

Information Pack

Chair appointment to the board of the Scottish Food Commission



Closing date: 5:00pm Wednesday, 8 May 2024



**Ethical Standards
Commissioner**

All appointments are regulated by the Ethical Standards Commissioner (ESC)

Information pack for appointment to the Board of the Scottish Food Commission

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands is seeking to appoint a Chair to the board of the Scottish Food Commission. The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands values highly the benefits of having different points of view on the board and welcomes applications from people from all walks of life.

The appointments process for this board vacancy follows the [Code of Practice for Public Appointments](#) and is regulated by the [Ethical Standards Commissioner](#).

Key dates for this appointment round

Closing date	Wednesday 8 May 2024
Sift of applications	Thursday 16 May 2024
Date applicants will hear about the outcome of their application	By Thursday 23 May 2024
Interviews	Wednesday 12 & Thursday 13 June 2024 Interviews will be held in person, at St. Andrew's House – Edinburgh. It is unlikely that we will be able to offer an alternative interview date.
Ministerial decision	By Friday 28 June 2024
Start date	Thursday 1 August 2024

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

RECRUITMENT OF A CHAIR OF SCOTTISH FOOD COMMISSION

Thank you for your interest in becoming the Chair of the Scottish Food Commission.

The Scottish Food Commission (SFC) is a new executive non-departmental public body to be established under the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022, which we expect to become fully operational in 2025. It will consist of a Chair and between 2 and 4 Commissioners, supported by a small staff.

The SFC will provide an oversight function for the delivery of the provisions in the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act. The Act requires Scottish Ministers and relevant authorities (currently defined at local authorities and health boards) to produce Good Food Nation Plans. These Plans will set out the main outcomes to be achieved in relation to food-related issues, the policies needed to do this and the measures that will be used to assess progress.

The functions of the SFC are set out in the Good Food Nation (Act) 2022 and will include: scrutinising and making recommendations in relation to the Good Food Nation Plans and progress reports; conducting research; and providing advice to Scottish Ministers, local authorities and health boards in relation to their Good Food Nation Plans. As these functions are directly linked to the Good Food Nation Plans, we will therefore establish it to coincide with the publication of the final version of the Scottish Government's Good Food Nation Plan in 2025.

We are seeking a Chair to steer this new body through the challenging but exciting period immediately before establishment and in the early years of operation. The successful candidate will have a unique opportunity to shape the direction of the Commission and its model of working for the future.

This will be a demanding but rewarding post. The new Chair will be required to provide strong leadership and demonstrate experience of setting up a new organisation in a complex political landscape. Highly skilled communication will be essential for fostering positive relationships and building trust within the organisation, as well as excellent analysis and decision-making skills.

Further information on the post can be obtained by contacting Ashley Cooke, the Deputy Director for Food and Drink, email: deputydirectoroffood&drink@gov.scot. If this is a role that interests you, I would encourage you to make an application. We have appointed Aspen People to support this recruitment.



Mairi Gougeon
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands.

Information about the role

Remuneration	£221 per day for a maximum of 80 days/year (non-pensionable) and reasonable expenses.
Time commitment	<p>We expect that the time commitment will change over the life of the body. While the body is being established and during the first months of operation more engagement will be needed – i.e. up to 80 days/year. During the establishment phase there may also be phases of increased activity.</p> <p>It is likely that once the body is established the Chair's time commitment will decrease to approximately 50 days/year.</p> <p>The Chair's time commitment will be reviewed on a regular basis.</p>
Length of appointment term	<p>This appointment will be for 4 years in the first instance.</p> <p>At the end of the 4 year term, there is the possibility of reappointment, subject to evidence of effective performance and having regard to the skills, knowledge, understanding and experience required by the Board at the time. Any appointments and subsequent reappointments will not extend beyond a maximum of eight years.</p>
Location of meetings	Initially meetings will mainly take place via MS Teams and in person at Scottish Government buildings in Edinburgh. A permanent office base for the new Scottish Food Commission has not yet been identified.

Disqualifications

Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022,
Schedule

*Scottish food commission: Constitution and
operation*

Disqualification from membership

*17(1)A person is disqualified from being a
member of the Commission if the person
is—*

*(a)disqualified from being a member by
virtue of section 19 of the Ethical Standards
in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000,*

*(b)disqualified from being the director of a
company registered under the Companies
Act 2006 in Great Britain.*

*(2)The Scottish Ministers may by
regulations modify this paragraph to add or
remove descriptions of persons disqualified
from being a member of the Commission.*

*(3)Regulations under sub-paragraph (2)
may not repeal sub-paragraph (1)(a).*

A member of the Scottish Parliament
cannot also hold a public appointment for
public bodies listed in the schedule of [the
Scottish Parliament \(Disqualification\) Order
2020](#).

Former ministers and senior crown servants
(Director General level and above) should
seek advice from the Advisory Committee
on Business Appointments (ACOBA) before
applying for this role.

The Board of the Scottish Food Commission

This is an exciting opportunity to shape and influence the development of a new public body: the Scottish Food Commission. It is expected that the Commission will be formally established by mid-2025.

The Scottish Food Commission is a new non-departmental public body that is to be established to provide an oversight role of provisions made in the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022.

The board of the Scottish Food Commission will have a collective responsibility to make strategic decisions and take independent actions to carry out the functions as outlined in the Good Food Nation Act Section 20. The functions of the Scottish Food Commission relate directly to Good Food Nation Plans of Scottish Ministers and relevant authorities (currently local authorities and health boards).

The role of the board will develop over time: initially the board will play a significant role in developing the identity of the new body as well as identifying the strategic goals for the body in its first year of operations. As the Scottish Food Commission transitions to full operation, the board will make strategic decisions on how to exercise their statutory functions, including as a first step the review of the national Good Food Nation Plan.

The Scottish Food Commission will play a significant role in reshaping the Scottish food system. The recommendations and advice provided by the Commission to Scottish Ministers and relevant authorities will form an important part of ensuring that Good Food Nation Plans are continuously improved.

The board of the Scottish Food Commission will be supported by a chief executive and a small staffing complement.

The role of the Board Chair

As the first chair of the Scottish Food Commission, this appointment will play a crucial role in shaping the future and strategic direction of this new public body.

You will be actively involved in the recruitment of the chief executive, the first member of staff to the Scottish Food Commission, and in appointing the other members of the board.

You will work closely with the sponsor team and the chief executive, once in place, to enable the new public body to take on its statutory functions and full budgetary control once it is established.

Once the body is fully established you will be key in ensuring the Commission effectively fulfils its oversight role and provides constructive challenge, that is evidence based, to Scottish Ministers and relevant authorities in relation to their Good Food Nation Plans.

This is a high publicity role that will attract great interest from key stakeholders interested in the Scottish food system.

The selection panel

Chair	Ashley Cooke, Deputy Director Food and Drink, Scottish Government
Independent panel member	Maria Jennings, Former Director of Food Standards Agency
Representative from the Ethical Standards Commissioner	Kay Hampton, Public Appointments Advisor
Panel member	Hilary Pearce, Deputy Director of European Structural Funds & State Aid Division, Scottish Government

Please note that applicants will be asked to declare if they know any members of the selection panel. The panel will also declare if they know any applicants. Any actual or perceived conflicts of interest will be managed in line with the [Ethical Standards Commissioners Code of Practice for Public Appointments](#).

Person specification

As Chair of the Scottish Food Commission, you must be able to demonstrate the skills, knowledge and experience listed in the person specification below. We have explained exactly what we will be looking for and how this will be assessed. You will need to demonstrate evidence of the priority and essential criteria during the assessment process. For your application, you will only need to evidence some of these criteria (see ‘How will this be assessed?’ column and the application form). In providing the evidence sought, you can draw on examples from your working and/or personal life, or through participation with private, public, voluntary, charity or community organisations.

The priority criteria are weighted over the essential criteria, and the candidates who provide the strongest evidence against the priority criteria will be considered most able to fulfil the role. In the event that candidates provide evidence of equal merit against the priority criteria, the panel will then take into account the strength of the evidence presented against the essential criteria in determining the candidate(s) most able to fulfil the role.

You will also be asked to provide a tailored career history (one page summary of your career) setting out roles and responsibilities you have undertaken which demonstrate the essential skills relevant to this role as set out in the Person Specification.

Priority Criteria	Indicators	How will this be assessed
Experience of setting up a new organisation, and setting the direction for that organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of successfully formulating strategic aims of a new organisation, in line with pre-set core functions and helping to shape the identity of a new organisation • Familiarity with setting up a new organisation (business, charity, public body or other organisation) 	<p>In the written application we will want you to tell us about how you meet this criterion in a max of 400 words.</p> <p>We will have a discussion with you about this during the interview.</p>
Experience of navigating a complex policymaking landscape, including communicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience or comfortable with engaging with a range of stakeholders who may hold opposing or conflicting views • Able to communicate with a range of stakeholders on complex issues 	<p>In the written application we will want you to tell us about how you meet this criterion in a max of 400 words.</p>

<p>with a range of stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of the complex Scottish political landscape • Experience of working in conjunction with or interacting with national, regional or local government 	<p>We will have a discussion with you about this during the interview.</p>
<p>Leadership and Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides clear focus in ensuring that the body/organisation achieves its objectives • Enables all board members to make an effective contribution • Committed to equality of opportunity and to developing and maintaining a diverse board • Direct experience of ensuring effective governance at senior management or board level or held a specific post related to governance • Able to articulate what board responsibilities are from a fiscal and legal perspective and can demonstrate direct involvement in implementation of good governance principles • Understanding of audit and risk management and able to demonstrate effective practical application of that understanding. 	<p>In the written application we will want you to tell us about how you meet this criterion in a max of 400 words.</p> <p>We will have a discussion with you about this during the interview.</p>

Essential Criteria	Indicators	How will this be assessed
<p>Analysis and Decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience with the decision-making process at a high level and making reasoned judgments where extensive evidence might not be available • Experience in the analysis of highly complex information where critical/important decisions are being made • Understands the wider strategic environment and takes account of this when making decisions 	<p>We will have a discussion with you about this during the interview.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to stand back, set aside personal views and appreciate alternative views in the decisions being taken • Able to make difficult decisions 	
Seeing the bigger picture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes account of broader developments which may be relevant to or affect the organisation/board and its ability to meet its objectives and reviews the implications from a strategic perspective • Able to look ahead and consider issues over the short, medium and long term and identify relevant implications • An awareness of what is happening within a sector, across different geographical regions and awareness of any political implications 	We will have a discussion with you about this during the interview .
Communication, influence and constructive challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to communicate effectively and influence different audiences and in public settings • Able to challenge constructively and positively influence, particularly in a Board setting • Successful in encouraging a group to work collaboratively together and to reach compromise and consensus • Able to inspire others and gain respect 	We will be assessing this throughout the assessment process .
Understanding of the complexity of the food system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the range of stakeholders that operate within the complex food system • Understanding of the issues facing the food system and elements that influence it 	We will have a discussion with you about this during the interview .

The assessment process

The assessment process will happen as follows:

1. The selection panel will assess all application forms against the criteria for appointment (see the person specification). Those who demonstrate evidence that most closely meet the criteria tested at this stage will be shortlisted for interview.
Applications will be anonymised.
2. The selection panel will interview candidates, the questions they ask will relate directly to the criteria for appointment. There will also be a practical exercise for applicants to complete. Further details will be shared with those shortlisted for interview.
3. The selection panel will also ask questions relevant to the fit and proper person test (see below) which will include questions about [the Principles of Public Life](#).
4. The selection panel will review the evidence provided and agree on which candidates have most closely met the criteria for selection and should be recommended to the appointing Minister.
5. The appointing Minister will make a decision about whom to appoint based on evidence from the selection panel. The appointing Minister may request to meet with candidates before making a final decision.
6. Appointees will be asked to complete pre-appointment checks which will include a Disclosure Check (there is no charge for this). Appointment is conditional on satisfactory completion of these.

Fit and proper person checks

In the context of public appointments, a fit and proper person is someone who is suitable because they meet the requirements of the role, and their past or present activities and behaviour means they are suitable. Tests are built into different stages of the appointment process to ensure that:

- Conduct to date has been compatible with the public appointment
- Membership is not barred by the body's constitution e.g., criminal record or bankruptcy (see disqualifications)
- There are no unmanageable conflicts of interest
- Political activity is declared
- There is agreement to abide by the Principles of Public life in Scotland. Please see the link [above](#).
- There is confirmation that the time commitment required for the role can be met.

Social media checks for candidates invited to interview

The selection panel may consider publicly available information about candidates which is posted by candidates on social media. Any findings that the selection panel agree are pertinent to the role or that may call into question suitability for the appointment, credibility of the appointments process or the public body will be discussed with candidates at interview. Consideration of any issues will take place openly and transparently to establish the facts. Candidates will be given an opportunity to respond to any concerns. This information will be handled in line with the Privacy Notice for public appointments: [Privacy notice - Public appointments: guide - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/privacy-notice-public-appointments/guide/)

How to apply

Start the application process apply by clicking this link: [Appointment Listings at Scottish Government \(icims.com\)](https://icims.com)

Find the advert for the board you want to apply for. Follow the instructions on the advert to register online and complete the relevant sections. Then download the document called 'application form', complete the form (this should be a word document or pdf) and return it by the closing date to [PA Applications Mailbox@gov.scot](mailto:PA.Applications.Mailbox@gov.scot)

Please note that late applications will not be considered by the selection panel.

Common questions and answers

Who can I contact to speak about this role?	Ashley Cooke, the Deputy Director for Food and Drink, email: deputydirectoroffood&drink@gov.scot
Who can I speak to about a disability related reasonable adjustment?	Please contact the Public Appointments Team Email: public.appointments@gov.scot Telephone: 0300 244 1898 Deaf, deafblind and BSL users can contact the team via contactSCOTLAND-BSL
I am having a problem with the application process who can I speak with?	Please contact the Public Appointments Team (see contact details above).
Do you have any advice about how to complete an application form?	Yes. More information is provided here: Introduction - Public appointments: guide - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
Do you have any advice for candidates attending interviews?	Yes. More information is provided here: Introduction - Public appointments: guide - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

I can't attend the interview in person, can I attend remotely?	Yes. You can request to attend the interview using MS Teams. Please contact the Public Appointments Team (see contact details above).
Will you reimburse expenses for attending an interview?	Yes. You can claim reasonable expenses, further information will be provided with the invitation to interview.
What does 'appointed on merit' mean?	Appointed on merit means that the people who are appointed most closely meet the criteria that is sought for the board vacancy at a point in time. People are assessed on the evidence that they present in the appointments process and the findings of the fit and proper person test.
What role does the Ethical Standards Commissioner (ESC) have in the appointments process?	The ESC regulate and monitor the public appointments process . The Commissioner plays a role in ensuring appointments are made on merit and use fair methods. More information about the Commissioner's role is provided here: Public appointments Information leaflet Ethical Standards Commissioner
Can I apply if I am not a British citizen?	Yes. You can apply for and be appointed to the Boards of Public Bodies if you are not a British citizen however you must be legally entitled to work in the UK.
Would remuneration for a public appointment impact on my benefits?	Possibly. Taking up a remunerated public appointment may affect benefits payments. This will depend on individual circumstances and you should seek advice from your benefits provider. More information is provided here: Public appointments and welfare benefits: information - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
Do the selection panel see information from the diversity monitoring form?	No. Diversity monitoring information provided by applicants is not shared with the selection panel. If applicants opt for a guaranteed interview this information will be shared with the selection panel following shortlisting. Sometimes information about a reasonable adjustment is shared with the selection panel to ensure that requirements are met (e.g. if a BSL interpreter is required).

<p>Do I need to provide an email address and contact details at application stage?</p>	<p>In order to meet the requirements of the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) the Scottish Government must be able to verify the credentials of applicants for public appointments should they be recommended for appointment. To ensure that this is possible all applicants must provide an address and contact details at application stage. If applicants do not provide this information their application will be rejected.</p>
<p>How will my personal information be handled?</p>	<p>All personal information will be handled with great care and in line with UK GDPR and data protection requirements. Further information can be found in the Privacy Notice here: Privacy notice - Public appointments: guide - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)</p>
<p>Can I get feedback on my application or interview?</p>	<p>Yes. You can request feedback.</p>
<p>Is any training provided if I am offered and take up an appointment?</p>	<p>Yes. Each board has their own induction process and training offer. New appointees are also invited to attend an induction day hosted by the Scottish Government.</p>
<p>Can I apply for a Chair role on a board if I have already been a member of that board?</p>	<p>Yes. Board members can serve a maximum of 8 years on one board in one role. The board Chair is considered a different role and so current and previous members can apply.</p>
<p>Is it possible to hold more than one public appointment?</p>	<p>Yes. It is possible to have more than one public appointment. You should check that you can make the time commitment for an additional appointment and that there are no unmanageable conflicts of interest.</p>
<p>Are public appointments announced?</p>	<p>Yes. Every appointment is announced here: Public appointments: news releases - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) The board may also announce new appointments on their own website and social media platforms. Information published will include a biography and details of any political activity within the last 5 years.</p>
<p>What standards are expected of board members?</p>	<p>The conduct expected of board members of Scottish public boards is set out here: Members of devolved public bodies: model code of conduct - December</p>

	2021 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)(this includes the Principles of Public Life)
How can I complain about the public appointments process?	Further information about the complaints process for public appointments can be found here: How to apply - Public appointments: guide - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) Anyone concerned about public appointments can raise a complaint and have it independently investigated by the Ethical Standards Commissioner. Investigation process public appointments Ethical Standards Commissioner

For further information

Please contact the Public Appointments Team, Scottish Government

Email: public.appointments@gov.scot

Phone number: 0300 244 1898

Deaf, deafblind and BSL users can contact the team via [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](#)



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Get in touch:

If you require a reasonable adjustment at any stage of the appointments process or if require further support with your application, please contact the **Public Appointments Team**.

Telephone: [0300 244 1898](tel:03002441898)

Email: PA_Applications_Mailbox@gov.scot