

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Co-opted Members Review Group**

6th November, 2013

PRESENT – Councillors Lister, C. Taylor and Crudass.

OFFICERS – Jenni Cooke, Assistant Director, Children, Families and Learning, Allison Hill, Democratic Support.

Purpose of Meeting – To examine the current position of statutory and non-statutory representatives on Children and Young People Scrutiny and to review as appropriate.

Current representatives -

Statutory Co-optees:- Voting Members :-

- 1 Church of England Diocese Representative (Jeremy Fitt);
- 1 Roman Catholic Diocese Representative (Mr. M. Frank);
- 3 Parent Governor Representatives (Primary/Secondary and Special School Parent Governor Representatives – 3 Vacancies).

Non-Statutory Co-optees:- Non-Voting Members :-

- 1 representative of the Darlington Association of Governors (vacant);
- 3 Community Representatives (Emma Coltman, Sanja Miah, and Mr. D. Moyes);
- 1 Representative from the Darlington College (Mr. T. Grant);
- 1 Representative from the Queen Elizabeth Sixth-Form College (Mr. T. Fisher);
- 1 Primary Head Teacher Representative (Mr. Watkinson, Mowden Infant School);
- 1 Primary Classroom Teacher (vacant);
- 1 Secondary Classroom Teacher (vacant);
- 1 Secondary Head Teacher Representative (vacant);
- 2 Representatives from the Darlington Partnership (vacant).

Background

Under the Education Act 1996 and the School Standards Framework Act 1998 local authorities are required to include parent governor and church school representatives on overview and scrutiny committees when considering education matters and as such we have statutory co-optees. However, as Scrutiny changes and we are dealing with less education matters from the emergence of Academies etc., therefore Scrutiny feels it appropriate to reconsider the role of our statutory co-optees in present Scrutiny.

With regard to the Localism Bill, information from the Centre for Public Scrutiny, there was some reference of repealing the requirement for statutory co-optees however this never carried over into the Act. This is an area which is still unclear, as the duty was more properly related to the co-optees role on Council's School Organisation Committees, and Government has not presented a clear case for retaining this statutory duty since the establishment of Scrutiny. Also the Government's plans under the Localism Act, for additional autonomy for schools makes this requirement more difficult to retain.

However, the Centre for Public Scrutiny Website, and a Policy Briefing 13 dated November 2011, refers to the recasting of the role of the statutory education co-optees in the light of general changes in the relationship between councils and local education providers and an opportunity to re-think the role of the statutory co-optees. A suggestion for involvement of co-optees to be involved only in task and finish dealing with issues that have an impact on education has been suggested.

Points Discussed

With regard to the parent governor statutory co-optees there are currently 3 vacancies and recruitment in the past has been difficult. However, as there is still a requirement to appoint parent governor representatives on local authority overview and scrutiny committees and sub-committees dealing with education, we agreed to look to fill these vacancies as soon as possible.

With regard to non-statutory co-optees Scrutiny have recently appointed two new community representatives. There are still remaining vacancies in other non-statutory co-optee roles. Members reviewed this list and considered how to fill the vacancies they felt remained appropriate to retain. Members also agreed to reduce the number of school representatives to 1 Primary School Teacher representative, 1 Secondary School Teacher representative and 1 Further Education representative. The vacancies for representatives from the Darlington Association of Governors and the Darlington Partnership are to be removed.

With regard to extending the list of representatives on the Scrutiny, Members agreed that representatives from health, police, social care etc. will be invited to attend a meeting of Scrutiny if the agenda requires it. Also, suitable representatives will continue to be invited to attend relevant Review Group meetings.