

Council – 12 September 2011

Elected Members on Walsall's Fostering and Adoption Panels

Service area: Children's Services

Wards: All

1. Summary of report

To inform members of new regulations relating to Councillors being included in the membership of Fostering and Adoption Panels.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Walsall continues to have a Councillor as a voting (non-independent) member on both the Walsall Adoption and Fostering Panels.
- 2.2 That the Council maintain an elected member role in Panels in accordance with good Corporate Parenting advice and guidance; although this is no longer a statutory requirement.
- 2.3 That the Council nominate an elected member to sit on the Adoption Panel for the remainder of the current municipal year (see paragraph 3.5 of the report).

3. Background information

- 3.1 Under recently published new Regulations there is no longer a requirement for Councillors to be included in the membership of Fostering or Adoption Panels. The only two statutory roles that remain are those of a social worker and two independent members. The regulations state that elected members cannot be one of the two independent persons who sit on the panel.
- 3.2 Good practice advice received from the British Association for Fostering and Adoption says that it is consistent with good corporate parenting to have a Councillor on both the Adoption and Fostering Panels. This would be both as a voting member and an active corporate parent champion to understand key matters affecting children in care.
- 3.3 To be effective agencies have to consider the appropriate use of all members in order to have a suitably experienced, qualified and diverse panel. Panels must be able to reflect the complex needs of children and allow for good recommendations to be made to the agency decision maker.

- 3.4 Over recent years Councillors have been consistent members on both the Fostering and Adoption Panels as voting members. It is important that individual Councillors are suitably experienced and supported so that they can be effective members in both the voting context and political governance.
- 3.5 Councillor Paul was nominated to sit on the Fostering Panel at the Annual Meeting of Council in May.

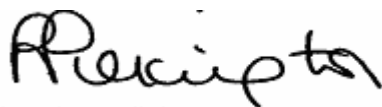
Author

David Bovell

Head of Service Corporate Parenting

☎ 658355

✉ bovelld@walsall.gov.uk



Pauline Pilkington

Executive Director

Date: 10 August 2011