

Report to the Constitution Working Group



Date of meeting: 12 March 2020

**Epping Forest
District Council**

Subject: Overview & Scrutiny Committees – Co-option of Members

Responsible Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)

Democratic Services: Vivienne Messenger (01992 564265)

Recommendations:

(1) That the draft revised protocol for the co-option of non-elected Members to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees be recommended to the Council for approval.

Report:

1. At its meeting on 28 January 2020, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a draft revised protocol for the co-option of independent members to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny committees.

2. The Council's current arrangements for the co-option of non-elected members to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees are enshrined within Article 6 (Overview and Scrutiny) of the Constitution. Paragraph (6) states that:

"6... The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall be entitled to recommend to the Council the appointment of appropriate persons as non-voting co-optees."

3. Previously, this process had been followed to appoint representatives of the Epping Forest Youth Council to membership of the former Communities Select Committee. In addition, the Chairman of the Tenants & Leaseholders Federation (TLF) was an active co-opted member of the same former Select Committee.

4. With the introduction of the new Select Committee arrangements at the start of this municipal year, the Service Director for Housing & Property Services had suggested that the Chairman of the Tenants & Leaseholders Forum (what is now the TLF) should be co-opted onto the Stronger Communities Select Committee, whilst the Epping Forest Youth Council was also keen to secure co-opted membership of the same Select Committee.

5. Consequently, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has considered proposals for appropriate selection procedures and criteria for the appointment of co-opted Members to the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committees. This would bring the co-option of independent members for the Select Committees in line with the existing arrangements for the Audit & Governance Committee, Standards Committee and the Remuneration Panel (which was entirely composed of independent Members).

6. This draft protocol has been submitted to the Working Group and is attached at Appendix 1 of this report. The Working Group is requested to consider the draft protocol and recommend its approval to the Council.

7. The Working Group is reminded that the Members' Allowances Scheme for the current municipal year provides for the application of an annual allowance of £500.00 for co-opted independent Members of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Any proposals for revision to this element of the Scheme would be required to be considered by the independent advisory Remuneration Panel, whose views on which the Council would be required to pay regard.

Resource Implications:

Any significant increase in the number of members co-opted to the Council's overview and scrutiny committees, would be likely to affect the current and future level of budget provision for members allowances.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The Local Government Act 2000 confers power on the Council to co-opt non-voting members to membership of its Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

There are no implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the corporate Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues within the District.

Consultation Undertaken:

The draft protocol for the co-option of Members to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees has been developed at the request of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Background Papers:

None.

Risk Management:

The Council's Constitution (Article 6) sets out the arrangements for the co-option of independent Members to the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committees.