



Report to: Members

Subject: Re-appointment of Chris West for an additional term

Date: 15 July 2023

Report by: Charles Tassell, Vice-Chairman

Purpose: To seek agreement to elect Dr Chris West as Trustee of KWT for a further limited period up to a maximum of three years.

1. Background

In 2024 KWT Council (the Board of Trustees) is due to lose by retirement three experienced and long-standing trustees, including the Chair Dr Chris West. The Trust is currently at a pivotal point in its institutional development as it launches the 2030 Wilder Kent Strategy and significantly gears up the work of its subsidiary companies which are operating (and innovating) at the cutting edge of environmental policy.

Earlier this year, the Board conducted a skills audit of the current trustees and is actively recruiting to fill vacancies to ensure an effective and appropriate skills mix. The proposal to retain Dr West (in addition to the new trustees that will be recruited as part that process) is because the Board agreed his unique skillset is a particular match to the organisation at this present time while it pivots to a Nature Based Solutions (NBS) strategy.

The Board further agreed that it would appreciate the ability to reappoint Dr West as its Chair, which would provide surety of organisational stability throughout this important period, whilst plans are developed to recruit the right individual to take over either in advance of, or at the end of, Dr West's additional term of office.

The Board regards the proposal to extend Dr West's term of office as an exceptional circumstance in light of the critical point in the Trust's development and the role he has played in steering the organisation to this point since he took the role of Chair in 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic limited the ability of the Trust to achieve its potential over the last few years and it is felt that an extension to the Chair's term of office in this particular instance would allow the Board to retain some of the momentum it has built since coming out of the pandemic. It would also mitigate the risk of loss of momentum in the event of a change of Chair which may prove a distraction from the execution of this very important strategy at a critical time in the organisation's development and within the nature crisis.

2. KWT Articles of Association and the regulatory context

Charity Commission guidance on the length of service for trustees states: a 'charity's governing document may include a set number of years trustees can serve for. A trustee who has reached the end of their set term can be re-appointed for another term, unless your governing document says otherwise.'

KWTs Memorandum and Articles of Association are based on a set term of nine years however there is no other clause specifically stating that a trustee cannot be appointed for a further term.

Proposed resolution:

The Council of Trustees therefore proposes that Dr West be elected for a further, exceptional and limited term of up to a maximum of three years from this AGM, which would in effect be only a potential extension of his term by two years. It is the board's intention to begin recruitment for a replacement Chair no later than end 2024 and to allow sufficient time for an orderly handover when appropriate.