



Report of Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Date: 26th February 2015

Subject: Appointment of Co-opted Member for Looked After Children and Care Leavers

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

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. This report provides guidance to the Scrutiny Board and seeks agreement for the appointment of a co-opted member for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

Recommendation

2. Members are asked to agree the appointment of Charlee Bewsher, as the co-opted member for Looked After Children and Care Leavers from the 26th February 2015 and recommend to the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) that this membership continues for 2015/16

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Scrutiny Board's formal agreement for the appointment of a co-opted member to the Board representing Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

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.

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, at this moment in time 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. Considering this criteria, in June 2014 the Scrutiny Board determined that a member for Looked After Children and Care Leavers should be co-opted onto the Scrutiny Board.
- 3.4 Currently, there is no overarching national guidance or criteria that should be considered when seeking to appoint co-opted members. It is normal practice to seek a nomination through representative partnerships. In this case representation has been considered and made by MALAP (Multi-Agency Looked After Children Partnership).

4.0 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 The guidance surrounding co-opted members was previously discussed by the Scrutiny Chairs when 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 As stated in paragraph 3.15 above, when Scrutiny Boards are considering the appointment of a co-opted member for a term of office, they should be mindful of any potential conflicts of interest that may arise during the course of the year in view of the Scrutiny Boards' wide ranging terms of reference.

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 Members are asked to agree the appointment of Charlee Bewsher, as the co-opted member for Looked After Children and Care Leavers from the 26th February 2015 and recommend to the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) that this membership continues for 2015/16

6.0 Background documents¹ - None

¹ 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.