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**Report of Head of Scrutiny and Member Development**

**Report to Scrutiny Board (Health and Well-being and Adult Social Care)**

**Date: 15 July 2014**

**Subject: Co-opted Members**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

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**Summary of main issues**

1. For a number of years the Council's Constitution has made provision for the appointment of co-opted members to individual Scrutiny Boards. However, the appointment of co-opted members has not always been considered consistently across Scrutiny Boards.
2. This report provides guidance to the Scrutiny Board when seeking to appoint co-opted members. There are also some legislative arrangements in place for the appointment of specific co-opted members. Such cases are set out in Article 6 of the Council's Constitution and are also summarised within this report.

**Recommendation**

3. In line with the options available outlined in this report, Members are asked to consider the appointment of co-opted members to the Scrutiny Board.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Scrutiny Board's formal consideration for the appointment of co-opted members to the Board.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 For a number of years the Council's Constitution has made provision for the appointment of co-opted members to individual Scrutiny Boards. For those Scrutiny Boards where co-opted members have previously been appointed, such arrangements have tended to be reviewed on an annual basis, usually at the beginning of a new municipal year. However, the appointment of co-opted members has not been considered consistently across all Scrutiny Boards.

## **3 Main issues**

### General arrangements for appointing co-opted members

- 3.1 It is widely recognised that in some circumstances, co-opted members can significantly aid the work of Scrutiny Boards. This is currently reflected in Article 6 (Scrutiny Boards) of the Council's Constitution, which outlines the options available to Scrutiny Boards in relation to appointing co-opted members.
- 3.2 In general terms, Scrutiny Boards can appoint:
- Up to five non-voting co-opted members for a term of office that does not go beyond the next Annual Meeting of Council ; and/or,
  - Up to two non-voting co-opted members for a term of office that relates to the duration of a particular and specific scrutiny inquiry.
- 3.3 In the majority of cases the appointment of co-opted members is optional and is determined by the relevant Scrutiny Board. However, Article 6 makes it clear that co-option would normally only be appropriate where the co-opted member has some specialist skill or knowledge, which would be of assistance to the Scrutiny Board. Particular issues to consider when seeking to appoint a co-opted member are set out later in the report.
- 3.4 There are also some legislative arrangements in place for the appointment of specific co-opted members. Such cases are also set out in Article 6 (Scrutiny Boards) of the Council's Constitution and relate to Education representatives.

### Issues to consider when seeking to appoint co-opted members

- 3.5 Currently, there is no overarching national guidance or criteria that should be considered when seeking to appoint co-opted members. As a result, there is a plethora of methods employed within Councils for the appointment of co-optees to Overview and Scrutiny Committees (Scrutiny Boards). For example, some

Council's use "job descriptions", some carry out formal interviews and some advertise for co-optees in the local press, with individuals completing a simple application form which is then considered by Members.

- 3.6 The Constitution makes it clear that 'co-option would normally only be appropriate where the co-opted member has some specialist skill or knowledge, which would be of assistance to the Scrutiny Board'. In considering the appointment of co-opted members, Scrutiny Boards should be satisfied that a co-opted member can use their specialist skill or knowledge to add value to the work of the Scrutiny Board. However, co-opted members should not be seen as a replacement to professional advice from officers.
- 3.7 Co-opted members should be considered as representatives of wider groups of people. However, when seeking external input into the Scrutiny Board's work, consideration should always be given to other alternative approaches, such as the role of expert witnesses or use of external research studies, to help achieve a balanced evidence base.
- 3.8 Despite the lack of any national guidance, what is clear is that any process for appointing co-opted members should be open, effective and carried out in a manner which seeks to strengthen the work of Scrutiny Boards and add additional skills across their membership.
- 3.9 Historically, Scrutiny Boards that have considered issues across health and adult social care have tended to operate with standing co-opted members. In 2011/12, the Scrutiny Board (Health and Wellbeing and Adult Social Care) formally appointed four non-voting co-opted members to their membership, as follows:
  - Alliance of Service Users and Carers – 1 co-opted member;
  - Leeds Local Involvement Network – 2 co-opted members; and
  - Equality representative – 1 co-opted member
- 3.10 In 2012/13, the Scrutiny Board retained these arrangements, however under the new arrangements created by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, Local Involvement Networks ceased to exist on 31 March 2013, with HealthWatch Leeds forming the local organisation responsible for gathering and representing the patient and public voice across the health and social care sector from 1 April 2013.
- 3.11 In 2013/14, the Scrutiny Board agreed not to appoint any standing non-voting co-opted members to its membership, but would review the appointment of non-voting co-opted members in relation to any particular and specific scrutiny inquiry during the 2013/14 municipal year. There was also a clear intention to continue to develop a close working relationship with HealthWatch Leeds, particularly in terms of gathering patient/ public views regarding specific work areas/ topics throughout the year. It is perhaps fair to say this approach had limited success.

3.12 It should also be noted that in a recent meeting between the Chair of the Scrutiny Board and the Chair and Director of HealthWatch Leeds, there was a positive discussion about appointing a representative from HealthWatch Leeds as a standing co-opted member to the Scrutiny Board, to help provide an opportunity for the views and intelligence gathered from service users and the wider public to be routinely brought to the attention of the Scrutiny Board.

3.13 This approach would not preclude any further appointment of co-opted members within the overall provision of the Council's Constitution.

## **4.0 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

4.1.1 During 2010/11, the guidance surrounding co-opted members was discussed by the Scrutiny Chairs and it was agreed that individual Scrutiny Boards would consider the appointment of co-optees on an individual basis.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration.**

4.2.1 The process for appointing co-opted members should be open, effective and carried out in a manner which seeks to strengthen the work of the Scrutiny Board. In doing so, due regard should also be given to any potential equality issues in line with the Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.

### **4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities**

4.3.1 The Council's Scrutiny arrangements are one of the key parts of the Council's governance arrangements. Within the Council's Constitution, there is particular provision for the appointment of co-opted members to individual Scrutiny Boards, which this report seeks to summarise.

### **4.4 Resources and Value for Money**

4.4.1 Where applicable, any incidental expenses paid to co-optees will be met within existing resources.

### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 Where additional members are co-opted onto a Scrutiny Board, such members must comply with the provisions set out in the Member's Code of Conduct as detailed within the Council's Constitution.

### **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 No specific implications to consider.

## **5.0 Conclusions**

5.1 For a number of years the Council's Constitution has made provision for the appointment of co-opted members to individual Scrutiny Boards. However, the appointment of co-opted members has not always been considered

consistently across Scrutiny Boards. This report therefore sets out the legislative arrangements in place for the appointment of specific co-opted members and also provides further guidance when seeking to appoint co-opted members.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

6.1 In line with the options available outlined in this report, Members are asked to consider the appointment of co-opted members to the Scrutiny Board.

## **7.0 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None.

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.