

COUNCIL

12 OCTOBER 2017

REPRESENTATION BY MEDWAY PARENTS AND CARERS FORUM ON THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Report from: Neil Davies, Chief Executive

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Summary

This report recommends the Council to agree to representation on the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee by the Medway Parents and Carers Forum (MPCF).

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The appointment of a non-voting co-optee to represent the Medway Parents and Carers Forum (MPCF) on the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee is a matter for full Council.

2. Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 1 August 2017 the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered and agreed a request from the MPCF for a non-voting seat on the Committee. It was agreed to recommend the Council to formally approve an increase in the size of the Committee and the appointment of a representative nominated by the Forum (and a named substitute).

3. Advice and analysis

- 3.1 At its meeting on 1 August 2017 the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a request from the MPCF for representation on the Committee.
- 3.2 Currently the Committee includes places for non-voting representatives of the Youth Council (x 2) and Healthwatch Medway (x 1), plus a Head Teacher and Teacher as well as four statutory voting places for co-optees representing the Church of England and Roman Catholic Dioceses and two parent governors of maintained schools.
- 3.3 Most Local Authority areas in England have a Parent and Carers Forum established as a representative local group of parents and

carers of children and young people with disabilities to work alongside local authorities, education, health and other service providers to ensure the services they plan, commission, deliver and monitor meet the needs of children and families. In the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 year olds, published in January 2015, the Department for Education and Department of Health state that Local Authorities are actively encouraged to work with their local Parent and Carers Forum.

- 3.4 The Medway Parents and Carers Forum has a membership of around 500 people and works, or has developing links with, a range of local groups such as Medway Ethnic Minorities Forum, 21 Together, the Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Trust (Kent and Medway) and the Kent Deaf Children's Society. The Forum has recently entered into a partnership agreement setting out how it will work together with the Council and NHS Medway Clinical Commissioning Group. The agreement seeks to achieve the empowerment of parents and carers of children and young people with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) so that there is effective parent/carer participation in the shaping of services and decision making, as well as associated information and support.
- 3.5 The provision of a seat on this Committee would assist the Forum to achieve its purpose of supporting parents and carers to have a voice in shaping locally delivered services for disabled children and young people and would provide access by Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members to the views of those parents and carers on a regular and ongoing basis.
- 3.6 The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to support the addition of a representative nominated by the MPCF to the membership of the Committee, together with a named substitute and to recommend this to Full Council.
- 3.7 Since the Committee met in August, MPCF have asked if they could nominate two substitute Members to provide more flexibility and capacity for the Forum to be regularly represented at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings.

4. Financial, legal and risk implications

- 4.1 Section 9FA of the Local Government Act 2000 provides for an Overview and Scrutiny Committee to include co-opted members who are not members of the Council. People who are co-opted to Overview and Scrutiny Committees under this provision are not entitled to vote unless the Council has made a scheme to allow voting (under Section 11 of Schedule A1 to the Local Government Act 2000). Medway Council has not made such a scheme.
- 4.2 There are no financial or risk implications arising from this report.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 That the size of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee be increased to include one non-voting place for a

representative of the Medway Parents and Carers Forum to be appointed for a one year term of office each year.

- 5.2 That Keith Clear be appointed to the Committee as the representative of the Forum for the remainder of this Municipal year with Michelle Dewar and June Patey as named substitutes.

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Background papers

None

Appendices

None