

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT

1. Meeting:	Cabinet
2. Date:	5th September 2012
3. Title:	Scrutiny Review - Role of School Governors
4. Directorate:	Resources All wards

5. Summary

The report sets out the findings and recommendations of the scrutiny review into Support for School Governors, undertaken by Improving Lives Select Commission (attached as Appendix 1).

6. Recommendations

- a. That Cabinet receives the report and recommendations**
- b. That Cabinet's response to the recommendations is fed back to OSMB within two months of its submission.**

7. Proposals and Details

At its first meeting in July 2011, the Improving Lives Select Commission Members included in their work programme a commitment to undertake a review to examine the role of school governors and the support provided to Governing Bodies by the Council. This followed a report examining proposed changes set out in the Government's Importance of Teaching White Paper 2010.

Arising from the White Paper and subsequent Education Act 2011, was the need to clarify the accountability and responsibilities of school governing bodies and the local authority's changing role to commission support services for continuing training and support for school governors.

The review recognises and values the role of school governors in providing leadership and challenge in schools. As a volunteer body they play a vital role to improve outcomes for children and young people in Rotherham. The review also acknowledges the financial constraints experienced by schools and education support services within Rotherham. This is the context in which this review was undertaken.

7.1 The purpose of the review, chaired by Cllr Ann Russell, was to examine:

- Against a national background of changing policy, the role of the local authority in supporting governing bodies to undertake their leadership and challenge role in schools and achieve the best outcomes for pupils;
- The impact of the changing policy context for education and the Education Act 2011;
- The current role of Governing Bodies;
- The current support, training and development opportunities available to governors;
- The views of existing governors on their own expectations of the role and effectiveness of governing bodies in respect of their leadership and challenge responsibilities;
- The support required to enable Governing Bodies future role and development.

7.2 The review began its evidence gathering in September 2011, concluding in April 2012. This included:

- Consultation with key officers with overview of Rotherham context;
- Desktop based research - looking at national and local good practice and Government Legislation;
- Outcomes of the Key Stage 2 Performance Clinics;
- Issuing a questionnaire to 150 chairs and vice chairs of school governing bodies; the response rate was 46% (69/150);
- Interviews with Cabinet Members Chairs and Vice Chairs of School Governing Bodies, and CYPS Officers

7.3 The recommendations from the report are contained in Section 7 of the full report. In summary, these cover

- School Governor's Taskforce
- Recruitment
- Local Authority Governors
- Induction and Training
- Role of the Clerk of Governing Bodies
- Services provided by the Council

8. Finance

A number of the review recommendations may have financial implications if adopted. This would require further exploration by the Strategic Leadership Team and Schools on the cost, risks and benefits of their implementation.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The Education Act 2011 sets out a number of challenges for school governance arrangements. In order to maintain a body of governors who are able to challenge underperformance, the local authority will need to make decisions on what services it should offer in the light of reduced funding, current local partnership arrangements and steer from the Department of Education.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Corporate Plan Outcomes

- Ensure the best start in life for children and families
- Provide additional support to the most vulnerable in our community
- Help local people and local businesses benefit from a growing economy

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Education Act 2011

Importance of Teaching White Paper 2010

Improving Lives Select Commission 11th July 2012.

OSMB 20th July 2012

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