

Invest NI starts hunt for new leader as Kevin Holland steps down

Invest Northern Ireland is on the hunt for a new chief executive after current boss Kevin Holland announced his intention to stand down.

Mr Holland, who has been in the post since 2019, said he has decided to “pass on the leadership role and to focus on a new area”.

His time at the organisation covered one of the most disruptive for the Northern Ireland economy and coincided with both Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Bristol native’s appointment brought vast international public and private sector experience to the organisation having built life sciences businesses across the Middle East, Africa, Russia and Turkey. Mr Holland was also a former advisor to the British Embassy in China.

One of the most high-profile roles in the business world in Northern Ireland, the chief executive of Invest NI is charged with winning inward investment from around the world for Northern Ireland and stimulating the creation and growth of indigenous companies.

When Mr Holland took over the job from previous chief executive Alastair Hamilton, it commanded a salary of between £160,000 to £175,000.

The chair of Invest NI Rose Mary Stalker said the process to recruit a new CEO will be initiated as soon as possible and “interim arrangements will be announced over the coming days”.

She thanked Mr Holland for his work in the post.

“Both personally, and on behalf of the board, I would like to place on record our appreciation and thank Kevin for the dedication and direction he has provided to Invest NI during a particularly challenging time brought about by the impact of Brexit and the global pandemic. During this time, Kevin has led the organisation in the delivery of emergency aid schemes and set up recovery plans for the region whilst maintaining Invest NI’s wide range of business programmes.

“We wish Kevin every success in the next chapter of his career.”

Mr Holland said he was proud of the work the organisation has done in the last two years

“Now, as Invest NI enters its next planning cycle, I have decided to pass on the leadership role and to focus on a new area,” he said. “I would like to thank you all for your support over the past couple of years and look forward to seeing the continued development of this great organisation.”