

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE:

15 JANUARY 2015

REPORT OF THE COUNTY CLERK & MONITORING OFFICER

AGENDA ITEM 4

LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS

Reason for the Report

1. To establish a Local Authority (LA) Governors' Appointment Panel to ensure a strategic approach to the appointment of LA governors in Cardiff schools.

Background

2. The current arrangement for the appointment of LA Governors to Cardiff schools involves potential candidates being nominated by the political groups represented on the council with individual nominations being formally approved at the monthly Council meetings. The current process provides limited scope to widen the pool of potential candidates and no formal process to approve the suitability of candidates. There continues to be a high level of LA Governors vacancies across all schools.
3. In September 2014, political group whips were consulted and agreed with the proposal to widen the pool of candidates to business leaders, staff and interested citizens and to formalise a process to check suitability of potential candidates pending the Scrutiny Committee Review. Events to encourage applications from interested council staff and business partners have also been arranged.
4. In November 2014, the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee agreed to carry out a Task and Finish Inquiry in to improving the effectiveness of Cardiff's schools governing bodies with an early review of this arrangement. The first report from the Inquiry setting out the key findings and recommendations in relation to LA Governor Appointments is contained in the letter set out at Appendix A to this report. The Cabinet Member (Education) Cllr Julia Magill has confirmed her support for these proposals. Full Council has responsibility for responding to these recommendations.

A Local Authority Governors Panel

5. The Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group are recommending that the Council delegate its powers of LA Governor Appointment to a cross party Member Panel. It is also recommended that if agreed this Panel should also deal with LA Governor removals from office. The Director of Education, Monitoring Officer and a representative from the Cardiff Governors Association would act as advisors to the Panel. Governor Services staff would clerk the Panel and facilitate the recruitment of suitable candidates to form a pool of potential appointments. This would enable appointments to be focused on the needs and challenges of the individual school and ensure that Governing Bodies are well supported with specific expertise and experience.
6. The Panel could also maintain an over view relating to the recruitment of governors; criteria for appointment and conduct of LA governors , the potential for payment of expenses to LA governors; the training of governors; and any other matters that may be referred to the Panel by the Cabinet or the Constitution Committee.
7. It is proposed that the Panel would comprise up to seven Cardiff councillors and meet termly or more frequently as required to consider all LA governor applications or renewals. The Panel would also consider any objections to appointments and any applications to remove an LA governor.

Legal Implications

8. LA governors are appointed by the Council. They are subject to the statutory rules regarding qualification and disqualification affecting all governors set out in the relevant regulations: The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005. Candidates must be aged 18 or over at the time of their appointment. No person may at any time hold office as governor in more than two schools

Financial Implications

9. None identified

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to recommend to Council that a Governors Panel be established as part of the Constitution with the following Terms of Reference:

Governors Panel

Terms of reference

- (i) For School Governing Bodies constituted under The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005 to appoint and remove governors to those places allocated to the Local Authority;
- (ii) To consider and make decisions relating to the recruitment of governors; the potential for payment of expenses to LA governors; the training of governors; and any other matters that may be referred to the Panel by the Cabinet or the Constitution Committee.

Membership

Seven members

MARIE ROSENTHAL
County Clerk and Monitoring Officer
09 January 2015