

Meeting of the Decision Session – Executive Member for Children and Young People

14 December 2010

Report of the Director of Adults, Children and Education

Local Authority (LA) School Governors

Summary

1. This report provides information about the current position with regard to vacancies for LA seats on governing bodies, lists current nominations for those vacancies, as detailed in Annex 1, and requests the appointment, or re-appointment, of the listed nominees.

Background

2. National benchmarking data on governor vacancies indicates a national average of 12% for LA governor vacancies. York has 7 (4%) LA vacancies at the time of writing this report. This is higher than usual and reflects an increased number of terms of office ending at this time in the school calendar.
3. Some vacancies will be generated by those existing governors not wishing to stand for a further term of office. The following table summarises the current position of LA vacancies and appointments in City of York schools.

Total number of LA seats in City of York schools	174
Number of LA seats currently filled (or held)	157
Number of new LA appointments addressed by this paper	4
Number of LA reappointments addressed by this paper	0
Number of LA appointments in progress/ on hold	(5 / 1) 6
Number of LA vacancies remaining after this paper (excluding those where a nominee has been identified or where it has been agreed to hold vacancies)	7 (4%)
Number of applicants placed in community vacancies since the last report.	0

Political affiliation of LA governors		
Party	Number of governors	Percentage of all LA governors
Labour	19	12.1
Lib Dem	13	8.3
Conservative	4	2.6
Green	1	0.6
Independent	5	3.2
Others	115	73.2

Identification of vacancies

4. The overall picture of governor vacancies is informed by a detailed database, which includes records of all schools, the structure of their governing bodies, individuals who serve as governors and terms of office.
5. From the database can be determined such information as current vacancies and terms of office which are due to expire. In this way the Governance Service can clearly identify in advance the actions which are required and act accordingly.

Reviewing Vacancies

6. The vacancy position is under constant review. When potential new governors are identified the candidate is interviewed to discuss their interest and suitability. The Chair of Governors and headteacher are also asked to meet with the candidate and show him or her around the school prior to nomination for appointment. This allows the school to assess the potential candidate in terms of a good match for the needs of the governing body and current governors.
7. Where a term of office is due to expire, the individuals are contacted to ask whether they would like their name to be put forward again for reappointment. Chairs and headteachers are contacted to invite any relevant supporting information. Where a reappointment is appropriate, this is included on the nomination paper for consideration by the Executive Member.
8. All Local Authority governors are required to apply for an enhanced disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau.
9. It should be noted that, as well as filling LA vacancies, the Governance Service also assists schools who are having difficulties filling community governor vacancies.

Political Balance

10. In York the LA governor seats are filled on merit, rather than by strict consideration of political balance. Just under a third of LA governors are, in practice, linked to one of the political parties. Amongst this number there is a balance which very broadly reflects the political balance within the authority. As and when a situation arises in which any party has significantly more seats than their political representation would indicate to be appropriate, steps may be taken to redress the balance over a period of time, whilst always considering the need to identify the best possible governor for a school, rather than taking account of individuals' political affiliation.

Consultation

11. Consultation on the nominations for appointment has been undertaken in accordance with the agreed procedure for the appointment of LA governors.

Options

12. The Executive Member has the options of appointing/re-appointing or not appointing to fill vacant seats as proposed at Annex 1.

Analysis

13. If the Executive Member chooses not to appoint to fill vacant seats this will have a detrimental impact on the work of governing bodies and their ability to meet statutory requirements. However equally importantly is the need for confidence that the proposals in Annex 1 will deliver volunteers who are committed to developing their skills in order to make a strong contribution to the work of the school.

Corporate Priorities

14. Good effective school governance does play a significant role in enhancing individual institutions and contributing as a result to the Learning City corporate priority which describes how

“We want to make sure that local people have access to world class education and training facilities and provision”

Implications

15. There are no implications relating to equalities, crime and disorder, ITT, property, financial, legal or HR issues arising from this report.

Risk Management

16. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, there are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report. Good active governance arrangements do contribute to effective school management arrangements and, as a result, reduce risks to the organisation.

Recommendations

17. That the Executive Member appoints or re-appoints, LA Governors to fill vacant places as proposed in Annex 1.

Reason: to ensure that local authority places on school governing bodies continue to be effectively filled

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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

None

Wards Affected:

All 

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers

None

Annex

Annex 1 details the current position of LA governor vacancies and lists those governors who are being nominated for appointment or re-appointment.