



SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 4TH FEBRUARY 2020

SUBJECT: SOCIAL SERVICES CO-OPTED MEMBER VACANCY

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members that Mrs Jill Lawton, Co-opted Member has resigned her position on the Social Services Scrutiny Committee. Therefore members are asked if they consider there is a need to fill the co-opted member vacancy in accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 Statutory Guidance. If the Scrutiny Committee agrees that the position should be filled to note the process to be followed and approve the establishment of an Appointments Sub-Committee.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report informs Social Services Scrutiny Committee of the resignation of Mrs Jill Lawton Co-opted member. The scrutiny committee is advised of the process for recruitment as agreed by Council in May 2017 and informed of the guidance from Welsh Government in respect of the appointment of scrutiny committee co-opted members. The Social Services Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider if they wish to fill the vacancy, taking into account guidance and, if so, agree which scrutiny committee members will sit on the appointments sub-committee.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Social Services Scrutiny Committee determine whether to recruit to fill the co-opted member vacancy.
- 3.2 That should Social Services Scrutiny Committee agree to recruit as in recommendation 3.1, to appoint three members will sit on the appointments sub-committee.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The minutes record the reasons for making any decisions reached. It is therefore essential that reports set out clear “reasons” for making the decision as recommended.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 Mrs Jill Lawton, Co-opted member of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee has resigned her position and Members are asked to consider if they wish to recruit to the vacancy, and if so, appointed members to a sub-committee to select candidates and hold interviews before making its recommendations to the Social Services Scrutiny Committee.

Background

- 5.2 A report on co-opted members of scrutiny committees was considered and approved by Council on 18th May 2017. In that report it was agreed that Social Services Scrutiny Committee would have a maximum of four non-statutory co-opted members to represent user and carers organisation in the county borough. Non-statutory co-opted members do not have voting rights.
- 5.3 It was agreed that the Council would contact the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations to ask them to facilitate contact with charitable organisations that currently represent users and carers in the county borough. These organisations would then be asked to provide nominations for a co-opted member of the scrutiny committee subject to there being no more than one nomination from each organisation.
- 5.4 Council agreed that a Co-opted Member Appointments Sub-Committee of the Health Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee would be established. The Sub-Committee will consist of the Chair, Vice Chair and one nominated committee member. The Sub-Committee will consider all nominated persons and select a shortlist for interview where they will determine the nominees experience and skills. Following the interview the Sub-Committee will make a recommendation to the Scrutiny Committee. The interview panel is also be permitted to suggest unsuccessful interviewees as reserves, should future vacancies arise.
- 5.5 It was agreed that the positions would be offered for a fixed term to run concurrently with the term of office for each respective administration. They may then seek re-nomination, subject to the agreed selection process outlined above, which will also be applied to for any future vacancies as and when they occur.
- 5.6 A role description (appendix 1) was developed for all co-opted members with full training made available, co-opted members are also be expected to sign up to the members code of conduct.

Welsh Government Guidance

- 5.7 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 Statutory Guidance gives advice to scrutiny committees who are considering appointing co-opted members. Welsh Government state that including a broader range of specialists, community representatives and service-users in scrutiny exercises is advantageous, and that Councils may proactively engage co-optees in scrutiny activity, to send powerful messages about citizen-centred services and partnership working through their own structures and practice.
- 5.8 The Guidance states that when deciding whether to co-opt it should be informed by scrutiny forward work plans and what outcomes elected members are seeking to achieve as the result of planned scrutiny exercises. Councils are advised to think carefully about the use of co-option as a means to develop partner relations or improved public connections that may add significant value to the work of scrutiny committees. In some circumstances use of expert witnesses may be more appropriate.
- 5.9 In all instances where co-option is being considered, care should be taken to ensure that co-option is in fact the best way for some individuals or groups of interest to be involved in the work of scrutiny committees. Groups of interest should include protected characteristics equality groups in recognition of the value these perspectives can add to the work of local authority scrutiny committees.

5.10 Conclusion

This report outlines the process for recruitment and selection of co-opted members and also

gives Welsh Government Guidance on how the appointment of Co-opted members should be considered as a means to include a broader range of perspectives at scrutiny committee meetings. Members should therefore consider if the scrutiny committee needs to recruit to the vacant position, taking into account the work programme and guidance. Are there for example particular gaps in knowledge or skills that the scrutiny committee would benefit from? The scrutiny committee must also consider (if it wishes to recruit) who will be appointed to the sub-committee, as set out in point 5.3.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 It is a matter for the scrutiny committee to decide if it wishes to recruit to the vacant co-opted member position, if recruitment is endorsed by Members the administration of the process can be organised and supported by the Scrutiny Manager.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

7.1 Corporate Plan 2018-2023.

Consideration of the membership of a scrutiny committee contributes to the following Corporate Plan 2018-2023 by ensuring that there is an effective scrutiny function and council policies are scrutinised against the following objectives:-

Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all

Objective 2 - Enabling employment

Objective 3 - Address the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's well-being

Objective 4 - Promote a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and minimises the adverse impacts on the environment

Objective 5 - Creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle in accordance with the sustainable Development Principle within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Objective 6 - Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 8.1 The operation of scrutiny is required by the Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent Assembly legislation. Consideration of the membership of a scrutiny committee contributes to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016 by ensuring that there is an effective scrutiny function and council policies are scrutinised against the following goals:-

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language
- A globally responsible Wales

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no equalities implications in respect of this report, however should the Scrutiny Committee agree to recruit to the co-opted member position, the recruitment process will ensure that groups that represent those with protected characteristics have an equal opportunity to nominate.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no financial implications not contained in the report.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no personnel implications not contained in the report.

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 There are no consultation responses not contained in the report.

13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

- 13.2 Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

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Background Papers: Report to Annual Council 18th May 2017 Co-opted Scrutiny Committee Members
Agenda Item 16

Appendices:
Appendix 1 Co-opted Member Role Description