

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Introduction

1. This report concerns the appointment of independent members to the Council's Corporate Governance Committee.

Background

2. 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, to provide continuity outside the political cycle (this being of particular importance where members of the committee can change annually or because of elections) and to help achieve a non-political focus on governance, risk and control matters.
3. The Government has recently committed to mandate audit committees with at least one independent member and consideration at full council, where this requirement does not yet apply in the sector, However, it could be some time before the relevant statute is enacted to support this approach and the Government and CIPFA has encouraged local authorities to establish their audit committee arrangements in line with this guidance.
4. Independent members are non-elected co-opted members that will not be able to vote on matters like elected members of the Committee but will be part of the Committee in an advisory and consultative capacity. They will operate in accordance with the Co-opted Members Protocol agreed by the Constitution Committee at its meeting on 21 January 2025. They are recruited based on the suitability of their qualifications and experience in the area of audit and/or governance and 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.
5. The positions were advertised within the County and applications were received from the following two candidates:

Gordon Grimes

Mr Grimes, a retired Senior Civil Servant, has been an Independent Person for various local authorities in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland since 2012. He has been an Independent Member of the Leicestershire County Council's Corporate Governance Committee since 2023. He lives in Enderby.

John Pilgrim

Mr Pilgrim, now retired, had a long career in the financial services sector including PwC LLP, Ernst and Young LLP and HM Customs and Excise. He is currently a trustee of local charities and has committee experience. He has been an Independent Member to support the Member Conduct Complaints Process since 2024. He lives in Ashby de la Zouch.

6. Members of the Constitution Committee were consulted on the proposed appointments, in line with the functions of that Committee. Unanimous support was given to the proposal to recommend the two applicants for appointment.

Resource Implications

7. There are no resource implications arising from this report.

Equality Implications

8. None.

Human Rights Implications

9. None.

(Motion to be moved: -

That Mr G. Grimes and Mr J. Pilgrim be appointed to serve as independent members of the Corporate Governance Committee for a term of four years up to the May annual Council meeting in 2029.)