

## **CSE INQUIRY MEMBER ADVISORY GROUP**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the CSE Inquiry Member Advisory Group held on Tuesday, 22 May 2018 at 6.00pm in meeting rooms G3/4 Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford**

**Present:** Councillors S Bentley, K T Blundell, N A M England, T J Nelson, H Rhodes, and P J Scott

**In Attendance:** Suzanne Dodd (Governance & Legal Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer), Jonathan Eatough (Assistant Director: Governance, Procurement & Commissioning and Monitoring Officer) and Deborah Moseley (Democratic and Scrutiny Services Team Leader)

#### **CSEIMAG - 01      Election of Chair**

Following welcome and introductions from the Monitoring Officer, Councillors Bentley and Nelson raised concerns regarding the constitution of the Group.

Councillor Bentley queried the appointment of Councillor H Rhodes to the Group as it was his understanding from statements made by the Lead Cabinet Member that the Cabinet would have no involvement in the process but he noted that the Leader would be appointing Councillor Rhodes to the Cabinet for 2018/19.

Councillor Nelson believed that the victims and survivors and victim and survivor groups should be at the heart of the process from the outset and to this end, he considered that the Group should co-opt, with voting rights, three representatives from victim and survivor groups and that the Chair should be drawn from their number.

The Monitoring Officer responded that the Group was constituted according to the requirements set out in the Cabinet report of 19 April 2018. He noted that the report provided that the Group should not consist of any Members who had ever been Council Leader or Deputy Leader or held a portfolio responsibility for children's services/safe-guarding, nor had they been a member of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee between November 2014 and May 2016. The Monitoring Officer had pursued the route to commission an Inquiry as provided for in the Cabinet report of 19 April 2018 and he stated that this was the first time that these issues had been raised with him. He advised that the meeting could not continue without the appointment of a Chair and that the issue of co-optees could be discussed at a more appropriate point of the agenda.

Councillors Bentley and Nelson maintained their objection to the appointment of Councillor Rhodes to the Group.

Councillor N A M England proposed that Councillor P J Scott be elected Chair. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Rhodes and carried by a majority vote.

**Resolved – that Councillor P J Scott be elected as Chair of the CSE Inquiry Member Advisory Group.**

**CSEIMAG - 02      Apologies for Absence**

None.

**CSEIMAG - 03      Declarations of Interest**

None.

**CSEIMAG - 04      Governance Issues**

The Governance & Legal Services Manager set out the three areas of good governance which should govern the activity of the Group in order to give public confidence.

Confidentiality – This included access to information, how any confidential information would be shared with the Group and how Members should manage and store that information. All Members of the Group would be asked to sign a confidentiality statement which would be circulated over the next few days and comments on the statement were welcomed. Councillor T J Nelson commented that he did not expect the Group to be party to any confidential information other than that which might be commercially sensitive.

Data Protection – This included the key principles of processing personal information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations. A protocol would be drafted and provided to the Group.

Conflicts of Interest – The way in which conflicts were managed was crucial to the integrity of the Inquiry. There were three types of interest: actual, perceived and potential and the circumstances of each created different levels of risk. Members were required to disclose any clashes of interest with the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer. A number of strategies were available to deal with interests and the risks posed: registering of low risk interests; restricting involvement in the Group; relinquishing the interest when public duties outweighed private matters; and, in high risk circumstances, resignation.

If Members had any questions regarding these issues they should be raised with the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer.

**CSEIMAG - 05      Terms of Reference**

Councillor T J Nelson stated that the constitution of the Group should provide for victim and survivor groups to be at the heart of the process from beginning and proposed that three representatives from victim and survivor groups be co-opted to join the Group and engage in the process. Councillor S Bentley seconded the proposal.

The Monitoring Officer reiterated to the Group that a three stage process had been agreed by Cabinet on 19 April which made a lot of provision for engagement with victim and survivor groups during the course of the Inquiry. He felt that there had been a clear steer from Council to expedite the process and, in the interests of balancing speed and proportionality, the involvement of additional groups had not been envisaged at this stage of the process, which focussed purely on agreeing a procedure for the procurement of a commissioning body and agreeing a specification to inform the work of the commissioning body. He stated that it was crucial that victims and survivors were involved in the Inquiry but also that their knowledge and experience was called upon at the right time. The Monitoring Officer pointed out that the proposed appointment of co-optees required consideration of how to consult with victim and survivor groups to bring forward candidates, the subsequent selection process and how training would be provided.

During the subsequent debate of the proposal, Members discussed whether the co-option of a representative of the Local Government Association (LGA) was feasible but the Monitoring Officer advised that it was hoped to draw on the LGA's experience during the procurement process to evaluate bids. Members also considered the likelihood of any individuals coming forward for co-option but decided, on balance, that the opportunity should be provided.

**Resolved – that provision be made in the Terms of Reference for three representatives of victims and survivor groups with appropriate knowledge and experience to be co-opted to the CSE Inquiry Member Advisory Group.**

On the advice of the Monitoring Officer, the meeting adjourned at 6.35pm for a report on the process of co-option to be brought to the next meeting.

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....