

Education Scrutiny Committee

30 October 2007

Governing Bodies Review

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to present the proposed remit to Members and agree a way forward for this review.

Background

2. In May 2005 Cllr Kind registered a topic on the role of School Governors and in October 2006 this committee received a feasibility report on this topic. At that time, it was suggested that Children's Services EMAP receive a report on the ever changing level of responsibility associated with the role of Governor, but this did not happen.
3. This topic was reconsidered at a meeting of this Committee in July 2007, and Members agreed to receive a presentation from the Governance Services Manager at their next meeting. On 11 September 2007 this presentation was given and Members agreed to undertake a review of the Role of School Governors, and asked that a potential remit be presented for consideration at this meeting – see Annex A.
4. It is recognised that this review fits with the following eligibility criteria:
 - i. Public Interest (i.e. in terms of proposals being both in the public interest and resident perceptions)
 - ii. Service Efficiency

Timetable For Review

5. Having regard to the objectives within the proposed remit and the consultation methods identified, it is suggested that this review will require a timeframe of six months. With this in mind, the following timetable is presented for consideration:

Meeting Date	Consultation Activities & Events
30 October 07	Consideration of scoping report and proposed remit
05 December 07	To consider draft survey before it is issued and identify any additional information to be sought
09 January 08	Consideration of Objective No.3
26 February 08	Consideration of Objective No.4
15 April 08	Consider survey results, and agree recommendations
27 May 2008	Consideration of final draft report

Consultation

i) To investigate the current composition of governing bodies in an effort to find ways of improving the ethnicity balance and chairing skills of panel members

6. The Governance Service Manager has provided information on the current composition of governing bodies showing the different categories of governors, the number of each type per school, where there are vacancies and which category these vacancies fall within – see Annex B.
7. Annex C provides information on the different governor categories and who is responsible for recruiting these. It also identifies the support given by the Governance Service team to schools when trying to fill governing body vacancies.
8. In order to improve the ethnicity balance of governing bodies it will first be necessary to identify the current balance. With this in mind, a survey of governors is planned for January 2008, under the guise of getting the Governance Service database up to date. Prior to this being sent out, this committee will have an opportunity to feed into it to ensure it captures all of the relevant information to fully inform this review.

ii) To identify ways of increasing the number of community Governors

9. On the whole the Local Authority does not have a problem recruiting their governors. However, some schools experience problems recruiting community governors and turn to the governance service for help. . They are often surprised when they are reminded that it is a governing body responsibility to recruit community governors. It is suggested that they write to local businesses, or place an advert in a local shop etc, One of their regular concerns is that they don't have the time to spend on active recruitment, and this point cannot be ignored as many governors are busy people taking on a very responsible role on top of their normal day-to-day commitments.
10. The Governance Service Manager has provided information on the methods currently and previously used to attract applicants to the role of governor. These include:
 - Advertising in 'Your Local Link' - a free advertising magazine. This magazine is used because they give the best advertising rates.
 - Press releases - used in the past when Local Authority vacancies became high. This was moderately successful, but the budget cannot support local press advertising charges.
 - Advertising space on year planners – this hasn't given much return and isn't a good use of the very limited budget.
 - Recruitment stand in the library - no responses received so not repeated
 - Volunteer recruitment drives with York Cares (otherwise known as speed dating) - recruited one governor as a result. However, at the time of the

last one they judged that our need wasn't as great as other organisations so we didn't get a slot at the speed dating session they ran.

11. On more than one occasion in the past the Governance Service team have tried to organise putting the stand up in supermarkets on a Saturday morning. Unfortunately, this required governor support to attend and talk to people, and the response was so poor that it didn't go ahead.
12. Any new ideas for recruitment drives need to bear in mind the question of capacity, as the governance team is just 2 x FTE, and this must be borne in mind if additional work, especially at weekends, is required.

Options

13. Having considered the suggested remit and the information contained within this report, Members may choose to:
 - Agree the remit and timetable as proposed, or;
 - Amend and agree a revised remit and timetable

Implications

14. There are no known Legal, Financial, HR, Equalities or other implications associated with the recommendations within this report.

Corporate Priorities

15. 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

16. 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 this meeting, could affect the focus of the review and the progress of the Scrutiny Workplan.

Recommendations

17. Members are asked to consider and agree the proposed remit, timetable and methods for progressing the review.

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

Contact Details

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Scoping Report Approved

Date 16 October 2007

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes

Annex A – Proposed Remit

Annex B – Table showing current composition of governing bodies

Annex C - Table of Governor types and information on recruitment responsibility