

New Co-opted Member

Date: 7th September 2022

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

- 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.
- The appointment of non-voting school staff representation has been a longstanding approach adopted by the Children and Families Scrutiny Board and this year both Celia Foote and Helen Bellamy had been nominated again by the School Staff Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) to continue their role on the Scrutiny Board. Their appointment was formally approved by the Scrutiny Board in June 2022.
- However, in July 2022 the Chair informed Board Members that after representing teachers and other school staff in the work of scrutiny over the last 20 years, Celia Foote was now retiring. As such, the School Staff Joint Consultative Committee has nominated Mr Nick Tones to replace Celia's position on the Scrutiny Board from September onwards.
- The Board is therefore asked to formally approve the appointment of Mr Nick Tones as a non-voting co-opted member to the Children and Families Scrutiny Board.

Recommendations

Members are asked to approve the appointment of Mr Nick Tones as a non-voting co-opted member to the Children and Families Scrutiny Board.

What is this report about?

1. The appointment of non-voting school staff representation has been a longstanding approach adopted by the Children and Families Scrutiny Board and this year, both Celia Foote and Helen Bellamy had been nominated again by the School Staff Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) to continue their role on the Scrutiny Board. Their appointment was formally agreed by the Scrutiny Board in June 2022.
2. However, in July 2022 the Chair informed Board Members that after representing teachers and other school staff in the work of scrutiny over the last 20 years, Celia Foote was now retiring. As such, the School Staff Joint Consultative Committee was asked to nominate another representative to replace Celia's position on the Scrutiny Board and this has been confirmed as Mr Nick Tones.
3. The Board is therefore asked to formally approve the appointment of Mr Nick Tones as a non-voting co-opted member to the Children and Families Scrutiny Board.

What impact will this proposal have?

4. It is widely recognised that in some circumstances, co-opted members can significantly aid the work of Scrutiny Boards.
5. The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules make 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.
6. 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.
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.
8. When considering the appointment of a co-opted member for a term of office, Scrutiny Boards 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. To help overcome this, Scrutiny Boards may wish to focus on the provision available to appoint 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.
9. 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.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

10. The terms of reference of the Scrutiny Boards promote a strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function and it is widely recognised that co-opted members can significantly aid the work of Scrutiny Boards.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

11. Nominations for non-voting school staff representation on the Children and Families Scrutiny Board is sought from the School Staff Joint Consultative Committee (JCC).

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

What are the resource implications?

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

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

13. When Scrutiny Boards are considering the appointment of a standing 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.

What are the legal implications?

14. 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.

Appendices

- None.

Background papers

- None.