**Candidate**

**Information Document**

**AGRI-FOOD AND BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE**

**BOARD MEMBER – 11 POSITIONS**

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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:

**Dolores Kelly**

**ALB Corporate Sponsor Branch**

**Ballykelly House**

**111 Ballykelly Road**

**Ballykelly**

**Limavady**

**BT49 9HP**

**Tel: 028 7744 2025**

**Or by email to:** [**PublicAppointments@daera-ni.gov.uk**](mailto: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 11 Board members to the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) Board. Four appointments will take effect from 3rd May 2021, a further four with effect from 6th September 2021 with a final three appointments with effect from 3rd January 2022.

AFBI is seeking to appoint 11 new Board Members with a range of skills/knowledge to the Board and its Sub-Committees.  The Sub-Committees are as follows:

* **Audit and Risk Assurance**
* **Organisational Development and Human Resources**
* **Business and Finance**
* **Oversight and Governance**
* **Science Strategy**

Vacancies will be filled according to need in the above categories and as directed by the Minister, i.e. chosen from an **unranked** list to meet the skills required at that time.  All successful candidates chosen for appointment will serve the same length of term regardless of the date of appointment.

Further information about the organisation, including its Annual Report and Statement of Accounts can be obtained from the AFBI website at: [**www.afbini.gov.uk**](http://www.afbini.gov.uk)**.**

**A Regulated Appointment**

The procedure for this appointment 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**](http://www.publicappointmentsni.org)

**Background**

AFBI came into full legal existence on 1 April 2006. It was formed as a merger of the former Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) Science Service and the Agricultural Research Institute for Northern Ireland (ARINI). AFBI is a DAERA Executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) set up under the powers of the Agriculture (NI) Order 2004. It is empowered under the Order to undertake 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, rural development and enterprise with a particular emphasis on the natural environment. It employs approximately 650 staff who are located on six specialised DAERA owned sites across Northern Ireland and one site leased by DAERA from a private landowner at Bushmills. In total the AFBI occupied estate comprises of approximately 406 hectares of land and 37,000 m2 of laboratory, offices and outbuildings. A process between AFBI and DAERA is underway for further development of the estate. AFBI also operates a 53m marine research vessel which is due to be upgraded and will enable AFBI to pursue an integrated marine science programme in Northern Ireland’s coastal waters, the Irish Sea and adjacent sea areas.

DAERA is both AFBI’s primary funder and its major customer. An annual work programme, which AFBI has a statutory obligation to deliver, is assigned by the Department to AFBI. This comprises DAERA’s scientific testing, advice, research and development and emergency response requirements. In 2019/2020, DAERA is providing £50.9m of funding to AFBI. A deficit funding model is operated which means that DAERA’s funding represents a contribution towards AFBI’s overall costs (of £57.2m) and AFBI must make up the shortfall by generating additional income from other sources. This non-DAERA income is generated from a range of sources including other government departments, public sector bodies, the European Union (EU), private sector customers, the sale of livestock and farm produce. AFBI currently secures approximately a third of its income from outside the core funding provided by DAERA and its commercial work is of increasing importance to the Institute. As part of its Science Transformation Programme, DAERA has undertaken a periodic review of AFBI. This considered its form and function, its efficiency and effectiveness and whether its governance arrangements align with good practice. The review report can be found on the DAERA website or at the following link:

[**http://nics.intranet.nigov.net/daera/articles/afbi-agri-food-and-biosciences-institute-review**](http://nics.intranet.nigov.net/daera/articles/afbi-agri-food-and-biosciences-institute-review)

**The AFBI Board**

The Board of AFBI is currently comprised of a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and 10 Board members who are appointed by the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. The governance of AFBI is organised with five sub-committees:

* **Audit and Risk Assurance**
* **Organisational Development and Human Resources**
* **Business and Finance**
* **Oversight and Governance**
* **Science Strategy**

In making appointments to the AFBI Board, the Department seeks to:

1. **ensure that each member has relevant knowledge and experience in order to contribute to the Board and can demonstrate the ability to operate as an effective Member; and**
2. **as far as practicable, ensure 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 Chief Executive and Senior 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 shall:

* establish the overall strategic direction of AFBI within the policy and resources framework determined by the Minister and DAERA;
* constructively challenge and support AFBI’s Senior Management Team in its planning, target setting and delivery of performance;
* ensure 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;
* ensure 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;
* ensure 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;
* demonstrate high standards of corporate governance at all times, including using the audit sub-committee to help the Board to address the key financial and other risks facing AFBI; and
* appointa Chief Executive to AFBI and, in consultation with DAERA, set performance objectives and remuneration terms linked to those objectives for the Chief Executive, which gives due weight to the proper management and use of public monies.

**Section 2 – Role Profile**

**AFBI BOARD MEMBER ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Board members are responsible to the AFBI Chair. They share the collective responsibilities set out above, in particular for ensuring that AFBI fulfils the aims and objectives set by DAERA and approved by the Minister and that AFBI’s affairs are conducted with probity.

In particular they will be required to:

* Attend Board meetings on a regular basis (11 meetings per year), having prepared by reading relevant papers in advance and, if necessary, seeking further information;
* Contribute to the work of any committees that have been established by the Board;
* Offer constructive challenge in Board and sub-committee discussions, and contribute to decision-making;
* Make decisions together and take joint responsibility for them;
* Exercise independent judgement and a healthy scepticism in relation to decision making and scrutiny of proposals from the Executive Team;
* Maintain a focus on strategy and performance and not be distracted by detail;
* Operate as an effective team member and strive to build consensus within the Board;
* Act as effective ambassadors for AFBI;
* Actively promote the policies of AFBI inside and outside the organisation;
* Should not criticise other public bodies or air personal grievances;
* Represent the Board at meetings and events when required;
* Ensure that any public comments made about DAERA, AFBI, a Board decision etc. are in line with AFBI’s media/communications policy and act with propriety and in good faith at all times;
* Agree to follow the Seven Principles Underpinning Public Life; and
* Abide by the AFBI Board Code of Practice.

**Other Information**

**Time commitment**

An AFBI Board Member is required to fulfil their role and responsibilities in full. To do so, a time commitment of approximately **20** days per year is envisaged including attendance at **11** Board meetings per year and, at the Chair’s request, Board sub-committee meetings and meetings with the DAERA Board.

Board members are also required to attend any other meetings that are necessary in order to fulfil duties as an AFBI Board Member e.g. induction meetings, training days, site visits or meetings with stakeholders.

**Period of appointment**

AFBI Board Members will initially be appointed for a term of **three** years. Subject to satisfactory performance, the appointment will continue for the remainder of the full term, and the Board member may be offered a re-appointment at the end of their term for up to a further **two** years (**five** years in total). This potential re-appointment is also subject to satisfactory performance.

**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.

**Remuneration**

Remuneration as a member of the AFBI Board will be **£402** per diem (under review). This is payable for attendance at Board meetings, meetings of sub-committees of the Board and meetings with the DAERA Board only. The daily rate includes travel time and preparation time. Appropriate tax and National Insurance deductions will be made. The appointment is not pensionable.

AFBI Board Members are also eligible to claim allowances, at Northern Ireland Civil Service rates, for travel and subsistence costs necessarily incurred on official business. Board members are eligible to claim allowances, at Northern Ireland Civil Service rates, for Travel and Subsistence costs including travel expenses to and from home to the meeting venue and incurred as part of the work of AFBI, away from the normal venue*.*

**Location**

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

**Training and development**

New Board members may be required to attend relevant training courses, organised by AFBI or DAERA.

**Performance Appraisal**

Board members performance will be subject to an annual appraisal. You will be appraised by the AFBI Chair in accordance with the agreed AFBI Board member appraisal system.

**Indemnities for personal liability**

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**

Board members have a duty in relation to conduct, propriety and confidentiality. He/she will be required as a condition of appointment to abide by the Seven Principles Underpinning Public Life (**Annex A**) and by a Code of Practice of the AFBI Board. Board members must notify the Chair if he/she becomes the subject of a police investigation or is arrested by the police.

**Attendance**

Board members are expected to attend meetings regularly. An appointment may be terminated if attendance becomes such that it interferes with the good running of the AFBI Board.

**Gifts and Hospitality**

Board members 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 AFBI Secretariat and considered by the Chair.

**Conflicts of Interest**

Board members must declare any personal or business interests which may, or may not be perceived to, 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 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 they must inform the Institute Secretariat. If, at a meeting of the Institute, a particular issue arises that could give rise to a potential conflict, Board members should disclose their interest to the Chair, discuss a way forward and agree with the Chair any further action to be taken. They 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 a Board member be in any doubt, it is best to err on the side of caution and disclose the information.

Board members must inform the Chair in advance of any new appointments which may impinge on their duties. The Chair, in turn, will advise the Department.

**Political Activity**

Board members of AFBI cannot occupy paid party political posts, hold particularly sensitive positions of responsibility in a political party, or hold a position of elected MP, MEP or MLA, under the terms of the House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975, the European Parliamentary Elections Act 2002 and the Northern Ireland Assembly Disqualification Act 1975.

They 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 the AFBI Board may be terminated if the Department feels that, in the case of an AFBI Board Member accepting such a role, the positions are incompatible.

Subject to the foregoing, Board members are free to engage in political activities provided that they are conscious of their general public responsibilities and exercises proper discretion, particularly with regard to the work of AFBI.

**Bankruptcy**

Board members 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.

**Confidentiality**

The provisions of the Official Secrets Act 1911 to 1989 apply to AFBI 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 to hold other public 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, a cross – departmental check will be carried out on the probity and performance of those candidates who currently hold or have held public appointment roles.

**Section 3 - Person Specification**

Before applying for this position, 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, that show clearly how you meet each of the criteria listed below.

1. **Relevant Experience**

The functions of AFBI, the role of the AFBI Board, Chair and Deputy Chair and some of the challenges facing the organisation are detailed on pages 5 - 11 of this document.

We are looking for evidence that demonstrates your experience or knowledge of the agriculture or food sectors and/or of a business development or change management process in any sector and how you would apply this when considering the range of strategic challenges facing AFBI. When providing this evidence, you need to demonstrate that you have the ability to operate as an effective Board member. You do not need to demonstrate experience in undertaking any of AFBI’s specialist scientific activities.

1. **Financial Planning and Management**

AFBI Board members will be responsible for ensuring that the highest standards of financial management are applied within AFBI and that AFBI operates within the financial framework established by DAERA and the Department of Finance (DoF) (according to the requirements of AFBI’s Management Statement and Financial Memorandum, Managing Public Money Northern Ireland and any other guidance issued by DAERA or DoF).

Board members will actively monitor the financial performance of the organisation by receiving, reviewing and acting upon regular financial information and constructively challenging AFBI’s Executive Management Team in its financial planning, target setting and budgetary performance.

We are looking for evidence that demonstrates your knowledge of Financial Planning and Management and have used those skills to analyse financial/commercial/economic information where critical/important decisions are being made. We are also looking for evidence of your ability to use financial information to support the management team in delivering value for money, improve performance, identify and deliver efficiencies. Experience of participating in an Audit and/or Governance and/or Risk committee is desirable.

1. **Corporate Governance, Risk Management and Accountability**

Corporate governance can be defined as “The way in which organisations are directed and controlled”. Accountabilitycan be defined as “the process by which public sector bodies and the individuals within them are held to account for their decisions and actions, including their stewardship of public funds and all aspects of performance”. AFBI Board members will be expected to ensure that high standards of corporate governance and accountability are upheld throughout AFBI.

We are looking for evidence, gained in a leadership/decision-making/influencing role in an organisation/enterprise;

* Of your application of the principles and practice of corporate governance and accountability, including risk management;
* To demonstrate that you have introduced, maintained or improved good governance within an organisation/enterprise; and
* That you have demonstrated personal accountability when making or recommending decisions and taking action.

1. **Influencing and Directing Change**

AFBI Members will be required to ensure that AFBI’s corporate, business and other plans identify the challenges and opportunities facing the organisation and outline how they will be addressed.

We are looking for evidence that demonstrates your ability to influence, direct and oversee organisational change, including how you have listened to and inspired others and created a culture to deliver such change and also how you have overcome obstacles when driving change, while seeking out opportunities for innovation.

1. **Communication**

AFBI Board members will be excellent communicators, effective ambassadors and advocates for AFBI and the board, accessible and responsive to the Chair and capable of providing constructive challenge to the Executive Management Team.

We are looking for evidence to demonstrate your communication skills including your ability to put a point of view across clearly and concisely, to debate and interact effectively with both colleagues and peers and to influence others to achieve desired outcomes.

**Please note:**

1. No formal qualifications are required for any of the posts.
2. You should ensure that you provide evidence in your application form which demonstrates your skills and understanding of 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:

[**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 (CPA NI).

**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 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**](mailto:publicappointments@daera-ni.gov.uk).

Alternatively you can download the information pack at**:** [**www.daera-ni.gov.uk/public-appointments.**](www.daera-ni.gov.uk/public-appointments.)

**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 on **pages** **12 to 15** of this document. 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:**

* Due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation, staff within DAERA Public Appointments Unit will, generally, be working from home. At this time, it would be appreciated if all forms could be submitted electronically; however, if this is not possible, could you please advise if a hard copy application has been sent. You can contact us on 028 7744 2025 or [**publicappointments@daera-ni.gov.uk**](mailto:publicappointments@daera-ni.gov.uk)**;**
* Typewritten or electronic versions of the application are welcome and should be completed in **Arial** minimum font size **12**. If your application is submitted by email we may require you to sign **Part A** if invited to interview;
* 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 welcome to apply for the post of AFBI Board Member. They should, however, be aware that a judgment will 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 an AFBI Board Member an unmanageable conflict of interest.

Civil servants, or former civil servants, who wish to apply, may also wish to check their eligibility to do so with Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Human Resources.

**Timetable/Time Frame**

The closing time and date for receipt of completed application forms by post or email is **4:00 pm on Friday 29th January 2021**.

Completed applications should be returned to Dolores Kelly at [**publicappointments@daera-ni.gov.uk**](mailto:publicappointments@daera-ni.gov.uk) (for contact details see the Contents page of this document).

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

Applications will be individually date-stamped and the time of receipt formally recorded. An acknowledgement of the application will be issued within three working days of receipt. 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 AFBI Board Members posts will be overseen by a Selection Panel. The Selection Panel will have an independent panel member who has been allocated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPA NI) and has had no recent employment, advisory or other operational contact with DAERA. The final appointments will be made by the DAERA Minister.

DAERA’s 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 carried out 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 taken into account 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.

The eligibility sift is due to take place on **15th February 2021.**

**Shortlisting**

If, following the sift exercise, the number of applicants meeting the essential criteria are, in the Departments view, too many to be interviewed, shortlisting may be applied. Shortlisting in this competition will involve incrementally increasing the value of the pass mark in the following criteria:

* **Financial Planning and Management**
* **Corporate Governance and Accountability**

Applicants who are sifted out will be informed of the decision at this stage.

**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 state clearly their reasons for contesting the decision of the panel. The applicant must contact the Public Appointments Unit requesting a review within **10** days of receiving the outcome letter from the sift process. New information which was not included in the applicant’s original application cannot be taken into account in this process.

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

**Interviews**

DAERA’s preference is to conduct the interviews face to face, however, given the current Covid-19 situation, DAERA will complete the interview process in line with any guidelines that the NI Assembly and Public Health Agency have in place at the time of interview. The interviews may take the form of either socially distanced or on a remote face to face basis through the “Webex” platform on **22nd,23rd, 26th, 29th & 30th March 2021**. Candidates should note that a valid form of photographic identity will need to be presented to the panel if interviews take place 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 Sean McGrade, Director of Corporate Services, DAERA;**
* **Mr Colin Coffey, Chairman of AFBI Board;**
* **Mrs Angela Coffey, Independent Assessor appointed by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland.**

It is expected that the successful candidates will be notified by **15th April** so that those appointed to the first four positions can take up their posts from **3rd May 2021** (subject to the necessary pre-appointment checks). Four further appointments will be made from **3rd September 2021** with a further three made from **3rd January 2022.**

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**](mailto:publicappointments@daera-ni.gov.uk) .

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

**Appointments**

Once the selection panel has interviewed candidates, it will make its recommendations to the Minister. 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**

Under the terms of the House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975, the European Parliamentary Elections Act 2002 and the Northern Ireland Assembly Disqualification Act 1975, existing MPs, MEPs and MLAs cease to hold their elected office if they take up 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, the European Parliamentary Elections Act 2002 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, MEP or MLA.

If an individual holding a public appointment decides to stand for election as an MP, MEP or MLA, 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, MEP or MLA their election will be void.

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

The highest standards of propriety are expected of the AFBI Board Members. Public appointees must show a willingness to work under any administration irrespective of public 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:

[**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, 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.

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

A person appointed to the AFBI Board may be removed from office if he/she:-

1. has become bankrupt or made an arrangement with creditors or is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or a debt relief restrictions order;
2. attendance becomes such that it interferes with the good running of AFBI otherwise than for a reason approved by DAERA; or
3. is otherwise unable or unfit to discharge the functions of a member, or is unsuitable to continue as a member;
4. has during the process leading to their appointment given false information or wilfully suppressed any material fact.

**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 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 ALB Corporate Sponsor Branch, Public Appointments Unit, as per the details on the contents page.

**Section 6 – Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form and Complaints Procedure**

**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. The information will be used for statistical purposes and will be 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 young people, people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds and people with disabilities are currently under represented on the AFBI Board, applications from these groups would be particularly welcome.

**Complaints and Challenges**

If you wish to challenge or make a complaint about any aspect of this appointment process, you should in the first instance contact Dolores Kelly. Your complaint will be managed in accordance with a set procedure. If you are unhappy with DAERA’s response, you may wish to contact the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland. The Commissioner operates an independent complaints procedure dealing with potential breaches in the Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies.

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

**Dolores Kelly**

**ALB Corporate Sponsor Branch**

**DAERA**

**Ballykelly House**

**111 Ballykelly Road**

**Ballykelly**

**Limavady**

**BT49 9HP**

**Email:** [**PublicAppointments@daera-ni.gov.uk**](mailto:PublicAppointments@daera-ni.gov.uk)

**Telephone: (028) 7744 2025**

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

**Judena Leslie**

**Commissioner for Public Appointments (CPANI)**

**Dundonald House**

**Annexe B, Stormont Estate**

**Upper Newtownards Road**

**Belfast**

**BT4 3SB**

**Email:** [**info@publicappointmentsni.org**](mailto:info@publicappointmentsni.org)

**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**

**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 General Data Protection Regulation (2016). 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.

A full copy of the DAERA Privacy Statement can be found here: -

[**https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/daera-privacy-statement**](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/daera-privacy-statement)

If you require this in hard copy, please contact Dolores Kelly 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 take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or other friends.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**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.