
MEETING	EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	30 OCTOBER 2007
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS KIRK (CHAIR), BROOKS (VICE-CHAIR), ALEXANDER, GUNNELL, MERRETT, MORLEY AND DR D SELICK
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR HYMAN AND MR J BAILEY

16. Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda.

No interests were declared further to the standing personal, non prejudicial interests declared at previous meetings.

17. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2007 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

18. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

19. Governing Bodies Review

Members considered a report which presented a proposed remit for the scrutiny topic on the role of School Governors and invited Members to agree a way forward for this review.

A suggested timetable was set out in paragraph 5 of the report and a draft remit was attached at Annex A. The Governance Service Manager was in attendance to elaborate on the information presented in the report, and in Annexes B and C, concerning the composition of governing bodies and the methods used currently and previously to attract applicants to the role of governor. Additional recruitment methods that had not been mentioned in the report included the Governors' One-Stop Shop and placing notices in Council wage slips. Recruitment was a particular problem in certain schools, due possibly to the nature of the areas they served, and community governor vacancies were the most difficult to fill.

The Scrutiny Officer reported that a survey of governors was planned for January 2008, with the aim of updating the information currently held on

individuals by the Governance Service. It was intended to use this to identify the current ethnic and gender balance of governing bodies. .

In discussing the proposed remit, Members agreed that the main issue with regard to the composition of governing bodies was the need to ensure that they reflected the diversity of the communities which they served. This did not just mean ethnic diversity. Chairing and other skills should be included in a separate objective, as there was a need to determine the range of skills which individual governors brought to governing bodies as well as any training needs that might exist. It was noted that the final objective, relating to extended schools, might need to be revisited in the light of the information gathered in the first stage of the review.

In considering the information provided in the report, Members started to identify a number of questions for inclusion in the survey. It became clear that some of these required a response from governors as individuals and others required a response from governing bodies. Members requested that a draft of the suggested survey for individual governors be presented for consideration at their next meeting, and agreed that the information required from governing bodies be sought via a report to each school's governing body.

In addition, it was suggested that information be obtained from other local authorities, to determine best practice in recruiting governors in 'hard to reach' areas, and by inviting individual governors to give evidence to the Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED: (i) That the objectives set out in the proposed remit at Annex A to the report be amended to read as follows:

- i. To investigate the current composition of governing bodies, with an effort to find ways of improving their diversity so that they better reflect the community.
- ii. To investigate ways of maximising the skills that individual governors bring to governing bodies.
- iii. To identify ways of increasing the numbers of Community Governors.
- iv. To identify ways of increasing community involvement with governing bodies.
- v. To investigate the role of governors and current clerking arrangements in extended schools.

REASON: To ensure that the review reflects Members' views regarding the key issues that should be scrutinised.

- (ii) That, subject to those amendments, and any further minor amendments that Members may agree to at the next meeting, the remit be agreed.
- (iii) That the timetable outlined in paragraph 5 of the report be agreed, subject to appropriate amendments to accommodate the changes made to the remit for the review.

REASON: In order to progress the review and ensure compliance with scrutiny procedures, protocols and work plans.

CLLR M KIRK

Chair of Scrutiny Committee

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.30 pm.