



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol  
**MERTHYR TUDFUL**  
**MERTHYR TYDFIL**  
County Borough Council

## **ROLE DESCRIPTION AND OTHER INFORMATION FOR SCRUTINY CO-OPTED MEMBERS**

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**As a general rule scrutiny co-opted members should be able to:**

- Represent the interests of the population that receive services provided by or commissioned by public service providers; and/or,
  - Contribute expert knowledge or skills that will lead to a rigorous and objective scrutiny of the issues under review; and/or,
  - Live or work in the county borough area.
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### **1. Key roles**

- 1.1 To act as a non-party-political voice for those who live and/or work in the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil.
- 1.2 To bring specialist knowledge and/or skills to the scrutiny process and/or to bring an element of external challenge by representing the public.
- 1.3 To take an interest in, attend and contribute to the Committees or Task & Finish Groups to which you are appointed.
- 1.4 To establish good relations with other members, officers and co-optees.
- 1.5 To abide by the relevant sections of the Council's Constitution in terms of the rules and procedures for Scrutiny, Committee proceedings and the Code of Conduct.

- 1.6 At all times seek to promote awareness, understanding and interest in the work of Scrutiny.

## **2. What will you be expected to do as a Co-optee?**

- 2.1 Attend formal meetings of the Committee to which you have been appointed.
- 2.2 Attend additional meetings and evidence gathering sessions such as site visits and Task Groups.
- 2.3 Prepare for each meeting by reading the agenda papers and additional information to familiarise yourself with the issue under scrutiny. Prior to the meeting consider the questions you may wish to put to Cabinet Members, Officers and external witnesses.
- 2.4 At the meetings you will need to listen carefully, ask questions in a way which is non-judgemental, respect confidentiality and help the Committee to make practical suggestions for improvements in services.
- 2.5 Assist in the preparation of reports and the formulation of recommendations.
- 2.6 Contribute to the Council's Performance Management Framework. In particular to provide the challenge element and see services from the perspective of local people.
- 2.7 Contribute to the development of the Scrutiny Work Programme.
- 2.8 Attend any training and development events and other workshops to develop your understanding of the key priorities and initiatives being pursued by the Council.
- 2.9 Keep abreast of the key issues for the authority and bear these in mind when scrutinising services and making recommendations for improvement.
- 2.10 Contribute to achieving an open, accountable and transparent decision-making process at Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

## **3. Person specification - what skills and qualities do Co-optees need?**

- 3.1 A keen and genuine interest in achieving improvements in public services for local people.
- 3.2 The ability to work effectively within a team.

- 3.3 The ability to communicate effectively and build good relations with other members and officers.
- 3.4 A respect for confidentiality.
- 3.5 The ability to deal with issues of a sensitive nature in a diplomatic manner.
- 3.6 To respect the views of others and consider issues in a fair and non-judgemental way.
- 3.7 The ability to problem-solve and look for innovative new ways of working that will achieve improvements in services.
- 3.8 An interest in local government.
- 3.9 An awareness of the key priorities for the County Borough and the range of agencies involved in providing services to local people (including the private and voluntary sectors).
- 3.10 The need for a high degree of sensitivity and discretion.
- 3.11 The requirement to attend Committee meetings, which are usually held in the afternoons.
- 3.12 We are looking to advance the provision of agendas in electronic format so a working knowledge and access to IT facilities is essential.

#### **4. What is a Scrutiny Committee Co-opted Member?**

A co-opted member is someone (other than a Councillor) who is a member of the committee and takes a full and active part in the work of the committee. Co-opted Members, with the exception of Statutory Education Co-optees, do not have the right to vote at Committee meetings. The Statutory Education Co-optees on the Learning & LAESCYP Scrutiny Committee have voting rights in relation to education matters only.

#### **5. What is expected of a co-opted member?**

Before taking up your appointment as a co-optee you will need to:

- 5.1 Sign up to the Council's Members' **Code of Conduct**.
- 5.2 Complete a **Register of Interests** form.

5.3 All co-opted members must abide by the **Council's Constitution** in terms of rules and procedures for Scrutiny Committee proceedings.

5.4 With regard to the work of your Scrutiny Committee it is expected that you will:-

- Prepare in advance of the meeting, by taking part in site visits, relevant development and training and by reading published agenda and papers.
- Contribute to the discussions of the scrutiny committee or task and finish group on all matters.
- Bring any specialist knowledge and/or skills to the committee.
- Bring an element of external challenge to the Committee discussions for example, through your representational role (where applicable) and also by relating issues more as the general public will view issues.
- Take an interest in, attend and contribute to the scrutiny committee or task and finish groups to which you volunteer.
- Gather evidence and research appropriate to the committee's agenda.
- Promote awareness, understanding and interest in the work of the Scrutiny Committees
- Ask questions in order to help the committee to make practical suggestions for improvements to services.
- Assist in the preparation of reports where appropriate.
- When involved in review activity, to put forward evidence-based views/comments/suggestions on a given topic on the basis of knowledge or experience.
- To help establish where the organisation/community of interest/user group represented by the co-optee and the overview and scrutiny committee will work separately.
- To be involved, or identify the right person to be involved, in scrutiny review activity if requested.
- To report on progress and constraints with the delivery of respective work programmes, including presenting the Committee with annual reports where relevant.

- To share good practice and organisational learning.
- To help identify the support needed for an effective working relationship between the organisation or stakeholder group represented by the co-opted member and the relevant scrutiny committee.

5.5 Where appropriate keep informed those you represent.

5.6 You may need to declare a personal or prejudicial interest in specific agenda items – you will be given guidance on what this means.

5.7 At committee you may raise issues for consideration for future scrutiny during discussion about the committee's forward work programme.