
MEETING	EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	27 MAY 2008
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS ASPDEN (CHAIR), BROOKS (VICE-CHAIR), HYMAN, MERRETT, MORLEY, DR D SELICK AND COUNCILLOR LOOKER (SUBSTITUTE)
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS BLANCHARD, FUNNELL AND MR J BAILEY

1. 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 Looker declared a personal interest in the business generally, as a governor of Park Grove Primary School and of Canon Lee School.

Cllr Aspden declared a personal interest in the business generally, as a governor of the Danesgate Centre, a member of the National Union of Teachers and an employee of North Yorkshire County Council, and asked that this be added to the list.

Cllr Brooks declared a personal interest in the business generally, as a member of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers and an employee of City College, Manchester, and asked that this be added to the list.

Cllr Hyman asked that his name be removed from the list, as he was no longer a governor of Huntington Primary School.

Cllr Merrett asked that the list be amended to record that he was now a governor of St Paul's Primary School and Treasurer (rather than Acting Treasurer) of the York Chinese Cultural Association.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2008 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

4. INTERIM REPORT FOR SCHOOL GOVERNORS REVIEW (PART A)

Members considered the fifth interim report on Part A of their review of school governors. The report summarised information gathered and issues arising to date and asked Members to decide whether any further consultation with Governing Bodies was required in order to progress the review.

Responses and comments from the School Governor Exit Questionnaire were attached at Annex A to the report. A summary of the findings from the full Governing Body Questionnaire was circulated at the meeting as Annex B.

The Scrutiny Officer reported that the Governing Body Questionnaire, incorporating amendments made by Members at the last meeting, had been sent out to 70 schools. 11 completed questionnaires had been returned and these responses were detailed in Annex B. It was noted that all the schools that had responded were primary schools. No further responses were expected at this stage. Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 17 of the report (Issues Arising) which set out how improvements to the quality of information held on the Governor Support and Development Service Database as a result of this review would allow them, amongst other things, to identify gaps in skills and identify future training needs of members of governing bodies.

Members made the following comments and suggestions regarding the responses to the questionnaire:

- One approach could be to target those parents who were already involved in other groups within the community
- Existing links such as residents' associations could also be used.
- Hard to reach groups could be targeted via those places they used – eg leaflets in Polish shops.
- People without children may still be interested in becoming a governor and could be approached
- One school (Woodthorpe Primary) did not feel they had a community, raising the question of what was meant by "community".

- RESOLVED:
- (i) That the report, and Members' comments, be noted.
 - (ii) That the responses from the Governing Body Questionnaire be noted and it be agreed that some groups in the community are under-represented as school governors.
 - (iii) That it be agreed that no further information is required from the Governing Bodies.
 - (iv) That examples of best practice from responses to the Governing Body questionnaire be

collated and disseminated amongst schools to assist them in improving their methods of advertising governing body vacancies, in order to attract community governors to the role and attract interest from hard to reach groups.

- (v) That the draft final report from this scrutiny review be brought to the next meeting of the Committee, on 17 June 2008.
- (vi) That the draft final report be circulated to Members in advance of the meeting in order that final comments/amendments can be fed back at the meeting.

REASON: To ensure that work can proceed as planned for this review whilst complying with scrutiny procedures, protocols and work plans.

5. SCOPING REPORT FOR SCHOOL GOVERNORS REVIEW (PART B)

Members received a report which asked them to re-consider the scoping information on Part B of the review of school governors, originally presented to the meeting on 26 February 2008, and to agree a way forward for this part of the review. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2008 were attached as Annex A to the report.

The Scrutiny Officer reiterated that this report had originally been presented at the February Meeting of the Committee at which the Head of Early Years and Extended Schools Advisor had been present and provided feedback. Members' views on how to proceed with Part B of the review were requested.

Members raised the question as to whether Extended Schools had effective governance arrangements in place. The Assistant Director of Partnerships and Early Intervention advised that some governing bodies had set up sub-committees to look after extended services but this issue was one that was being debated nationally. He stated that guidance on this would be refined in the course of the forthcoming year but admitted that there were concerns that at present there may be some schools where accountability and responsibilities are not clear.

There was agreement not to proceed with Part B but to put forward "the role of governance in Extended Services" as future topic for review. The Assistant Director of Partnerships and Early Intervention suggested including Children's Centres in this proposal as there was confusion because Children's Centres covered different geographic areas to school catchment areas. Members were in agreement to put the topic forward as "The role of Governance in Extended Services and Children's Centres"

RESOLVED: (I) That it be agreed not to proceed with Part B of the School Governors Review as outlined in the report.

(II) That the Extended Services Team be requested to attend the meeting on 16 July to give a presentation including an update on previous scrutiny recommendations relating to Extended Schools.

(III) That "The role of Governance in Extended Services and Children's Centres" be put forward as a potential topic for future review.

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

6. POTENTIAL FUTURE SCRUTINY TOPICS

Members considered a report which presented a draft work plan for the Committee and a response from the Director of Learning, Culture and Children's Services regarding possible future scrutiny topics.

The Assistant Director of Partnerships and Early Intervention introduced the first possible topic "Facilities for Young People". He reported that national evidence suggested that there were not enough places for young people to go or things to do outside school hours which in turn contributes to anti social behaviour. He advised that there was less of a consensus on the best model for youth facilities; however the opinion now was to provide more universal facilities for young people rather than targeting resources on more intense activities for the most vulnerable young people. He indicated that there would be a short term opportunity to bid for funding from a new national pot from the National Lottery branded "myplace" but stressed that timing was important as the closing date for bids is September 2008.

Members raised their concerns over timescales for this proposed review. The Chairman reminded Members that the Committee had conducted a review into "Facilities for Teenagers" in 2003-2004 and suggested it would be worthwhile to look back at this and in particular the recommendations. He stated that in four years, the Youth Service had been reorganised and that it would be beneficial to have a presentation and report presented on the implementation of these recommendations.

With regard to the second proposed topic, "The Use of New Technologies" the Assistant Director reported that this would provide an opportunity to assess the risks and shape policy development in this area. New technology brought great opportunities (such as an aid to communication (such as texting parents on school attendance) but also problems (such as concerns for children communicating online, cyberbullying and happy slapping). It was unclear to what extent the Committee could assist with this topic at this stage as further guidance from Central Government was due to be published on this topic in the next 12-18 months.

RESOLVED: (i) That the following possible topics for review be put forward for discussion at the next meeting of the Committee:

- "Facilities for Young People"

- “The Use of New Technologies”
- “The role of Governance in Extended Services and Children’s Centres”

(ii) That a presentation, including an update on the implementation of recommendations from the review on Facilities for Teenagers, be given at the meeting of the Committee on 16 July 2008.

REASON: To ensure work can proceed in line with scrutiny procedures and protocols.

7. CHAIR'S REMARKS - BRIEFING SESSIONS AND WORK PLAN

The Chair announced that:

1. A schedule of pre-meeting briefing sessions had been arranged for the Chair and the Vice Chair. The sessions would take place two weeks before each formal meeting. A representative from the Labour Group members would be welcome to attend in addition to the Chair and Vice Chair. The Scrutiny Officer would circulate the schedule to all Committee Members.
2. In future, an item on the Committee’s work plan would appear on the agenda for each meeting.

17 June 2008	16 July 2008
Future Scrutiny Topics - Discussion	Final Report on Part A of the School Governors’ Review (sign off)
Draft final report on Part A of the School Governors’ Review	Update from the Extended Schools Service
Update from the Governance Service	Update on implementation of recommendations from previous scrutiny reviews in relation to Extended Schools and Facilities for Teenagers
	Future Scrutiny Topics – Selection

Councillor Aspden, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.15 pm].