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Environment Agency

Briefing pack for the appointment of

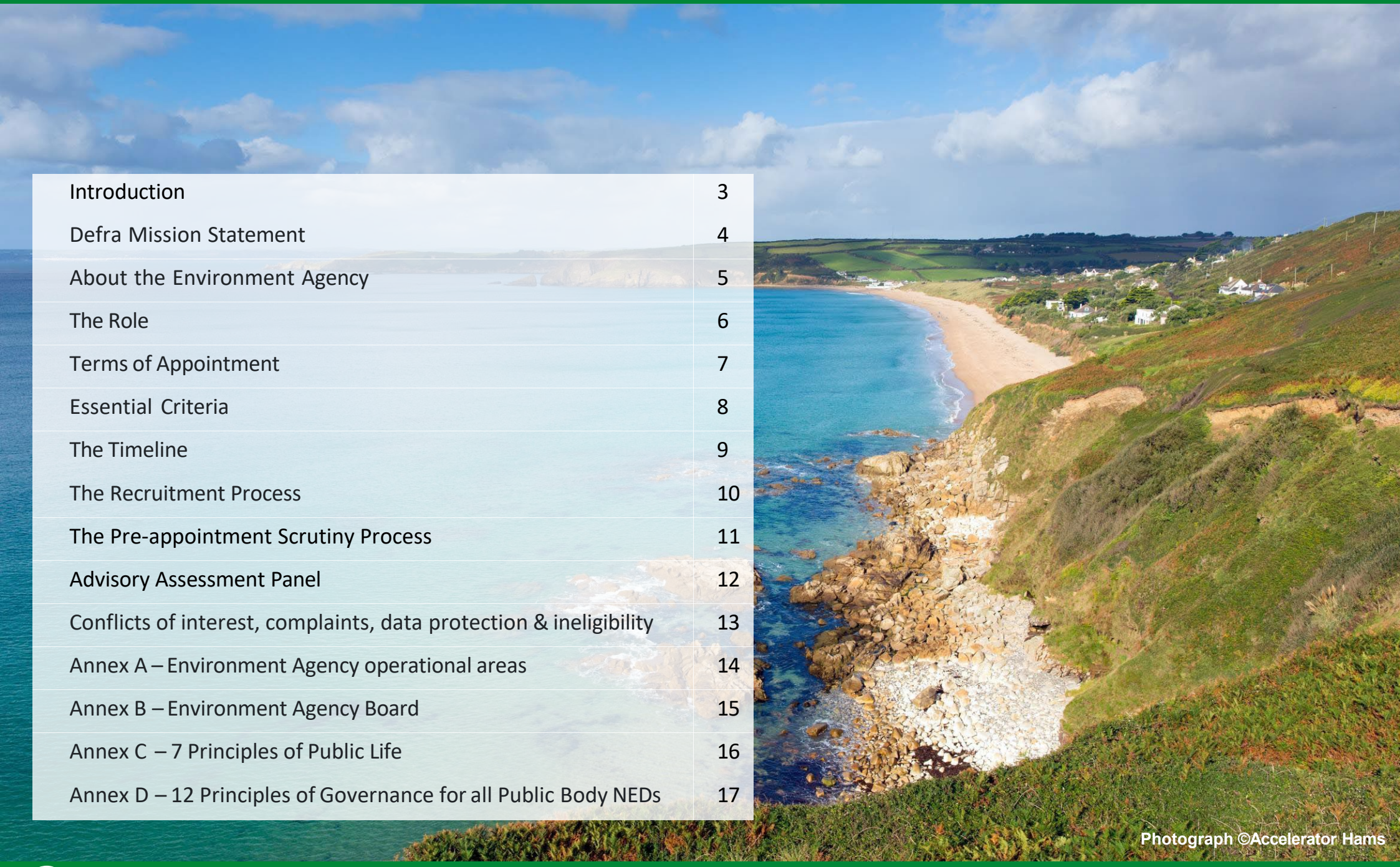
# Chair of the Environment Agency

**CLOSING DATE:**
**6 August 2026**
**REFERENCE: OBRZP**

disability confident LEADER

Regulated by The Commissioner for Public Appointments

Saxton Bampfylde

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# Contents

**Dear Candidate,**

Thank you for your interest in applying to the role of Chair of the Environment Agency (EA).

The EA was established in 1996 to protect and improve the environment and support sustainable development. It works to create better places for people and wildlife and protects people, homes, and businesses from environmental incidents and pollution. The EA has a crucial role in enabling and supporting this government's mission-led approach to delivering economic growth, clean energy and environmental restoration together. This is a very exciting time to lead the EA.

The EA has a critical role in delivering some of the government's biggest priorities, including supporting sustainable growth through its planning and permitting functions, enabling investment in infrastructure through its multi-billion pound flood and coastal erosion defence programme, improving climate change resilience, and supporting nature's recovery such as tackling the blight of waste crime. The EA Chair will provide overall leadership and strategic vision for the EA Board.

We are seeking someone with a proven ability to lead complex, high-profile organisations, while maintaining high-quality services and inspiring teams. You will be ready to lead and inspire the EA in becoming a digitally led regulator, and improving regulatory effectiveness. You must be committed to aligning the EA's objectives with the government's broader economic growth agenda and have a clear understanding of regulation's role in supporting sustainable growth.

The EA will have a significant role to play in working with Government and other regulators to reform the water system. I am looking for someone who can drive strategic direction in line with a pivotal and meaningful vision. To do this successfully, you will need to enjoy building strong relationships with a variety of stakeholders while balancing support and constructive challenge to the organisation. You will also have experience of effective decision making in complex environments and critically analysing evidence to make recommendations. This is an opportunity to lead a modern, responsive regulator that works in partnership with business, communities and government to get things done.

You will also need to be committed to upholding integrity and transparency. The core Department and stakeholders rely on the EA to provide impartial expert advice and operational delivery at arms-length. You will need to support the organisation to maintain the confidence of ministers, and exercise independent judgment.

If you have experience of large-scale delivery, a genuine passion for environmental protection and good commercial and financial acumen including on driving efficiency, this may be the leadership role for you.

I particularly encourage applications from talented people of all backgrounds and regions to ensure the EA's Board reflects our diverse society and takes an inclusive and equitable approach. I look forward to receiving applications from a broad range of candidates who can offer the expertise and leadership needed to guide the EA at this critical time.

**EMMA REYNOLDS MP**

**Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

# Introduction from Minister

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.

Photograph @AABrandTeam

## 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.

# Defra Mission statement

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, and 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 business 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, and 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:

- **Healthy air, land and water supporting nature's recovery** - now recognises our contribution to reversing nature's decline
- **Sustainable growth** - is now more closely aligned with our statutory role to support sustainable development, and the government's vital growth mission
- **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 out 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
Gov.uk | X | Facebook | LinkedIn | Instagram | YouTube

# About the Environment Agency

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This role requires a clear understanding of the Environment Agency's work, priorities and challenges, and the context within which it operates.

As Chair, you will:

- Provide leadership and strategic vision for the Board of the Environment Agency, embedding a strong organisational culture which is innovative, empowering and collaborative, and embraces technology, digital innovation and the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence.

- Lead the EA at a time of significant change, working with Government and other regulators to support the creation of a new integrated water regulator, while ensuring the EA delivers effectively through this period of change.
- Improve the environment while supporting growth by ensuring the Environment Agency is an efficient, impactful and digitally led regulator. This includes protecting and improving the environment through effective regulation while supporting sustainable development and the Government's growth mission.
- Ensure the implementation of the Environment Agency's Strategic Policy Statement and Growth Goals.
- Ensure the EA delivers its critical functions within a constrained fiscal environment, by driving a culture of continuous improvement and efficiency across the organisation.
- Command the confidence of Ministers across Government and a wide range of public, private and third sector partners.
- Ensure the Environment Agency provides excellent customer service.
- Be a visible leader and strong representative of the Environment Agency.

# The Role

**Remuneration**

£100,000 per annum. £650 day rate

- Expenses are payable

**Time commitment**

2.5-3 days per week

- The Board meets 8 times a year
- Board committees meet 4 times a year

**Term length**

Initial appointment for 4 years

- Ministers may extend your term, subject to good performance

**Location**

London

- Board meetings will take place at locations around the country, including London and Bristol on a regular basis

Photograph ©AABrand Team

# Terms of Appointment

**We are looking to attract dynamic candidates from a range of diverse backgrounds, who can demonstrate the following essential criteria:**

1. **Strategic Leadership:** A strong track record in senior leadership roles (Executive or Non-Executive), alongside a proven record of delivery within a large or complex organisation or business, or of delivery on a national scale within the private, public or voluntary sectors. The ability to provide visible, credible leadership for a high-profile organisation operating under public, parliamentary and media scrutiny.

2. **Change Management:** The ability to set strategic vision and drive forward priorities of high-profile organisations under scrutiny, driving change while maintaining high-quality services and inspiring diverse teams. This includes working effectively with Government and other regulators through significant organisational and regulatory change.

3. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Strong communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to build strong stakeholder relationships, including with Ministers, Senior Government officials, external stakeholders and other regulators. The ability to work collaboratively with the non-executive board, Chief Executive Officer and other key stakeholders, providing support, constructive challenge and assurance as appropriate.

4. **Judgement:** Effective decision-making skills with the ability to critically analyse a wide range of information to make clear and objective evidence-based recommendations to support the delivery of the organisation's objectives.

5. **Commercial and Financial Acumen:** A commercial mindset. An understanding or experience of public sector finances or the financial management of a large organisation, and an ability to drive efficiency across the organisation. An understanding of and demonstrable experience in economic policy, regulation and/or infrastructure development to support the Government's ambition to deliver economic growth in balance with environmental protections.

6. **Integrity and Governance:** A commitment to upholding the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and impartiality while maintaining the confidence of Ministers and stakeholders and exercising independent judgement. Able to ensure effective governance and promote accountability.

7. **Knowledge:** A clear understanding of the Environment Agency's work, priorities, challenges, and the context in which it operates, including its role in protecting and enhancing the environment.

Successful candidates must abide by the Nolan principles of public service (attached at Annex C), the Code of Conduct for Board Members and demonstrate the 12 Principles of Governance for all Public Body NEDs (attached at Annex D).

# Essential Criteria

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Photograph ©AABrand Team, Nick Evverad

# The Timeline

**Advert close**
6 August 2026

- Candidates must demonstrate how they meet the essential criteria. Refer to the 'Recruitment Process' section to understand how to apply

**Shortlist**
17 August 2026

- The Panel will assess all applications against the criteria and decide who they would like to invite for interview
- Ministers must be consulted on the shortlist before we can confirm who has been successful at this stage.
- Detailed feedback will not be provided at this stage

**Interviews**
30 September and 1 October 2026

- Held at 2 Marsham Street, Westminster, London
- Will last approximately 45 minutes

**Ministers select preferred candidate**
End of October/Early November

- The Panel will decide who they deem to be appointable. It is then up to Ministers to decide who they would like to appoint
- Ministers may wish to meet candidates before deciding

**Pre-appointment scrutiny hearing**
Late November 2026

- The preferred candidate is required to appear before the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs & Environmental Audit Select Committees
- Guidance on pre-appointment scrutiny hearings can be found here.

**Successful candidate in post**
1 January 2027

Photograph @Environment Agency

## How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Defra on this appointment.

Your application contains two parts. **Both** parts must be submitted by midday 6 August 2026 to be considered complete. Applications received after this date will not be considered.

- Part one: Diversity Monitoring and Conflict of Interest Form on the public appointments website here*: Appointment details – Chair of the Environment Agency (EA) – Apply for a public appointment – GOV.UK
- Part two: A two-page statement of suitability and two-page CV

The key to a good application is to give the reader specific information about how you meet the criteria for appointment. Think about your knowledge, skills, experience and personal attributes, and take full advantage of the space available. Provide practical evidence that best demonstrates how you meet the essential criteria.

Candidates should apply for this role through Saxton Bampfylde's website at https://roles.saxbam.com/ using code **OBRZP**. Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter. Candidates must also complete the diversity monitoring and conflict of interest form on the public appointments website here: Appointment details – Chair of the Environment Agency (EA) – Apply for a public appointment – GOV.UK

For queries about your application or the recruitment process, please email Maria.Dodson@saxbam.com

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

### 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.

# The Recruitment Process

## Pre-appointment scrutiny

This role is subject to pre-appointment scrutiny by the EFRA and EAC select committees.

This is an important part of the appointment process for some of the most significant public appointments made by Ministers. It is designed to provide an added level of scrutiny to verify that the recruitment meets the principles set out in the Governance Code on Public Appointments which sets out the expectations which the Government places on non-executive members of public bodies.

The pre-appointment scrutiny aspect of the appointment has two parts:

First, information concerning the appointment and the Minister's preferred candidate is shared with the select committee. As part of this process, you will need to be content for your name and your CV to be shared with the select committee. You may also be required to complete a pre-appointment hearing questionnaire. Normally any information provided to the select committee by Government or a candidate will be published.

Second, it is likely that the select committee will decide to call the Government's preferred candidate to a public hearing before the select committee to answer questions relating to their suitability to the role. Although you would not be expected to have an in-depth knowledge of how the body works or an exact plan of what you would do in the role, you will be expected to provide a credible representation of your understanding of the work of the body and what your role in its future would be.

The Government is committed to making public appointments as accessible as possible so that no one is deterred from applying. The Department will provide support to you to help you prepare for the hearing and the clerks to the select committee will also be available to discuss with you how the hearing will run.

You will also be supported by the Department in working with the select committee should you require any adjustment to enable you to participate fully in the hearing process.

More information about pre-appointment scrutiny can be found here.

The Liaison Committee also published guidelines to select committees for pre-appointment.

# The Pre-appointment Scrutiny Process

## Advisory Assessment Panel

- **David Hill** – Director General for Strategy and Water as the Department Official
- **Christine Farnish** – Chair of the Money Advice Trust as the senior independent panel member
- **Dan Corry** – Defra Non-Executive Director as the other panel member

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.

# Advisory Assessment Panel

### Conflicts of Interest and Due Diligence

If you have any interests that might be relevant to the work of the Environment Agency, 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.

# Conflicts of interest, complaints, data protection and ineligibility

# Our areas

## North

1. North East
2. Cumbria and Lancashire
3. Yorkshire
4. Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire

## Midlands

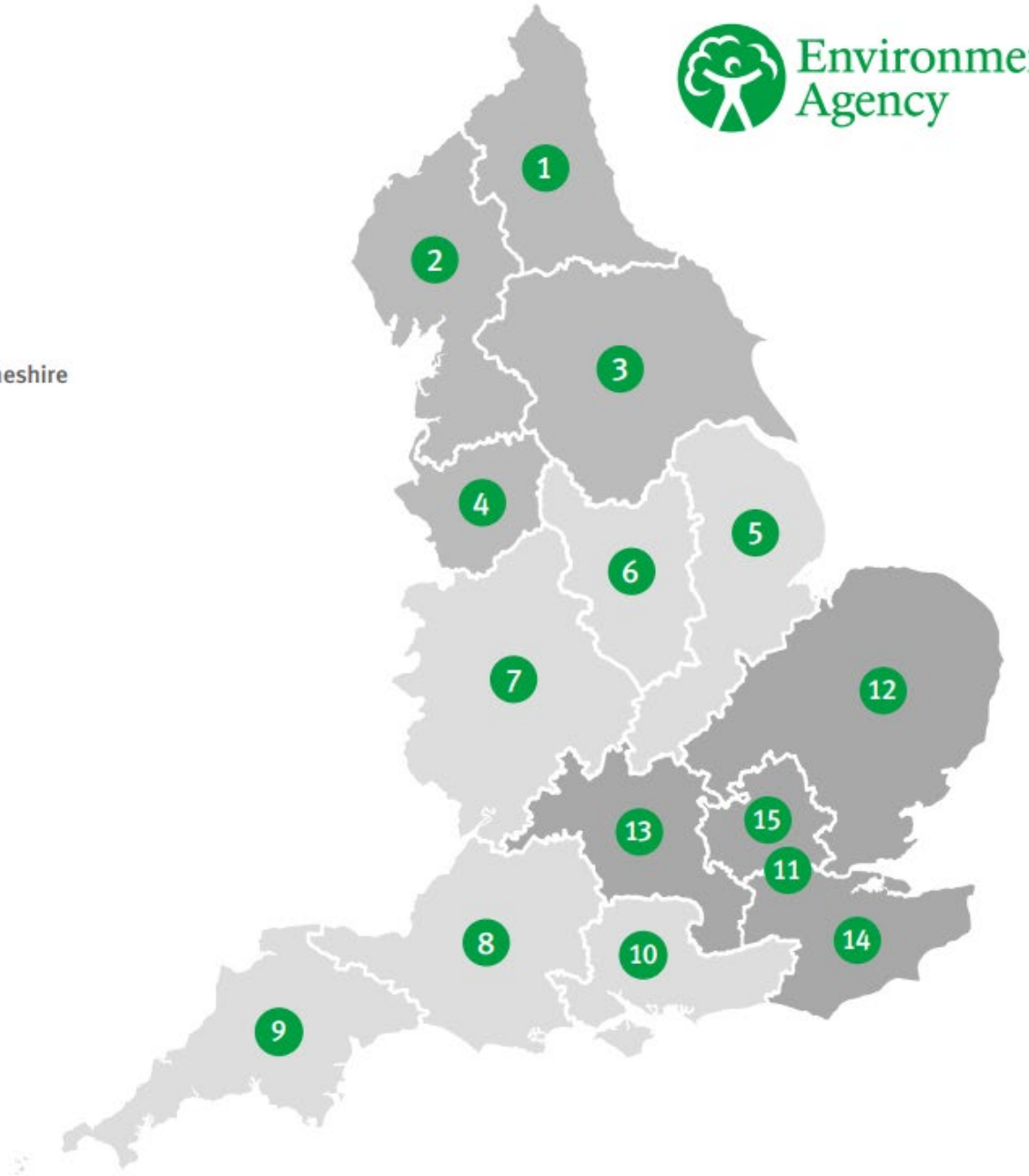
5. Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire
6. East Midlands
7. West Midlands

## South and South West

8. Wessex
9. Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly
10. Solent and South Downs

## East and South East

11. London
12. East Anglia
13. Thames
14. Kent, South London and East Sussex
15. Hertfordshire & North London




# Annex A – Environment Agency Areas

Alan Lovell (chair)

Jon Watts

Lilli Matson

Dr Stewart Davies

Ines Faden da Silva (deputy chair)

Mark Suthern

Sarah Mukherjee

Brittany Harris

Maya Leibman

# Annex B – Environment Agency Board

**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 C – The Seven Principles of Public Life

**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 D – 12 Principles of Governance for Public Body NEDs

Saxton Bampfylde

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

disability confident LEADER

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