

Committee(s): Natural Environment Board – For Decision	Dated: 16 May 2024
Subject: Non-Voting External Representative Appointment(s) to Natural Environment Board	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	N/A
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Town Clerk	For Decision
Report author: Blair Stringman, Town Clerk’s Department	

Summary

The Constitution of Natural Environment Board (the Board) was agreed by the Court of Common Council in January 2024 to allow the appointment of non-voting external Members to bolster its membership. Following changes to the constitution of the Board in January 2024, external representative vacancies were advertised with twelve candidates shortlisted for interview. A recruitment panel consisting of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Natural Environment Board and the Natural Environment Director interviewed candidates and further shortlisted their preferred candidates for onward recommendation and approval of Natural Environment Board for terms as detailed in the recommendation(s).

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to approve the appointment of the candidate(s) shortlisted for the following terms:

- a) For a term of one year, Dr Heather Barrett-Mold OBE
- b) For a term of two years, Tony Leach
- c) For a term of three years, Vladislav Dobrokhotov & Dani Stephenson

Main Report

Background

1. To ensure the Board has access to necessary expertise to promote its success, it was recommended that the composition be revised to include up to four external representatives with specific focus areas (including biodiversity & nature resilience, community engagement, access & recreation, culture, heritage & learning and income generation).

2. Following changes to the constitution to enable appointments of non-voting representatives, an open and transparent approach to the recruitment of external representatives, which followed a similar approach to the recruitment of external representatives on other City of London Committees, including advertising on the Corporation website and use of LinkedIn and other mechanisms to generate interest took place. All adverts included a role profile which highlighted the skills, expertise and unique perspectives the Natural Environment Board was seeking to achieve with these key external appointments.
3. After closing of the advert, interviews took place with a panel consisting of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Natural Environment Board alongside the Director of Natural Environment. Twelve candidates were shortlisted by the Chairman and several others eliminated.
4. The twelve included 3 women and one diversity candidate. All CVs are available to Members on request to the Town Clerk.

Current Position

5. The need for the best possible expertise at Board level is vitally important. Accordingly, it is proposed to augment the Board with up to four external representatives who, in addition to the expertise of Members, bring specific areas of expertise to the Board, but not exclusively, addressing the following areas:
 - Biodiversity & nature resilience (including climate action)
 - Community engagement
 - Access & recreation
 - Culture, heritage & learning
 - Resourcing including income generation.

(It should be noted that external representatives are required to sign up to the Corporation's Code of Conduct, which should provide a level of assurance on governance and accountability.)

Options

6. Option 1 (This option is recommended)

To approve the appointment of the candidate(s) shortlisted for terms specified in the recommendation(s) of this report. This will assist the board in bringing specific areas of expertise to address gaps in knowledge for improved governance following an extensive recruitment process.

7. Option 2 (This option is not recommended)

To not approve the appointment of the candidate(s) shortlisted for the terms specified in the recommendation(s) of this report. This will prevent the board from bringing specific areas of expertise to address gaps in knowledge for improved

governance which was already agreed at the Court of Common Council in January 2024.

Proposals

8. The Board's constitution was amended in January 2024 to allow the appointment of non-voting external members. This change was made to bring in external representatives with specialised skill sets and experience to improve governance.
9. Following the changes to the constitution, external advertisements were placed and twelve candidates were shortlisted by the Chair, while others were discounted.
10. The recommendation to approve the appointment of the shortlisted candidates, Dr. Heather Barrett-Mold OBE for a term of one year, Tony Leach for a term of two years, and Vladislav Dobrokhotov and Dani Stephenson for a term of three years, is based on the need to bolster the Board's membership with external representatives. This will enable the City Corporation to bring in more specialised skill sets and experience to address gaps in knowledge and improve governance.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – The Natural Environment Strategy sets the framework for effective scrutiny and oversight of Natural Environment programmes and activities at a strategic level. The Natural Environment Board, supported by external representatives who have specific expertise in the areas of focus, will play a key role in ensuring co-ordination and strategic alignment between the Natural Environment strategy and the Corporation's new Corporate Strategy, and, by necessity, the governing documents of the charities.

Financial implications - There will be a nominal resource requirement for the recruitment, induction and training of external appointments.

Resource implications - There will be no material change to the existing level of officer support for the Board.

Legal implications – External appointments shall have no voting rights.

Risk implications – none.

Equalities implications – none.

Climate implications – none.

Security implications - External representatives are required to sign up to the Corporation's Code of Conduct.

Conclusion

11. This report recommends the appointment of the shortlisted candidates to the Natural Environment Board as non-voting external representatives for the specified terms. This will help to bring in specialised skill sets and experience to improve governance and address gaps in the board's knowledge.

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