

# report



meeting	ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE	
date	1 February 2006	agenda item number

## REPORT OF HEAD OF SCRUTINY

### **Member visits to Derbyshire and Durham schools**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. This report proposes visits by County Councillors to schools in Derbyshire and Durham in March 2006 as part of the Education Development Plan – Attainment and Targets Study Group, a study group of the Education and Lifelong Learning Select Committee.

#### **Information and Advice**

2. Under the Travel and Accommodation Policy and other arrangements approved by the full Council on 7 October 2004, this Committee is the appropriate body for considering/approving attendance at a range of events and the travel and accommodation requirements arising therefrom.
3. This report describes a proposal which is within the Committee's decision-making powers and Members are asked to consider whether attendance at the event should be approved (including the number of representatives), together with any necessary travel, accommodation or other arrangements.
4. The information included within the following sections of the report should ensure compliance with normal decision-making rules. If attendance is approved, the details referred to below will be used to compile the public Register, which is available on the Council's web-site.

#### **Reasons for attendance**

5. The Education and Lifelong Learning Select Committee decided to set up a study group at its meeting of 13 September 2005 to focus on improving Nottinghamshire schools' performance against our statistical neighbours.
6. The terms of reference which were subsequently agreed by the Select Committee are :
  - To consider the current attainment levels and transition arrangements operating across Nottinghamshire schools;
  - To examine "successful" Nottinghamshire schools and to promote good practice across the school fraternity;
  - To liaise with statistical neighbours to identify good practice elsewhere and to suggest recommendations to Cabinet regarding using this practice within Nottinghamshire
7. As part of the Study Group's work, it has decided to visit a number of Nottinghamshire schools throughout February. To be able to successfully compare and contrast measures being undertaken by this LEA and statistical neighbouring LEA's, the Group felt that visits to other counties schools were vital. Derbyshire, given its close geographic proximity was chosen as was Durham which has recently undergone a major transformation in its education service resulting in its 5A\*-C attainment results rising approximately 10% in 3 years between 2002 and 2005.
8. The Study Group is proposing two half day Derbyshire school visits (as yet not specified) on Wednesday 1 March and Thursday 2 March. In addition it is planning a full day visit incorporating at least two Durham schools (as yet not specified) on Tuesday 14 March. A maximum of 4 Councillors and 1 co-opted Member will be undertaking these visits, with officer support.
9. The Education and Lifelong learning will be asked to agree to these visits at its meeting on 24 January 2006.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

10. This report is necessary to ensure compliance with the Council's Travel and Accommodation policy and current arrangements for approving cross county attendance at conferences, seminars and Member Training events. The needs of individual travellers will have been considered when compiling the report and, where departures from the policy are recommended, Members should consider the reasons given.

### **Financial Implications**

11. The anticipated cost of the visit will be between £260-£500. This will cover transport costs for 4 Councillors and 1 co-opted member as Members have expressed an interest in travelling by rail. The cost of train tickets between Newark and Durham is £52.30 return. Costs will be met from the Scrutiny Team budget. Officer costs will be met from relevant departmental budgets.

#### **Crime and Disorder implications**

12. Nil.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

13. That the Committee approves the proposed visits to 2 Derbyshire schools and 2 Durham schools in March 2006.

**Lynn Senior**  
Head of Scrutiny

#### **Legal Services' Comments (PDH 200105 )**

14. The delegation to the Administration Committee includes members travel. It is therefore appropriate that the Committee be asked to consider the member travel costs for this scrutiny visit to gain information to inform the particular scrutiny study. The Committee should be sure that it has sufficient information to make an informed decision.

#### **Director of Resources' Financial Comments**

15. This cost will fall to the Scrutiny Team budget since it relates to a scrutiny review..

#### **Background Papers Available for Public Inspection**

Nil.

#### **Electoral Division(s) Affected**

Nottinghamshire