



**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, 9 January 2008

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 5 December 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 responsible for this meeting. Contact details are listed at the foot of this agenda. The deadline for registering is **Tuesday, 8 January at 5:00 pm.**

4. School Governors - Interim Report (Pages 9 - 16)

This second interim report presents further information in relation to the scrutiny topic on the role of School Governors and asks Members to agree further action to progress 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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The majority of councillors are not appointed to the Executive (38 out of 47). Any 3 non-Executive councillors can 'call-in' an item of business from a published Executive (or Executive Member Advisory Panel (EMAP)) agenda. The Executive will still discuss the 'called in' business on the published date and will set out its views for consideration by a specially convened Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC). That SMC meeting will then make its recommendations to the next scheduled Executive meeting in the following week, where a final decision on the 'called-in' business will be made.

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 – Governor of Huntington Primary School.

Councillor Merrett – Parent of a child attending St Paul's Primary School and committee member of the York Chinese Cultural Association.

Co-opted statutory members

Dr D Sellick – Governor of Derwent Infant and Junior School.

Mr J Bailey – Chair of Governors of Huntington Primary School and Governor of Huntington Primary School.

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City of York Council

Committee Minutes

MEETING	EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	5 DECEMBER 2007
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS KIRK (CHAIR), BROOKS (VICE-CHAIR), ALEXANDER, GUNNELL, HYMAN, MERRETT, MORLEY AND DR D SELICK
APOLOGIES	MR J BAILEY

20. 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, in addition to the list of general personal interests circulated with the agenda.

Cllr Hyman asked that the list be amended to record that he was now a governor at Huntington Primary School and that Mr Bailey was now Chair of Governors at Huntington Primary school and a governor of Huntington School.

Cllr Merrett declared a general personal interest in the business of the Committee, as a member of the committee of the York Chinese Cultural Association, and asked that the list be amended to incorporate this.

21. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2007 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

22. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that Ken Beavan had registered to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme, in relation to agenda item 4 (School Governors – Interim Report: Minute 23 refers).

Mr Beavan expressed the view, as a former school governor, that introducing a questionnaire into the governor selection process risked putting off some potential applicants, who might consider the questions intrusive and irrelevant. The Council should not be introducing bureaucratic obstacles nor using the Equalities agenda to 'micromanage' the process and should be aware of the consequences before going down this route.

In response to these comments, Members stressed that the purpose of the questionnaire at this stage was to gather information about the current make-up of governing bodies, with a view to ensuring that they reflected

the communities they worked in. It would not be compulsory to complete the questionnaire and all information would be treated as confidential.

23. SCHOOL GOVERNORS - INTERIM REPORT

Members considered a report which presented further information in relation to the Scrutiny topic on School Governors and sought agreement for a revised remit and methods of progressing the review of this topic.

At the last meeting, Members had agreed revisions to the remit and had suggested that it be split into two parts, with part B relating to the role of governors and clerking arrangements in extended schools. The report outlined information gathered and issues arising in respect of each of the revised key objectives within the remit. A draft questionnaire to be used to survey individual governors, as agreed at the last meeting, was attached as Annex A to the report, together with a draft covering letter. An example of a printout of from the Governance Service database, to be sent with the questionnaire seeking confirmation of the accuracy of information currently held, was circulated at the meeting. A draft timetable for completing the survey exercise was set out in paragraph 6 of the report and estimated costs were attached as Annex B.

In respect of the information provided at paragraph 4 on the ethnic make up of schools in York, Members commented that this did not seem to reflect the City's growing Eastern European population, a point which might need to be picked up in the review report. In respect of the draft questionnaire, Members discussed a number of issues, including whether to seek information on the social (as well as ethnic) diversity of governors and whether to ask about languages spoken. It was agreed that the latter could be dealt with more appropriately in the questionnaire to governing bodies as a whole.

It was noted that, for data protection purposes, there was a need to be clear about what the information from the questionnaire would be used for. It might be necessary to clarify this if there was a dual reason for the survey (i.e. to verify information on the database and to find out further information for the review).

RESOLVED: (i) That the questionnaire and covering letter at Annex A to the report be amended as follows:

- Question 3 – change 'office' to 'offices' and add the main committees of governing bodies to the list of offices.
- Question 4 – add 'local knowledge', 'child care', 'fundraising' and 'teaching' to the list of skills.
- Question 10 – include a section on social background.
- Question 11 – delete existing question and substitute a more open-ended question, explaining the reasons for the survey with reference to the review remit (to be annexed to the questionnaire) and seeking additional comments.

- At the end – include a question asking whether the governor would be prepared to participate in a further survey.
- Covering letter – re-draft to emphasise that the information received will be treated as confidential, that it is not compulsory to complete the questionnaire but that the results will assist the Council in ensuring that all schools have a full complement of governors.

(ii) That the amended questionnaire and letter be circulated to Members before the next meeting of the Committee, with any further comments to be made directly to the Scrutiny Officer, who, in the absence of any comments, will consider the questionnaire to be approved.

(iii) That the proposed timetable at paragraph 6 of the report be amended to include consideration of an exit questionnaire for school governors as an item on the agenda for the meeting on 7 January 2008.

(iv) That, subject to the above amendments, the revised remit and methods set out in the report be approved.

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

Action Required

Amend and circulate draft questionnaire and covering letter. GR

Cllr M Kirk

Chair of Scrutiny Committee

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.40 pm].

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Education Scrutiny Committee

9 January 2008

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 5 December 2007, Members considered an interim report which presented a draft of a survey for individual school governors. A number

of amendments and additions were identified and these changes were subsequently made. The revised survey has now been sent out together with a print out for each Governor from the Governor Support & Development Service database.

4. The covering letter sent with the survey outlined the aims and objectives of this review and asked that completed surveys be returned no later than 4 February 2008. The information received as a result will be fed into the database, and used to provide statistics to support this review.
5. A report containing the required statistical information will be presented at the meeting scheduled for 26 February 2008.

Issues Arising

6. At the last meeting, Members considered the print, postal and database costs involved with carrying out this survey. Some of the costs will be covered by the Governor Support & Development Service budget. The remaining costs need to be funded from the scrutiny budget. These are:
 - Printing of return freepost envelopes = £ 93.00
 - Costs for return post (based on 100% returns) = £264.00
 - Data entry = £165.00
£532.00
 - Production of Reports – Costs between £20 - £60 each
7. Each scrutiny review has a budget of £250. Members will need to agree exactly what statistical information they require from the information provided in the returned surveys, so that the number of report types can be agreed and a quote for these can be sought. Once this cost is known a report to Scrutiny Management Committee can be submitted requesting additional funding for this review.

To identify ways of increasing the number of Community Governors

Information Gathered

8. In considering ways to increase the number of Community Governors, Members recognised the need to identify the reasons why governors stand down and why some schools have a bigger turnover than others.
9. As a result, Members suggested that the Governor Support & Development Service issue an exit questionnaire to governors standing down so that the information gained could be used to highlight any issues within the governing body. This in turn could then be used to ensure that each governing body was receiving the right type of training and support in order to address the issues. A draft exit questionnaire is attached at Annex A for Members consideration.

To identify ways of increasing community involvement with Governing Bodies

10. 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

11. Members will need to consider the statistical information received via the individual governor survey in order to identify what further information they require to support this review. This information can then also be sought via the governing body questionnaire.
12. With this in mind, the report and governing body questionnaire cannot be completed until after the meeting on 28 February 2008. They could be presented for Members consideration at the meeting scheduled for 15 April 2007 with the relevant officers in attendance, and any changes identified then incorporated into the documents before they are sent out.
13. Governing Bodies will be asked to respond within a set timeframe in order that the results can be presented at the meeting of this committee scheduled for 27 May 2008.

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

Information Gathered

14. A number of questions have been included in the survey for individual governing body members that will identify their current skills and what additional training they require to support them in their role. Indirectly, the information they provide will also highlight the skills that are available but not currently being utilised, and those which are lacking within each governing body.

Issues Arising

15. Members need to be clear how they want this information to be presented as this will affect the type of reports required from the database and the costs for this review. For example, a report per school that shows each role, the current skills of the role holder, and the additional training that the role holder would like.

Options

16. Having considered the information contained within this report and associated annex, Members may choose to:
 - Revise the draft exit questionnaire attached at Annex A
 - Agree the report types required in order that a quote for the work can be sought
 - Agree the suggested timetable for consideration of objective (iii) – ‘Identify ways of increasing community involvement with Governing Bodies’ , as set out in paragraphs 12 & 13 above.

Implications

17. There are financial implications associated with the return postal costs and collation of data arising from the individual governors survey. It is recognised that this will be over and above the available budget for this review but at this stage the exact amount is unknown as Members have yet to agree the number and type of reports they require from the database.
18. There are no known Legal, Equalities, HR, implications associated with the recommendations within this report.

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:
 - a) Agree the number and type of reports they require from the database
 - b) Any revisions to the draft exit questionnaire
 - c) The timetable for consideration of objective (iii)

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 December 2007

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: Scoping Report dated 30 October 2007 & Interim Report dated 5 December 2007

Annexes: Annex A – Draft Exit Questionnaire

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**LEARNING, CULTURE & CHILDREN'S SERVICES
GOVERNOR SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT SERVICE**

SCHOOL GOVERNOR EXIT QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Governor

Thank you for the time and commitment you have dedicated to being a school governor. It would be extremely helpful to the development of governor support within the City of York if you could take the time to complete this questionnaire and return it to me in the FREEPOST envelope provided.

If you would prefer to complete this form electronically, please email me at sue.pagliaro@york.gov.uk.

With thanks for your assistance.

Sue Pagliaro
Manager, Governor Support & Development Service

PERSONAL DETAILS	
Name:	
Address:	
	Postcode:

POST DETAILS		
School:		
For how long did you serve as a governor?	Years:	Months:
What category of governor were you (eg parent/community):		
If you held any office (eg chair of governors/subject link) please state:		

REASON(S) FOR LEAVING (please tick all relevant)		
End of term of office	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Workload too great	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Work commitments	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Family commitments	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Ill health	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please detail):		

SUPPORT YOU RECEIVED AS A GOVERNOR		
Did you attend governor training?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If you didn't attend training, please tell us why:		
Did you find the termly mailout from the Local Authority useful (Governor Dispatch etc)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If you didn't find it useful, please tell us why:		
Did you ever contact the School Governor Support & Development Service?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Did the call resolve your query?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If not, please tell us why:		
As a new governor, did you have a mentor?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
As a new governor, did your governing body offer any induction?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Would you consider being a governor again in the future?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If not, please tell us why:		

OTHER INFORMATION
Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience of being a school governor?:

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
We very much value your comments.**