



Chair of the RPA's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee & Non-Executive member of the Management Board

About the Rural Payments Agency (RPA)

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) is an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

Established in October 2001 as an accredited European Union (EU) Paying Agency, the RPA is responsible for making direct aid and rural development payments to farmers in England. It is also the paying agency for market support measures across the United Kingdom under the authority of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and as appropriate in agreement with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Northern Ireland. The RPA also has responsibility for livestock identification and traceability services within Great Britain.

Following the EU referendum and until exit negotiations are concluded, the UK remains a full member of the European Union. During this time RPA and Defra will continue to negotiate, implement and apply EU legislation. It will be for the Government to begin negotiations to exit the EU. The outcome of these negotiations will determine what arrangements apply in relation to EU legislation and funding in future once the UK has left the EU. RPA will work with Defra to provide expertise, advice and guidance relevant to the work of the agencies in these future negotiations.

The role and structure of the RPA's Management Board & Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

The post will see you become chair of RPA's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and a Non-Executive member of RPA's Management Board, and Defra Group's Audit and Risk Committee.

Non-Executive Directors advise, challenge and provide independent advice to RPA's Management Board to ensure that the most appropriate strategy and development plan is being designed by the organisation. You will provide a high level of insight into the issues facing the rural economy and will offer a balanced view based on their leadership position within the agricultural sector.

RPA Management Board

The role of the RPA Management Board is to ensure that effective arrangements are in place to provide assurance on risk management, governance and internal controls. It has no executive responsibility and acts to provide independent, expert advice and challenge to the Chief Executive Officer. The Board will provide advice on strategy and the deliverability of policies and key objectives (agreed annually with the Ministers) achieving value for money, scrutinise performance and provide support and challenge in the delivery of RPA responsibilities and the exercise of the Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) responsibilities as Accounting Officer. The Board takes into account guidance issued by the Department and will receive and review regular financial information concerning the management of the RPA; and provides positive assurance to the department that appropriate action has been taken on such concerns.



The RPA Management Board is chaired by a lead Non-Executive Director. It comprises of three other Non-Executive Members, four Executive Directors (including the CEO) and Defra's Corporate Customer. The Board meets a minimum of 6 times a year

RPA Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC)

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) is a committee of the RPA Management Board. It has no executive responsibility and acts solely as an advisory committee to the Management Board and to the Accounting Officer.

Its aim is to support and advise on issues of risk, control and governance within the agency. The role of Non-Executive Directors is to largely provide an effective challenge function to the executive. They have a responsibility to ensure the audit programme is focused on Agency priorities so that they can assure the Accounting Officer that appropriate controls are in place and operating effectively. Non-Executive Directors also play a key role in ensuring high standards of financial probity and corporate governance.

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will meet at least four times a year and will be scheduled at key points along the accounts timetable. The Chair of the ARAC may convene additional meetings when they consider it necessary, or at the request of other members.

Membership comprises of 3 Non-Executive Directors (including the Chair) and is normally attended by the Finance Director, Head of Internal Audit, Defra Internal Audit and the National Audit Office. Committee members can also meet without others present should the occasion arise.

Defra Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

The Defra Audit and Risk Assurance Committee is a sub-committee of the Defra Board and advises the Defra Board and the Principal Accounting Officer (the Permanent Secretary) on issues of risk, control and governance.

The Committee comprises of 2 Defra Non-Executive Board members plus 4 ex-officio members.

The role of the Chair of RPA's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and a Non-Executive member of RPA's Management Board, and Defra Group's Audit and Risk Committee

The role of the Chair is to:

- Support the RPA Management Board Chair to provide expert advice, support and constructive challenge, bringing external experience and expertise to the Board's decisions on strategic and operational issues.
- Support the RPA Management Board Chair by providing advice on finance, risks and governance issues.
- Attend Board meetings and maintain a high standard of discussion and debate, helping to steer the Agency by collective working.
- Chair RPA's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and attend Defra Group's Audit and Risk Committee.



- Contribute to the delivery of the Annual Report and Accounts and Business Plans.
- Communicate regularly with the other Non-Executive Directors and senior officials

The role of a Non-Executive Director is to:

- Provide scrutiny and constructive challenge on performance, operational issues including operational and delivery implications of policy.
- Attend Board and / or Committee meetings and maintain a high standard of discussion and debate, helping to steer the agency by collective working.
- Ensure compliance with the Corporate Governance Code, Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies and rules relating to the use of public funds and conflicts of interest. Any deviations from the Codes are adequately explained.
- Ensure that the Board obtains and considers all appropriate information through close collaboration with the Chair.
- To meet regularly with the other Non-Executive Directors to ensure their views are understood and that the Chair is made aware of any concerns.

Expected behaviours of individual Board members

In addition to the Seven Principles of Public Life detailed in Annex A, Board members are expected to:

- Comply at all times with the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies and with the rules relating to the use of public funds and to conflicts of interest;
- Not misuse information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or for political profit, nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests or those of connected persons or organisations;
- Comply with the board's rules on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality, and of business appointments; and
- Act in good faith and in the best interests of the RPA.



Terms of Appointment

Appointments follow civil service protocol and are for a fixed term of between one to three years. Thereafter, whilst not automatic, an extension period of up to three years may be granted. Appointments beyond six years will only be considered exceptionally.

You will be expected to devote approximately **thirty (30) days per year** to your duties. This allows for attendance at Board and Committee meetings, involvement in Board sub-committees, associated preparation time and other ad hoc Management Board events/advisory support to executives. Meetings generally take place in Reading or London.

During your appointment as a Non-Executive Director, you must not put yourself in a position of conflict with your duties to the Agency. You are also expected to adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life (Annex A)

Remuneration will be £500 per day along with reimbursement of travel and subsistence. This appointment is not pensionable with any fees and expenses subject to tax and National Insurance.

Person Specification

The vacancy is for a Non-Executive Chair of the RPA Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (meets 4 times a year) and member of the RPA Management Board (meets 6 times a year), and the Defra Group's Audit Risk Committee (meets 4 times a year).

Essential criteria

We are particularly interested in individuals who can offer the following skills and experiences:

- A formal accounting qualification and relevant accounting, auditing or risk experience to complement the existing range of skills on the Committee
- A good understanding of government and experience of serving on an Audit Committee and / or Board meetings
- Be familiar with current approaches to risk management, internal control and corporate governance
- Experience of dealing with internal and external audit

Desirable criteria

- Knowledge of the farming industry and rural community.

Personal Attributes

- Integrity, probity and high ethical standards, with a comprehensive understanding of the principles of governance and systems of control, and how to apply them appropriately
- An ability to maintain a sense of perspective and to pick out critical issues, and to question intelligently, debate constructively, challenge rigorously and decide dispassionately



- Independence of mind and sound judgement, together with the ability to provide impartial, objective and pragmatic advice
- Sufficient strength of character to seek and obtain full and satisfactory answers within the environment of the Committee, and to influence effectively outside of RPA
- A good communicator, able to represent the RPA and articulate its purpose clearly, with well-developed influencing skills and personal credibility
- A commitment to the 7 principles of public life, together with the willingness and availability to devote the necessary time to understand the business dynamics and context

Application instructions

If you wish to apply for this post, please supply the following:

- 1) A copy of your CV, including your current postal and email address and contact telephone (mobile and home) number(s).
- 2) A covering letter outlining how your experience matches the requirements for this post. Please note the **closing date for applications is [TBC]**.

These should be returned to Alec Harris by:-

- email (preferable) to Alec.Harris@rpa.gsi.gov.uk
- or by post to Alec Harris, RPA, Eden Bridge House, Lowther Street, Carlisle, CA3 8DX

Short-listing will determine which candidates best demonstrate the specified qualities and experience, who will then be invited for interview to be held on [TBC]. Please could you let Alec know if your availability on these dates will be an issue.

Queries

Any enquiries can be directed to Alec on 020 776 43569 or at the above email address

Referees

References may be taken up prior to appointment.



Annex A: Seven Principles of Public Life

Selflessness: Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity: Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity: In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability: Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness: Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty: Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.