

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
ADULT CARE SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 11 JANUARY 2001 AT 10.30 A.M.**

Agenda Item No:

1

CO-OPTIONS 2000/2001 - OPTIONS

Report of the County Secretary

Author:- Peter Hull, Committee Administrator Tel. 01992 555565

Executive Member:- Julia Price

1. Purpose of the report

The Committee at its last meeting requested a report on options for providing co-opted members on the basis that there should be no more than 2/3 co-optees on the Committee involving specific areas of the Committee's work. Members indicated that co-optees should attend the Committee only where they had a particular involvement.

2. Summary

2.1 The functions of the Select Committee outlined in the Constitution are

“Select Committees shall adopt a flexible and informal approach to meetings, and shall each determined their own arrangements for doing so, including co-opting non-voting members.”

Standing Order SC1(3) concerning the constitution and membership of committees indicates “that committees shall take account of views from a wide range of sources and shall each determine their own arrangements for doing so including whether to co-opt non-voting members”.

2.2 The Committee's remit is:

- (i) the policies and services of the County Council as a Social Services Authority in relation to adults and the scrutiny of these services
- (ii) all aspects of gypsy and traveller site provision
- (iii) the Council's relationship with the Health Service

2.3 Options include:

- (a) the selection of 3-4 permanent non-voting co-opted members to mirror the remit of the Select Committee in relation to adults services, gypsy and traveller site provision and the Health Service. The main example of co-options onto the County Council Committee has been the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee (and the Education Committee) where 5 non-voting teacher representatives have been appointed. Any co-optees appointed to the Adult Care Services Select Committee would be non-voting for the period to May 2001. They would need a broad remit and need to acquire some familiarisation with procedures of both the Select Committee and the County Council in order to play an effective role. Training for such individuals would be necessary. Appointments would be through this Committee after identification of the number of co-optees and the subject matters co-optees should cover. They would be recruited through appropriate advertisements.
- (b) as a distinct difference from the appointment of co-optees individuals with a special interest could be invited to attend meetings given the subject matters involved. For example at this meeting a report on the implementation of the National Carers' Strategy is before this Committee and representatives from the Carers' Associations have been invited to attend. Members may wish to have this flexibility rather than appointing permanent co-opted members.

Other matters identified for scrutiny up to June 2001 include:

- (i) the annual report on complaints
- (ii) the Inspection Unit's Annual Report
- (iii) recruitment and retention of staff in the new adult care service
- (iv) how responsible reporting functions in Social Services establishments
- (v) National Service Framework - Mental Health in Hertfordshire
- (vi) How responsible reporting functions in the Social Services Department

Further matters for scrutiny and/or comment will no doubt be identified during the next few months which might benefit from the advice of representatives from special interest groups.

- (c) status quo i.e. invitation of professional representatives from the health service etc. to attend meetings as and when necessary.

3. Conclusions

The Committee needs to determine in what way (if any) it wishes to fulfill its new scrutiny role and what part non-voting non County Council representatives should take in this process.

The three options above give different perspectives. It is intended that the Select Committee will conduct its business as effectively as possible and members may wish to adopt option (b) whereby special interest groups such as Carers' Associations etc should be invited to attend individual meetings as and when specific subjects are under discussion.

4. Financial Implications

This is unquantifiable but co-opted members would be entitled to claim expenses in so far as travel and subsistence and possibly a loss of earnings allowance.

Background papers used by the author in compiling this report:

Constitution of the County Council

Standing Order SC1(3) - Constitution and Membership of Select Committees