



NATURESCOT

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Recruitment to SAC and the Expert Panel – an update

Purpose

1. This paper updates the Committee on the proposed recruitment to the Scientific Advisory Committee and the Expert Panel.

Action

2. **The Committee is asked to note the work that is being undertaken and alert colleagues to the upcoming recruitment exercise.**

Preparation of the paper

3. The paper was written by Sarah Hutcheon and Des Thompson, and is sponsored by Eileen Stuart.

Background

4. NatureScot is currently running a recruitment exercise to replace Board members who are standing down or leaving the Board after their two terms as Board members. This includes Bob Furness, as Chair of the Committee. We should hear of the appointment of new Board members later in March. Once the new members are appointed, the Chair of NatureScot will appoint a new Chair of the Committee.
5. In addition to this, we will be running a recruitment exercise shortly to appoint members to the Committee and the Expert Panel. We have one Committee member who will be leaving us this year, and a number of Expert Panel members whose appointments are ending in June.
6. We have reviewed and revised the job role and specification, in discussion with the Chair of the Committee. As part of this we have identified areas of expertise where we would particularly welcome applications. The draft Job Role and Specification is shown in **Annex 1**.
7. Interviews are likely to take place in Q1 2021/22, once the new Committee Chair is in place.

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Annex 1**MEMBER OF SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)****ROLE DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION****Role Description**

As a member of NatureScot's SAC you will:

- Provide advice to the NatureScot Board and staff on scientific matters, contribute to NatureScot's research work within the context of the Corporate Plan, and advise on novel and contentious science issues;
- Undertake peer reviews contributing to the quality assurance of reports and other scientific material;
- Review the scientific basis for the notification of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and any consents, when requested to do so by the Protected Areas Committee, including all cases in which NatureScot is obliged to consider representations made by interested parties, and to advise the NatureScot Board as appropriate; and
- Contribute to in-depth investigations of particular topics as required by the NatureScot Board or when requested by the Director of Nature and Climate Change.

We are also looking to appoint members to our scientific Expert Panel. These members are called on, as required, to provide advice on scientific matters (especially in relation to novel and contentious work); to peer review NatureScot research reports; and to contribute to in depth investigations of specific research themes that underpin NatureScot's programmes of work.

Time commitment

Members of the SAC should be prepared to attend Committee meetings regularly, and to give a minimum of 10 days per annum to play a full part in such meetings and in other activities of NatureScot. Work is ongoing throughout the year, rather than concentrated in any particular time period. The time input of Expert Panel members varies from several to up to ten days per annum.

Meetings

The SAC holds plenary meetings twice a year (Inverness or Battleby, near Perth, or by video conference) and on such other occasions as required by its Chair and the NatureScot Board. Where specialist advice is required on some topics (e.g. marine issues, species-land management interactions, or protected areas' proposals) members may meet with staff to determine a view. The SAC provides advice on sensitive topics to the Board and Scottish Government and its operating procedures reflect this role.

Occasionally, sub-groups of the SAC are formed to advise on specific topics. These include reviews of NatureScot work, or specialist inputs to major projects.

SAC membership is ratified by the NatureScot Board. The Committee is made up of up to seven members (the Chair, who is also a Board member, and up to six others). In addition, a number of experts serve on a scientific Expert Panel. The Chair of the SAC is drawn from the NatureScot Board.

Remuneration

Committee and Panel members receive remuneration of a daily fee of £xxx which is non-pensionable. This daily fee is subject to annual review. The appointment carries reasonable expenses including travel, childcare and carer expenses.

Length of Appointment

The term of appointment is normally three years with the possibility of re-appointment, subject to evidence of effective performance and satisfying the skills, knowledge and personal qualities required on the Committee at the time of appointment (up to a maximum of eight years). Members' performance is appraised annually by the Chair of the Committee.

Code of Conduct

In carrying out their public service, individual Committee members are expected to comply with the Codes of Conduct and rules adopted by NatureScot on such matters as the use of public funds, conflicts of interest, confidentiality and the misuse of information for personal or political gain and generally, at all times act in good faith in the best interests of NatureScot. NatureScot's *'Standing Orders and Ways of Working for the Board, Committees and Management Team'* sets out in details the role, responsibilities and conduct for Committee Members. The [NatureScot website](#) gives details.

Training and Development

New members receive induction training and supporting material covering their roles and responsibilities, and accountability and governance arrangements. There is also an ongoing appraisal process which will give Members an opportunity to discuss their performance with the Chair and highlight any developmental or training needs which may have been identified.

Person Specification

We are looking for members who met the following criteria:

Specific knowledge and expertise:

- A clear understanding of the state of nature and the causes of change, and NatureScot's policies; and
- Experience of having contributed to in-depth investigations of specified research themes.

Leadership and team working:

- Effective strategic scientific leadership, providing advice on strategic scientific matters or projects which are novel or contentious;

- Experience and ability to challenge effectively and constructively, and influence decision making, within a Committee or other team setting; and
- Experience of effective communications skills, including presentation skills to deliver messages to diverse audiences.

Applications are particularly welcomed from people with a background in one or more of the following areas:

Biodiversity and climate science; earth science (including soils); freshwater and marine ecology (including marine renewables); and social science (including environmental health, education and economics).

The same application process is used to select SAC and Expert Panel members. Those invited to interview will be asked whether they wish to be considered for one or both of these positions.