



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Covent Garden Market Authority: Appointment of two Non-Executive Directors

Briefing pack for applicants

The closing date for the receipt of applications for this role is 09:00 am on 8 December 2025.



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Defra mission statement

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) wants Britain to be a great place to live. Our work plays a critical role in the wellbeing of everyone in the country through the creation of healthy environments, a world leading food and farming industry, a thriving rural economy and enhanced protection against floods and animal and plant diseases.

Appointing high-calibre people from diverse backgrounds, with relevant skills, knowledge and experience, to the boards of public bodies and statutory corporations will help ensure that the work of Defra and its partners is more effective, resilient and accountable and meets the needs of a modern and diverse Britain.

Equal Opportunities

UK Government has a policy of equality of opportunity. We aim to promote equal opportunity policies whereby no one suffers harassment or unfair discrimination either directly or indirectly, 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 and encourage 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. If a person with disabilities is put at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled 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 submit your application' section below.



About Covent Garden Market Authority

Covent Garden Market Authority (CGMA) is a statutory corporation set up in 1961 with a legal obligation to provide and run a bulk horticultural wholesale market. It oversaw the move in 1974 from the market's famous Covent Garden site in central London (home to a fruit and vegetable market since 1654) to its new location at Nine Elms, also in central London. CGMA owns the 38-acre site on which the market is situated and is landlord to its tenant businesses.

CGMA is overseen by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Secretary of State is responsible for the appointment of CGMA's Chair and Board. CGMA has a statutory duty to at least break even, taking one year with another, and our ambition is for it to be a thriving and profitable business. In 2024-25, CGMA had an annual revenue of £19.1m and a workforce of 28 staff members.

New Covent Garden Market today

Based in Nine Elms since 1974, New Covent Garden Market (NCGM) is London's largest wholesale fresh produce and flower market. The market supplies London's leading restaurants and florists with the highest quality fruit, vegetables, flowers and fresh produce from the UK and around the world. The market is home to 137 businesses with over 2,000 employees, and a combined turnover of £934m in 2024-25.

Redevelopment

CGMA is undertaking a long-term project to rebuild the market to meet the needs of a modern wholesale market and the customers that it serves. Redevelopment of the market was agreed in 2013 and construction started in 2015. The market redevelopment is a joint venture between developers Vinci and St. Modwen (VSM), under the terms of a development agreement with CGMA. Construction costs for the 38-acre market development are funded by the release of 18 acres of surplus land, with no expense to taxpayers.

The redevelopment is progressing at pace. The complex migration strategy for the main fruit and vegetable market, while businesses continue to trade, is advancing well, with many new units built, fitted out, and occupied. The Flower Market is thriving in its temporary home until the end of the redevelopment, and the new Food Exchange, opened in 2017, is occupied with tenant businesses that include a business incubation floor with demonstration kitchens. The Food Exchange is also the home to CGMA's offices, and commercial tenanted offices.

Following a legal dispute with tenants in 2020, a settlement was agreed which resulted in changes to the redevelopment design and rents being capped at a reduced rate until the end of the redevelopment. CGMA is therefore restricted in its profit-making abilities while redevelopment is ongoing. Defra provided a grant for the full cost of the settlement, split into annual allocations over 6 years, and paid on evidence of need.

Disengagement

It has been the policy of successive Governments since 1990 to remove NCGM from central Government control and ownership. The redevelopment of the market will facilitate the long-term policy of removing responsibility for it from central Government.

Further information

For further information about New Covent Garden Market, the redevelopment project, CGMA and its Board, please visit: <http://www.newcoventgardenmarket.com/>.

The appointment is made in accordance with the [Governance Code on Public Appointments](#) and is regulated by the [Commissioner for Public Appointments](#).

The role and person specification

Role of the Board

The CGMA Board consists of the Chair and 4-7 other members, providing strategic direction to the market through its redevelopment phase and ensuring the stability and viability of the market to enable government to disengage from responsibility of the market. In supporting the Chair to deliver the redevelopment, the Board will help lead the Authority through a period of significant change.

CGMA is a small organisation of some 28 people whose offices are situated on the market site at Nine Elms in Vauxhall in central London. There will be a minimum of 6 Board meetings and 3 Audit and Risk Committee meetings a year, as well as 2 days away as a Board and preparation time.

Key challenges for the organisation

Redevelopment project

- Successful delivery of the market redevelopment project to time and budget, in accordance with the objectives of the original business case and contractual obligations, reflecting industry needs. The redevelopment is being undertaken whilst the market continues to operate with all the attendant issues this creates.
- Ensuring the market tenants continue to have a voice, while managing expectations given CGMA's wider challenges and maintaining a focus on the market's profitability.

Market management and organisational effectiveness

- The market primarily operates from 10.00pm to 07.00am. CGMA as landlord manages services to the tenants and seeks to ensure the market is well run and that responsibilities to tenant businesses are effectively met, whilst complying with CGMA's statutory duties.
- Maximising organisational efficiency and appropriate commercial performance to ensure CGMA is well placed to be a thriving going concern and deliver value for money, both for present effectiveness and in preparation for when Government relinquishes its statutory responsibilities for the market.
- Preparing the market for the future – ensuring understanding of, and support for, the market's future direction (which will include increased rents), as well as helping the tenants manage change in the way the market operates and is run, in order to meet the needs of its evolving customer base.
- CGMA is governed by Statute and must operate in accordance with those Statutes.

About the roles

The Board requires a broad range of experience from its Non-Executive Directors. We seek two individuals with the integrity, skills and judgment necessary to deliver strategic direction at a time of significant change for New Covent Garden Market, as its redevelopment comes to an end in 2028. They will be able to command the confidence of Ministers, fellow Board members, Executive Directors, tenants and stakeholders. They will be expected to contribute to corporate decisions at a senior level and will each have a proven record, at senior level, one in:

- **Business Development**, and the other in:
- **Stakeholder Engagement**.

Demonstrable experience with similar sized businesses is important. Preferably this will include experience with tenant-based businesses and/or the fresh food and horticultural sector. Both members will be required to sit on either the Audit and Risk Committee or the Remuneration Committee.

All board members are expected to adhere to the Nolan principles governing the conduct of public servants (see Annex A).

Business Development role

The major redevelopment of the market site is now in its final phases and the development of a long-term business plan to grow value by diverse business opportunities during and following the redevelopment is critical. Building on the opportunities of the newly redeveloped market within the context of the wider regeneration project in the Vauxhall Nine Elms Battersea area will be a big focus of the new member's role, drawing on their specific business development expertise.

Essential criteria

In their applications, candidates must be able to demonstrate evidence of all of the following essential criteria:

1. Strong commercial acumen and senior (ideally Board) level knowledge of identifying potential growth opportunities, generating income and securing finance or investment, either through property or business development.
2. Proven track record of growing assets, delivering greater commerciality and sustainability through business relationships.
3. The skills necessary to deliver effective strategic direction in a growth and/or business context.
4. Demonstrable ability to guide an organisation through periods of strategic transition, (such as those relating to the end of the ongoing redevelopment), and ensure continuity of leadership and performance.

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5. Sound knowledge and expertise in good governance at senior levels in a large organisation in either the private or public sector, and an understanding of the needs and priorities of Government.

Stakeholder Engagement role

Engagement and outreach are ever important at CGMA given the value of strong relations with customers and wider stakeholders. This is particularly important given that CGMA is at a time of change with the upcoming rent review in 2027 and the end of the redevelopment in 2028.

Essential criteria

In their applications, candidates must be able to demonstrate evidence of all of the following essential criteria:

1. Proven track record of engaging effectively with a diverse group of stakeholders; with the ability to listen to multiple perspectives and build trust and support among various levels of government, business and local stakeholders.
2. Strong communication skills, a high level of personal impact, and the ability to provide constructive, independent leadership - offering both challenge and support to the Board and Executive in navigating a range of complex issues.
3. The skills necessary to deliver clear and effective strategic direction aligned with CGMA's communication goals and overall mission.
4. Demonstrable ability to guide an organisation through periods of strategic transition, such as those relating to the end of the ongoing redevelopment, and ensure continuity of leadership and performance.
5. Sound knowledge and expertise in good governance at senior levels in a large organisation in either the private or public sector, and an understanding of the needs and priorities of Government.

Terms of appointment

Period of appointment

We will be looking for successful candidates to start in April 2026. The term of the appointment will be **3 or 4 years**, to be agreed with the successful candidate. Reappointments may be made subject to satisfactory performance assessment and will be at the discretion of Defra Ministers.

Remuneration and time commitment

A non-pensionable remuneration of **£520 per day** is payable based on a time commitment of **2-3 days per month**. A per diem rate of **£431** will be paid for additional duties.

There are a minimum of 6 Board meetings a year, as well as 2 days away as a Board and preparation time (see Annex C for key dates). Reasonable travel expenses are also paid.

As the market works at night you may be required from time to time to attend at night and/or early in the morning.

Location of Offices

The Covent Garden Market Authority offices are in London, based at New Covent Garden Market on the Nine Elms site in Vauxhall.

Annual Appraisal

The Board members are subject to an annual appraisal by the Chair of CGMA.

The draft **terms and conditions** for the appointment can be supplied on request.

You must inform Defra if you have any **conflict of interest** that might affect your ability to undertake this role. You should disclose information on any relevant business interest, public appointment or position of authority, including other connections with commercial, public or voluntary bodies.

The successful candidates must abide by the principles of public service ([Annex A](#)), the 12 Principles of Governance for all Public Body Non-Executive Directors ([Annex B](#)) and the [Code of Conduct for Board members](#).

Overview of the recruitment process

The **closing date** for applications is 09:00 am on **8 December 2025**. We expect final interviews to take place in the week commencing 9 February 2026.

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:

- Adrian Cooper, Senior CGMA Sponsor, Defra, as Chair;
- Jay Doshi, Head of Portfolio Management, National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA), as the Independent Panel Member;
- Wanda Goldwag, Chair, Covent Garden Market Authority (CGMA).

The panel will assess your application to select those demonstrating the best fit with the role by considering the evidence you have provided against the essential criteria set out in the Person Specification section. Failure to address any or all of these may affect your application.

We expect to sift applications in the week commencing 12 January and hold interviews in the week commencing 9 February. Interviews are expected to take place in person at Defra in London and will last for approximately 45 minutes. Further details about the format will be provided to you in advance, should you be selected.

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.

References will be taken up for those candidates selected for interview and due diligence checks undertaken. Details about our checks are on [page 11](#) below.

These are Ministerial appointments and all candidates deemed to be appointable by the Panel may be asked to meet with Minister responsible for CGMA before a final decision is made.

How to apply and submit your application

To apply for this post please submit the following information **no later than 09:00 am on Monday 8 December 2025**.

In order to apply you will need to create an account on the Public Appointments website or sign in. To apply, you must provide:

- equality information
- information relating to any outside interests or potential reputational issues

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.

All applications must be submitted via the GatenbySanderson website.

For the Non-Executive Director (**Business Development**):

www.gatenbysanderson.com/job/GSe124942

For the Non-Executive Director (**Stakeholder Engagement**):

www.gatenbysanderson.com/job/GSe127678

- a CV of no more than two sides of A4;
- a supporting statement of not more than 1000 words (approximately two sides of A4), setting out how you meet the essential criteria – make sure you refer to the contents of this document and provide specific examples;
- e-mail addresses for two referees.

For a confidential discussion about the role to help you determine your suitability for application and/or to answer any questions you might have, please contact our recruitment advisors at GatenbySanderson:

- Zoe Bennett, zoe.bennett@gatenbysanderson.com
- Olivia Robinson, olivia.robinson@gatenbysanderson.com
- Julie Myers, julie.myers@gatenbysanderson.com

If you have any questions about **the appointments process**, you need a change to be made so that you can make your application, or require additional assistance to support you in your application, please email our recruitment advisors at the email addresses above.

Alternatively, please contact the Defra Public Appointments Team on:

✉ publicappts@defra.gov.uk

Conflicts of interest and due diligence

If you have any interests that might be relevant to the work of the Covent Garden Market Authority 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 Stefana.Baukovic@defra.gov.uk.

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

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

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.

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 our Privacy Notice, accessible through the Cabinet Office website (<https://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk>) or by requesting a copy from publicappts@defra.gov.uk.

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> or

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65c4f9a19c5b7f0012951b7a/governance_code_on_public_appointments.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/regulating-appointments/complaints-and-investigations>

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: CGMA Board members and key meetings

Members of the CGMA Board

- Wanda Goldwag (Chair)
- Sarah Calcutt
- Fiona Fell
- David Fison
- Victoria Wilson
- Jo Wright

Meetings currently scheduled for 2026

Board Meetings	ARAC Meetings	RemCo Meetings
29 January		
26 February	19 February	
26 March		23 March
30 April	23 April	
20 May		
25 June		22 June
29 July	21 July	
24 September		
29 October		14 October
26 November	18 November	



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