

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) Board Recruitment
Advisory Assessment Panel
Introductory and planning meeting
Notes of the meeting

Date: 21 April 2021

Time: 14:00-15:00

Location: MS Teams

Attendees

Welsh Government Official (Panel Chair)
Chair, Natural Resources Wales
Independent Panel Member
Welsh Government Official
Gatenby Sanderson Official
Gatenby Sanderson Official
NRW Official
Welsh Government Official
Welsh Government Official

Welcome and introductions

1. Welsh Government Official, as the Panel Chair, advised the Panel consisted of the Chair of NRW, Independent Panel Member and Welsh Government Official. Following introductions, he thanked everyone for their role in this recruitment campaign.

Overview and agreement of roles, responsibilities and recruitment process

2. Welsh Government Official confirmed all Panel members and their support teams had received the Panel's guidance document. No questions were raised about the different roles. It was agreed interview questions and the sequence of questions would be agreed later in the process.

Overview of candidate criteria

3. The Chair of NRW outlined the background for the criteria, as set out in his letter to Welsh Government Official in February 2021. NRW requires Board members who can operate at non-executive level and not get involved in the detail at executive level. He stressed to the Panel members the complexity of the organisation, and that Board members should not be representative of sectors. The complexities mean NRW is often required to take difficult decisions with conflicting priorities. Board members will need to understand the intricacies of this, and of NRW's relationship with government as a sponsored body.

4. The Chair of NRW confirmed he was not necessarily looking for qualified people. For the landscape roles, the Board need those with credibility with the sector. For the Finance Committee Chair, the Board required someone who knows their way around financial reporting, but can also manage of KPIs – audit and risk is covered in a separate sub-committee. Overall, the Board needs team players for these challenging but important roles.
5. The Chair of NRW confirmed he did not think experience as a non-executive director was necessary, but someone with a promising prospective would be considered. The location of Board members was discussed. It was agreed members did not need to live in Wales, but they should have an understanding of Wales, both as a culture and a place. With regard to the context of a public profile, he advised this is about fitting the right member to the job required. He needs Board members who can work together across the Board, but also on their own on behalf of the organisation – essentially, a safe pair of hands with credibility with their audience.
6. The criteria around future generations was there to test applicants' understanding of the legislative architecture under which NRW operates. And whether they understand what the Future Generation Action mean in practice for NRW. For example, collaboration and empowering the organisation to work with other organisations to share the load.

Planning requirements

7. Gatenby Sanderson Official discussed how Gatenby Sanderson is sourcing candidates. With the breadth of the role of NRW, they are concentrating their search to find people with innovation, passion and creativity so they can add value to the Board with their experience. There is a wide search, with advertisements in Welsh media, social media, board recruitment and diversity job sites and the not for profit sector. The Public Appointments Team had also circulated the advertisements to their diversity networks. The initial reports show a rich search horizon.
8. Gatenby Sanderson Official advised that given the breadth of the organisation and requirements of the Board members, her ambition is to give the Panel a long list with more than less to allow the Panel genuine choice. She will provide the Panel with a long list with applicants put into one of three groups – A, B or C. This will include a summary against each application. She would expect around 30 people to be agreed at long-list (8-10 for each role) who would undergo a preliminary interview with Gatenby Sanderson. A report on these discussions would be prepared for the Panel for discussion at the short list meeting.
9. The Panel confirmed they had all received the meeting dates and interview schedule. Welsh Government Official asked the Panel to reflect on the sift matrix, but acknowledged this would be discussed in detail following the long list meeting. Welsh Government Official also asked the Panel to reflect on any interview questions they may wish to consider. Welsh Government Official will circulate to the panel questions previously used in recruitment to NRW's Board.

Next steps

10. Welsh Government Official advised the advert closes on Friday 30 April. Very soon following this, the Panel will receive the applications and a list of applicants. Gatenby Sanderson Official confirmed she will prepare a long list report for each role and will circulate these to the Panel as early as possible on Friday 7 May in readiness for their meeting on Monday 10 May.