairs:

Trent: TrentRFCC@environment-agency.gov.uk

North West: NW-RFCC@environment-agency.gov.uk

Southern: southern.rfcc@environment-agency.gov.uk

If you have any further questions, please contact us at: rfcc-correspondence@defra.gov.uk.

Conflicts of Interest and Due Diligence

If you have any interests that might be relevant to the work of the Marine Management Organisation, 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.



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

