

## Summary Sheet

### Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 19 November 2018

### Report Title

Membership of the Fostering Panel

### Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

### Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Shokat Lal, Assistant Chief Executive

### Report Author(s)

James McLaughlin, Head of Democratic Services  
01709 822477 or james.mclaughlin@rotherham.gov.uk

### Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

### Report Summary

This report is submitted to seek approval to appoint a new member to serve on the Fostering Panel to fill the vacancy created after Councillor Cusworth stepped down from serving on that body.

### Recommendations

1. That Councillor Bob Bird be appointed to serve on the Fostering Panel for the remainder of the municipal year.

### List of Appendices Included

None

### Background Papers

Report to Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting – 19 February 2018 – Councillor Representation on Adoption and Fostering Panels

### Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

### Council Approval Required

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Membership of the Fostering Panel**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 On 18 February 2018, the former Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting considered a report outlining a proposed approach to democratic involvement in the Council's Adoption and Fostering Panels.
- 1.2 The report concluded that councillors have an important role in driving forward the improvement journey in respect of the policy direction and increasing public confidence in and the outcomes of local democratic decision making. It recommended increasing the number of councillors sitting on Adoption and Fostering Panel hearings to two Members on the basis that it would meet the requirement to increase democratic representation.
- 1.3 The decision was taken at the meeting on 18 February 2018 that two councillors would serve on the Fostering Panel, with Councillors Cusworth and M. Elliott being duly appointed.

### **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 A vacancy has arisen for a councillor to be appointed to the Fostering Panel following Councillor Cusworth's decision to step down from the panel.
- 2.2 The establishment of Fostering Panels is laid down by the Fostering service (England) Regulations 2011. Regulation 23(1) requires the fostering service to provide a central list of persons considered to be suitable members of the panel.
- 2.3 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 carers matching considerations are to be for certain ages or categories of children.
- 2.4 The Panel also considers the continuing approval of foster carers following their annual carer's review or other significant changes in their circumstances.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 It is recommended that Councillor Bob Bird be appointed to serve on the Fostering Panel.

3.2 A panel must have sufficient members and individual members must have between them the experience and expertise necessary to effectively discharge the functions of the panel. Corporate Parenting is enhanced by the appointment of councillors each to the Fostering Panel. Councillors bring knowledge of the wider authority, and of their own area of work. They contribute to the consistency and independence of the panels, as well as enabling Panel Members to develop a deep understanding of the role, knowledge of policy and cases as they progress.

#### **4. Consultation on proposal**

4.1 The Deputy Leader of the Council has consulted Members to identify a nominee to fill the vacancy on the Fostering Panel.

#### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 If Councillor Bird is appointed by Cabinet, the Head of Democratic Services will communicate the decision and arrange for induction to take place with the service.

#### **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

6.1 As no allowances or payments are made to councillors who are representatives on the Fostering Panel, there are no financial or procurement implications associated with this report.

#### **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

7.1 The statutory provisions governing the operation of the Fostering Panel are set out elsewhere in the report. Beyond these, there are no legal implications associated with this report.

#### **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

8.1 There are no human resources implications associated with this report.

#### **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

9.1 There are no direct implications for children and young people beyond the recommended appointment discussed earlier in the main body of the report.

9.2 There are no implications for vulnerable adults.

#### **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

10.1 There are no equalities or human rights implications associated with this report.

#### **11. Implications for Partners**

11.1 There are no implications for partners arising from this report.

## 12. Risks and Mitigation

12.1 There are no specific risks arising from the proposal in this report.

## 13. Accountable Officer(s)

Ian Walker – Head of Service – Children in Care

James McLaughlin – Head of Democratic Services

Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	05/11/18
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Dermot Pearson	02/11/18
Assistant Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development (if appropriate)	N/A	
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)	N/A	

*Report Author:*            *James McLaughlin, Head of Democratic Services*  
   *01709 822477 or james.mclaughlin@rotherham.gov.uk*

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