



## **COUNCIL FOR NATURE CONSERVATION AND THE COUNTRYSIDE**

### **ROLE AND PERSON SPECIFICATION**

#### **1. Title of Post**

Member of the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside

#### **2. Terms and Conditions of Appointment**

The appointment of new members to the Council will follow the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland's Code of Practice. The appointments will be for a maximum period of three years, effective from 18 February 2012 until 17 February 2015, however, there is the possibility of an extension for a second three-year term, subject to satisfactory service.

Members are not paid, but are entitled to an allowance for travelling and other out-of-pocket expenses, including a subsistence allowance, payable in line with standard civil service rates and arrangements. Expenses incurred in relation to the care of dependants will also be reimbursed where appropriate.

If, after appointment, a Member is unable to make a satisfactory contribution to the work of the Council he/she may be invited to withdraw from the Council.

Should the Council be abolished, amalgamated or have its functions transferred during the appointment period, then the appointments would, of course, also cease with effect from the date of that abolition, amalgamation or transfer.

#### **3. Members' Responsibilities**

Members are asked to attend and contribute to full Council meetings and participate on sub-committees. Previous Councils have met about six times a year, normally for a full day. Meetings are held throughout Northern Ireland. The Council has several subcommittees, which meet at less frequent intervals, and all Members normally serve on at least one.

Ad hoc meetings may be held from time to time to consider specific issues. Previous Councils have also arranged a few field visits each year, normally

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within Northern Ireland but occasionally to Great Britain or the Republic of Ireland. Members may also be asked to represent the Council on outside bodies and/or at one-off conferences or events. The time commitment for each Member is equivalent to approximately two full days per month.

### **4. Conduct and Handling Conflicts of Interest**

All candidates are strongly advised to read the following leaflets provided in this application pack –

- “Probity & Conflicts of Interest – Guidance for Candidates” which sets out the Seven Principles of Conduct Underpinning Public Life (the Nolan principals); and
- the leaflet entitled “CPANI: Commissioner for Public Appointments Northern Ireland” which provides guidance on complaints and conflicts of interest.

The Chair and Members must at all times operate within the limits of the Council’s statutory authority as laid down in Article 4(3) and (4) of the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Amendment) (NI) Order 1989/SI No. 492.

In exercising their duties the Chair, Deputy Chair and Members of the Council must demonstrate impartiality, integrity and objectivity and should be aware of their wider responsibilities as Members of the Council. Like others who serve the public, they must follow the Seven Principles of Conduct Underpinning Public Life as set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

The Members must:

- undertake on appointment to comply at all times with the Seven Principles of Conduct Underpinning Public Life and with the rules relating to the use of public funds;
- act in good faith and in the best interests of the Council;
- not use information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or for political purposes, nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests or those of connected persons, firms, businesses or other organisations; and
- ensure that they comply with DOE’s rules on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality.

If the Member is deemed to have breached the Seven Principles of Conduct Underpinning Public Life, the Department may terminate his/her appointment. The Members should declare from the outset any personal or business interests which may conflict with their responsibilities as Council Members. This begins with completion of the relevant section of the application form. The Panel will explore issues relating to conflict of interest with applicants who are interviewed, including the extent to which any conflict might affect the

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person's ability to contribute effectively and impartially to the Council and how this might be handled if the applicant were to be appointed.

A register of these interests will be kept. It will list direct or indirect pecuniary interests which members of the public might reasonably think could influence judgement. The register of interest will also include non-pecuniary interests of Members which relate closely to the body's activities or interests of close family members and persons living in the same household as the Council Member. If changes occur, Council Members should ensure that the register is updated. The contents of the register will be open to the public for inspection.

The Department may take the view that by concealing a conflict of interest, an appointee would be deemed to have breached the Seven Principles of Conduct Underpinning Public Life and may terminate the appointment.

### 5. Person Specification

This section indicates the criteria which the selection panel will use to assess the applications. It is essential that applicants indicate on their application forms how and to what extent they meet these criteria. For applicants invited to interview, the criteria will also be tested in interview questions.

No specific professional qualifications are required. However, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have:

- a) **competence** in the following areas:
  - good communication and interpersonal skills;
  - analytical and decision-making skills;
  - ability to work as a team member;
  - representational ability.
  
- b) **practical experience** in one or more relevant areas such as:
  - terrestrial and freshwater ecology;
  - marine and coastal sciences;
  - earth science conservation;
  - environmental education;
  - landscape planning and management; and
  - countryside management in connection with agriculture, forestry or outdoor recreation.
  
- c) **knowledge and understanding** of current nature conservation and countryside management issues.

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### 6. Appointment Process

All application forms must be returned to:

**Finance and Business Planning Division  
Department of the Environment  
Room 4-13b  
Clarence Court  
10-18 Adelaide Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8GB**

Applications can also be submitted by email to:

[publicappointments@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:publicappointments@doeni.gov.uk)

Forms should be signed in writing or with an electronic signature. Those forms not signed at the time of submission must be signed at interview.

Application forms must be received **by 12:00 noon on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2011**. CVs will **not** be accepted. The receipt of each form will be acknowledged.

Applicants will be shortlisted for interview on the basis of the answers on their application form. It is therefore essential that applicants show in their answers how and to what extent they meet the criteria. Each applicant will be formally notified of the outcome of their application as soon as possible after the closing date.

The Department plans to hold the interviews during the period 7<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2011. Those candidates successful at interview will be presented to the Minister in an unranked list containing a short description of each candidate's skills and experience. The Minister will make the final decision on the appointment of members.

The Department will publicly announce the appointment of new members for the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside by means of a press notice.

Department of the Environment  
Finance and Business Planning Division  
September 2011