



**Notice of meeting of
Education Scrutiny Committee**

To: Councillors Kirk (Chair), Brooks (Vice-Chair), Alexander, Gunnell, Hyman, Merrett and Morley

Co-opted Statutory Members:

Mr John Bailey (Parent Governor Representative) and Dr David Sellick (Church of England Representative)

Date: Wednesday, 5 December 2007

Time: 5.00 pm

Venue: The Guildhall, York

AGENDA

1. Declarations of Interest (Pages 3 - 4)

At this point Members are asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in the business on this agenda. A list of general personal interests previously declared is attached.

2. Minutes (Pages 5 - 8)

To approve and sign the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on 30 October 2007.

3. Public Participation

At this point in the meeting members of the public who have registered their wish to speak regarding an item on the agenda or an issue within the Committee's remit can do so. Anyone who wishes to register or requires further information is requested to contact the Democracy Officer on the contact details listed at the foot of this agenda. The deadline for registering is Tuesday, 4 December at 5:00 pm.

4. School Governors - Interim Report (Pages 9 - 20)

This interim report presents further information in relation to the scrutiny topic on School Governors and asks Members to consider a revised remit and methods of progressing their review of this topic.

5. Urgent Business

Any other business which the Chair considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972

Democracy Officer:

Name: Fiona Young

Contact details:

- Telephone – (01904) 551027
- E-mail – fiona.young@york.gov.uk

For more information about any of the following please contact the Democracy Officer responsible for servicing this meeting

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports

Contact details are set out above.

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Scrutiny Committees

The purpose of all scrutiny and ad-hoc scrutiny committees appointed by the Council is to:

- Monitor the performance and effectiveness of services;
- Review existing policies and assist in the development of new ones, as necessary; and
- Monitor best value continuous service improvement plans

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EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Agenda item I: Declarations of interest.

Please state any amendments you have to your declarations of interest:

Councillor Hyman - Chair of Governors at Huntington Primary School;

Councillor Merrett - as his daughter attended St Paul's Primary School;

Co-opted statutory members

Dr D Sellick – Governor of Derwent Infant and Junior School

Mr J Bailey – Governor of Huntington School and Huntington Primary School

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City of York Council

Minutes

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.

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Education Scrutiny Committee

5 December 2007

School Governors – Interim Report

Background

1. In coming to a decision to review this topic, the Education Scrutiny Committee recognised certain key objectives. Due to the work involved in examining these objectives, Members agreed to split the review into two parts, and the following revised remit was suggested:

Remit

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

Part A - 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

Part B – Key Objective

- v. Investigate the role of Governors and current clerking arrangements in extended schools

To 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

Information Gathered

3. At a meeting on 30 October 2007, Members considered a scoping report for the review which identified the current composition of governing bodies and

gave a snap shot of the number of vacant seats at the time of providing the information.

4. A recent report from the ODPM identified York as having one of the fastest growing BME communities in the country and the most recent Pupil Levels Annual School Census (PLASC) provided the following statistics:
 - There are at least 49 languages spoken by children in York schools
 - There are 1340 minority ethnic pupils in York schools
 - All York schools have minority ethnic pupils
 - Until recently the largest ethnic group were Travellers, but this is an overarching term that includes several distinct groups
 - There are significant Bangladeshi, Chinese and Turkish/Kurdish communities in York
 - Only 27 out of 1578 teachers in York schools are from minority ethnic backgrounds (1.7%)

Issues Arising

5. In order to identify ways of improving the diversity of governing bodies, to better reflect their community, Members recognised it would first be necessary to clarify their current level of diversity. It was agreed that a survey of individual governors be carried out in order to confirm the validity of the information currently held on the Governance Service database, and to identify any other information pertinent to the objectives of this review. In regard to this particular objective, the survey would need to identify the age, gender, ethnicity, skills etc of all current school governors.
6. Information provided by Marketing & Communications on the council's approach to surveys was taken into consideration when producing a first draft of the survey. A copy of this together with a draft covering letter and example of a database printout is attached at Annex A. The proposed timetable for the survey in relation to its production, circulation and collation of responses is as follows:

Meeting - 5 December 2007	Consider draft survey, and covering letter and agree any amendments
7 December 2008	Send out survey etc requesting responses by 4 February 2008
5 –22 February 2008	Data from responses received to be entered into database and report produced detailing the findings
Meeting - 26 February 2008	Consideration of report

6. There will be print, postal and database costs incurred in carrying out this survey but there is some money available for this work within the Governor Support & Development Service budget. The remaining cost would have to

be funded from the scrutiny budget available for this review. Annex B provides a outline of the costs involved.

To identify ways of increasing the number of Community Governors

Information Gathered

8. At the meeting on 30 October 2007 the Governance Service Manager explained that the criteria for being a community governor was the same for primary and secondary schools, with people being drawn from the local area to the school, for example from the parish council or local churches, community groups or organisations. In practice though, people with links to organisations with an interest in the education of older children such as youth groups or local businesses, were more likely to be attracted to places on secondary school governing bodies.
9. It was noted that governing bodies are responsible for recruiting their own community governors but often struggle with this and require help from the Governor Support & Development Service. As an example of the level of support given, the Governance Manager confirmed that in the last six months the Service have provided between 8-10 governors for community vacancies.

Issues Arising

10. Having considered the information provided within the scoping report on the previous and current methods used to attract applicants to the role of governor, Members suggested the following alternative methods:
 - Via Resident Associations, particularly for community governors
 - On local radio stations i.e. Radio York & Minster FM
11. In order to reduce the number of vacant seats on governing bodies, be they community governor vacancies or any other, Members agreed it would be helpful to identify the reasons why governors stand down and why some schools have a bigger turnover than others.
12. Members therefore suggested that the Governance Service consider issuing an exit questionnaire to governors standing down, and that the findings be fed back to the governing body.

To identify ways of increasing community involvement with Governing Bodies

13. In order to identify ways of increasing community involvement with Governing Bodies, Members agreed it would be necessary to understand the methods used and level of involvement attained currently. Members considered how best to gather this information and agreed that a report explaining the work of this committee and a questionnaire be presented at a full governors' meeting of each school.

Issues Arising

14. As this report may require the involvement of other council officers, it was agreed that work on the first two objectives be progressed first and that this report not be finalised and presented until the new year.

Investigate ways of maximizing the skills that individual members of governing bodies bring to their role

Information Gathered

15. The committee were informed that the Governor Support & Development Service have a pool of applicants that they can draw on when there is an Local Authority (LA) vacancy to fill. The Governance Manager confirmed that occasionally this pool is used to supply individuals to fill other vacancies e.g. community governors. In the last six months the Service has provided approximately 15 LA governors and on appointment, all new governors are given training.

Issues Arising

16. Members suggested that new governors may benefit from receiving training earlier in the process and that perhaps this should commence when they first go into the pool rather than waiting until they are in post. The Governance Manager agreed that once in the pool there was no reason why they could not start to attend meetings to begin their training and to get a feel for the type of business that governing bodies deal with.
17. Members agreed to include a number of questions in the survey for individual governing body members that would help to identify their skills. It was hoped that this information could then be used to clarify the following:
 - What skills were currently being utilised to the advantage of their governing body
 - What skills were available but not currently being utilised
 - What skills were lacking within each governing body
 - What additional training was required for each governing body member to support them in their role

Options

18. Having considered the suggested revised remit and the information contained within this report, Members may choose to:
 - Agree the revised remit or amend and agree a further revision
 - Agree any further questions to be added to the draft survey for individual governing body members, in relation to objectives (i) and (iv) of this review
 - Request that a draft exit questionnaire be presented for consideration in regard to objective (ii), at their next meeting on 9 January 2008.

- Agree the issues to be covered by the questionnaire to Governing Bodies in relation to objective (iii), in order to identify ways of maximising their involvement with their community.

Implications

19. There are no known Legal, Financial, HR, implications associated with the recommendations within this report. However, Members should be aware that there may be equality implications associated with the suggested survey of governors and therefore care should be taken in the way the survey questions are presented.

Corporate Priorities

20. Although the remit for this review does not fit directly with any of the Corporate Priorities, 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'.

Risk Management

21. 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. Also, not keeping to the timetable agreed at the meeting on 30 October 2007 could affect the focus of the review and the progress of the Scrutiny Workplan.

Recommendation

22. In light of the above options, Members are asked to consider and agree the revised remit, and methods for progressing the review.

Reason: To ensure compliance with scrutiny procedures, protocols and workplans.

Contact Details

Author:

Melanie Carr
Scrutiny Officer
Scrutiny Services
Tel No.01904 552063

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Dawn Steel
Democratic Services & Scrutiny Manager

Interim Report Approved **Date** 21 November 2007

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: Scoping Report dated 30 October 2007

Annexes: Annex A – Draft survey & covering letter
Annex B – Outline Costs for Survey

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«Title» «FirstName» «LastName»
«Address1»
«Address2»
«Address3»
«City»
«PostalCode»

27 November 2007

Dear «FirstName»

The Governor Support and Development Service is constantly seeking ways of improving the services we offer to governors to make them more focused on both individual and whole Governing Body needs. In recent months we have been working closely with the Education Scrutiny Committee, which is made up of elected Members and governor representatives. It's role is to focus on the work of the Local Authority in all areas of education to ensure the provision of improved services within the City.

In regard to Governing Bodies, the remit of this particular exercise is to encourage and improve their level of community involvement and maximise their diversity and skills.

Your help in providing the information requested by Education Scrutiny Committee is crucial to the process. The enclosed survey is designed to gather as much relevant data as possible and we are also taking this opportunity to check with you that the information held on our service database is accurate and up-to-date.

I very much value the input of Education Scrutiny Committee in this exercise and greatly appreciate the time you will spend in completing the survey. Later in the process we will be asking governing bodies as a whole for collective feedback on their role in promoting community cohesion. It is envisaged that this will go out to chairs of governors shortly.

Please return your completed survey in the freepost envelope provided to reach us by 4th February 2008.

With many thanks and best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Sue Pagliaro
Manager, Governor Support & Development Service

Questions For Survey of Individual School Governors

1. Name.....
2. What is your gender? Male / Female In what year were you born?
3. What office do you hold within your governing body?

Chair Person	<input type="checkbox"/>	Special Needs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child Protection	<input type="checkbox"/>
Numeracy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Racial Equality	<input type="checkbox"/>
Literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health & Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Subject Link – please state which subject	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other – please give name of office	<input type="checkbox"/>

Skills & Training

4. From the list below, please select what you consider to be your strongest skills (please tick all relevant boxes)

Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Project Management	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategic Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Team Working	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Making	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problem Solving	<input type="checkbox"/>	IT	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal Knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health & Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other – please give details:.....

5. Do you attend Core Training Sessions ? Yes / No
6. Does Core Training provide all of your training needs? Yes / No
- 6a. If not, what improvements could we make?.....

7. What form of training do you prefer?

Whole Governor Body Training	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distance Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
On-line Training	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other – please specify.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
.....	

8. What additional training do you need to support you in your role as a Governor?

Personal Requirements

- 9. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 says that someone has a disability if they have a ‘physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Yes / No

- 9a. If yes, please give details of any special needs provision you require to fulfil your role as governor (e.g. wheelchair access or audio loop facilities)

Governing Body Diversity

- 10. To help us understand community representation, please tell us about your ethnic background

Asian or Asian British

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Any other Asian background

White

- British
- Irish
- Other please specify

Black or Black British

- Caribbean
- African
- Any other Black background

Mixed

- White & Black Caribbean
- White & Black African
- White & Asian
- Any other mixed background

Chinese or other ethnic group

- Chinese
- Any other – please specify.....

- 11. Do you feel the ethnic balance on your governing body reflects the ethnic balance:
 - a) amongst the pupils at your school Yes / No
 - b) within the community local to your school Yes / No

For Local Authority Governors only

- 12. To help towards the proportionality of LA seats we need to know if you have any political affiliation; i.e. are you actively involved with a political group (e.g. a party member, canvasser etc)?

If yes, please tick your party below; if not, tick ‘no affiliation’

- Liberal Democrat Labour Conservative Green
- Independent Other – please specify
- No affiliation

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School Governors Review

Outline Costs For Carrying out a Survey of Individual School Governors

Printing (to be paid by Governor Support & Development Services)	Survey Folded A3 tinted paper, double sided = 6p per copy	£65.82
	Covering letter & printout of information currently stored on database A4 white paper, double sided = 5p per copy	£54.85
Postal (Costs to be split between Scrutiny & Governor Support & Development Services)	Mail out Up to C5 envelope no more than 5mm thick and weighing no more than 100g Second Class = 24p per envelope (to be paid by Governor Support & Development Services)	£263.28
	Second Class pre-paid return envelope Cost based on all 1097 being returned = 24p per envelope (to be paid by Scrutiny)	£263.28
Database Reconfiguration (to be paid by Governor Support & Development Services)	Add additional fields to database in line with the questions in the survey	£160.00
Data Entry (to be paid by Scrutiny)	Based on: 4-sided questionnaire including 3 open-ended questions A 70% response rate i.e.768 completed surveys from the 1097 issued	Between £550 - £750
	NB: It will not be possible to provide a firm cost for the data entry until the questionnaire is finalised.	
Production of Reports (to be paid by Scrutiny)	Reports based on information collated from the database	£20 - £60

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