

Iain Coucher announced as preferred Ofwat Chair candidate

Press release

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The Environment Secretary has selected Iain Coucher as the Government's preferred candidate to succeed Jonson Cox as the Chair of Ofwat, the independent economic regulator of water services in England and Wales.

Mr Coucher's selection followed a rigorous process conducted in accordance with the Ministerial Governance Code on Public Appointments. The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee (ESC) will now hold a pre-appointment hearing and report on Mr Coucher's suitability for the post.

Pre-appointment scrutiny is an important part of the appointment process for some of the most significant public appointments made by Ministers to verify that the recruitment meets the principles set out in the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Pre-appointment hearings are held in public and allow a Select Committee to take evidence from a Minister's preferred candidate before they are appointed. The ESC will publish a report setting out their views on the candidate's suitability for the post, which will be considered by Ministers before deciding whether to proceed with the appointment.

All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. There is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if any declared) to be made public. Mr Coucher has not declared any significant political activity in the past five years.

Subject to the ESC's report and the final decision being made by the Secretary of State, Mr Coucher will take up the post on 1 July 2022. Mr Cox has agreed with the Environment Secretary to extend his tenure as Chair of Ofwat to 30 June 2022.

Biographical details of Iain Coucher

- Iain has held a number of senior executive roles, including that of Chief Executive at the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) and Network Rail.
- He has been a non-executive director for Cadent Gas plc and a Board Member for the Rail Safety and Standards Board.
- He is currently a senior adviser at HIG Capital, a leading global investment fund, as well as a Trustee of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and Earthwatch (Europe).

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