**Candidate**

**Information Booklet**



**Statutory Advisory Council to the**

**Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**

**Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (CNCC)**

**Chair and Deputy Chair Appointments**



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If you would like to speak to someone in connection with any aspect of the process or if you require an application pack in a different format such as Braille, large print, audio etc. please contact:

**Public Appointments Branch**

**Jubilee House**

**111 Ballykelly Road**

**Ballykelly**

**Limavady**

**BT49 9HP**

**Tel: 028 7744 2025**

**Or by email to:** **PublicAppointments@daera-ni.gov.uk**

**Section 1 – Outline of the public body and its role**

**Appointment**

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) wishes to appoint a **Chair** and **Deputy Chair** to the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (CNCC). Further information about the Council can be obtained from the website at: [**https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/contacts/council-nature-conservation-and-countryside-cncc**](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/contacts/council-nature-conservation-and-countryside-cncc)

**A Regulated Appointment**

The procedure for these appointments adheres to the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI). This means that the process will be based on merit after a fair, open and transparent process that involves independent scrutiny. A copy of the code can be found at [**https://www.publicappointmentsni.org/**](https://www.publicappointmentsni.org/)

**Overview of the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (CNCC)**

The Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (CNCC) was established in 1989 under the provisions of the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1989. Its statutory role is also covered by the provisions of The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002.

The aim of CNCC is to provide independent advice to the Department (DAERA) on Nature Conservation and the Countryside and, in consultation, on Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) with due regard to matters affecting agriculture, forestry and inland fisheries. CNCC does not employ any staff although it is provided with support staff by DAERA.

**Statutory Roles:**

* to advise the Department on matters relating to nature conservation;
* to enquire into and report on matters affecting the natural beauty or amenity of any place in Northern Ireland;
* to advise the Department on the establishment and management of National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) and nature reserves;
* to advise the Minister on matters relating to Marine Conservation;
* as a consultee to local councils regarding local nature reserves;
* to advise the Department on the protection of wildlife species;
* to advise on payment of certain types of grants (under the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1989; and
* to advise on promotional and educational activities.

Council may also be consulted on Planning Policy Statements and Development Plans; however, it must be noted that CNCC is **not** a statutory consultee.

**Additional Roles:**

Council also offers advice relevant to its remit to other government departments such as Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure and is represented on other groups and working parties, as agreed.

**Organisational Structure**

At present, the CNCC has **8** members with a range of environmental expertise throughout Northern Ireland and further afield. Through this recruitment process, we aim to expand this, reflecting the need for even greater cross disciplinary knowledge to provide advice to inform nature conservation related activity at present.

**Section 2 – Role profile**

**The CNCC Role**

CNCC (The Council) advises the Department on matters relating to nature conservation and the countryside. The Council establishes its overall strategic direction agreed with DAERA whilst ensuring that any statutory requirements are complied with.

**Chair’s Role**

The role of the Chair of CNCC is to lead on the provision of relevant scientific and technical advice to the department on matters relating to nature conservation and the countryside. The Chair of CNCC must regularly attend CNCC meetings, keep up to date on relevant issues, and contribute to the decision-making process at meetings. In so doing, they must act in the best interests of the CNCC and ensure its advice is based on the best available evidence.

In addition, the Chair will be responsible for chairing Council, sub-committee or working group meetings ensuring that they work effectively, providing strategic leadership for the Council, managing Council business and preparing Council reports and conveying the Council’s advice to DAERA.

The Chair must comply with the CNCC’s Code of Practice for Members. In particular, they must not misuse information gained in the course of their public service for gain to themselves or associates. Also, they are required to declare publicly to the Council any private interests that may be perceived to conflict with their public duties and to comply with the Council’s rules on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality.

**Duties**

Contribute to Council’s open and independent scrutiny of nature conservation and countryside issues, based on objective analysis of scientific or other evidence.

Contribute to the development of the Council’s annual work plan and prepare or contribute to Council reports including contributing to and delivering CNCC’s end-of-term report.

Support the work of the Department by assisting in the development of strategies and related policies, based on reliable evidence, and with associated assessment of the risks associated with policy options or opportunities.

Represent CNCC at all levels within the profession and to senior levels in the Sponsor Department and ensuring that constructive relationships and strategic alliances are built and maintained between the Council, the Department and other key partners.

Attend Council meetings and other relevant events and represent CNCC on outside bodies and at events and conferences. Chair or contribute as a member to Council working groups, as agreed.

Represent the best interests of the Council both internally and externally at all times.

Display high standards of honesty and integrity to provide leadership in impartial decision making and adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life.

**Qualities Sought**

The candidate should be able to demonstrate independent strategic thinking as well as an ability to provide open scrutiny of relevant nature conservation and countryside management issues and be able to carry out objective analysis of scientific or other evidence; examine and weigh up conflicting evidence; highlight where evidence is needed or lacking and constructively challenge assumptions.

The candidate should demonstrate a strategic level of understanding of the policy landscape relevant to the work of CNCC.

The candidate should demonstrate the ability to maintain a good open, direct, supporting and challenging relationship with all other Members of the Council.

They should have good people skills and be a team leader, and player, with the ability to bring Council Members together to achieve effective and coherent delivery. They must demonstrate a broad awareness of the main challenges facing the operations of the CNCC and requirements which need to be met to deliver on the work programme. The Chair must fully understand the requirements of the Council which need to be met and have an expert knowledge and a relevant degree-level qualification in one or more of these areas; -

* Biological or Environmental Science (including terrestrial and/or freshwater ecosystems);
* Environmental Law or Planning (terrestrial and/or marine);
* Economics as applied to the environment (including natural capital methods);
* Marine and/or coastal sciences;
* Earth science conservation;
* Conservation Management;
* Landscape planning and management;
* Countryside management in connection with agriculture, forestry, ecosystem service delivery, or outdoor recreation delivery.

The candidate should be able to demonstrate experience in leading and chairing cross-disciplinary groups.

The candidate should demonstrate high levels of competency in oral and, especially, in written audience-specific presentational skills.

**Other Information**

The following are the key terms and conditions: -

* **Location**: The CNCC meetings are normally held at Clare House, Airport Road West, Belfast BT3 9ED but may also be held using a variety of video/audio conferencing technologies. **There will be a requirement to travel within the UK to attend JNCC meetings up to six times per annum.**
* **Period of appointment**: The Chair appointment will be for **three** years.
* **Termination of Appointment**: Your appointment may be terminated if at any time you are considered unfit to continue in office or are incapable of performing your duties as Chair of the Council.
* **Performance Appraisal:** An annual assessment of the performance of the Chair is completed by the Director of Natural Environment Division.
* **Re-appointment**: Re-appointment for a second term may be considered subject to an appropriate standard of performance and attendance having been achieved during the initial period in office, and evidence of continued adherence to the Seven Principles of Public Life (**see** **Annex A**). Re-appointment for a second term requires the approval of the Minister.
* **Time commitment**: The total time commitment for the Chair is approximately **48** days per annum. The Chair will be expected to attend the CNCC meetings and stakeholder meetings and is nominated to serve on any of its sub-committees, this may involve attendance at meetings held in the rest of the UK and Republic of Ireland, and thus involve travel and attendance outside of normal office hours.
* **Attendance**: The Chair of the CNCC is expected to attend meetings regularly. An appointment may be terminated if attendance becomes such that it interferes with the effective running of the Council.
* **Remuneration:** Remuneration for the CNCC Chair is **£10,364** per annum (under review) paid in 12 equal monthly instalments, the appointment is **not** pensionable and PAYE deductions will be made.
* **Expenses**: In carrying out the role as Chair, you are entitled to claim out of pocket expenses in line with NICS Policy for the following expenses –
1. travel and other expenses incurred on the CNCC business. This includes, for example, travel between your home (or your place of business) and the meeting location (mostly Belfast) to attend Council meetings;
2. reasonable expenses incurred in relation to the care of dependants (including childcare costs); and
3. any other appropriate expenses such as particular costs associated with disabilities.

Reimbursement of expenses will be made on a monthly basis following receipt of a completed claim form supported with relevant receipts.

Appointees who already work in the public sector **cannot** be paid twice from the public purse for the same period of time.

* **Training and Development**: The new Chair will be required to undergo formal training within six months of appointment and may be required to attend relevant training courses organised by the CNCC or DAERA. The Chair sits on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) there will be induction training for that role delivered by JNCC staff.

**Deputy Chair’s Role**

The Deputy Chair of CNCC must regularly attend CNCC meetings, keep up to date on relevant issues, and contribute to the decision-making process at meetings. In so doing, they must act in the best interests of the CNCC and ensure its advice is based on the best available evidence.

In addition, the Deputy Chair supports or substitutes for the Chair, which may include chairing Council, sub-committee or working group meetings and ensuring that they work effectively, providing strategic leadership for the Council, managing Council business, preparing Council reports, and conveying the Council’s advice to DAERA.

The Deputy Chair must comply with the CNCC’s Code of Practice for Members. In particular, they must not misuse information gained in the course of their public service for gain to themselves or associates. Also, they are required to declare publicly to the Council any private interests that may be perceived to conflict with their public duties and to comply with the Council’s rules on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality.

**Duties**

Contribute to Council’s open and independent scrutiny of nature conservation and countryside issues, based on objective analysis of scientific or other evidence.

Contribute to the development of the Council’s annual work plan and prepare or contribute to Council reports including contributing to CNCC’s end-of-term report.

Support the work of the Department by assisting in the development of strategies and related policies, based on reliable evidence, and with associated assessment of the risks associated with policy options or opportunities.

Represent CNCC at all levels within the profession and to senior levels in the Sponsor Department and ensuring that constructive relationships and strategic alliances are built and maintained between the Council, the Department and other key partners.

Attend Council meetings and other relevant events and represent CNCC on outside bodies and at events and conferences. Chair or contribute as a member to Council working groups, as agreed.

Represent the best interests of the Council both internally and externally at all times.

Display high standards of honesty and integrity to provide leadership in impartial decision making and adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life.

**Qualities Sought**

The candidate should be able to demonstrate independent strategic thinking as well as an ability to provide open scrutiny of relevant nature conservation and countryside management issues and be able to carry out objective analysis of scientific or other evidence; examine and weigh up conflicting evidence; highlight where evidence is needed or lacking and constructively challenge assumptions.

The candidate should demonstrate a strategic level of understanding of the policy landscape relevant to the work of CNCC.

The candidate should demonstrate the ability to maintain a good open, direct, supporting and challenging relationship with the Chair of Council.

They should have good people skills and be a team leader, and player, with the ability to bring Council Members together to achieve effective and coherent delivery. They must demonstrate a broad awareness of the main challenges facing the operations of the CNCC and requirements which need to be met to deliver on the work programme. The Deputy Chair must fully understand the requirements of the Council which need to be met and have an expert knowledge and a relevant degree-level qualification in one or more of these areas; -

* Biological or Environmental Science (including terrestrial and/or freshwater ecosystems);
* Environmental Law or Planning (terrestrial and/or marine);
* Economics as applied to the environment (including natural capital methods);
* Marine and/or coastal sciences;
* Earth science conservation;
* Conservation Management;
* Landscape planning and management;
* Countryside management in connection with agriculture, forestry, ecosystem service delivery, or outdoor recreation delivery.

The candidate should be able to demonstrate experience in leading, chairing or deputy chairing cross-disciplinary groups.

The candidate should demonstrate high levels of competency in oral and, especially, in written audience-specific presentational skills.

**Other Information**

The following are the key terms and conditions: -

* **Location**: The CNCC meetings are normally held at Clare House, Airport Road West, Belfast BT3 9ED but may be held using a variety of video/audio conferencing technologies. **There will be a requirement to travel within the UK to attend JNCC meetings up to six times per annum.**
* **Period of appointment**: The Deputy Chair appointment will be for **three** years.
* **Termination of Appointment**: Your appointment may be terminated if at any time you are considered unfit to continue in office or are incapable of performing your duties as Deputy Chair of the Council.
* **Performance Appraisal:** An annual assessment of the performance of the Deputy Chair is completed by the Chair of CNCC.
* **Re-appointment**: Re-appointment for a second term may be considered subject to an appropriate standard of performance and attendance having been achieved during the initial period in office, and evidence of continued adherence to the Seven Principles of Public Life (**see** **Annex A**). Re-appointment for a second term requires the approval of the Minister.
* **Time commitment**: The total time commitment for the Deputy Chair is approximately **33** days per annum. The Deputy Chair will be expected to attend the CNCC meetings and stakeholder meetings and were nominated to serve on any of its sub-committees, this may involve attendance at meetings held in the rest of the UK and Republic of Ireland, and thus involve travel and attendance outside of normal office hours.
* **Remuneration:** Remuneration for the CNCC Deputy Chair is **£6,964** per annum (under review), the appointment is **not** pensionable and PAYE deductions will be made.
* **Expenses**: In carrying out the role as Deputy Chair, you are entitled to claim out of pocket expenses in line with NICS Policy for the following expenses –
	1. travel and other expenses incurred on the CNCC business. This includes, for example, travel between your home (or your place of business) and the meeting location (mostly Belfast) to attend Council meetings;
	2. reasonable expenses incurred in relation to the care of dependants (including childcare costs); and
	3. any other appropriate expenses such as particular costs associated with disabilities.

Reimbursement of expenses will be made on a monthly basis following receipt of a completed claim form supported with relevant receipts.

Appointees who already work in the public sector **cannot** be paid twice from the public purse for the same period of time.

* **Training and Development**: The new Deputy Chair will be required to undergo formal training within six months of appointment and may be required to attend relevant training courses organised by the CNCC or DAERA. As the Deputy Chair sits on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) there will be induction training for that role delivered by JNCC staff.

The following applies to **both** Chair and Deputy chair roles: -

* **Indemnities for personal liability:** The Government has indicated that an individual board member who has acted honestly and in good faith will not have to meet out of his/her own personal resources any personal civil liability which is incurred in the execution or purported execution of his/her board function, save where the person has acted recklessly.
* **Conduct:** All public appointees have a duty in relation to conduct, propriety and confidentiality.
* You must at all times operate within the limits of the Council’s statutory authority as laid down in Article 4(3) and (4) of the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Amendment) (NI) Order 1989/SI No. 492. The Chair must notify the Director of Natural Environment Division while the Deputy Chair must notify the Chair and the Director of Natural Environment Division if you become the subject of a police investigation or are arrested by the police.
* In exercising their duties the Chair and Deputy Chair, must demonstrate impartiality, integrity and objectivity and should be aware of their wider responsibilities of the Council. The Chair and Deputy Chair must:
* undertake on appointment to comply at all times with the Seven Principles of Conduct Underpinning Public Life and with the rules relating to the use of public funds;
* act in good faith and in the best interests of the Council; and
* not use information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or for political purposes, nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests or those of connected persons, firms, businesses or other organisations.

If you are deemed to have breached the Seven Principles of Conduct Underpinning Public Life, the department may terminate your appointment.

* **Gifts and Hospitality:** All public appointees are expected to ensure that the acceptance of gifts and hospitality can stand up to public scrutiny. Gifts should be declined wherever possible, and any offers should be reported to the Special Advisory Council’s Secretariat. Where it would be ungracious or otherwise difficult not to accept, you should inform the Special Advisory Council’s Secretariat of the gift, the estimated value and the donor. Public appointees must take personal responsibility to ensure that a record is placed in the appropriate hospitality register. Similarly, care should be taken that no extravagance is involved with working lunches and other social occasions.
* **Conflicts of Interest:** Conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived, can be damaging to the individual board member, the board itself and the Department. If a conflict of interest arises or is identified, it is essential that it is resolved as quickly as possible.

You must declare any personal or business interests, pecuniary or non-pecuniary which may, or may be perceived to, influence your judgement when performing your duties as Chair or Deputy Chair of the Council. Failure to do so could lead to your appointment being withdrawn.

You are encouraged to register your own interests and the interests of close family members and persons living in the same household that appear closely related to your activities as Chair or Deputy Chair. Should you be in any doubt about what to disclose it is best to err on the side of caution and disclose the information. These interests will be included in an appropriate register of interests maintained by the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside, and you must ensure that your entries are kept up to date.

Should an issue arise subsequent to the completion of the register of interests that could give rise to a potential conflict of interest you must inform the Director of Natural Environment Division.

If at a meeting of the Council an issue arises that could give rise to a potential conflict you should disclose your interest and withdraw from any discussion or consideration of the matter.

In extreme situations if a conflict of interest cannot be resolved dismissal may be the most appropriate option, however due process must be followed and the principles of natural justice applied.

* **Other Appointments:** You must inform the Director of Natural Environment Division in advance of taking up any new appointments which may impinge on your duties.
* **Political Activity:** You should not occupy paid party-political posts or hold particularly sensitive positions of responsibility in a political party. Subject to the foregoing, you are free to engage in political activities provided that you are conscious of your general public responsibilities and exercise proper discretion, particularly with regard to the work of the Council. Be prepared to disclose any potential conflicts of interest.
	+ You are expected to inform the Minister of any intention to accept a prominent position in any political party and to understand that your appointment as Chair /Deputy Chair of the Council may be terminated if the Minister feels that, in the case of you accepting such a role, the positions are incompatible.

**Official Secrets Act:**

The Act applies to Crown servants, Government contractors and to others who have, or have had, official information in their possession. For the purposes of the Act, “Crown servants” includes Ministers of the Crown; Civil Servants (including members of the Diplomatic Service); members of the armed forces; the police; and **office holders** and the members or staff of a body (or class of members or employees of such a body) which are “prescribed” for the purpose by an Order made under the Act.

The provisions of the Official Secrets Act 1911 to 1989 apply to public appointees. Unauthorised disclosure of any information gained in the course of your appointment, or its use by you or others for personal gain or advancement, could result in your appointment being terminated early, or even criminal prosecution.

**Section 3 – Person specification**

Before applying for these positions, please take the time to study the essential criteria set out below and consider whether you meet these. Candidates who do not meet the essential criteria will **not** be considered for interview.

**Essential Criteria: CNCC Chair and Deputy Chair**

Applications for the position of the CNCC Chair and Deputy Chair are invited from candidates who can demonstrate both on the application form and, if invited for interview, that they can bring the following skills, expertise, experience and knowledge to the work which the CNCC undertakes.

**1. Knowledge, expertise and practical experience in a field relevant to CNCC**

Please demonstrate by way of a practical example (or examples) your knowledge and expertise (and relevant degree-level qualification) in a field relevant to CNCC (in at least one of the areas listed below) and how this relates to current nature conservation and marine and countryside management matters within the Department’s areas of responsibility.

* Biological or Environmental Science (including terrestrial and/or freshwater ecosystems);
* Environmental Law or Planning (terrestrial and/or marine);
* Economics as applied to the environment (including natural capital methods);
* Marine and/or coastal sciences;
* Earth science conservation;
* Conservation Management;
* Landscape planning and management; and
* Countryside management in connection with agriculture, forestry, ecosystem service delivery, or outdoor recreation delivery.

**2. Strategic Leadership**

CNCC (the Council) will be responsible for establishing its strategic direction within the scope of its statutory responsibilities and ensuring that the Council achieves its aims and objectives as agreed with DAERA. The Chair and Deputy Chair should have the ability to think strategically to decide or influence strategic direction and provide leadership in the provision of impartial advice to the Department.

Please demonstrate by way of a practical example (or examples) your strategic leadership skills and how they made a positive contribution to the performance of an organisation or group.

**3. Corporate Governance and Accountability**

The Chair and Deputy Chair will be expected to ensure that the CNCC has high standards of corporate governance and accountability. Corporate governance may be described as the way in which an organisation is directed and controlled. Accountability can be defined as the process by which public sector bodies and individuals within them are held to account for their decisions and actions, including all aspects of performance.

Please demonstrate by way of a practical example (or examples) experience gained within a personal, voluntary, or professional context of your ability to apply the principles and practice of corporate governance and accountability, including risk management, and that you have demonstrated personal accountability when making decisions and taking action.

**4. Analytical Ability**

The Chair and Deputy Chair should have strong analytic skills with the ability to interrogate complex and diverse information in order to provide strategic and effective advice and constructive challenge.

Please demonstrate by way of a practical example (or examples) your ability to analyse complex, and /or conflicting information on environmental / countryside / marine matters from a variety of sources and make recommendations.

**Please note:**

* A formal degree-level qualification is required in a field relevant to CNCC (in at least one of the areas listed above in paragraph 1 of this section)**\***. Details of previous employment are **not** required.
* You should ensure that you provide evidence in your application form which outlines how your experience matches each of the essential criteria detailed above.
* The selection panel will not make assumptions from the title of the applicant’s post or the nature of the organisation as to the skills and experience which you may have gained. It is not sufficient to simply list the various posts that you have held.
* If you do not provide sufficient detail under each of the criteria the selection panel may reject your application.
* Only the details provided by you in your application form will be provided to the selection panel for the purpose of determining your eligibility for these positions. Details must be provided in the relevant box for each of the essential criteria – any information provided on continuation sheets will **not** be considered.

\*Relevant or equivalent qualifications: give the type of qualification and date awarded (the date awarded is the date on which you were notified of your result by the official awarding body). If you believe your qualification is equivalent to the one required, the onus is on you to provide the panel with details of modules studied etc so that a well-informed decision can be made.

It is strongly recommended that all applicants/candidates read the **‘Public Appointments Guide’** which provides an overview of Public Appointments in Northern Ireland and helpful information for those wishing to apply. A copy of this Guide can be found at the following link:

[**https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/public-appointments-guide.pdf**](https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/public-appointments-guide.pdf)

**Section 4 - Application and Selection Process**

DAERA is committed to the principles of public appointments based on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process. The appointment process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI).

**Guaranteed Interview Scheme**

All reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate the needs of applicants/candidates with a disability. We are operating the Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) in this appointment process. The aim of the GIS is to provide applicants with a disability the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities beyond the initial application stage. Applicants with a disability who meet the criteria at stage one of the selection process (the sift process) will automatically be offered an interview. Their application will not be subjected to any short-listing which may take place.

**Application Procedure**

Application forms can be obtained from the Public Appointments Unit, DAERA for contact details see the contents page of this document. Application forms or further information about the process can be obtained from the Public Appointments Unit at the address on the cover of this document or by e-mailing a request to: **publicappointments@daera-ni.gov.uk**.

Alternatively, you can download the information pack at: [**https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/appointment-chairperson-and-deputy-chairperson-council-nature-conservation-and-countryside-cncc**](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/appointment-chairperson-and-deputy-chairperson-council-nature-conservation-and-countryside-cncc%20)

**Making Your Application**

The application form is designed to ensure applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the competition requirements. You will be assessed against the essential criteria in **Part B** of the application form. You can use examples from your working life, including any voluntary or community work you are, or have been, engaged in or, if preferred, you can use examples from your personal life.

**Please note:**

* All forms should be submitted electronically. However, where this is not possible, you should notify the Public Appointments Unit if a hard copy application has been sent to facilitate timely collection arrangements.
* You can contact us **on 028 7744 2025** or **publicappointments@daera-ni.gov.uk**;
* Typewritten or electronic versions of the application are welcome and should be completed in **Arial** minimum font size **12**;
* Handwritten applications should be completed in legible block capitals using black ink;
* We will **not** accept CVs, letters, or any other supplementary material in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms;
* When completing the application form, a maximum of **400** words per criterion is permitted;
* Application forms should **not** be amended in any way; and
* Braille, large print and audio formats are available on request.

**Applications from Civil Servants/Former Civil Servants**

Civil servants, or former civil servants are subject to the rules on Acceptance of Outside Business Appointments, Employment or Self-Employment for a period of up to **two** years after leaving the NI Civil Service. Individuals in this category, who wish to apply, must check their eligibility to do so with their former Department and the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Human Resources. (*Standards of Conduct Policy Sections 8, IRO Public Appointments: Error! Filename not specified.Kelly, Dolores14:25*

*The NICS Staff Handbook includes the HR policy, 6.01 Standards of Conduct)*

Civil servants, or former civil servants, should be aware that a judgement may also be made by the interviewing panel, taking account of the Cabinet Office guidance on Making and Managing Public Appointments, as to whether the nature of their employment could lead to a perceived, or real, split of loyalties of a sufficiently serious nature to render appointment as a CNCC Chair or Deputy Chair an unmanageable conflict of interest.

**Timetable/Time Frame**

The closing time and date for receipt of completed application forms by post or email has been extended to **Midnight on Thursday 31 October 2024.**

Completed applications should be returned to DAERA’s Public Appointments at **publicappointments@daera-ni.gov.uk** (for contact details see the Contents page of this document).

**Late applications will not be accepted by DAERA.**

The time of receipt of applications will be formally and individually recorded. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for their application to arrive with DAERA on or before the deadline.

Please ensure that posted applications bear the correct amount of postage as any shortfall may lead to a delay in delivery, causing you to miss the deadline.

To ensure equality of opportunity for all, applications will **not** be examined until after the closing deadline.

**Selection Process**

The appointment process for the CNCC Chair and Deputy Chair positions will be overseen by a Selection Panel. The Selection Panel will have an independent panel member who has been allocated by the office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI) and has had no recent employment, advisory or other operational contact with DAERA. The final appointments will be made by the DAERA Minister.

DAERA Public Appointments Unit will conduct an initial application admissibility check. Applications will only be eligible for panel assessment if they are received within the deadline and all eligible questions are completed in line with the parameters set out in **Section 4** of the Candidate Information Document.

**Part A** and **Part B** of the Application Form should be completed in full.

**Part C**, the Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form is **not** compulsory and failure to complete this will not result in your application being withdrawn.

**Sift Process**

An **anonymised** sift of all applications will be conducted by the selection panel.

The Selection Panel will assess **Part B** of all application forms. Only information supplied under each of the criteria in the application form will be considered for the sift process. It is therefore essential that you provide in the application form information relevant to **each** of the essential criteria.

Only those applicants who are deemed to meet **all** the essential criteria will be invited to interview. If a high number of applications are received, only the top scoring applicants will progress to the next stage, based on the quality of information received. Applicants who are sifted out will be informed of the decision at this stage.

At Sift stage the criteria will be marked out of a scoring framework of 1 to 5. Each individual criterion needs to meet the satisfactory level, which is obtaining a minimum pass mark of **2** to be considered for the next stage of the selection process. Only those applicants assessed as meeting **all** the criteria will be eligible to proceed to the next stage of the selection process.

**Shortlisting**

If, following the sift exercise, shortlisting is required, this will involve incrementally increasing the value of the pass mark in the following criterion:

**1. Knowledge, expertise and practical experience in a field relevant to CNCC.**

Only those applicants who are deemed to meet **all** of the essential criteria will be invited to interview, subject to any shortlisting as above.

If an applicant challenges a decision not to short-list them for interview the Department will refer the matter to the same selection panel that made the original decision not to short-list the applicant for interview.

**Feedback**

If an applicant does not pass the sift stage of the process, feedback will be provided on request, this will be based on the Panel’s consensus assessment of your application.

DAERA has a system in place to deal with queries, challenges, or complaints raised during the appointment process and to reassess decisions not to invite candidates for interview.

**Reassessment Process**

If an applicant is unhappy with the decision of the panel, in that they have not been invited to interview, they have the right to make a request in writing to have their case reviewed. The applicant must contact the Public Appointments Unit requesting a review within **10** days of receiving the outcome letter from the sift process.

The reassessment request will be shared with the panel in full and the panel are clearly advised **not** to take any additional information provided by the applicant into account, that the reassessment must be based only on the information provided by the applicant in their application form.

Applicants should contact the DAERA Public Appointments Unit by email at: **publicappointments@daera-ni.gov.uk** to request a reassessment.

**Interview Process**

Interviews will be carried out in person. Requests for remote interviews will only be considered by the panel in **exceptional** circumstances, audio only interviews will **not** be permitted. If the selection panel agrees that it is necessary to conduct an interview(s) remotely, these will be conducted via the video conferencing facility used by DAERA i.e., Microsoft Teams and candidates will be provided with a link by email to engage in the interview.

It is anticipated that interviews will be held **w/c 9 December 2024 at Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) HQ, 17 Antrim Road, Lisburn, BT28 3AL**. A valid form of photographic identity will need to be presented to the panel for **all** candidates attending for interview, either in person or remotely.

The interviews will be competence-based interviews which test candidates against the specific selection criteria for a particular appointment. Please see the enclosed Guide to Competency Based Interviewing **(Annex B).**

The application form gives you an opportunity to provide examples relevant to the specific criteria. These, in turn, provide the interview panel with information and evidence about you, to gain a deeper understanding of your abilities.

The interview is a crucial part of the appointment process and thorough preparation is essential. You can prepare for interview by:

* reading and thoroughly understanding the selection criteria;
* reminding yourself of examples you used in your application form and being prepared to expand on these at interview, if asked;
* rehearsing how you might relate your experiences to the interview panel, emphasising your own role and responsibilities; and
* not assuming that your qualities and experience will speak for themselves.

The interview panel will be:

* **Mr David Reid, (Chair), Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA);**
* **Miss Liz Loughran, Director of Natural Environment Division;**
* **Mr Raymond Mullan, Independent Assessor appointed by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland CPANI.**

It is expected that the successful candidates will be notified by **w/c 16 December 2024** so that the appointees can take up their positions from **1 March 2025** (subject to the necessary pre-appointment checks).

If unsuccessful at interview, candidates may request **Feedback** on their performance, this can be arranged by contacting the Public Appointments Unit by email at **publicappointments@daera-ni-gov.uk**

Applicants will be able to claim expenses for travel at standard NI Civil Service rates for attendance at interview.

**Appointments**

**Under the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, appointments to the CNCC can only be made by a Minister.**

Ministerial choice is a key element of public appointment policy that enables Ministers to indicate if they wish to be presented with the names of candidates found suitable for appointment in a ranked (strict merit order) or unranked (alphabetical) list. The Minister has requested to be presented with an unranked (alphabetical) list of candidates deemed suitable for appointment.

Candidates should be aware that information provided in the application form and at interview stage will be used to compile an applicant summary. The applicant summary will provide the Minister with an objective analysis of each applicant’s skills and experience, based on the information provided during the appointment round and the selection panel’s assessment of that applicant. In addition, if they are successful, they will be asked to provide information for a short pen picture for inclusion in the press release to announce the appointment, in line with the Commissioner for Public Appointment’s Code of Practice. This will include:

* their name;
* a brief summary of the skills and knowledge they bring to the role;
* details of current appointments they hold and any related remuneration received; and
* details of any political activity declared in the last five years.

DAERA will add the following information to the press release:

* a short description of the body to which they have been appointed;
* the period of appointment; and
* any remuneration associated with the appointment.

**Disqualification**

**There are no statutory disqualification criteria for these positions.**

**Section 5 - Probity and Conflicts of Interest**

The highest standards of propriety are expected of the CNCC Chair and Deputy Chair. Public appointees must show a willingness to work under any administration irrespective of public opinion. Public appointees, including the CNCC Chair and Deputy Chair, must adhere to the Seven Principles of conduct underpinning Public Life as established by the Nolan Committee. A copy is attached at **Annex A.**

Any private or business interests that a potential Chair and Deputy Chair might have, and that may be relevant to the work of the CNCC, must be declared in the application form. Examples of what might constitute a conflict of interest are given on the enclosed leaflet issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

[**http://www.publicappointmentsni.org/sites/cpani/files/media-files/CPANI\_Guidance\_on\_conflicts\_of\_interest\_and\_complaints.docx**](http://www.publicappointmentsni.org/sites/cpani/files/media-files/CPANI_Guidance_on_conflicts_of_interest_and_complaints.docx)

You should declare in your application form any matter(s) which could cause or could be perceived to cause reputational damage to DAERA or the CNCC.

Conflicts of interest are not necessarily a barrier to appointment, but both real and perceived conflicts, if viewed as relevant, will be explored by the selection panel to ensure that the public can have confidence in the CNCC’s independence and impartiality.

Applicants will be assessed on these issues during the selection stage of the appointment process.

A person appointed to the CNCC may be removed from office if they: -

1. have become bankrupt or made an arrangement with creditors or is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or a debt relief restriction order;
2. have been absent from more than three *c*onsecutive meetings otherwise than for a reason approved by DAERA;
3. are otherwise unable or unfit to discharge the functions of a member, or is unsuitable to continue as a member; and/or
4. have during the process leading to their appointment given false information or wilfully suppressed any material fact.

**Other Public Appointments**

Departments have a duty to satisfy themselves, as far as practicable, that those they appoint to the Boards of Public Bodies will perform their duties in an effective manner. DAERA will therefore conduct a cross-departmental check on the probity and performance of those candidates who currently hold or have held public appointment roles. Similar information will be provided by this Department on request in respect of all DAERA associated Board Members.

**The Two Terms Rule**

You should be aware that if you have already served **two** terms in the **same** position on the **same** board you cannot apply through open competition for a third term.

**Double Paying**

If you already work in the public sector you need to be aware that:

* you may be ineligible for consideration for this appointment if in the Department’s view there is a conflict of interest, the perception of a conflict or a potential conflict, between the appointment and their existing commitments;
* you will be asked to confirm that you have permission from your employer to take up an appointment if one is offered and your Department will confirm this; and
* there is a general guiding principle that an individual should not be paid twice from the public purse for the same period of time. As a result, if you already work in the public sector, you may not be entitled to claim remuneration, including expenses, for this position if the duties are undertaken during a period of time for which you are already paid by the public sector. If in doubt you should contact your employer for advice.

In the interests of minimising the potential for double paying to occur, DAERA reserves the right to contact your employer regarding your candidature.

**Access NI Checks**

If successful, you should be aware that you will be required to complete a basic Access NI check. Further details in relation to this can be found in the Access NI Code of Practice. Should you require a copy of this please contact the Public Appointments Unit as per details on contents page.

**Section 6 - Equal Opportunities Monitoring and Complaints Procedure**

**Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form (Voluntary)**

The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) is committed to equality of opportunity. The NICS monitors the appointment processes to help ensure that processes and procedures promote equality of opportunity as far as possible. Please complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form - **Part C** of the application form.

The information provided in the Monitoring Form will be detached from the information on the application form and held separately. It will **not** be available to selection panels or to anyone else involved in the selection process. The information will be used for statistical purposes and analysed independently by staff in the **Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)** in the strictest confidence.

Furthermore, some of the personal information you supply may be disclosed to other government departments, the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland, or anonymously in response to Assembly/Parliamentary Questions and other enquiries.

**Diversity in Public Appointments**

DAERA is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified people irrespective of religious belief, gender, disability, ethnic origin, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation or whether or not they have dependants. All applications for appointment are considered strictly on merit. Since women, young people, people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds and people with disabilities are currently underrepresented on the CNCC, applications from these groups would be particularly welcome.

**Complaints Procedure**

If you wish to make a complaint about any aspect of this appointment process, you should direct your concerns in the first instance in writing to the Public Appointments Unit, DAERA (see contact details below).

**Public Appointments Branch**

**Jubilee House**

**111 Ballykelly Road**

**Limavady**

**BT49 9HP**

**Or by email to:** **PublicAppointments@daera-ni.gov.uk**

**Telephone:** **028 7744 2025**

**Textphone: 1 8001 7744 2025**

If you are unhappy with DAERA’s response, you may wish to write to the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments in Northern Ireland (see contact details below).

**Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI (CPANI)**

**Stormont Castle - Interim**

**Stormont Estate**

**Upper Newtownards Road**

**Belfast, BT4 3XX**

**E-mail:** **info@publicappointmentsni.org**

**If you have a hearing difficulty you can contact DAERA via Text Relay.**

**Making a call from a text phone dial 18001 77442025**

**Making a call from a telephone dial 18002 77442025**

**Section 7 – DAERA’S PRIVACY NOTICE**

The Department takes data protection, freedom of information and environmental information issues seriously. It takes care to ensure that any personal information received from you is dealt with in a way which complies with the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act (2018). This means that any personal information you supply will be processed principally for the purpose for which it has been provided. However, the Department is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers, and to this end may use the information you have provided for this purpose where it is permitted and required to do so. It may also share this information with other bodies responsible for the audit or administration of public funds, in order to prevent and detect crime.

A full copy of the **DAERA’S Public Appointments Privacy Statement** can be found here: -

[**https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/daeras-public-appointments-privacy-notice**](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/daeras-public-appointments-privacy-notice)

If you require this in hard copy, please contact DAERA’s Public Appointments Unit as per contact details on page 2.

**Annex A**

**The Seven Principles Underpinning Public Life**

In 1995, the Committee on Standards in Public Life defined seven principles, which should underpin the actions of all who serve the public in any way. These are:

**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**

**Guide to Competency Based Interviewing**

Competency Based Interviewing (CBI) is currently the most common method adopted for making public appointments in Northern Ireland. CBI is based on the premise that past performance is the best indicator of how someone will perform in a similar situation in the future. The CBI approach places the onus on you, the candidate, to provide evidence from your own experience of specific skills, competencies and behaviours at the required standard of performance. A **‘competence’** is simply a desirable skill or quality.

CBI provides the opportunity for you to answer questions about how you have reacted to and dealt with previous situations, the lessons you have learned and how you might handle similar situations in the future. CBI gives you an opportunity to illustrate your personality, skill set and individual competencies to the interviewer.

During the interview each competence is tested separately and you will be told which competence you are being questioned on. For each competence, the interviewer will begin by asking a **lead question**. These questions are seeking an **example** of a situation or task which led you to take a certain course of action. Lead questions are standardised and are therefore asked to each candidate in the same way. Some examples of lead questions are:

* *Describe a situation when you have worked as part of a team?*
* *Tell me about a time when you have been faced with a challenge in work?*

**Probing questions** will then be used to determine the course of action taken, what changes were created by those actions and the effects of those actions on others. Examples of probing questions are:

* *What did you actually do?*
* *What risks did you take?*
* *How did you plan it?*
* *What were the implications of….?*
* *What went well?*
* *What went badly?*
* *What were the outcomes?*
* *What would you do differently?*

When preparing for a CBI, a good approach is to read each competence that you will be questioned on, identify a relevant example and break it down under the following headings:

* Describe the **challenge** presented,
* Explain the **context** of that challenge,
* Outline the **action** taken and
* Describe the end **result**.

The competencies being tested are the criteria indicated in the application form.