



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Appointment of the Chair of Natural England

Briefing pack for applicants

Closing Date: Extended to 12 noon 24 September 2018

Reference: APT08-18



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Ministerial message to candidates

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in becoming the new Chair of Natural England. This is a great opportunity for a high calibre leader to help shape the future of this substantial organisation at an exciting time.

The Government has set out a clear ambition, in our 25 year plan for the environment launched earlier this year to be the first generation that leaves the environment in a better state than we found it. Natural England has a vital role to play in helping achieve this objective; through its responsibility to protect and enhance the natural environment. It is responsible for licensing, incentivising and advising on conservation on land and in the marine environment. Natural England is working with Defra and other delivery partners on EU exit – to secure the opportunity to develop a better approach to protecting and enhancing the natural environment and our farming and fishing industries and to ensure that new policies are implemented effectively.

I am looking for an ambitious new Chair for Natural England; a strong and visible leader who is passionate about the environment, has the ability to lead a substantial operational delivery organisation effectively and efficiently with a customer focus, and can respond to new opportunities and priorities and drive change and innovation.

If you have the skills, passion and experience to lead Natural England, whatever your background, we very much look forward to hearing from you.

Michael Gove
Secretary of State for the Environment



About the Defra Group

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 our public bodies will help us to ensure that our work is more effective, resilient and accountable.

Natural England is the Government's advisor for the natural environment in England, helping to protect England's nature and landscapes for people to enjoy and for the services they provide.

Natural England is part of the Defra group. The Defra group comprises of the core Department and a range of public bodies operating at various lengths from the core Department. This includes Executive Agencies, Non-Departmental Public Bodies, Non-Ministerial Departments and other public bodies.

Equal Opportunities

UK government has a policy of equality of opportunity. We aim to promote equal opportunity policies whereby no one suffers unfair discrimination either directly or indirectly, or harassment, on grounds such as race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or age.

Diversity

We positively welcome applicants from all backgrounds. All public appointments are made on merit following a fair and open competition as regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Disability

We guarantee to interview anyone with a disability whose application meets the minimum criteria for the post. By 'minimum criteria' we mean that you must provide us with evidence in your application which demonstrates that you

generally meet the level of competence required

for each criterion, as well as meeting any of the qualifications, skills or experience defined as essential. The Cabinet Office is committed to the employment and career development of disabled people (the minimum criteria means the essential competences as set out in the advertisement for the post). To show this we use the Disability Confident symbol awarded by Jobcentre Plus.

The Context

Natural England plays a key role in delivering the environmental priorities of central government. Its general purpose is to ensure that the natural

environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development. Natural England forms part of the Defra Group and has its own powers and duties, exercising advisory and regulatory responsibilities

at arm's length from Ministers. Natural England is accountable to Defra's Secretary of State for the delivery of its objectives.

This is an exciting time for Natural England. In January 2018, the Government published '[A Green Future: Our 25 year plan to improve the environment](#)'. This set out an ambition to be the first generation that leaves the environment in a better state than we found it, and identifies some of the key steps we will need to take to reverse the decline in biodiversity and improve the health of our habitats and soils. As the Government's advisor for the natural environment Natural England has a key role in delivering this plan.

This is also a time of rapid change. The UK's departure from the EU requires us to ensure that we have a fully functioning framework to protect and enhance our natural environment. The Government has carried out a consultation -



[Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit](#) - on how

we might change the framework of support to farmers and land managers as we leave the Common Agricultural Policy. Future financial support for farming should see public money paying for public goods – principally, environmental outcomes. Again, Natural England plays a key role, through its evidence and advisory capability and as one of the principal delivery organisations within the Defra group.

As Chair of the Board your leadership will be essential in driving ambitious plans with the senior leadership of the organisation. You will be able to share your experience and enthusiasm for the natural environment, be able to work collaboratively and in partnership nationally, as well as locally, with stakeholders and staff alike.

The leadership and strategic challenges the Chair will need to meet include:

- ensuring strong collaborative and collective leadership to work effectively across the Defra Group to achieve integrated delivery (including on agri-environment, biodiversity and marine);
- embedding and driving delivery of the 25 year plan vision, and ensure Natural England responds swiftly and effectively to the new opportunities and priorities being shaped by EU Exit;
- driving innovation, both to improve delivery and to help shape the future (post-EU) delivery model; and
- re-focussing the work of Natural England, following the transfer of processing of

Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship applications and payments to the Rural Payments Agency with an emphasis on efficient and effective delivery.

The Role

The Chair provides leadership and strategic vision for the Board, sets the overall strategic operational direction of Natural England, ensures good governance and, with the Board, holds the executive to account.

The Chair will promote a positive and constructive relationship with everyone that works with Natural England including farmers and other land managers, business and industry, planners and developers, and a wide range of interest groups and local communities as well as Other

Government Departments, regulators and local government.

As Chair you have the following responsibilities:

- responsibility to the Secretary of State for the overall leadership, direction and effectiveness of Natural England, ensuring that its policies and actions are in line with Government's strategic priorities and its affairs are conducted with probity;
- chairing and leading the Board in all its work,

The Board

managing its business and formulating the Board's strategy;

- building and maintaining an effective, cohesive and focussed Board, including annually assessing the performance of members and committees;
- ensuring that the Board, in reaching decisions, takes proper account of guidance provided by the responsible Minister or the department (and other relevant information or evidence);
- driving collaborative working within the Defra group (and with other government departments) to make the best use of resources available and to maximise outcomes and benefits;
- driving increased efficiency and effectiveness;
- representing Natural England to Ministers, partner and stakeholder organisations as well as the general public, and promoting and maintaining effective customer, stakeholder and partner relationships at the strategic level to support the achievement of Natural England's aims;
- ensuring effective governance across the Board following best practice and in line with

the requirements in Natural England's [framework document](#);

- promoting a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion on the Board as well as more widely in Natural England;
- leading the Board in its relationship with the Executive, and in particular the Chief Executive, providing support but constructively challenging when necessary; and
- participating effectively on the [Defra Board](#)

and [Joint Nature Conservation Committee](#) as an *ex-officio* Non-Executive Director.

The Board of Natural England sets the strategic direction of the organisation and ensures that it contributes to delivery of the Government's policies for the natural environment in England. It ensures the correct, efficient and effective use of Natural England's resources, including its public funding and income from fees and charges. The Board is crucial in constructively challenging and holding the Executive to account.

The Board of Natural England includes a Chair and must have no fewer than 8 and no more than 15 other members.

As the Chair of the Board you will be responsible for the [effective overall leadership](#) of the Natural England Board so that it is able to address challenges faced by the organisation and fulfil its collective responsibility to:

- establish and take forward the strategic aims and objectives of Natural England;
- set the long-term direction for the Executive team and the tone and pace needed to deliver the agreed strategies and plans;

- agree an Action Plan for each year that sets out Natural England's specific delivery commitments and approving the appropriate allocation of resources;
- receive and review regular performance information concerning the ongoing delivery of Natural England against its agreed Action Plan;
- ensure that Ministers are kept informed of any changes which are likely to impact on the strategic direction of Natural England or on the attainability of its targets, and determining the steps needed to deal with such changes; and.
- ensure that effective and high standards of corporate governance are in place at all times.

Further information about the Board including its current membership can be found at [Annex A](#).

The Natural England [framework document](#) outlines the specific requirements for the Board and Leadership as part of the Natural England Governance [structures and processes](#).

For more details about Natural England's responsibilities and priorities see the latest [annual report](#) and the [Natural England website](#).

The Person

We are looking for someone who shows:

- strong and visible leadership with an ability to deliver change, and drive efficiency,

Essential criteria

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

- An ability and capacity to lead and represent Natural England strategically, giving a clear sense of overall vision, strategic direction and purpose and providing support to the Executive team with constructive challenge;

effectiveness and a customer focus in a substantial organisation;

- a passion for the natural environment, and an understanding of the benefits it offers to people;
- the ability to command confidence and respect at the highest level including with Ministers across Government and partners, marshalling arguments and evidence around the benefits that the natural environment offers economically and socially as well as environmentally;
- the interpersonal and communication skills to engage, enthuse and inspire a wide cross section of people and organisations including staff and delivery partners as well as the wider public;
- clear strategic, innovative and creative thinking;
- a collaborative style, ready to work with partners across sectors to deliver Government's long term objectives;
- the ability to support and challenge others in a constructive manner, including working with the Chief Executive Officer and the Defra Board; and
- probity, integrity and a commitment to public service values.

The successful candidate must abide by the Seven Principles of Public Life (attached at [Annex B](#)) and the [Code of Conduct for Board members](#).

- Significant business acumen and experience working with complex delivery organisations and driving change, including a proven track record at a senior level in the private, public or voluntary sector in a comparable organisation;
- An interest in and an existing understanding – or a capacity to quickly develop an understanding - of environmental issues, the work of Natural England and how it can improve the natural environment and contribute to a range of Government priorities;
- An ability to build an effective team culture, productive relationships, and create consensus around practical solutions both within the Board and in the way the wider organisation does business; and
- Experience and insight in delivering a top quality service to customers and of building resilient and collaborative networks with key partners.

About Natural England

Natural England is the government’s independent advisor on the natural environment. It provides practical advice and leadership, grounded in science, to help safeguard England’s nature, landscapes and seas, for people to enjoy and for the services they provide.

Created by an Act of Parliament in 2006, Natural England is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body, sponsored by Defra, employing around 2,300 people.

Its general purpose is: “To ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development”. Our varied roles include:

- promoting nature conservation and protecting biodiversity (e.g. encouraging people to manage land in environmentally beneficial ways);
- securing facilities for the scientific study and enjoyment of the natural environment (e.g. designating and helping to care for more than 4,000 National Nature Reserves and Sites of Specific Scientific Interest, from the Lizard in Cornwall to Lindisfarne in Northumberland);
- promoting access to the countryside and open spaces and encouraging open-air recreation (e.g. creating the 2,700-mile England Coast Path

by 2020 – the longest continuous coastal footpath in the world); and

- contributing in other ways to social and economic well-being through management of the natural environment (e.g. advising planners and developers to secure sustainable development and benefits for wildlife and habitat, such as the expansion of Abberton Reservoir in Essex).

Responsibilities

Natural England has a broad set of statutory responsibilities as:

- the government’s statutory advisor for the natural environment in England, informing the development of policy to enable Defra’s strategic objective of creating a ‘great place to live’, creating conditions in which nature and our economy can thrive together;
- advisor and regulator. It works at a local level with decision-makers and communities, using evidence, technical expertise and local knowledge to help people enhance and enjoy their natural environments; and
- the delivery body for a range of key government programmes – including biodiversity improvement, the ‘Blue Belt’ of marine protection and the creation of the England Coast Path.

Terms of appointment

The Chair is expected to spend the equivalent of two days per week on Natural England business. This includes preparing for meetings and travelling time.

There is no set location for the role and it will be dependent on the successful candidate. The role can combine working from home or the office with attendance at meetings in Westminster and various other locations.

The new Chair will be expected to attend around nine meetings of the Natural England Board per year, as well as relevant committee meetings and visits. Board meetings are held across the country in local Natural England offices.

The Natural England Chair is also an *ex officio* Non-Executive member of the Defra Board and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

The remuneration is £546 per day (£141,960 pro rata) for a time commitment of 104 days per annum or 2 days per week. The appointment is non-pensionable. Reasonable travel expenses are paid.

The appointment will be for up to three years. Reappointments may be made subject to satisfactory performance assessment and will be at the discretion of the Secretary of State.

The recruitment process

Strategic Direction

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan sets the ambition to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better place. Natural England has a key role in fulfilling this goal, working with government, NGO's and local people to improve natural capital. Its [Conservation 21](#) strategy sets out how it can contribute to delivering the 25 Year Plan through three guiding principles:

- focussing on a larger scale - to **create resilient landscapes and seas**, thinking about ecological networks, landscapes and ecosystems in an integrated way.
- putting **people at the heart of the natural environment** – helping people recognise the importance of the natural environment to their daily lives, forging local partnerships to help develop strategies that deliver local results.

- embracing the concept of **natural capital** as a way of understanding society gains from the natural environment, to secure long-term sustainable environmental investment.

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

The closing date for applications is noon on 24 September. We expect to have shortlisted by 4 October, with Panel interviews on 29 and 31 October.

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 Clare Moriarty (Permanent Secretary, Defra) as

chair, Elizabeth Buchanan (Non-Executive Director, Defra), Dame Fiona Reynolds (Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge) and Lord Bew (Chair of the Committee on Standards in Public Life) as the Senior Independent Panel Member.

At the shortlist meeting the Panel will assess each application against the [essential criteria](#) and decide who to invite for final interview.

Interviews will be held at Defra's offices in Westminster and will last for approximately 45

minutes. Further details about the format will be provided to you in advance.

Candidates considered appointable by the Panel will be asked to have an individual meeting with the Secretary of State on 13 November. The decision on which of the candidates to appoint will be made by the Secretary of State. All interviewees will be advised in writing of the outcome of the interview.

The recruitment process continued

This role is subject to a joint pre-appointment scrutiny hearing by the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Efra) and Environmental Audit (EAC) Select Committees. The Secretary of State's preferred candidate will be invited to attend a hearing at Efra and EAC's request and it is expected that this will be in December 2018. The preferred candidate will be supported by Defra and Natural England in advance of this hearing. If you require more information on pre-appointment scrutiny then Cabinet Office have issued [guidance](#).

Campaign timeline

Advert deadline	24 September
Shortlist meeting	4 October
Interviews	29 & 31 October
Ministerial meeting	13 November
Efra/EAC hearing	December (TBC)

How to apply and submit your application

To apply, please send the following to Publicappts@defra.gsi.gov.uk by the deadline of **12 noon on 24 September** quoting reference 'APT08-18':

- A CV of not more than two sides of A4;
- A supporting statement of not more than 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;
- Contact details of two referees;
- Completed diversity monitoring form;
- Completed conflicts of interest, conduct and political activity monitoring form (please note section on [Conflicts of interest and due diligence](#) below).

If you have any questions about the appointments process please contact Andrew Morris, Public Appointments Team on 020 802 66562 or publicappts@defra.gsi.gov.uk

For an informal discussion about the role please contact Mick Oliver, Natural England on 07768 291446 or Mick.J.Oliver@naturalengland.org.uk

Completed applications should be sent by email to Publicappts@defra.gsi.gov.uk by the deadline of **12 noon on 24 September 2018**. Please quote reference 'APT08-18'

Conflicts of interest and due diligence

If you have any interests that might be relevant to the work of Natural England, 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 publically 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.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/578498/governance_code_on_public_appointments_16_12_2016.pdf

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 full details of the complaints process for public

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/>

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/complaintsand-investigations/>

Annex A – Current membership of the Board

Andrew Sells (Chair) [biography](#)

James Cross (Chief Executive, *ex officio* board member) [biography](#)

Lord Blencathra (Deputy Chair) [biography](#)

Dr Julia Aglionby [biography](#)

Dr Andy Clements [biography](#)

Teresa Dent CBE [biography](#)

Catherine Dugmore [biography](#)

Professor Sue Hartley [biography](#)

Dr Joe Horwood* [biography](#)

Dr Simon Lyster [biography](#)

Henry Robinson [biography](#)

Marian Spain [biography](#)

Professor Michael Winter OBE [biography](#)

*Dr Joe Horwood's final term will end on 30 September 2018

Annex B – 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.



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