

SUBJECT:	Co-option onto Adult Select Committee
MEETING:	Adults Select Committee
DATE:	30th July 2019
DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1** To discuss potential co-option of individuals onto the Adults Select Committee in a non-voting capacity.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. That Members consider a discussion paper on co-option of individuals/representatives of organisations onto the Adults Select Committee for the term of the administration without voting rights.
- ii. If the Select Committee decided to proceed with co-option, the committee would need to request that a report be taken to Council for approval.

3 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1** When new political management arrangements were introduced in 2000, it was envisaged that Scrutiny would play a significant role in engaging the public in the development of policies and services. The powers relating to co-option (section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000) enable co-option of an individual onto a scrutiny committee in a non-voting capacity to offer additional expertise.
- 3.2** Scrutiny committees may choose to invite public service providers, partnerships, health bodies and other public sector organisations to scrutiny meetings to discuss services provided to residents. The act intended that scrutiny committees would enable the public voice to be heard and provide a clear mechanism through which the public could influence the work of the Council.
- 3.3** The Adults Select Committee has previously co-opted representatives onto the committee without voting rights. In 2017, the committee considered co-option and decided not to proceed. Members agreed to call in stakeholders and witnesses as appropriate when scrutinising a particular issue. The Adults Select Committee has decided to review their arrangements and to reconsider the merits of co-option.
- 3.4** The options appraisal presents the rationale for co-option, however, potential co-opted representation onto Adults Select Committee could include:
- Access for All Forum
 - Ageing Well Executive Group
 - Age UK
 - Mind
 - Young Carers
 - Carers

- Tenants of Registered Social Landlords
- Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (3rd sector)

3.5 In order for scrutiny committees to ensure that their evidence base is sufficiently robust when making recommendations on service improvements, committees may seek the views of the public and key stakeholders in their scrutiny work. Whilst this involves proactive discussion with service users on a topic by topic basis, the additional expertise offered by stakeholder representative groups strengthens the argument for co-option.

3.6 Members may wish to consider individuals who represent stakeholder groups, community forums, relevant organisations as listed above and the voluntary sector (to sit on a full term basis) in line with the Select Committee's remit. Appendix A provides the Terms of Reference for the Ageing Well Executive Group, which comprises representatives of key organisations that deliver actions to support older people ~ this is provided as an example and may offer a useful starting point for the committee in considering co-option.

4.0 EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

4.1 Whilst there are no direct implications arising specifically from this report, there would be positive implications should the committee support the co-option of appropriate individuals onto Adults Select Committee, as follows:

- Ensuring scrutiny has the evidence base to support recommendations they make on the provision of high quality services that match people's needs.
- Enabling stakeholders to be better represented in decision-making
- Encouraging democratic debate in the design and delivery of future services
- Ensuring a more balanced consideration of the future impact of decisions on people, in particular groups with 'protected characteristics' (as defined by legislation) and future generations.

5.0 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 Two options are provided for Members to evaluate as follows:

Option 1: To continue with the current Adult's Select Committee arrangement ~ no co-opted membership.

Advantages: The Select Committee can choose to invite expert witnesses to give evidence or provide expertise to specific meetings ~ this may be a more constructive use of time than co-optees occupying a standing seat on a committee, particularly where there may not be items at every meeting to benefit from the co-optees' expertise.

Disadvantages: There may be topics which would benefit from a wider input ~ these cannot always be foreseen, so there may be missed opportunities for evidence to substitute conclusions, providing more effective scrutiny.

Option 2: To broaden the membership of the current Select Committee through co-opting appropriate individuals onto the committee.

Advantages: This would provide expertise and would substantiate scrutiny's evidence base for recommendations. Option 2 would still allow the committee the flexibility to proactively seek stakeholder views and service user feedback for specific pieces of work, as outlined in Option 1. The remit of the Adults Select Committee and the content forward work programme does reflect many discussions that would benefit from involvement of service users and stakeholders.

Disadvantages: There are none envisaged ~ representatives could decide whether the agenda content for a meeting reflects their interest and whether it would be beneficial for them to attend.

- 5.2** Should the Select Committee decide not to formally co-opt onto the committee, it should be considered standard practice to invite key stakeholders, service users and expert witnesses to scrutiny meetings on a case by case/topic by topic basis.

6 EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1** If agreed, the proposal would be subject to a review by the Select Committee at the end of the administrative term as to the effectiveness of the changes implemented, based upon the Select Committee's impact and the outcomes demonstrated.

7 REASONS:

- 7.1** There is a need to review scrutiny arrangements regularly to ensure they are fit for purpose and to ensure that committees can deliver their responsibilities effectively. Scrutiny committees are intended to be the vehicle for evidence-based discussion of issues affecting local people. The opportunity may enhance the effectiveness of the committee and ensure that scrutiny offers maximum added value.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** There are no significant resource implications arising from the report as co-optees would not be paid to sit on the Select Committee, however, travel costs to meetings would be paid in line with the advice of the Independent Remuneration Panel Guidance.

9. CONSULTEES

Appropriate Officers

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Centre for Public Scrutiny Practice Guide 6 on 'Scrutiny Bodies: Membership and Political Management'

<https://www.cfps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/PG-6.pdf>

11. AUTHOR

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