

Decision Maker: Education Portfolio Holder

Date: For Pre-Decision Scrutiny by the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on 17th September 2013

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: **SCHOOL GOVERNANCE WORKING PARTY:
IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

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Chief Officer: Terry Parkin, Executive Director, Education, Care and Health Services

Ward: Borough wide

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 This report outlines the recommendations and subsequent actions arising from the 12 March 2013 School Governance Working Party, convened by the Education PDS Committee to:
- review how the Local Authority recruits and supports school governors, ensuring that schools are governed to a high standard of accountability;
 - ensure that school governors work with the LA and have the support they need to undertake their role effectively;
 - develop good working relationships and communication between Members and LA Governors.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 The Education Policy and Development Scrutiny Committee are asked to note:
- i) the statutory role of the LA Governor in maintained schools and their future role in Bromley academies;
 - ii) the work of the School Governance Working Party and the recommendations/actions arising from this.
- 2.2 The Education Portfolio Holder is asked to:
- i) recommend that a review is undertaken on how school governors, and in particular LA Governors, are recruited and appointed.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Not Applicable
 2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: No Cost
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Education: Workforce Development and Governor Services
 4. Total current budget for this head: £159,000
 5. Source of funding: £53,000 Dedicated Schools' grant (DSG); £106,000 income
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 3 FTE
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: 108
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: None:
 2. Call-in: Applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): All state funded Bromley schools (95)
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 With the significant national and local changes in education and the acceleration of the academisation of schools, school governance has become a topical issue and a priority for Members and Officers in supporting school improvement.
- 3.2 All LA maintained schools are required to have LA representatives on their governing bodies. Although academies are not required to have an LA representative, 13 of our existing 31 academies have retained an LA representative. **Appendix 1** shows those academies with/without LA Governors.
- 3.3 The 'make-up' of a Bromley maintained school governing body is detailed in the Constitution of Government for the individual school; for each academy it is laid out in the Articles of Association as agreed with the DfE.
- 3.4 A primary role of governing bodies is to contribute towards the effectiveness of a school's leadership team, holding the senior leadership team to account. The effectiveness of a governing body is judged by Ofsted as part of the overall leadership and management grade, which is a limiting judgement for a school's inspection.
- 3.5 The roles and responsibilities of an LA Governor are clearly laid out in statute. At the meeting of the School Governance Working Party on 12 March 2013, the role was clearly defined as follows in line with the school governance regulations:
“ Local Authority Governors are appointed by and represent the Local Authority on a school or academy Governing Body. They should consider the views and advice of the Local Authority but are not delegates. Like other categories of governor, they cannot be directed to present a particular point of view. They should act in the best interests of the pupils and the community which the school or academy serves”.
- 3.6 LA Governors are appointed by the LA and, therefore, can also be removed under the Regulations by the LA. This can be a substantial advantage to a school if governance is deemed to be ineffective, as the LA can support school improvement by appointing and directing a strong LA governor or, equally, by removing an ineffective LA Governor.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKING PARTY

4.1 Recruitment

Recruitment of LA Governors and governors in general was a key focus of the School Governance Working Party and various campaign methods were discussed and reviewed.

4.2 Since the 12 March 2013 meeting, the LA Lead Officer for Governor Services has secured the services of School Governor One Stop Shop (SGOSS), a DfE sponsored charity which is directly tasked with supporting the recruitment of governors.

4.3 A contact was made with the Regional Manager of SGOSS and the local authority has provisionally agreed a structured recruitment campaign from October 2013, which will include

recommendations for recruitment arising from the Working Party. The recruitment campaign will be entirely funded by SGOSS and, therefore, at no cost to Council funds.

4.4 Selection

The Education Select Committee Review, published in June 2013, highlighted the quality of school governors as a priority. Recent Ofsted inspections (January - July 2013) in Bromley schools have highlighted ineffective governance in five schools. The LA is supporting these and two other schools in relation to strengthening governance.

4.5 Under the revised inspection framework, if Ofsted highlights ineffective governance and/or the leadership of a school is judged as requiring improvement, there is an expectation that an external review of the school's governance arrangements will take place. There are significant cost and resource implications for the school and for the Education Service in this and, therefore, early support is pivotal to avoid this.

4.6 One such measure which was considered at the Working Party was to develop a more robust recruitment and selection process of school governors and, in particular, LA governors. This will need careful planning and it is recommended that a review is undertaken of how school governors and, in particular, LA Governors in other authorities are recruited, selected and appointed. This could take place in the autumn term 2013, for agreement at the 12 November 2013 Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee, with implementation in January 2014.

4.7 A further initiative discussed by the Working Party was to introduce a programme of advanced LA Governors, recruited specifically to help with supporting improvements in schools with ineffective governance. It is worth noting that this initiative is also likely to attract academies to retain LA Governors on their governing bodies and maintain the relationship between the LA and its academies.

4.8 Support and communication

The School Governors Working Party also considered:

- how LA Governors might access specialist support and advice from the LA where appropriate, with the consideration of a hotline number;
- an annual LA governor questionnaire to be completed to identify particular concerns, or improvements required;
- how the Education PDS Committee could contribute towards the themes and objectives of the termly LA Governor Forums.

4.9 Further consideration would need to be given to the cost and staffing implications in providing a hotline number. However, an annual questionnaire will be introduced in September 2013 and resourced by Governor Services.

4.10 The Working Party also considered a Governors' Induction Pack specifically outlining the roles and responsibilities of LA Governors. This has since been developed, along with an Induction Pack for Parent Governors.

- 4.11 An Online Forum using Fronter has also been developed for Chairs of Governors and LA Governors. It is planned that this will be 'live' for the first LA Governor Forum at the end of September. This will allow Members and Officers to update LA Governors with key documentation quickly and cost effectively.
- 4.12 The Portfolio Holder and Chairman of the Education PDS committee are scheduled to discuss the finding of the School Governance Working Party with LA Governors at the next LA Governor Forum on 30 September 2013.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations and actions in this report would support the delivery of priorities for children and young people as set out in the Council's Education Commitments and agreed at the Council Meeting of 21 January 2013 to work to improve school governance.

The recommendations and actions in this report also support the work programme as set out in the Education Portfolio Plan 2013: to promote educational opportunity in the borough, ensuring all families have a choice of good and outstanding schools and early years; and to work with governing bodies, the Department for Education and others to expand popular and successful schools and create additional early years' capacity.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All actions arising from the implementation of recommendations in this report will need to be met within existing resources.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The local authority has a number of statutory duties pertaining to governing bodies of schools: to make the Instrument of Government for all maintained schools and federations of schools (DfE 067); to appoint local authority governors to all maintained schools and to give notice of the removal of any local authority governor (DfE 066); to provide training and information for school governors (DfE 068); to appoint additional governors if the school is eligible for intervention (DfE 117).

Non-Applicable Sections:	PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	

Appendix 1

Academy Schools (as of August 2013), those highlighted* have maintained an LA Governor in their Articles of Association (governance constitution).

	Name of School	Date of Conversion
1	Beaverwood	01/03/2011
2	Bishop Justus	01/03/2011
3*	Bullers Wood	01/05/2011
4	Charles Darwin	01/04/2011
5*	Coopers	01/03/2011
6*	Darrick Wood	01/10/2010
7	Harris Beckenham	01/09/2011
8	Harris Bromley	01/09/2011
9*	Hayes	01/04/2011
10	Kemnal	01/09/2010
11*	Langley Boys	01/04/2011
12	Langley Girls	01/08/2011
13	Newstead Wood	01/04/2011
14*	Ravens Wood	01/04/2011
15	Ravensbourne	01/04/2011
16	The Priory	01/04/2012
	<i>Primary Schools</i>	
17	Balgowan	01/08/2011
18	Biggin Hill	01/08/2011
19*	Crofton Infants	01/09/2012
20*	Crofton Juniors	01/12/2011
21*	Darrick Wood Infants	01/08/2011
22*	Green St Green	01/08/2011
23*	Hayes Primary	01/07/2011
24	Hillside	01/09/2012
25	Pickhurst Infants	01/08/2011
26*	Pickhurst Junior	01/08/2011
27	Stewart Fleming	01/08/2011
28	St James RC	01/01/2012
28	Tubbenden	01/03/2012
30	Valley	01/08/2011
31*	Warren Road	01/07/2011