

Executive

18 November 2008

Report of Democratic Services Manager

School Governors Review Final Report - Education Scrutiny Committee

Summary

1. This report presents the final report for the review of Schools Governors, carried out by the Education Scrutiny Committee and asks Members to approve the recommendations previously agreed by Scrutiny Management Committee.

Background

2. In coming to a decision to carry out a review of this topic, the Education Scrutiny Committee recognised certain key objectives and the following remit was agreed:

Remit

'In regard to Governing Bodies, to encourage an improved level of community involvement and maximise their diversity and skills.'

Key Objectives

- i. Investigate the current composition of governing bodies with an effort to find ways of improving the diversity of governing bodies to better reflect the community
 - ii. Identify ways of increasing the number of community Governors
 - iii. Identify ways of increasing community involvement with Governing Bodies
 - iv. Investigate ways of maximizing the skills that individual members of governing bodies bring to their role
3. The final report from this review was presented to Scrutiny Management Committee on 15 September 2008. They paid tribute to the hard work undertaken by Governors and to their immense workload, noting the high level of commitment required. They also expressed their thanks to the Education

Scrutiny Committee for carrying out the review and endorsed the recommendations arising from the review in full (as shown below in paragraph 7).

Consultation

4. As part of their review, the Education Scrutiny Committee carried out a number of surveys and consultation sessions, as detailed in their final report attached at Annex A.

Options

5. Having regard to the aim and objectives of the remit for the review and having considered the information provided in the final report and, the options available to the Executive are:
 - i. to approve the recommendations arising from this scrutiny review in full or part;
 - ii. to reject the proposed recommendations and outline alternative proposals, where applicable

Analysis

6. The final report attached at Annex A provides a full analysis of all of the information gathered and the arising issues.

Summary of Recommendations Arising From Review

7. The final report recommends that the Executive:
 1. Acknowledge the significant voluntary contribution of school governors to the successful running of York schools
 2. Note the work of the Governor Support & Development Service Team, in particular in supporting this scrutiny review and the resulting benefits gained to their service area as referenced in Annex F to the final report
 3. Instruct the Governor Support & Development Service Team to:
 - i) Continue to develop improved methods for advertising governor vacancies i.e. by targeting specific organisations, in order to attract a more diverse mix of individuals to the role of governor and ensure it captures the information necessary to reflect changing circumstances and monitor diversity
 - ii) Create an information guide which identifies the most effective methods for finding and recruiting potential community governors and distribute it to all York schools
 - iii) Continue use of the 'Exit Questionnaire' in order to investigate and understand governors motivation for leaving their post

- iv) Regularly maintain, update and develop their database to ensure it remains an effective tool
- v) Share information on best practice with all York schools
- vi) Consider the most applicable form of training for maximizing skills, whether that be whole governing body or online training

Reason: To improve the working methods of the Governor Support & Development Service team in order to improve the number of individuals taking up the role of Governor and reducing the number of Governors standing down.

Corporate Priorities

- 8. Although the remit for the School Governors review did not fit directly with any of the Corporate Priorities, it was recognised that it could indirectly have a positive effect in relation to Corporate Priority No.7 – ‘Improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the city’.

Implications

- 9. There are no known legal, Financial, Equalities, HR, or other implications associated with the recommendation below or the recommendations within the final report at Annex A.

Risk Management

- 10. Without the thorough engagement of current governors the findings from this review could be limited which in turn, could have a negative effect on the number of new applicants. It is recognised that some schools have difficulties in attracting community governors and therefore it is important that governing bodies are supported in attracting applicants for vacant seats, and retaining governing body members.

Recommendations

- 11. Members are asked to note the contents of the attached final report and its annexes and approve the recommendations arising from the review as detailed in paragraphs 7 above.

Reason: To enable the Executive to introduce appropriate changes to working practices and/or Council policy and procedures.

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Report Approved **Date** 30 October 2008

Wards Affected: All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: Interim Reports dated 26 February 2008, 3 April 2008 & 27 May 2008

Annexes:

- Annex A** – School Governors Review - Final Report dated 30 July 2008
- Annex AA** – Ethnicity Information
- Annex AB** – Information From Completed Exit Questionnaires
- Annex AC** – Information Relating To Community Governors
- Annex AD** – Information On Community Involvement With Governing Bodies
- Annex AE** – Information On Training Requirements
- Annex AF** – Update From Governor Support & Development Service