

COUNCIL

DATE	24 th July 2025
REPORT OF	The Chief Executive
SUBJECT	Appointment of Independent Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee
STATUS	Open
FORWARD PLAN REF NO.	Not applicable

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

An effective Audit and Governance Committee contributes to the achievement of strategic objectives by seeking and receiving assurance on the systems of risk management, governance and internal control which underpin the delivery of these objectives.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A report recommending the appointment of an independent Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, following the resignation of the current Chair.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That, subject to satisfactory references, Mr. P. Stone is appointed as the Independent Chair of the Audit Committee.
2. That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to finalise the conditions of appointment to this role.

REASONS FOR DECISION

The principle of having an independent Chair was previously agreed by Council and ensures that the Committee complies with best practice.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 At its meeting on the 20th May, 2009, Council agreed the principle of appointing an Independent Chair of the Audit Committee.
- 1.2 Mr Tim Render was appointed to the position in July 2010 and his leadership, dedication and expertise has greatly assisted the committee in driving high standards of governance and internal control, supporting the achievement of Council objectives. Mr Render announced his intention to stand down from the role in January 2025.
- 1.3 A selection panel comprising Mr Render and Councillors Boyd, Holland and Patrick, was convened to interview candidates on 23rd June 2025. The selection panel was supported by the Monitoring Officer, the Interim Section 151 Officer and the Head of Audit and Assurance. The panel recommended the appointment of Mr Paul Stone. It is a matter for full Council to confirm this appointment.

- 1.4 Mr Stone is a CIPFA qualified accountant with 25 years' experience in Local Government Finance. He is currently the Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer at North West Leicestershire District Council. During the interview process, he demonstrated a clear understanding of the role and purpose of the Audit Committee. He also effectively identified how he would seek to discharge the responsibilities of the position, working with the elected members on the Committee and the Council generally.
- 1.5 If appointed, the Mr Stone would be invited to serve for a term of office of four years, co-terminus with an elected members term of office. His term of office would conclude in May 2029.

2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Audit Committee has a leading role to play in ensuring that the Council's governance and internal control arrangements are effective and contribute to the mitigation of risks. As the complexity of Council operations, and especially of the financial accounts, increases, it is important that the Committee is resourced to play its part in mitigation of risks that may arise from areas that it oversee.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

It remains open to Full Council not to make an appointment and instead appoint an elected member to the position. The appointment of an independent Chair supports CIPFA guidance around the importance of independent membership to ensure the audit committee has the necessary expertise to carry out its role effectively.

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

There are no specific reputational issues related to this report. However, the recommendations will enhance the Council's reputation by complying with best practice.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no financial considerations to be taken into account as a result of the recommendations within this report. The Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee is subject to a Special Responsibility Allowance of £4500 per annum.

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

There are no implications for children and young people arising from the recommendations within this report.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no climate change or environmental implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

8. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

Not applicable.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

As set out in the main body of the report.

11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct human resources implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

12. WARD IMPLICATIONS

The work of the Audit and Governance Committee is applicable to all wards.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

14. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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