

Dame Helen Ghosh named as preferred Chair for the Office for Environmental Protection

17.4.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

Following a rigorous process Helen Ghosh has been selected as the preferred candidate to replace Dame Glenys Stacey.

Dame Helen Ghosh has been named as the preferred candidate to succeed Dame Glenys Stacey as Chair of the Office for Environmental Protection,.

Dame Helen has been selected by the Environment Secretary Emma Reynolds and by Andrew Muir, Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) following a rigorous process conducted in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Emma Reynolds has invited both the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee and the Environmental Audit Committee to hold a joint pre-appointment hearing and to report on the suitability of Dame Helen for the post.

Pre-appointment scrutiny is an important part of the appointment process for some of the most significant public appointments made by Ministers. It is designed to provide an added level of scrutiny, to verify that the recruitment meets the principles set out in the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Pre-appointment hearings are held in public and allow a Select Committee to take evidence from a Minister's preferred candidate before they are appointed. The Select Committee will then publish a report setting out their views on the candidate's suitability for the post. Ministers consider the Committee's views before deciding whether to proceed with the appointment.

All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for appointees' political activity, if any declared, to be made public. Dame Helen has not declared any significant political activity in the past five years.

Subject to the outcome of the pre-appointment hearing and the final decision of the Environment Secretary and Minister Muir, Dame Helen is expected to take up the post on 1 June 2026.

Biographical details of Dame Helen Ghosh:

As the Master of Balliol College in Oxford University from 2018 to 2026, Dame Helen Ghosh held various senior roles in the governance of the University as well as taking on the role of Chair of the Conference of Colleges. She previously spent six years as Director General of the National Trust and has held several senior roles in the Civil Service, including as Director General at HMRC, and as Permanent Secretary at both Defra and the Home Office. Dame Helen also has a wealth of experience as a non-executive, including seven years as a Trustee on the Board of Action for Conservation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dame-helen-ghosh-named-as-preferred-chair-for-the-office-for-environmental-protection>