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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
  - Production of Reports – Costs between £20 - £60 each = £532.00
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

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**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