**Chief Executive**

**National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

**Candidate Information Pack**

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[Latest annual review](https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/application/files/2916/1117/5323/Annual_Report_20_FINAL.pdf)[Charitable Objects and our Mission](https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/about-us/the-naaonb)

[The Colchester Declaration](https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/application/files/7216/1117/5782/The_Colchester_Declaration.pdf)

[Application Form](http://www.allysondavies-consultant.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/NAAONB_CE_AppForm.docx)

[Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form](http://www.allysondavies-consultant.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/EO_Form.doc)

To discuss this role further, please contact Allyson Davies

at [NAAONB@allysondavies-consultant.com](mailto:NAAONB@allysondavies-consultant.com)

or call 020 7828 3855 or 0796 855 6164

For background information on the National Association for AONBs:

[www.landscapesforlife.org.uk](http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk)

**The National Association for AONBs is committed to best practice   
in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

**Job-share applications are welcome:** please apply with a proposed job-share partner

Dear Potential Candidate

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chief Executive of the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a truly impactful and highly esteemed organisation to work for and the importance of this pivotal role cannot be overstated. The successful applicant will lead us through a context of profound change for the NAAONB and for the environment sector in general.

Our exit from the EU, the Covid pandemic and the twin challenges of climate change and nature depletion will mean huge changes in the way we as a nation manage, fund and value our national landscapes. The challenges are huge, but so are the opportunities.

We span England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and straddle the differing legislation shaping the landscape of those nations. We are currently funded by Defra, Natural England, and the Welsh Government, and also by our membership, which includes most of the UK’s 46 AONB Partnerships and Conservation Boards. AONBs and Conservation Boards are run as partnerships incorporating NGOs, local interest groups and the farming and land management community. Together, these partnerships form a complex network, rich in expertise, passion and creativity, and capable of great impact. Each AONB also has a team of dedicated, skilled and experienced staff to deliver action on the ground and promote collaboration to deliver the AONB Management Plan for each area.

Balancing the needs of many different stakeholders is challenging, but it is also our strength. We are able to assimilate the interests of all of these people who care passionately about our iconic landscapes and speak with a strong voice on their behalf.

The NAAONB is recognised as an organisation with integrity. We have a highly motivated staff team, small by design, able to respond to the requirements of Government and our membership with agility and pace. Whilst we are dynamic, we are also an unashamedly nurturing organisation and we think long term. We encourage creative thinking, personal development and exploring new ways to collaborate and solve problems. This approach has reaped countless benefits. The open approach enables us to challenge each other and our partners, but also gives us the confidence to actively welcome tough challenges and incorporate new ways of thinking and working.

This model of working is exemplified in the wide variety of projects the NAAONB coordinates, from promoting national staff development programmes, to co-ordinating AONBs’ commitment to nature recovery, delivering a national ELM trial programme or developing a shared art in the landscape strategy. We foster, support, and encourage creativity and new ideas in the network and in doing so, put people and their potential at the heart of the AONB Family.

We hope the information in this pack will give you an overview of the work of the National Association and why we think it is such a special organisation to work for.

Yours truly,

Philip Hygate

Chairman

**Chief Executive, National Association for AONBs**

**Background Briefing**

**About the National Association for AONBs**

The National Association for AONBs supports the UK’s 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. An AONB is a designated landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are precious enough to be safeguarded in the national interest. The NAAONB is a registered charity.

Our **vision** is that the natural beauty of AONBs is valued and secure.

Our **mission**is to support and develop a network of ambitious AONB partnerships with a strong collective voice.

Our **charitable objects**are simple and have the care of the UK’s countryside at their heart.

The charity’s membership is made up of AONB partnerships, conservation boards, local authorities, environment organisations and enthusiastic individuals who care deeply about our outstanding landscapes.

There is a small staff team and we are governed by a board of trustees. Our organisational culture and approach mean that we are able to galvanise voices and position ourselves effectively with policy and decision makers. This has enabled us to be highly influential and have significant impact at local, regional and national levels of government and in the media. The organisation is able to punch well above its weight and is in good shape. The new Chief Executive will join a highly functioning team and organisation. However, there will be plenty of opportunities and challenges ahead.

**It’s an exciting time to join us!**

Howard Davies, the current Chief Executive has led the organisation through significant change and has established it as a key part of the environmental movement in the UK. Some of our successes include:

* Securing a protected settlement for AONBs during a period of austerity,
* Steering the NAAONB and AONB Family through a sponsorship change bringing them closer to Government,
* Delivery of a programme of leadership development and transformation that built collaborative skills across the AONB Family,
* Raising ambition around nature recovery by providing vision and leadership around the Colchester Declaration – a declaration for nature in AONBs,
* Building influence and respect for AONB partnerships across a wide range of organisations including governments in England and Wales.

However, never has it been more apparent that the world faces huge environmental challenges – the need to tackle climate change and recover and protect nature in our landscapes is becoming ever more urgent. Awareness and value of the natural world has increased hugely in recent years and as we emerge into the new post-pandemic era it will be high on the political and public agendas.

The next few years promise to be pivotal in shaping the future role of the National Association for AONBs and taking the agenda even further. The Association, its members and network are poised to deliver on large-scale projects to conserve and enhance nature and heritage in the UK for generations to come. This means that there will be many opportunities for the new Chief Executive to make a real and lasting contribution, including:

* Working with the trustees, team and membership to develop new visions and strategies for the future, including positioning the Association as an important actor in the delivery of nature recovery and the fight against climate change in the UK,
* Continuing to lead the team and AONB network to build on a high profile and strong relationships across the board with policy and decision makers, locally, regionally and nationally, and with the media,
* Working with Government to support the coordination of testing and delivery of post-Brexit nature-friendly farming payment systems,
* Positioning the organisation to support AONB teams and partnerships in the context of the implementation of the Glover Review, including the relationship with a new National Landscape Service,
* Positioning the organisation in relation to the National Designated Landscape Partnership in Wales,
* Exploring new ways of sharing natural beauty with a wider and more diverse audience,
* Maximising the opportunities for awareness and profile raising in England presented by the 25 Year Environment Plan, Colchester Declaration, Green Recovery, COP26, and the increasing sense of urgency around the environmental crisis,
* Maximising opportunities presented by the progressive legislative framework in Wales, engaging with the agenda around the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and the Wellbeing of Future Generations.
* Leading a talented and experienced team, membership and partnerships ensuring that they can contribute fully and reach their potential,
* Preparing to act when the UK government responds to the recommendations of the Review of Designated Landscapes in England and ensuring that opportunities to collaborate are maximised,
* Forming powerful alliances with other conservation and heritage organisations to maximise the combined impact of our networks and voices,
* Maximising the opportunities presented by our charitable status, including being able to amplify our voice and diversify our funding base and opportunities to provide income-generating services,
* Building an organisation where equality, diversity and inclusivity are embraced and where the board, staff and projects evolve to reflect the diversity of the country.

**About you**

The new Chief Executive could come from a range of relevant backgrounds but they will need to hit the ground running in terms of knowledge about the environment and the conservation of nature and heritage in the context of Protected Landscapes. They will need to be ambitious for and with us, and by using their people and relationship-building skills, will lead the organisation to create and deliver a range of strategies and initiatives that together maximise the opportunities ahead.

The new Chief Executive could be someone who is currently a senior manager but who is ready to lead an organisation for the first time, or someone who already has experience of being a Chief Executive.

Whatever your background we will be delighted to hear from you, especially if you:

* Have a strong passion for the environment, for the natural world and its interconnectedness with human health and wellbeing, and a good understanding of the role cultural heritage plays in Protected Landscapes
* Are a relationship builder with Emotional Intelligence and excellent communication skills, who relishes collaboration and collegiality,
* Are a natural networker who thrives on building strategic partnerships for the benefit of AONBs and the broader environmental sector,
* Have vision and strategic flair; are able to bring in opportunities and work with the trustees, team and membership to maximise our impact, delegating and trusting in the potential and growing the talent of a strong and capable team and membership,
* Are committed to diversity, inclusion, and equality.

**We value and respect all the differences that make us who we are, including: age, cultural background, disability and mental health, ethnicity and race, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, and social background.**

**Job Description**

**Post title:** Chief Executive, National Association for AONBs

**Salary:** £58,000 – £60,000 per year, plus generous 30% non-contributory pension

**Hours:** 37 hours per week.

**Reporting to:** Chair, NAAONB

**Location:** Home-based, with the requirement for travel throughout England and Wales

**Key contacts: •** NAAONB Chair  
**•** NAAONB Trustees  
**•** NAAONB Staff team   
**•** Defra, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland officials  
**•** MHCLG and other relevant government departments and agencies  
**•** Natural Resources Wales and Natural England staff   
**•** AONB staff network  
**•** National Park Authorities and their representative bodies  
**•** Voluntary and private sector collaborators  
**•** Other relevant national and international organisations such as the Landscape Institute, IUCN, Europarc  
**•** Academia

**DBS:** This post **is not** subject to a disclosure.

**Description of role**

To deliver the charitable objects of the NAAONB, to provide leadership and support to a complex network of people, landscapes, and organisations, and provide an interface between AONB partnerships/conservation boards and governments at many levels. This requires a degree of creativity and boldness, emotional intelligence, empathy, and an understanding of politics and policy. To lead the Charity, and the staff team, working closely with Trustees in a way that rewards creativity and ambition, coaches and nurtures individuals and teams through a programme of collaborative skills development. To be the external face of AONBs nationally, and articulate our Mission with passion, at a time of great challenge and change for the NAAONB and for AONB Partnerships and Conservation Boards

**Postholder duties and responsibilities**

* Leadership and development of the NAAONB team to deliver against the Strategy and business plan, in line with our core values and beliefs, including setting and monitoring of work plans for staff;
* Working closely with the Chair and Trustees of the NAAONB to represent and advocate the Mission of the NAAONB at senior levels across government, and the voluntary and private sectors;
* Advising, supporting and servicing the Board of the NAAONB in its strategic development, both as the lead body representing the network of AONBs, and as an environmental charity;
* Setting of an annual budget, managing finances and regular monitoring and reporting on performance;
* Advising and supporting the Chair and the Trustees in ensuring compliance with best practice and good governance of both the charity and the company;
* Leading the strategic development of the NAAONB and harnessing the power of the individual AONB Partnerships and Conservation Boards and their teams, as both a learning network and as a cohort of protected landscape professionals developing policy and technical advice;
* Securing resources, both for the NAAONB itself, and also, through national collaborative programmes, for the AONB network;
* Raising awareness and promoting the purposes of AONBs, through advocacy and representation, as well as the implementation of a Communications Strategy for the NAAONB including key stakeholder engagement with the Chair;
* Providing professional technical advice on AONB matters on request, in pursuit of the NAAONB Mission;
* Ensuring the NAAONB and the AONB network maintains an international perspective and relevance, including exchange of best practice;
* Championing, practicing and upholding the core values and beliefs of the NAAONB;
* Undertaking any other duties in support of the organisation as may reasonably be required.

**Organisational responsibilities**

* **Values and behaviours**To demonstrate and be a role model for the Charity’s values and behaviours to promote and encourage positive behaviours in others, enhancing the quality and integrity of the work we do.
* **Smarter working**To lead the development of creative, innovative, smarter ways of working, including making the most of virtual communications.
* **Communication**To communicate effectively with our many stakeholders and to work collaboratively to provide the best possible outcomes for them, for the Charity and for the natural beauty of our AONBs.
* **Health, Safety and Wellbeing**To take responsibility for health, safety and wellbeing in accordance with the Charity’s Health and Safety policy and procedures.
* **Equality and diversity**To promote a society that gives everyone an equal chance to learn, work and live, free from discrimination and prejudice, and to ensure our commitment to equality and diversity is put into practice.
* **Confidentiality**To work in a way that does not divulge personal and/or confidential information and follow the charity’s policies and procedures in relation to data protection and security of information.
* **Reducing our carbon footprint**  
  To contribute to our responsibility in relation to climate change by considering and limiting the carbon impact of activities during the course of your work, wherever possible.
* **Performance management**  
  To promote a culture whereby the highest of standards and performance are achieved by all. To oversee a Performance and Development Review process for the staff of the Charity, to ensure continuous learning and improvement and to increase its performance.
* **Management and leadership**   
  To provide vision and leadership to inspire and empower colleagues so they can reach their full potential and contribute to the Charity’s Mission. To engage in personal development to ensure you are equipped to lead; to constantly seek better ways of working.
* **Financial management**   
  To manage the Charity’s finances in accordance with the Charity Commission’s regulations and to ensure the Charity achieves value for money in all circumstances through the monitoring of expenditure and the early identification of any financial irregularity.

*The above is not exhaustive and the post holder will be expected to undertake any duties which may reasonably fall within the level of responsibility of the post as directed the Chair.*

**Person Specification[[1]](#footnote-1)**

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| --- |
| Qualifications  Degree or equivalent, in an environment, sustainability, countryside recreation, land management or heritage related subject  Membership of a relevant professional body (D) |
| **Experience**  Landscape management/policy experience and demonstrable experience of influencing others  Budget management and risk management  Thorough understanding of current legislation and policy context for protected landscapes in England and Wales  Successfully leading dispersed, specialist teams  Developing and working in partnerships and coalitions to achieve shared outcomes  Working and negotiating with governments (both central and local), MPs and civil servants  Generating income and resources and the development of collaborative ventures  The culture and politics across England and Wales  Communicating via accessible reports, public speaking, utilising networks  IT software packages such as Excel, Word  Experience of leading a charity and/or working with a Board of Trustees (D) |
| Skills, Knowledge and Abilities  Demonstrable leadership skills and the ability to motivate and inspire others  The ability to successfully guide a team, organisation and membership through a process of transition  Ability to work collaboratively with others  Advanced strategic planning skills  Political acumen  Ability to communicate compellingly both orally and in writing, and to articulate and win support for the Charity’s mission  Ability to develop partnerships and co-operation between organisations and individuals  Ability to represent the NAAONB in a wide variety of professional settings  Knowledge of national policy initiatives for rural areas and socio-economic issues facing protected landscapes  Knowledge of the conservation and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage (D) |
| **Personal Qualities**  Highly developed emotional intelligence  The desire to bring out the best in others and to lead and inspire  An instinctive collaborator, who promotes collaborative behaviour in others  Resilience under pressure, with the capability to manage a complex and varied workload  Diplomatic and tactful, but capable of standing one’s ground when required  Sensitivity to the positions and values of others  Willingness to work outside normal office hours when required  An interest in and commitment to landscape; rural places; tackling the climate and biodiversity crisis; and inclusivity and access to nature for all |

**The Process**

**Recruitment Timetable**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Deadline for applications | Monday, 1 March, 2021 |
| Screening interviews | Week of 8 March |
| Panel interviews | 23 March |
| Final Interview (if required) | 26 March |
| Decision made & successful candidate notified | End of March |

**To Apply**

If you would like to apply for this role, please complete the **Application Form** (which you can download from [this link](http://www.allysondavies-consultant.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/NAAONB_CE_AppForm.docx)), and the **Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form** (downloaded from [this link](http://www.allysondavies-consultant.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/EO_Form.doc)). Attach a **CV** outlining your career to date, with any academic and professional qualifications.

Please send these three documents, by **10am on 1 March**, to Allyson Davies at [NAAONB@allysondavies-consultant.com](mailto:NAAONB@allysondavies-consultant.com)

**Note to Job Share Applicants**

Job share applicants are welcome. Please make it clear who you are applying with. Please talk to Allyson for advice on how to apply.

**Information**

If you require any further information or you would like to discuss anything in more detail, please contact Allyson Davies at the above email, or call 020 7828 3855 or 07968 556 164.

**Data Protection**

The personal information that you provide will be used to process your application for employment with the National Association of AONBs. Personal information about unsuccessful candidates will be held securely for six months after the recruitment exercise has been completed; it will then be destroyed or deleted. If your application is successful and you take up employment, the information will be used in the administration of your employment with us. It will be kept secure and will only be used for purposes directly relevant to your employment.

1. Essential, unless indicated with a (D) for desirable [↑](#footnote-ref-1)