



CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE – 21st MARCH 2023

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's approval of the proposed timetable for the appointment of independent members to the Corporate Governance Committee.

Background

2. The terms of reference of the Constitution Committee include the function of advertising and interviewing suitable people for recommendation to the County Council for appointment as an independent member of the Corporate Governance Committee.
3. Guidance issued by CIPFA recommends that local authorities include two co-opted independent members on their audit committee to:
 - Supplement the knowledge and experience of elected members in specific areas such as finance and audit;
 - Provide continuity outside the political cycle (this being of particular importance where members of the committee can change annually or because of elections);
 - Help achieve a non-political focus on governance, risk and control matters.
4. Whilst it could be some time before the relevant statute is enacted to support this approach the Government has encouraged local authorities to establish their audit committee arrangements in line with this guidance.
5. CIPFA specifically recommends two co-opted independent members rather than one, as this will allow for the recruitment of members with different but complementary knowledge and experience, increase the resilience and continuity of the Committee and show commitment in supporting and investing in the Committee.

6. Independent members are non-elected representatives who are recruited based on the suitability of their qualifications and experience in the area of audit and/or governance. They should provide:
- specialist knowledge and insight to the workings and deliberations of the committee;
 - an effective, independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework;
 - an independent review of the Council's financial and non-financial performance;
 - independent challenge to, and assurance over, the Council's internal control framework and wider governance processes.
6. The Independent Member(s) would not be able to vote on matters like elected members of the Committee can, but they will be part of the Committee in an advisory and consultative capacity.
7. The Corporate Governance Committee considered a report on the new CIPFA guidance and supported the proposed approach to seek to appoint of 'up to' two independent members, recognising that some authorities have had difficulty in appointing more than one.

Appointment Process

8. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, recruitment will be carried out by Members of the Constitution Committee and the Chair of the Corporate Governance Committee will also be involved in line with CIPFA Guidance, following a public advertisement and interviews supported by the Director of Law and Governance.
9. If only one independent member is appointed, the Constitution Committee following consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Governance Committee will determine if and when a further appointment should be sought.
10. In order that the new appointments can be put to the County Council for approval at its Annual Meeting in May 2023, the following timetable is proposed:

Advertisement

24th March 2023

[Alert to be sent to all County Council Members attaching copy of the advertisement and a letter sent to various bodies including district councils asking them for assistance in publicising the opportunity]

Closing date for applications

6th April 2023

Shortlisting by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Constitution Committee and Corporate Governance Committee	by 11 th April 2023
Letter to invite candidates for interview	by 14 th April 2023
Interviews to be conducted	Between 24 th and 28 th April 2023
County Council meeting	17 th May 2023

Recommendation

5. That the proposed timetable for the appointment of independent members to the Corporate Governance Committee be approved.

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure

None

Background Papers

Report to the Corporate Governance Committee on 21 November 2022 – Revised CIPFA Guidance for Audit Committee Members and Officers.

Officer to Contact

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