Appointment of Executive Director, Strategy, Transformation & Assurance

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Contents

1 Introduction from Philip Duffy
2 About us
3 The role
4 Key responsibilities & activities
5 Person specification
6 Diversity & inclusivity
7 Terms of appointment
8 Additional benefits
9 How to apply
10 Further information

Introduction from Philip Duffy (Chief Executive)

Thank you for your interest in joining the Environment Agency as our Executive Director, Strategy, Transformation & Assurance.

The Environment Agency plays a critical role at the heart of public life in England. Our work – protecting communities from flooding, improving water quality, regulating industry and helping the country respond to climate change – has never been more important, or more visible. We operate in a complex environment, balancing environmental priorities, economic growth and public expectations, often under significant scrutiny.

This is a pivotal moment for the organisation. We are strengthening our performance, continuing to build our organisational capability, and ensuring we are equipped to respond to the scale and pace of the environmental challenges we face. At the same time, we are working closely with government and partners across the system to deliver shared national priorities, in particular the work on Water Reform and our mission to tackle Waste Crime.

The Executive Director, Strategy, Transformation & Assurance is a critical role within this context. It sits at the centre of the organisation, connecting strategy with delivery, and ensuring we operate as a coherent, high-performing system. The role brings together oversight of strategy, transformation, governance and corporate services, with a clear focus on enabling our operational teams to deliver effectively for the communities we serve.

We are looking for a leader who combines strong judgement with practical delivery focus. This role requires someone who can operate confidently in a politically complex and fast-moving environment, build trusted relationships across government, and support the organisation in navigating competing priorities with clarity and balance. It also requires a leader who is comfortable maintaining grip on performance and delivery, while driving longer-term organisational improvement.

You do not need to be a technical specialist in any one function, but you will bring sufficient breadth and experience to provide effective leadership and challenge across a wide portfolio. Above all, you will be motivated by public service, committed to delivering outcomes, and able to lead with credibility, resilience and integrity.

We have made strong progress in recent years and have a committed and capable leadership team in place. This role offers a unique opportunity to shape the next phase of the Environment Agency's development and to make a meaningful impact on some of the most important issues facing the country.

I hope you will consider joining us and our mission.

About us

The Environment Agency works to create better places for people and wildlife, and supports sustainable development. We were established in 1996 to protect and improve the environment. We have over 13,000 employees, our head office is in Bristol and we have offices across England.

Within England we are responsible for:

- regulating major industry and waste
- treatment of contaminated land
- water quality and resources
- fisheries
- inland river, estuary and harbour navigations
- conservation and ecology

We are also responsible for managing the risk of flooding from main rivers, reservoirs, estuaries and the sea. Lead local flood authorities (LLFAs) are responsible for managing the risk of flooding from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses and lead on community recovery.

Our priorities are to:

- work with businesses and other organisations to manage the use of resources
- increase the resilience of people, property and businesses to the risks of flooding and coastal erosion
- protect and improve water, land and biodiversity
- improve the way we work as a regulator to protect people and the environment and support sustainable growth

In July last year we published a strategy that sets out our vision for the Environment Agency over the next 5 years and beyond. As part of that we renewed our three strategic goals to reflect the challenges of today:

1. **Healthy air, land and water supporting nature's recovery** - now recognises our contribution to reversing nature's decline
2. **Sustainable growth** - is now more closely aligned with our statutory role to support sustainable development, and the government's vital growth mission
3. **A nation resilient to climate change** - continues to show how our work on water supply and flood are vital to tackling climate change

We work with government, local councils, businesses, civil society groups and communities to make our environment a better place for people and wildlife.

We have hugely dedicated and professional employees and we are committed to promoting equality and diversity in all we do, and to valuing the diversity of our workforce, customers and communities.

We're committed to helping our people to find new ways of working and to maintain our focus on creating a better place for people and wildlife. For more information on the Environment Agency and what we do, please visit:

environmentagencycareers.co.uk

About us - Environment Agency - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Gov.uk | Twitter | Facebook | LinkedIn | Instagram | YouTube

The role

We are looking to recruit an Executive Director, Strategy, Transformation and Assurance to join the Environment Agency.

Job purpose:
The Executive Director, Strategy, Transformation & Assurance (ED, STA) is a pivotal leadership role at the heart of the Environment Agency, reporting directly to the Chief Executive and serving as a member of the Executive Team.

This is a unique opportunity to shape the strategic direction and performance of one of the UK's most important public organisations, responsible for protecting communities and improving the environment. The ED, STA plays a central role in ensuring that the Agency's long-term ambitions are translated into clear priorities and delivered effectively across a large, complex and nationally significant organisation.

Bringing together strategy, transformation, governance, assurance and corporate services, the role ensures the organisation operates as an integrated, high-performing system. Working across organisational boundaries, the postholder will align policy, strategy and operational delivery - ensuring the Agency remains focused on achieving meaningful outcomes for the environment and the people it serves.

The role operates at the intersection of delivery and government, requiring confident navigation of a high-profile, politically sensitive and fast-moving landscape. The ED, STA will work closely with the Chief Executive, Chair and Board to manage competing priorities, respond to government expectations and maintain organisational clarity and momentum. Building trusted relationships with senior stakeholders across government, including Defra, will be critical to success.

A key part of the role is leading organisational transformation - ensuring that change is purposeful, prioritised and delivers real improvements in capability, performance and resilience. The ED, STA will also provide leadership oversight of corporate services, ensuring they are aligned, effective and enable delivery, with a strong focus on integration rather than functional silos.

This is a broad and hands-on executive role, combining external influence with internal leadership. The successful candidate will be equally comfortable engaging at the centre of government and maintaining a strong grip on organisational delivery. Ultimately, the ED, STA will play a critical role in ensuring the Environment Agency is strategically aligned, operationally effective and equipped to respond to the challenges of a complex and evolving environmental, regulatory and policy landscape.

Key responsibilities & activities

- Contribute to the strategic leadership and overall direction of the Environment Agency as a member of the Executive Team.
- Lead the development and articulation of organisational strategy, ensuring alignment between strategic priorities, policy context and operational delivery.
- Support the translation of strategy into clear, prioritised plans, ensuring delivery is focused on outcomes for customers, communities and the environment.
- Provide oversight of governance, performance and assurance frameworks, ensuring clarity of accountability and effective organisational decision-making.
- Support the Chief Executive, Chair and Board in managing political sensitivities, competing priorities and cross-government relationships.
- Build and maintain effective relationships with senior stakeholders across government, including Defra and other departments, to support delivery of organisational and government priorities.
- Lead and coordinate organisational transformation activity, ensuring initiatives are aligned, prioritised and contribute to improved performance and capability.
- Provide oversight of corporate services functions (including HR, Finance, Digital/IT and related services), ensuring they are effective, appropriately aligned and support organisational delivery.
- Oversee the Agency's relationship with Defra in relation to corporate services and accountability arrangements, ensuring services meet organisational needs.
- Work closely with operational leadership to ensure alignment between strategy, corporate enablers and delivery.
- Promote a culture of continuous improvement, learning and evidence-based decision-making across the organisation.
- Maintain a balanced focus on external engagement and internal execution, ensuring sustained organisational performance in a complex environment.

Person specification

The successful Executive Director, Strategy, Transformation & Assurance will possess:

Essential

- Significant senior leadership experience in a complex, multi-stakeholder organisation, with a track record of delivering operational outcomes through others.
- Strong political awareness and judgement, with experience operating effectively in a high-profile, politically sensitive and fast-changing environment.
- Experience of working within, alongside, or engaging with government and regulatory environments, with the ability to understand and respond to public policy and political priorities.
- Proven ability to build trusted relationships with senior stakeholders, including government departments such as Defra, and to support senior leaders in managing political sensitivities and competing priorities.
- Demonstrated experience of delivering or enabling operational performance in an executive agency, local government, regulated sector or similarly outcome-focused environment, with a focus on accountability and grip.
- Sufficient experience of corporate services and/or transformation delivery (e.g. IT, HR, Finance, or business change) to provide confident oversight and challenge, without requiring deep functional specialism.
- Strong understanding of governance, assurance and accountability frameworks, with the ability to drive performance, clarity of roles and effective decision-making across a complex organisation.

Desirable

- Experience of working within the environmental sector, or on environmental or regulatory policy issues.
- Understanding of the Defra group and its operating context.
- Experience of working in a regulatory or delivery organisation subject to public and political scrutiny.
- Experience of improving or professionalising corporate or enabling functions within a complex organisation.
- Broad cross-functional experience, or deep expertise in a single function complemented by strong organisational understanding.

Diversity & inclusivity

Our commitment
We value difference and welcome everyone. We aim to create a diverse workforce reflecting the UK population and are committed to equal opportunities. We particularly welcome applications from underrepresented groups including BAME communities, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals, women, and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Our culture: how we do things

- One team, one mission: create a better place
- Focus on outcomes and deliver commitments
- Think big, act early, be visible
- Seek partnership, show leadership, take responsibility
- Innovate, move fast, stay agile
- Value difference, include everyone
- Be kind, stay safe and grow

Disability Confident Employer: The EA is an accredited 'Disability Confident Employer' under the government's Disability Confident Scheme which denotes organisations that have a positive commitment towards disabled people.

We guarantee to interview anyone with a disability whose application meets the minimum criteria for the role. If you wish to claim a guaranteed interview, you should declare so at the point you submit your application.

Reasonable Adjustments: Available during interviews and employment.
Disability Leave: Supporting management of health conditions
Zero Tolerance: For bullying, harassment and discrimination
Employee Networks: Supporting BAME, Disability, LGBTQ+, Faith, Gender Equality, Mental Health, and more

Flexible working: We consider flexible working patterns for all positions, including job sharing.
We recruit based on merit through fair, open and equal selection processes.

Watch the video below to hear from some of our employees, and hear about their experience with us: Value difference: include everyone - YouTube

Terms of appointment

The role is a permanent appointment.

Salary and benefits

Join us in this role and you will enjoy the following benefits:

Grade Rate: £130k – £150k

Location: London, 2 Marsham Street (min 2 days a week) with occasional travel to other locations for Board and Executive Team meetings.

Hours of work: 37 hours

Leave entitlement: Your leave allowance in this role will be 200 hours (27 days) or equivalent, depending on working pattern, plus bank holidays. Your allowance will be pro-rata if you work part time. Your entitlement depends on your grade, your contracted hours, and your length of continuous service – it can rise to 30 days with continued service.
In addition to this you may be entitled to up to 133 hours (18 days) flexi-time per year.

We offer up to two days paid environmental outcome days each year. These give you the opportunity to take part in community activities with a clear environmental outcome for people and wildlife.

Enhanced maternity, adoption and paternity leave, and sickness absence provisions are available.

Additional paid leave is available for employees taking part in public duties, trade union activities, special/trained forces and for health and safety representatives.

Work/life balance

We support and encourage flexible working hours and practices at all levels to help you achieve a good balance between your work life and your personal life. We will encourage you to keep developing your skills and professional knowledge throughout your career.

Pension

We will enrol you into the Environment Agency Pension Fund (EAPF) on commencing employment if your employment contract is for 3 months or more. The EAPF is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). It is a career average scheme, which means you will build up benefits based on your pay each scheme year rather than your final salary.

We will base your pension contributions on your actual pay and you will receive tax relief on your contributions. The pension contribution rates currently range between 5.5% to 12.5%. Whilst you are in the scheme, we will pay an employer contribution into your pension pot. We currently pay 19%, so this is a very generous scheme.

Location

If you are contractually based in one of our eligible locations, you will receive a London Weighting allowance.

Additional benefits

Personal Development	Health & wellbeing	Finance
Performance management Individual performance plans, learning and development matched to your agreed career objectives and progression plans. **Learning and development** A range of training courses, leadership development initiatives and access to learning and development materials are available, covering technical, managerial and personal skills. **Examination leave** Paid leave for exams and revision for approved studies. **Professional subscriptions*** We will pay the membership fees for one relevant professional association. **Mentoring and coaching** Access to support development and career progression.	**Occupational health** Access to occupational health advisory service. **Eye care** Free eye tests. **Employee assistance service** Access to Workplace Wellness available to you and your family. **Sports and social club** Opportunity to benefit from a wide range of subsidised events and discounts. **Health discount** Optional discounts provided by several external providers and health clubs. **Local benefits** These vary from region to region.	**Interest free loans*** For season tickets, bicycles and safety equipment. **Financial education club** Providing guidance on how to manage your finances including information on credit scores, pensions, buying your first house and getting debt-free. **Tenancy deposit loan scheme*** For employees directly employed by the Environment Agency, access to an interest free loan to pay for some, or all of a deposit on a privately rented home. The loan can be paid back over a period of up to 12 months, directly from the monthly salary. The following benefit is only applicable to eligible roles: • Free Car Parking *May be subject to completion of probationary period.

How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the Environment Agency on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code **OBRZO.**

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is **09.00 on Monday 20th July 2026**.

* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

Role Briefing

Candidates will have the opportunity to find out more about the role via a virtual briefing session on **8th July** at **14.00 – 15.00**.

Joining Link:
https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/315119897481655?p=S8Q7Ke8Ks1Hc78N2Wz
Meeting ID: 315 119 897 481 655
Passcode: x2xi2fV3

Please note that this not part of the formal assessment process; it is intended to give candidates the opportunity to learn more about the appointment and the Environment Agency.

GDPR personal data notice
According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

Further Information

Eligibility to apply and continuity of employment

Employment agency workers and contractors are considered external candidates and should therefore only apply for positions that are being advertised externally. They are not eligible to claim continuity of employment should they be successful in securing a position with the Environment Agency.

If you have been a member of a Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) in the last 12 months, we will not be able to continue with your application based on agreed appointment rules related to employing ex-RFCC members. We would welcome an application from you once the 12-month period have passed.

For applicants who currently work in local government or other bodies listed in the Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government etc.) (Modification) Order 1999, you may be eligible for continuous service for the purpose of calculating any future redundancy payment.

Right to work and eligibility for employment

Before applying, it is the responsibility of all candidates to ensure they have the correct right to work documentation. If you require sponsorship, please ensure that the position you apply for meets the UK Visa & Immigration (UKVI) requirements. If selected, your appointment would be subject to you obtaining and maintaining the relevant work visa terms and conditions set for you by UKVI.

Pre-employment checks

We apply the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) check when recruiting employees to our posts. This includes a basic criminal records check.

For the great majority of roles in the Environment Agency this will be sufficient and only certain roles will require a higher level of clearance. Should this be necessary, you will be advised of this during the recruitment process.

Positions based at our London office or roles that require frequent travel to London require Counter Terrorist Check (CTC) level security clearance. This will be confirmed to you during the recruitment process.

Want to find out more?

To find out more about what it's like to work at the Environment Agency, please visit: environmentagencycareers.co.uk/working-here

Due Diligence

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.

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