



**Nottinghamshire
County Council**

Recruitment and Retention of Governors Review Group

Minutes

Wednesday 28 September 2011 at 10am
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

Others in Attendance

Chris Parker – Area Manager, School Governors' One-Stop Shop

Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 July 2011 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors John Allin and Sybil Fielding.

Declarations of Interest by Members or Officers

None.

School Governors' One-Stop Shop

Members welcomed Mr Chris Parker, Area Manager for School Governors' One-Stop Shop who briefed Members on the independent charity and his role within the organisation. He explained that it was launched in 1999 with a remit to recruit skilled volunteers in helping school governors in schools that need it. He stated that the Area Managers covered 14 regions, his being the midlands and South Yorkshire.

Mr Parker informed Members about recent recruitment campaigns aimed at recruiting under-represented governors, such as disabled, ethnic minorities and single parents. With the help of sponsors, they were able to recruit 110 volunteers. Of these, 40 were

placed as school governors. He also showed examples of direct mail campaigns and explained how they promote local people to become governors. He stated that they provided several resources for advertising, all of which will be going online soon.

In response to questions and comments, Mr Parker replied:-

- We work strongly to develop bi-party relationships and work closely with many Local Authorities including this one. It makes the job easier if the Local Authority is open and keeps us up to date.
- Vacancies are advertised for specific vacancies.
- The current rate of the take-up of volunteers is 65%. This is mainly due to people wanting specific schools.
- If we place a school governor, we keep a tracking sheet as well as hold regular meetings with them. The Area Manager would liaise directly with the volunteers on a consistent basis.
- We aim to recruit underrepresented people by advertising at organisations they would be involved with.
- A volunteer would need to put down two references when they apply which are followed up either by the school or by us. The school itself is responsible for CRB checks.
- With regards to what defines a Community Governor, the decision lies with the school. Our advertisement will go to offices in the community, but if we find someone with the skills needed who lives outside the community and is willing to travel, we aren't going to refuse them.
- In Doncaster, we held induction training for people interested in applying and it worked very well.
- You can contact us on our website. There will soon be a new form that you will be able to fill in online to advertise any vacancies in your school.

Members thanked Mr Parker for his attendance.

Further Information for the Review

Leonie Meikle introduced the report which outlined further information for the review. She explained the procedures for the electing and appointing of different categories of governors, the turnover of governors in Nottinghamshire, the role of Nottinghamshire Governor Services and the different types of recruitment conducted by schools.

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

- Unfortunately, any issues between governors and the headteacher do not get reflected on the exit questionnaires.
- Majority of headteachers appreciate governors more now and are working with them rather than against.
- Chairs are given training when they are first inducted.

- If schools and academies are set for closure, we make contact and try to retain any Governors prior to the closure.
- Governing bodies come in different shapes and sizes, the smallest being seven.

Members suggested the following:-

- We need to look at the political process for electing Local Authority governors as people might be getting elected because of their party instead of their qualifications.
- The exit questionnaire could be more specific when asking for the reason of leaving. An exit interview by phone could also be more informative.
- A recommendation regarding marketing could be formulated for this review.
- It would be good to speak with clerks who currently run meetings of governing bodies.

Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed to change the date of the next meeting from 26 October 2011 to Tuesday, 18 October 2011 at 2pm.

The meeting closed at 11.55am.

CHAIR

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