

**Children's Services Scrutiny Committee – 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2014**

**Report of the Lead Officer and Director of Corporate Resources**

**Composition and Membership of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To receive the decision of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board regarding the composition and membership of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

**Background**

2. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board have indicated its wish to review the composition and membership of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee, to ensure that the Committee remains fit for purpose and to enable it to move forward with a wider focus than just educational issues. The Management Board had particular regard to the number of non-elected Members who serve on the Committee. The Board, at its meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2014, requested a report on a review of the composition and membership of the Committee, pending which it was also resolved that the Committee's existing co-opted members remain unchanged and that an appropriate recommendation be made to the Annual Meeting of the Council on the 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2014. The recommendation was duly approved.
3. The Committee currently comprises 11 elected Members, appointed in accordance with the proportionality requirements, five non-elected, voting Members and five non-elected, non-voting Members. The non-elected, voting, Members are stipulated by law and comprise one representative of each of the Church of England and Roman Catholic denominations, appointed by the Worcester Diocesan Education Committee and the Archdiocese of Birmingham, respectively, and one parent governor from each of the primary, secondary and special education phases. While there are legal stipulations regarding certain issues relating to parent governor representatives, there is discretion for local authorities to agree the number and type of such representatives.
4. In relation to non-elected, non-voting, Members there is no legal requirement to appoint.
5. On consideration of the above information, and the history to the appointment of the non-statutory Members of the Committee and its predecessors, as set out in the report submitted to the meeting, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, at its meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2014, resolved to recommend the Council as set out in paragraph 7 below.

6. At the Management Board meeting, there was a strong cross-party consensus that the existing co-opted membership is no longer appropriate for all meetings given the wider remit of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to look at social care issues not just education. Comments were also made that the current Committee is "too big" and leads to too much focus on education.
7. Accordingly, the Overview and Management Scrutiny Board resolved to recommend the Council:  
"That the statutory co-opted members be retained but that the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee establish a pool of specialist/key contacts who can be invited to attend to advise the Committee or give evidence at specific meetings depending on the topics under discussion"  
The recommendation will be considered at the meeting of the Council to be held on 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2014.
8. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board had in mind that contacts could include a wide range of educational/social care professionals/faith groups/disability groups/trade unions/people from other Boroughs etc etc. The Committee would have the discretion to invite people according to the topic under debate at the time.

### **Finance**

9. Except members of the Committee are able to claim expenses for the attendance of meetings, there are no direct financial implications.

### **Law**

10. Section 111 of the Local Government Act, 1972 authorises the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the exercise of any of its functions.
11. The relevant provisions regarding the appointment of non-elected, voting and non-voting members are contained in the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989, and associated regulations. Members with a voting entitlement do not affect Committees insofar as proportionality of membership is concerned.
12. The provisions regarding the requirement for Church representatives to be appointed to Council Committees dealing with education are contained in DfE Circular 19/1999 and to appoint Parent/Governor representatives to those Committees in the Education (Parent Governor Representatives) Regulations, 1999, as superseded by the 2001 Regulations of the same name.
13. The requirement to appoint Church Representatives, as indicated above, remains as does the requirement to appoint elected Parent/Governor representatives. The Council has discretion regarding the number and nature of Parent/Governor representatives to be elected, the period of office and responsibility for the election arrangements.

### **Equality Impact**

14. This report complies with the auspices of the Council on Equality and Diversity.

### **Recommendation**

15. That the decision of the Overview and Management Scrutiny Board review on the membership of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee, as set out above, be received and noted.



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**Lead Officer**



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**Director of Corporate Resources**

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### **List of Background Papers**

Minute No. 28 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2014 and the report submitted to the Management Board meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2014.