

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES TO THE EDUCATION (APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNORS) PANEL

10 JANUARY 2011

RECRUITMENT OF SCHOOL GOVERNORS UPDATE

1 Purpose of Report

This report is intended to give members an updated position on governor recruitment and levels of vacancies.

2 Description of Decision

Members of the Appointment of Governors Panel are asked to note the content of the report and give their views on the future recruitment of school governors.

3 Background

The Appointment of Governors Panel was constituted by the Council and met for the first time in December 1999. This marked a change in the way that Authority governors (previously known as LEA Governors) were appointed in Sunderland. The Appointments Panel was given full delegated powers to appoint and remove Authority governors and did not need to have its decisions ratified by another other Council Committee or Cabinet. The Appointments Panel holds a list of approved candidates for appointment as Authority governors and all appointments since then have only been made from this approved list. Sunderland City Council was among the first to publish selection criteria for its Authority governors.

At their peak (in 2002), vacancies for Authority governors stood at 21.6%. This was a matter of concern and was generally higher than the national average for this category of governor.

Alongside the new Appointment of Governors Panel the Council began to advertise for prospective governors and stepped up its efforts to recruit governors.

Surveys of school governor vacancies take place regularly and over the past ten years have shown a significant reduction in the level of governor vacancies overall (taking account of all categories). This is the result of sustained recruitment efforts, effective induction arrangements and strong support for governors. The trend across all school sectors has been downwards with fewer vacancies for Parent, Staff, Community and Foundation Governors.

The percentage of Authority appointed governor vacancies has also dropped to a much lower level (12.2%) while the actual number of Authority Governor vacancies has more than halved since 2002.

Although the Education (Appointment of Governors) Panel is only responsible for Authority Governor appointments, this report also makes reference to Sunderland's position in terms of other categories of governor to give members an overall perspective of governor recruitment in the City.

4 Current Position

Recent benchmarking against other Local Authorities has been carried out. Comparisons were drawn between Sunderland against other metropolitan Authorities and against all Authorities nationally. Some of the key points to note from this benchmarking are: -

- Compared to the national average, Sunderland's overall governor vacancy rate is lower than the national average. Our vacancies are just 8.9% compared to a national average of 11.2% across all Authorities and 10.5% for Metropolitan Authorities.
- Overall vacancy rates (taking account of all categories of governor) in Sunderland have fallen from 13% in March 2003 to the current level of 8.9%.
- The percentage of parent governor vacancies (12.7%) continues to be lower than the average for all Authorities.
- Community Governor vacancies in Sunderland are 9.5% which compares favourably with the national average of 14.1% for this category
- The level of Authority Governor vacancies (12.2%), although variable, is now broadly in line with national averages for all Authorities
- The percentage of vacant Staff Governor places are considerably lower than the national average at 2.7% (Sunderland) compared to 5.8% (national) and 5.4% (Metropolitan Authorities)

Sunderland is also successful in recruiting governors from all parts of the community and is active in monitoring data surrounding this participation. This is demonstrated by: -

- the increase in BME membership of Governing Bodies (currently 1.5% which is comparable with other Authorities in the north of England, which average 1.7%). Sunderland's figure also represents a positive step forward compared to 2006 (which was when data was first collated) as at that time the BME percentage of governors stood at 0.7%.
- the higher than average participation levels of people who class themselves as disabled (3.5% Sunderland, 1.2% national)
- male/female participation in line with national averages

Whilst there has been a great deal of positive action taken in terms of governor recruitment in the City it should remain a priority to minimise vacancies for all categories of governor including Authority appointed governors, for which the Education (Appointment of Governors) Panel is responsible.

5 Proposal

Members of the Education (Appointment of Governors) Panel are asked to note the content of the report.

Members are also asked to consider any additional strategies in relation to the recruitment of all governors but with particular reference to Authority governors.

6 Background papers

No background papers were used.