



meeting	EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING SELECT COMMITTEE		
date	6 December 2005	agenda item number	5

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Appointment and Retention of Local Authority Governors

Purpose of Report

1. To report on the current procedures used to appoint and retain Local Authority governors.

Information and Advice

Background

Local Authority Governance Consultative Group

2. The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility:-
 - to appoint Local Authority governors to all its maintained schools
 - to ensure that all Local Authority governors are chosen because they are suitable and able to contribute to the effective governance of the school, irrespective of political affiliation
 - to ensure that Local Authority vacancies do not remain unfilled.
3. In Nottinghamshire the appointment of Local Authority governors is made by the Cabinet Member for Education after consultation with the cross-party Governance Consultative Group.
4. At a Governance Consultative Group meeting on 29 September 2005, the Group agreed to accept the following updated remit of the Local Authority Governance Consultative Group which incorporates the changes and additions mentioned in **Appendix 1**.

Updated Remit of the Local Authority Governance Consultative Group (September 2005)

5. The group will meet every 6 weeks with the following terms of reference:-

- to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Education the appointment of Local Authority governors from a list of proposed nominees
- to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Education the appointment of additional Local Authority governors to those schools in special measures and receive reports on the progress of these schools when requested
- to recommend the removal, if it considers it necessary, of Local Authority governors from schools in accordance with the School Government Regulations
- to monitor all Local Authority governor vacancies and to consider any other associated issues, addressing long-term Local Authority governor vacancies in line with Local Authority targets. Making recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education as appropriate
- to agree and publish its criteria for considering nominations for Local Authority governors submitted either by the major political parties, schools or through public advertisement
- to provide advice to the Director of Education/Cabinet Member for Education in exercising their delegated authority to appoint Local Authority governors between meetings of the Local Authority Governance Consultative Group
- to receive reports of any other Local Authority governor appointments made by the Director of Education/Cabinet Member for Education between meetings of the Governance Consultative Group where there has been the urgent need to do so (including issues concerning the setting up of a temporary governing body for the new school in accordance with regulations 19 – 22)
- to consider nominations for reappointment of Local Authority governors where governing bodies decide to change their instrument of government and reconstitute.

The Work of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy Group

6. In September 2005 this cross-agency group, which was established to improve the recruitment and retention of school governors in Nottinghamshire, identified their broad aims as follows:-
 - to enable governing bodies to improve/raise the achievement of all young people in Nottinghamshire schools irrespective of their family background and ethnicity through effective governance
 - to encourage governing bodies to have high aspirations for their schools and pupils by having in place for all new governors induction mentoring and training opportunities

- to encourage governing bodies to work well as teams and to set positive role models for new governors and pupil observers
- to encourage Governing bodies to reflect the composition of the communities they serve and to seek to appoint members from under represented groups
- to enable governing bodies to play a part in developing the school and community to meet the needs of the future
- to promote the understanding that new governors need to feel they make a contribution at an early stage of their appointment by establishing effective induction processes
- as part of the group's retention strategy, to ensure new governors feel supported during their first year and are able to continue to access on-going support throughout their term of office from within their governing body, governing body services, governor training and Nottinghamshire Association of Governor's (NAGs)
- to recruit governors who can add value to the work of the governing body, depending on the needs of the school
- to enable/encourage governing bodies to work together in partnership with other governing bodies and/or appropriate agencies that may have a greater understanding of issues facing individual governors from under represented groups.

This Group meets once a term. Its brief is to consider all governorships, not specifically those appointed by the Local Authority. The Recruitment and Retention Strategy Group reports to the Governance Consultative Group.

Current Performance

7. Since 1 September 2003 governing bodies all over the country have been reconstituting in line with the new constitutional framework provided by the DfES. Most governing bodies in Nottinghamshire have chosen to go for the smaller representative compositions i.e. less Local Authority governors. There are still 43 governing bodies remaining to reconstitute by 31 August 2006 and Local Authority governorships have been reduced from 1149 at 15 August 2003 to 925 at 31 October 2005.
8. However the ability of Nottinghamshire County Council to fill Local Authority governor vacancies has not improved. Current statistics show a **15.6%** vacancy rate against a national average of 10% for metropolitan Local Authorities and 13% for County Authorities. The Nottinghamshire County Council target is to achieve **10% or less**.

9. Currently 50% of Local Authority vacancies are filled within 12 weeks. The Nottinghamshire target is that 80% of Local Authority governor vacancies should be filled within that period.
10. Currently 69% of Local Authority vacancies are filled within 6 months. The Nottinghamshire target is that 100% of Local Authority vacancies should be filled within that period.
11. This means that **30% of Local Authority governor vacancies remain unfilled after 6 months.**
12. On 29 September 2005 the Governance Consultative Group requested that the Head of Governor Services prepare a report looking at a range of options for them to consider in order to reduce Local Authority governor vacancies, and ensure that Local Authority governor appointments are made promptly.
13. This research is being undertaken and the Governance Consultative Group would welcome any contributions that members of the Education & Lifelong Learning Select Committee are able to make to this process.

Statutory and Policy Implications

14. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, personnel, Crime and Disorder and those using the service. Where such implications are material, they have been described in the text of the report. Members' attention is however drawn to the following:-

Equal Opportunities Implications

15. Nominations for Local Authority governorships are encouraged and received from a broad range of sources. Members should note that there is still under-representation of disabled people and people from ethnic minorities on most governing bodies within Nottinghamshire schools.

RECOMMENDATION

16. That the Committee note the report and consider whether they could assist in this review process, or if there are issues that they wish to identify for further scrutiny.

PAM TULLEY

Director of Education

Background Papers Available for Inspection

Nil.

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