

OPEN

Council

Wednesday 15 May 2024

Appointments to the Adoption Panel, the Fostering Panel and the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System Joint Scrutiny Committee

Report of: Director of Governance and Compliance (Monitoring Officer)

Report Reference No: C/4/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards

Purpose of Report

- 1 The report invites Council to approve a number of appointments to statutory panels which do not fall within the definition of “Committee” for the purposes of legislation.

Executive Summary

- 2 The Adoption Panel and the Fostering Panel are bodies which carry out statutory functions and therefore the Council is required to make appointments to ensure that the Council meets its obligations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Council is asked to:

- 1 appoint one Councillor to the Adoption Panel.
- 2 appoint one Councillor to the Fostering Panel; and
- 3 resolve that these appointments shall apply until such time as the Council’s representation is reviewed following the election of the new Council in 2027.

- | |
|--|
| <p>4 appoint two Councillors to the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System Joint Scrutiny Committee.</p> |
|--|

Background

- 3 The Council needs to make appointments to the following bodies. These bodies are statutory panels which do not fall within the definition of “Committee.”

Adoption Panel

- 4 The Panel considers the suitability of anyone who applies to become an adopter, and whether or not to recommend that they are suitable to adopt, and also considers the placement of any child with a particular adopter. The nominated member will be a full member of the Panel and is defined as an ‘independent panel member’ by the Independent Review of Determinations (amendments) 2011. Under the performance objectives of the Panel, each member is asked to attend 75% of the meetings, which are currently held every 6 weeks. In addition, each member is asked to attend any training events and induction events that are held at least annually, and also to undergo an annual appraisal.
- 5 The role of the Adoption Panel and the appointment of Elected Members are governed by the Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 and the Adoption Agencies, Independent Review of Determinations (amendments) 2011, and Adoption and Children Act 2022.
- 6 Councillor B Puddicombe served on the Adoption Panel during the 2023/24 municipal year.

Fostering Panel

- 7 The establishment of fostering panels is laid down by the Fostering Service (England) Regulations 2011. Regulation 23(1) and requires the fostering service to provide a central list of persons considered to be suitable members of the Panel, similar to the Adoption Panel.
- 8 The Fostering Panel makes timely and appropriate recommendations in line with the overriding objective to promote the welfare of children in foster care. The Panel considers and advises on the suitability of persons who apply to be foster carers for children who are “cared for” by the local authority. It states what its recommendations are in respect of a particular child or children and clarifies whether the prospective carer’s matching considerations are to be for certain ages or categories of children.

- 9 It considers the continuing approval of foster carers following their annual carer's review or other significant changes in their circumstances and advise on any other matters relating to the fostering service.
- 10 Councillor Carol Bulman served on the Fostering Panel during the 2023/24 municipal year.

Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System Joint Scrutiny Committee

- 11 The Joint Scrutiny Committee is made up of 18 elected members appointed on a politically proportionate basis from 9 local authorities and in accordance with the provisions of the Joint Health Scrutiny Protocol, Cheshire East Council has a total of two seats on the Committee.
- 12 Knowsley Council, as the Host Authority of the Joint Scrutiny Committee, will review the political balance on the Committee following the 2024 local elections.
- 13 The appointments to the Joint Scrutiny Committee are usually made by the Scrutiny Committee. However, the next meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Committee will be held on before the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 27 June 2024.
- 14 Therefore, Council is being asked to appoint two councillors to the Joint Scrutiny Committee on the agreed political proportionate basis.
- 15 Councillors Liz Wardlaw and Rob Vernon served on the Joint Scrutiny Committee during the 2023/24 municipal year.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 16 These bodies carry out statutory functions and appointments are needed to ensure that the Council meets its obligations.

Other Options Considered

- 17 The Council could choose not to nominate to these Panel.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 18 The report and recommendations demonstrate adherence to Council's Constitution, alongside statutory requirements.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 19 There are no direct implications for finance.

Policy

20 There are no direct implications for policy.

An open and enabling organisation.

Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

21 There are no direct implications for equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Human Resources

22 There are no direct implications for Human Resources.

Risk Management

23 There are no direct risk management implications.

Rural Communities

24 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

25 There are no direct implications for children and young people/Cared for Children.

Public Health

26 There are no direct implications for public health.

Climate Change

27 There are no implications relating to climate change.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Brian Reed Head of Democratic Services and Governance brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None