

Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)
Board - Deputy Chair and Board Members
Candidate Information Booklet



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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 Unit, Jubilee House, 111 Ballykelly Road, Ballykelly, BT49 9HP • Tel: 028 7744 2025

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

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

Making a call from a textphone dial: 1 8001 77442025. Making a call from a telephone dial: 1 8002 77442025

Welcome Statement

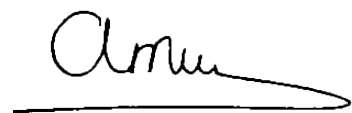
Thank you for your interest in the positions of Deputy Chair and Member of the Board of the Agri-food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI).

AFBI's vision is '*scientific excellence delivering impactful and sustainable outcomes for society, economy and the natural environment*'. As a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), AFBI's work is critical to the delivery of DAERA's priorities and the draft Programme for Government.

The Deputy Chair and Board members will help to lead the organisation through significant challenges in the coming years. You will also support the Chair to ensure AFBI delivers its statutory functions and help to lead AFBI in the delivery of its scientific services, which includes providing services to government, non-governmental organisations and commercial organisations.

In acting as a Board Member, you will establish and maintain effective governance and oversight of AFBI, ensuring the proper stewardship of public funds and accounting for how AFBI's resources are used to best effect.

If you have the ability to provide effective leadership that delivers results, as well as the ability to communicate and work effectively to deliver successful change, I hope you will apply for these important public appointments.



Andrew Muir MLA

Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs



Section 1 - Outline of the Public Body and its Role

Appointment

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) wishes to appoint a Deputy Chair and up to 18 Board Members to the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) Board. It is anticipated that successful candidates will be appointed from 1 June 2025. Further appointments may be made within the lifetime of the merit list.

A Regulated Appointment

The procedure for these appointments adheres to the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland. This means that it 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: www.publicappointmentsni.org

Background

AFBI is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) of DAERA. It undertakes scientific work (research and development, testing, advice and information on scientific matters and dissemination of the results of scientific research) in the fields of agriculture, animal health and welfare, food, fisheries, forestry, the natural environment and rural development and enterprise.

This work helps to enable the NI agri-food industry to market products nationally and internationally, helps protect animal and plant health, helps to ensure the safety of the food that we eat, contributes to the protection of our terrestrial and marine environments and is important to NI's long-term economic and environmental sustainability.

Key Partnerships for Delivery:

- DAERA's College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise;
- Queens University Belfast / Ulster University; and
- Other science institutes both locally and internationally.

AFBI leverages additional income from a wide range of local, national and international research funders and other customers. This external work is complementary and synergistic to the DAERA funded science programmes. The work typically involves extensive national and international collaborations which ensures that AFBI's science remains internationally relevant while adding benefit to the Northern Ireland industry and wider society.

Further information about the organisation, including its Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, can be obtained from the AFBI website at afbini.gov.uk

The AFBI Board

The Board of AFBI meets a minimum of ten times per annum. Board Members may be nominated to serve on any of the following five sub-committees:

1. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
2. Organisational Development and Human Resources Committee
3. Finance and Business Strategy Committee
4. Science Strategy Committee
5. Oversight & Governance Committee

In accordance with the Agriculture (Northern Ireland) Order 2004, in making appointments to the AFBI Board, the Department seeks to:

- a) Secure that each Member has experience in a field of activity relevant to the discharge of the functions of the Institute.
- b) As far as practicable, secure that the Members of the Institute (taken together) are reflective of the community in Northern Ireland.

The Board provides strategic direction and a challenge function to AFBI's Executive Management Team. It promotes good governance including the highest standards of financial management and provides assurance on the effectiveness of risk management and internal control. To this end, and in pursuit of its wider corporate responsibilities, the Board:

- Establishes the overall strategic direction of AFBI within the policy and resources framework determined by the Minister and DAERA;
- Constructively challenges AFBI's Executive Management Team in its planning, target setting and delivery of performance;
- Ensures that DAERA is kept informed of any changes which are likely to impact on the strategic direction of AFBI or on the attainability of its targets, and determine the steps needed to deal with such changes;
- Ensures that any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public funds are complied with; that the Board operates within the limits of its statutory authority and any delegated authority agreed with DAERA, and in accordance with any other conditions relating to the use of public funds; and that, in reaching decisions, the Board takes into account all relevant guidance issued by the Department of Finance (DoF) and DAERA;
- Ensures that the Board receives and reviews regular financial information concerning the management of AFBI; is informed in a timely manner about any concerns relating to the activities of AFBI; and provides positive assurance to DAERA that appropriate action has been taken on such concerns;

- Demonstrates high standards of corporate governance at all times, including using the Audit and Risk Assurance sub-committee to help the Board to address the key financial and other risks facing AFBI; and
- Appoints a Chief Executive to AFBI, sets performance objectives and remuneration terms linked to those objectives for the Chief Executive.

Section 2 - Role Profiles

The Deputy Chair and Board Members are responsible to the AFBI Chair and the DAERA Minister.

The Role of Deputy Chair

The Deputy Chair of the Institute will attend Board meetings and other meetings, mostly in Northern Ireland, as required, with key stakeholders, and undertake the necessary preparatory work for meetings.

In particular they will be required to:

- Assist and support the Chair in providing leadership to the Institute and, in the Chair's absence, deliver a leadership role within parameters agreed with the Chair;
- Along with the Chair, work closely with AFBI's Chief Executive and Executive Management Team to ensure that AFBI achieves its objectives;
- Assist and support the Chair in:
 - Ensuring all Board Members of the Institute, when taking up office, are fully briefed on the terms of their appointment and their duties and responsibilities;
 - Enabling all Institute Members to make a full contribution to the Institute's affairs and ensure that the Institute Board acts collectively as a team;
 - Ensuring that key and appropriate issues are determined by the Institute in a timely manner, including by delegation to appropriate sub-committees, such as Audit and Risk Assurance;
 - Ensuring that the Institute Board has adequate support and is provided efficiently with all of the necessary information, including data, on which to base informed decisions;

- Ensuring that AFBI complies with relevant DAERA and Executive policies and priorities as specified in AFBI's Partnership Agreement and other ad-hoc communications;
- Leading Members in the promotion of the work of AFBI and developing constructive relationships with key stakeholders;
- Co-ordinating and overseeing the work of sub-groups which will, in part, identify the market for AFBI products and services and its customers' current and future needs; identify and assess current and future development in the sector, including competitors' activities and opportunities to expand into new markets and innovations that meet customer needs; and
- Attending induction and any other training identified by DAERA or the Board.

The Deputy Chair will also help to lead AFBI through a period of significant change, including:

- The delivery of increasingly complex and diverse science programmes, with a key focus on environmental and agricultural sustainability, and NI climate change targets;
- Ensuring that the organisation is appropriately structured and has the key staffing capacity and skills to meet the challenges ahead in what is an increasingly competitive recruitment and retention environment, whilst also ensuring that improvement in staff culture remains a key organisational objective;
- Ensuring financial stability including meeting the challenges of a constrained public sector funding landscape and the need for continued resource efficiency and effectiveness and a focus on maximising external funding;
- Completion of the required estate infrastructure and IT projects including investment in new finance and business systems and DAERA-led projects such as the animal health sciences building and the replacement laboratory information management system;
- Meeting statutory duties, DAERA responsibilities and delivering projects within time and budget; and
- The outworkings of the Strategic Review of AFBI, including the implementation of recommendations, as required.

The Role of Members

The role of Board Members is to support the Deputy Chair and Chair in carrying out the above functions.

Other Information

Time commitment

The AFBI Deputy Chair and Board Members are required to fulfil their role and responsibilities in full. To do so, a time commitment of approximately 20 days per year is envisaged for both roles, including induction, training and development, attendance at and preparation for Board meetings, Strategy / Away Days, joint DAERA and AFBI Board meetings, regular meetings with DAERA senior officials and the annual Ministerial meeting.

Period of appointment

The AFBI Deputy Chair and Board Members will initially be appointed for a term of three years, subject to satisfactory performance. The Deputy Chair and Board Members may be considered for a second term for up to a further two years subject to satisfactory performance and Ministerial approval.

Performance Appraisal

An annual appraisal of the Deputy Chair and Board Member performance against agreed objectives will be conducted by the Chair of the Board, and subject to satisfactory performance, the appointment will continue for the remainder of the term.

Remuneration

The annual rate of remuneration for the AFBI Deputy Chair will be £12,289 (under review). The remuneration for AFBI Board Members will be £436 per day (under review). Appropriate tax and National Insurance deductions will be made. The appointments are not pensionable.

The AFBI Deputy Chair and Board Members are also eligible to claim allowances, at Northern Ireland Civil Service rates, for travel and subsistence costs necessarily incurred on official business. For the avoidance of doubt, 'official business' does not include travel between home and AFBI's headquarters (Newforge Lane, Belfast).

Location

AFBI's headquarters are currently at Newforge Lane, Belfast. There are also a further six AFBI regional sites. Meetings will normally take place in Belfast but may occasionally be held at other locations in Northern Ireland.

Training and development

The new Deputy Chair and Board Members may be required to attend relevant training courses, organised by AFBI or DAERA.

Indemnities for personal liability

The AFBI Deputy Chair and Board Members, acting honestly and in good faith, will not have to meet out of their own personal resources any personal civil liability which is incurred in the execution of their function, save where the person has acted recklessly.

Conduct

The Deputy Chair and Board Members have a duty in relation to conduct, propriety and confidentiality. They will be required as a condition of appointment to abide by the Seven Principles of Public Life (Annex A) and by a Code of Conduct of the AFBI Board. Appointees must notify the Institute Secretariat if they become the subject of a police investigation or are arrested by the police.

Attendance

The Deputy Chair and Board Members are expected to attend meetings regularly. The appointment may be terminated if attendance becomes such that it interferes with the good running of AFBI.

Gifts and Hospitality

Appointees will be 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 Institute Secretariat. Appointees must take personal responsibility to ensure that a record is placed in the appropriate hospitality register.

Conflicts of Interest

Appointees must declare any personal or business interests which may, or may be perceived to, represent a conflict of interest or influence their judgement when performing their duties as a Member of AFBI.

These interests will be included in an appropriate register of interests maintained by the Institute Secretariat and the Deputy Chair and Board Members must ensure that their 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, appointees must inform the Institute Secretariat. If, at a meeting of the Institute, a particular issue arises that could give rise to a potential conflict, appointees should disclose their interest and withdraw from any discussion or consideration of the matter. The Deputy Chair and Board Members are encouraged to register their own non-pecuniary interests and the interests of close family members and persons living in the same household that are closely related to their activities as a Member of AFBI. Should appointees be in any doubt, it is best to err on the side of caution and disclose the information.

Appointees must inform the Institute Secretariat in advance of any new appointments which may impinge on their duties.

Political Activity

Appointees cannot occupy paid party-political posts, hold particularly sensitive positions of responsibility in a political party, or hold a position of elected MP or MLA, under the terms of the House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975 and the Northern Ireland Assembly Disqualification Act 1975.

The Deputy Chair and Board Members are expected to inform the Institute Secretariat of any intention to accept a prominent position in any political party and to understand that their appointment as a Member of AFBI may be terminated if the Department feels that, in the case of appointees accepting such a role, the positions are incompatible.

Subject to the foregoing, the AFBI Deputy Chair and Board Members may engage in political activities provided that they are conscious of their general public responsibilities and exercise proper discretion, particularly with regard to the work of AFBI and the principles of public life.

Bankruptcy

Appointees may be removed from office before the end of their term of appointment if they become bankrupt, make an arrangement with creditors or are made the subject of a Bankruptcy Restrictions Order.

Official Secrets Act

The provisions of the Official Secrets Act 1911 to 1989 apply to the AFBI Deputy Chair and Board Members. Unauthorised disclosure of any information gained in the course of their appointment, or its use by them or others for personal gain or advancement, could result in their appointment being terminated early, or even criminal prosecution.

Other Public Appointments

It is not uncommon for applicants for public appointments to hold other appointments or to have done so in the past. DAERA is required, as far as practicable, to take steps to check how applicants have performed in these other roles. As such, the application form includes a section for candidates to list current public appointments held in Northern Ireland and DAERA will seek information on performance from the relevant Department(s).

Nationality

In general, you should have the right to work in the UK to be eligible to apply for a public appointment.

Please note:

- DAERA has no public appointments which are restricted to UK nationals only.
- Republic of Ireland (RoI) citizens may be appointed to any post.
- Commonwealth citizens who have immigration status allowing them to work in the UK may be appointed to any post.

It is the responsibility of any non-UK or non-RoI applicants to provide evidence that they have the appropriate permission if being offered a post. The Department will undertake pre-appointment checks to confirm if they can legally work in the UK.

Section 3 - Person Specification

Before applying for either of the 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

Candidates will need to demonstrate by way of example that they have the following skills, knowledge and experience. It is your responsibility to provide relevant examples, both on the application form and at interview, which show clearly how you meet each of the criteria listed below.

1. Engaging with others

Please provide evidence that demonstrates the ability to use your leadership and communication skills to engage with a range of stakeholders, at senior levels, to build effective working relationships that support organisational delivery in a challenging environment.

2. Delivering results

Please provide evidence that demonstrates your ability to oversee the delivery of results within a changing environment, while ensuring appropriate levels of governance are in operation within an organisation.

3. Relevant Experience

Please provide evidence that demonstrates your knowledge and experience in at least one of the areas stated on page 16 relevant to the work of the organisation:

- Climate change
- Protection of the terrestrial or marine environment
- Sustainable agri-food activities
- Animal health / disease control
- Financial management
- Corporate planning and governance
- Audit
- Risk management
- Human resources / capacity & capability planning
- The delivery of significant IT or estate infrastructure projects

4. Setting Strategic Direction and Managing Change (Deputy Chair position only)

Please provide evidence that demonstrates your strategic thinking and the skills you have employed to influence the direction of an organisation and bring about significant change, taking account of internal and external issues and challenges.

Please note:

1. Details of previous employment are not required.
2. You should ensure that you provide evidence in your application form which outlines how your experience matches the essential criteria detailed above.
3. 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.
4. If you do not provide sufficient detail under each of the criteria the selection panel may reject your application.
5. 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 the post or shortlisting (if necessary). Details must be provided in the relevant box for each of the essential criteria - any information provided on continuation sheets will not be used.

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: www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/public-appointments-guide.pdf

You may also be interested in registering for a free workshop on the public appointments process offered by CPANI.

Further details can be found at: <https://www.publicappointmentsni.org/workshops>

Section 4 - Application and Selection Process

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

All reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate the needs of applicants/candidates with a disability. The Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) is applicable to 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 essential 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 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: [Public Appointment Vacancies - Deputy Chair and up to 18 members to the Board of the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute \(AFBI\) | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

Anticipated appointment timetable

- The closing date for applications is noon Thursday 6 March 2025;
- The sift meeting is scheduled to take place w/c 17 March 2025;
- Interviews are scheduled to take place w/c Monday 31 March and / or 7 April 2025; and
- The appointments are anticipated to be made from 1 June 2025.

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 contained 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.

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

Part C - Applicants are requested to complete the Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form (voluntary). This will not be shared with the selection panel.

Application instructions:

- Completed application forms should be submitted electronically to DAERA's Public Appointments Unit at publicappointments@daera-ni.gov.uk.
- Typewritten or electronic versions of the application are preferred and should be completed in **Arial minimum font size 12**.
- Handwritten applications should be completed in legible block capitals using **black ink**.
- When completing the application form, a maximum of **400 words** per criterion is permitted. Any additional words will be redacted and not presented to the panel for assessment.
- We will not accept CVs, letters, or any other supplementary material in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms.
- The format of the application form should not be amended.
- Alternative formats are available on request.

Closing Date

The time and closing date for receipt of completed application forms by post or e-mail is:

12 noon on 6 March 2025.

Late applications will not generally be accepted. The selection panel may decide to accept a late application if there are exceptional, extenuating circumstances.

The time of receipt of applications will be formally recorded. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their application arrives with DAERA on or before the deadline whether via email or by post.

DAERA's Public Appointments Unit will conduct an initial application validity 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 outlined in Section 4 of the Candidate Information Booklet.

Applications will not be examined or assessed by the selection panel until after the closing deadline. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that the application is valid and meets the eligibility requirements.

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 current/ former Department and the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Human Resources. (Standards of Conduct Policy Sections 8, IRO Public Appointments: 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 AFBI Chair, Deputy Chair or Board Member, an unmanageable conflict of interest.

Selection Process

The appointment process for these 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 panel will compile a list of candidates found suitable for appointment for consideration of appointment by the DAERA Minister.

The selection panel is comprised of:

- Alison Caldwell, Director of Estate Transformation (Chair)
- David Simpson, Director of Corporate Planning & Governance
- Joan Ballantine, Independent Assessor appointed by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI)

Sift Process

It is anticipated that the eligibility sift will take place week commencing **17 March 2025**.

Applications will be anonymised before the selection panel conducts the sift exercise. The selection panel will assess Part B of the application form only.

Only information supplied under each criterion 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.

The scoring framework of **1-5** will be used at sift stage. The pass mark for each criterion will be **3**.

Shortlisting Criteria

Applicants should be aware that after an eligibility sift, should it be necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward to interview, the pass mark will incrementally be increased for the following criterion: **Delivering results**.

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 the 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.

Re-assessment 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 application reassessed. 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

It is anticipated that interviews will be held on week commencing **31 March and / or 7 April 2025 at Greenmount Campus, College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise, CAFRE, Antrim**. A valid form of photographic identity will need to be presented to the panel by each candidate attending for interview, either in person or remotely.

Interviews will be conducted **in person** by the selection panel. 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 and candidates will be provided with a link by email to engage in the interview.

At interview stage the criteria will be marked on a scoring framework from **1 to 5**. Candidates need to meet the satisfactory level required, which is obtaining the minimum pass mark of **3** for each criterion to be considered suitable for appointment, as detailed below:

- Engaging with Others
- Delivering Results
- Relevant Experience
- Setting Strategic Direction and Managing Change (Deputy Chair position only)

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, and a fuller 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.

We aim to notify the candidates of the interview outcome by week commencing **28 April 2025**.

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.

Appointment

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 that an **unranked** list should be presented in this appointment process. It is anticipated that the successful candidates will take up appointment from **1 June 2025**.

Candidates should be aware that information provided in their application form and at interview stage will be used to compile an **“Applicant Summary.”** The Applicant Summary provides 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 held 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.

A **reserve list** may be used to cover any vacancies that arise within 12 months following the initial appointment.

Disqualification

Under the terms of the House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975 and the Northern Ireland Assembly Disqualification Act 1975, existing MPs cease to hold their elected office if they accept an appointment to a public body listed in the aforementioned legislation.

The onus is on the person standing for election to state that they are aware of the provisions of the House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975 or the Northern Ireland Assembly Disqualification Act 1975 and that, to the best of their knowledge and belief, they are not disqualified from being an MP.

If an individual holding a public appointment decides to stand for election as an MP it is their responsibility to check whether the public body to which they belong or the office that they hold is listed in the appropriate Disqualification Act.

If the public body to which an individual belongs or the office that they hold is listed in the Disqualification Act they must immediately notify DAERA of their intention to stand for election. To avoid any disqualification issues from arising later they should resign their appointment before submitting their nomination as candidate in an election. If they have not resigned their public appointment before submitting their nomination as a candidate and are subsequently elected as an MP their election will be void.

Section 5 - Probity and Conflicts of Interest

The highest standards of propriety are expected of AFBI Board Members. Public appointees must show a willingness to work under any administration irrespective of political opinion. Public appointees, including the AFBI Board Members, 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 potential Board Members might have, and that may be relevant to the work of the AFBI, 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:

<https://www.publicappointmentsni.org/publications/guidance-conflicts-interest-integrity-and-how-raise-complaint>

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

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 AFBI Board's independence and impartiality.

Conflicts of interest and probity checks will be explored during the selection stage of the appointment process.

A person appointed to the AFBI Board may be removed from office if they:

- i. have become bankrupt or made an arrangement with creditors or are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or a debt relief restrictions order;
- ii. attendance becomes such that it interferes with the good running of AFBI otherwise than for a reason approved by DAERA;
- iii. are otherwise unable or unfit to discharge the functions of a Member or are unsuitable to continue as a Member;
- iv. 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 appointments. Similar information will be provided by this Department on request about 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, this includes re-applying for another Member position if you have already served two terms as a Member. This does not preclude Members who have served two terms as a Member from applying for the Deputy Chair post.

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 your 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 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 at: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/accessni-code-practice>

Section 6 - Diversity and Equal Opportunities Monitoring

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 minority ethnic backgrounds and people with disabilities are currently under-represented on the AFBI Board, applications from these groups would be particularly welcome.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

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. Please see Section 8 for further details on how this information may be used.

Section 7 - Complaints Procedure

If you wish to make a complaint about any aspect of this appointment process, you should in the first instance contact the Public Appointments Unit. Your complaint will be managed in accordance with a set procedure.

Please address any enquiries about the appointment process, including feedback or applications, to:

Public Appointments Unit

DAERA

Jubilee House

111 Ballykelly Road

Ballykelly, BT49 9HP

Email: PublicAppointments@daera-ni.gov.uk

If you are unhappy with DAERA's response, you may wish to write to the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (see contact details below). Please be aware that in the absence of a Commissioner currently, there may be a delay in dealing with complaints being considered independently of Departments (see contact details below):

The Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (CPANI)

Stormont Castle - Interim

Stormont Estate

Upper Newtownards Road

Belfast

BT4 3XX

Email: info@publicappointmentsni.org

Section 8 - DAERA's Public Appointments 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. 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. In addition, the Department may also use it for other legitimate purposes in line with DAERA's Public Appointments Privacy Notice and with the UK General Data Protection Regulation, Data Protection Act 2018, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

A full copy of the DAERA'S Public Appointments Privacy Notice can be found here:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/daeras-public-appointments-privacy-notice>

If you require this in hard copy, or an alternative format, please contact DAERA's Public Appointments Unit using the contact details on page 2.

Annex A - The Seven Principles Underpinning Public Life

Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness - Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty - Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership - Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and 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 manage 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?

You can prepare for the interview by:

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

During the interview:

- listen carefully to the questions, if you don't understand a question ask for clarification;
- answer with good clear examples that provide evidence of your ability and which relate to the criteria the panel is looking for; and
- don't sell yourself short, be positive and show enthusiasm.

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

Further information on competency-based interviews is available in the 'Public Appointments Guide'. 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>

Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)
Board - Deputy Chair and Board Members)
Candidate Information Booklet

