

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee - 14 December 2015

CO-OPTION OF SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL CONVENERS

Purpose	This report seeks committee approval for the co-option of Scrutiny Performance Panel Conveners to enable attendance at Committee meetings.
Content	Guidance on the proposed co-option and benefit is provided.
Councillors are being asked to	Approve the co-option of Scrutiny Performance Panel Conveners to the Committee
Lead Councillor(s)	Councillor Mary Jones, Chair of Scrutiny Programme Committee.
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1. Guidance on Co-option

- 1.1 Scrutiny has the power to co-opt non-voting members for either a topic or a term up to the next Annual Meeting of Council. There is no formal mechanism for co-option and relevant legislation / guidance focuses on co-option as a way of involving those who are not councillors in the scrutiny process. However that does not preclude the co-option of other councillors as non voting members. But there is no automatic right for members to be co-opted onto a scrutiny committee / body or their request to be placed on an agenda.
- 1.2 Co-opted members would not count towards a quorum of a meeting nor be eligible to serve as Chairman or Vice Chairman. Co-optees would also be required to declare any interest / conflict of interest / predetermination.
- 1.3 Co-option in the main is about scrutiny reaching out for expert knowledge or skills from others to support elected members in their deliberations and adding value to their work. This report is solely concerned with the proposed co-option to the Scrutiny Programme Committee of those councillors that are acting as Scrutiny Performance Panel Conveners, and not already represented on the Committee.

2. Co-option to the Scrutiny Programme Committee

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Programme Committee has established a scrutiny work programme which is based on establishing informal Panels and Working Groups to examine issues, with membership and conveners (to chair meetings) appointed by the committee. Much of this work is carried out on a 'task and finish' basis, however a number of Performance Panels have been created which effectively operate on an ongoing basis and these undertake in-depth performance and financial monitoring. As well as a general Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel, there is a Performance Panel for Child & Family Services, Schools, and the Local Service Board. The conveners of these Panels are required to attend the committee every 4 months to provide an update on the Panel's activities and achievements.
- 2.2 It is recognised that Performance Panel conveners have developed knowledge and expertise about specific services and add value to the work of committee when those areas are being discussed. Current practice has been to invite relevant Performance Panel Conveners when relevant Cabinet Members are appearing for a Q & A session and where the committee may be discussing a particular report, in order that they can contribute to questioning. There will also be wider benefit to the work programme from co-option, enabling better co-ordination between the work of the Committee and Performance Panels, including identifying issues for pre-decision scrutiny.
- 2.3 It is proposed that the committee recognise the valuable contribution of Performance Panel Conveners by formalising their involvement through co-option to the committee. This will enable Performance Panel Conveners to receive committee agendas and attend to participate for relevant items. It will also provide clarity to Cabinet Members and officers attending the committee about the membership of the Committee.
- 2.4 The convener of the Local Service Board Performance Panel is already designated as the chair of the Scrutiny Programme however the other councillors currently acting as Performance Panel Conveners would be co-opted:

Service Improvement & Finance	–	Cllr. Chris Holley
Child & Family Services	–	Cllr. Paxton Hood-Williams
Schools	–	Cllr. Fiona Gordon

Legal Officer: Wendy Parkin
Finance Officer: Carl Billingsley

Background Papers:

Council Constitution

Statutory Guidance from the Local Government Measure 2011 (Welsh Government June 2012)