

## **Protocol for Non - Voting Co-opted Members**

### **Introduction**

- 1.1 The primary purpose of establishing a protocol for the co-option of non statutory, non-voting scrutiny members is as follows:
- To set out how the appointment and role of non- voting scrutiny Panel members is taken forward.
- 1.2 Each Scrutiny panel is entitled to appoint up to three non-voting co-optees to assist scrutiny with its work. Non -voting co-optees are intended to bring an additional element of external challenge to the work of the scrutiny panels. By bringing a diverse spectrum of experience and adding a different perspective to many items, they are expected to add value to scrutiny by performing the following roles:
- To act as a non-party political voice for those who live and/or work in Haringey; and
  - To bring specialist knowledge and/or skills to the Overview and Scrutiny process and bring an element of external challenge by representing the public.
- 1.3 For the purposes of this protocol, the term ‘Co-opted members/Co-optees’ refers to Co-opted Non-statutory, Non-voting scrutiny members. Sections 2.4, 3, 4 and 5 of this protocol could also be applicable to Standards Committee which is also able to appoint up to 6 non-voting co-opted members as set out in the Constitution at Article 9 - paragraph 9.02.

### **2. Non - Voting Co-opted members**

- 2.1 Most members on Scrutiny Committees are elected members and voting co-opted members. Although provision is available for the appointment of up to three co-optees on for each Scrutiny Panel. The decision making on appointment of non – voting co-opted members should take place at the start of the Municipal year.
- 2.2 Non-voting Co-opted members will be an integral part of Scrutiny Panels and are able to contribute to questioning of witnesses and analysis of evidence. Scrutiny Panel chairs are advised to invite individuals who have specific and detailed knowledge of a particular issue to act as expert witnesses or independent external advisers instead of being applicable to the appointment process at section 5 below , as this will provide them with greater scope to contribute to evidence received by panels.
- 2.3 It is expected that appointed non-voting co-optees will:
- Attend formal meetings of the Panel, which are usually held in the evening.
  - Attend additional meetings and evidence gathering sessions such as site visits.
  - Prepare for meetings by reading the agenda papers and additional information to familiarise themselves with the issues being scrutinised.

- Prior to meetings consider questions they may wish to put to Cabinet Members, officers, and external witnesses.
- Help the Panel to make practical suggestions for improvements to services.
- Assist in the preparation of reports and the formulation of recommendations.
- Contribute to the development of the annual scrutiny work programme.
- Establish good relations with members, officers and other co-optees.
- Abide by the relevant sections of the Council's Constitution in terms of the rules and procedures for Overview and Scrutiny; and
- Keep abreast of key issues for the authority and bear these in mind when scrutinising services and making recommendations for improvement!

2.4 Non-voting co-opted member should also note the following:

- Co-optees on Scrutiny Panels will have no voting rights.
- Each co-opted member will usually be appointed for a period of 1 year by the Scrutiny panel at their first meeting of the Municipal year and their membership reviewed on an annual basis by the Scrutiny Panel.
- Employees and existing Councillors of Haringey Council are excluded from applying to be Co-optees.

### **3. Appointment process**

3.1 Primarily, Scrutiny will seek nominations from established community groups for Non -voting Co-optee positions. Where the panel identifies that a Non - voting Co-opted member maybe beneficial to the work of the Panel and its work programme for the coming municipal year, the Chair of Scrutiny and Panel Chair , supported with advice from Scrutiny Officers, will identify the appropriate community organisation to invite nominations for this role. The community groups will be known through established contact with the Council and through their existing contact with scrutiny members by participating in reviews.

3.2 Where the above is not possible and a particular experience/ expertise is required to assist the Panel for the duration of the municipal year, consideration can also be given to advertising the position on council's website and social media

3.3 Community organisations will be sent:

- Information on the role of overview and scrutiny non -voting co-opted members.
- Protocol for co-opted non-statutory non-voting members
- Information on the relevant Scrutiny Panel, the Scrutiny Work programme, and the skills and experience being sought to allow the community organisation to identify the appropriate individual to nominate.

3.4 Where the Panel is seeking particular expertise/ experience which is not available through contact with community organisations and the role is advertised, an application form will be sent to interested applicants. This will include a number of questions that have been devised by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny and Scrutiny

Panel Chair and Scrutiny Officers which will draw out the experience, community involvement and expertise needed for participation in this role.

- 3.5 The Scrutiny Panel Chair, along relevant scrutiny officer will shortlist suitable candidates. This will include an assessment against the Scrutiny Work Plan , role in the community, and considering the criteria at section 1.1 above. Applicants will also be asked to attend a short interview and provide a reference.

#### **4. Term of office**

- 4.1 Non-voting Co-opted members will be appointed for the duration of the Municipal year and the Scrutiny Panel will annually renew their membership according to consideration of their work plan.
- 4.2 Any Non-voting Co-opted members shall be appointed at the first Scrutiny Panel meeting of each Municipal year. A report shall be made to this meeting that specifies how they will add value to the work of the Panel and in particular:
- 4.3 The specialist knowledge and/or skills that the proposed Co-optees will provide; and the basis on which they can represent the local community and articulate their concerns.
- 4.5 At the end of the local election year period of office, each Scrutiny Committee will ask the Co-opted members if they wish to continue. If they do want to continue, they will be subject to the appointment process outlined above.
- 4.6 Co-optees may terminate their membership by giving one month's notice to the Democratic and Scrutiny Team Manager.

#### **5. Code of Conduct**

- 5.1 All Co-optees, including non-voting co- opted members, are required to sign the council's code of conduct which sets out the standards of behaviour expected.
- 5.2 Co-optees must also sign a declaration of interest form identifying any interests which an individual may have which require recording. Advice will be provided on these requirements.
- 5.3 Induction, training, and ongoing support
- 5.4 Non-Co-optees will receive an individual induction following appointment and prior to attending their first scrutiny meeting.
- 5.5 The induction will involve meeting with the Chair of the panel they are joining and the scrutiny officer responsible for the Panel.
- 5.6 Non-voting Co-optees are voluntary positions and there is no allowance provision for this role.