



Nottinghamshire
County Council

Recruitment and Retention of Governors Review Group

Minutes

Tuesday 20 December 2011 at 2pm
County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham

Membership

- Councillor Liz Yates (Chair)
- Councillor John Allin (Vice-chair)
- Councillor Vincent Dobson
- Councillor Sybil Fielding
- Councillor Rev Tom Irvine
- Councillor Mel Shepherd
- Councillor Brian Wombwell
- Mr David Richards

- absent

Officers in Attendance

Martin Gately – Scrutiny Co-ordinator

Daniel Reynafarje – Governance Support Officer

Gill Thackrey – Group Manager, Business Development and Support

Leonie Meikle – Governor Services Manager

Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting held on 22 November 2011, having been circulated to all Members, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chair, subject to the second sentence in the third paragraph under *Appointment of Local Authority Governors* be changed to read:-

“It was noted that the 50% of existing LA governors that are not re-appointed includes those who are no longer seeking a further term of office.”

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Allin (other County Council business), Sybil Fielding (other County Council business) and Councillor Brian Wombwell (other reasons).

Declarations of Interest by Members or Officers

No declarations of interests were made.

Impact of Academies and Federations

Ms Gill Thackrey and Ms Leonie Meikle introduced the report and highlighted that academies have no legal requirement to elect a governing body based on the same proportions/categories as those for maintained schools. They are also only required to have a minimum of three members. It was stated that ‘stand alone’ academies usually create the opportunity for Local Authority governors and that in those circumstances

the Local Authority is responsible for filling that vacancy. Sponsored academies do have a change of governing body. It was stated that no more than 19% of the governing body can have a connection with the Local Authority.

In response to questions and comments, Ms Thackrey and Ms Meikle replied:-

- Local Authority governors of Academy schools are still appointed by the Local Authority; however, the academy can choose whether or not to have a Local Authority governor.
- At the moment, in Nottinghamshire, all existing Local Authority governors have remained on the governing body of their Academy converted school.
- A management committee is the same thing as a Governing body.
- A so called 'soft' federation and a collaboration are effectively the same thing, although "collaboration" is the official term now more commonly used.
- In a collaboration, no governors are 'lost'; some governors from each school sit on a joint committee which is additional to the individual school governing bodies.
- A "hard federation", unlike a "soft federation", has a legal constitution and may require fewer governors.

Foundation Governors

Members welcomed Ms Alison Jacobson, Education Administrative Officer, Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham.

Ms Jacobson explained to Members that there are 4 strands of foundation governors: ex-officio, Parochial Church Council, Board of Education and Trustee. The ex-officio Foundation governor positions are offered to the incumbent by the Archdeacon of Newark or Nottingham respectively. If they are unable to fill the position, a lay officio is appointed. The Parochial Church Council governor is appointed by the relevant Parochial Church Council from the affiliated church referred to in the instrument of government. Recruitment can be a struggle for Voluntary Aided schools where the church council is less pro-active.

Ms Jacobson further explained that the schools and Diocesan Authorities seek governors who are practicing Christians, and who wish to promote the Christian ethos. She stated that the Diocese has recently set up its own review group to think about sources of potential governors including retired/current staff in church schools, curates and any new clergy just starting on their vocation. Recruits are not restricted to the Church of England.

In response to questions and comments, Ms Jacobson replied:-

- Foundation governors need to also be parents.
- The definition of practicing Christian may not necessarily mean they attend church frequently, but recruits should observe and promote Christian values and moral principles etc.
- The trustee foundation governors are appointed by the trust that provides financial support.

Members thanked Ms Jacobson for her attendance.

Work Programme

The work programme was agreed and it was noted that at the next meeting the Review Group would take account of recommendations already explored in preparation for formulating a draft report for the February meeting.

The meeting closed at 3.00pm.

CHAIR

Ref: m_20dec2011