



EDUCATION AND HERITAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
1 MAY 2002

**OPERATION OF THE REVIEW PANEL ON RECRUITMENT AND
RETENTION OF TEACHERS**

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to explain how the review of Recruitment and Retention of Teachers was undertaken and to review the lessons learned from it that can be used to inform the future conduct of reviews by member review panels.

Recommendation

2. The Education and Heritage Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note this report and to refer it to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration.

Background

3. On 22nd August 2001, the Education and Heritage Scrutiny Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive on its future work programme and identified Recruitment and Retention of Teachers as an issue that it wanted to examine in some detail. The Director of Education was asked to submit a position statement on the subject to the Committee's next meeting and a joint report of the Chief Executive and Director of Education was submitted to the meeting on 3rd October 2001. This report invited the Committee to determine the scope of a review panel to consider what the Council could do to address problems with recruiting and retaining teachers.
4. The Committee referred to the Education and Heritage Scrutiny Spokesmen the task of defining the scope and terms of reference of the Review Panel. A report was submitted to the Committee on 31st October that outlined the outcome of the Spokesmen's meeting. The following points were made:-
 - it would be appropriate at the first meeting of the Review Panel to identify the scale and scope of the problem of recruiting and retaining teachers and for it to consider a paper on the current work being done and potential sources of information on successful work/innovation elsewhere on this subject.

- the spokesmen were happy for the panel to identify the scope and scale of its review but felt that it should work towards being able to offer proposals for helping to recruit and retain teachers by the end of May 2002.
 - the panel should talk to a wide range of stakeholders but avoid duplicating work being done by the Headteacher/Officer Reference Group. It was important for the Panel to work in partnership with this group to avoid duplication and to explore areas where joint working might be appropriate.
 - the Panel should seek to arrange its first meeting early in November.
5. It was also reported that through the Political Group processes, Mrs V P Bill, Mrs R Camamile, Mr J W Royce, Mrs M L Sherwin and Mr D J Knaggs had been nominated to serve on the Review Panel. Mrs Bill was subsequently appointed as Chairman.

Progress made by the Review Panel

6. The Review Panel met on four occasions, on 19th November and 17th December 2001 and 29th January and 21st March 2002. At the first meeting the Review Panel recognised that:-
- It needed to be aware of work already in hand and to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.
 - It would be useful to know what other LEAs were doing on this subject.
 - It should identify the reasons behind the difficulties and the scale of the problem locally. To this end, it would be sensible to seek the views of local stakeholders.
 - Recruitment and Retention had been identified as an additional local priority in the Education Development Plan at the EDP Conference on 12 November 2001.
7. The Review Panel received a report from the Director of Education that referred to the difficulties facing Leicestershire schools in recruiting and retaining teachers and the action being taken by the Education Department to support schools and help to address these difficulties.
8. At its two subsequent meetings the Review Panel gathered information about the reasons behind the problem of recruiting and retaining teachers from both the national and local perspective; information about the work being done nationally and locally to address the problem and ideas as to what the Council could do to help tackle the problem locally. The sources for this information were:-

- Consultation with local stakeholders – The Recruitment and Retention Reference Group of Headteachers, the Teacher Trade Unions, the Co-opted Members of the Education and Heritage Scrutiny Committee and representatives of the Teacher Training Institutions at the Universities of Leicester and Loughborough.
- A summary of the responses to a questionnaire issued to every newly qualified teacher in Leicestershire. This sought to discover the factors affecting NQT's decisions to apply for posts in Leicestershire and to identify patterns that might inform future recruitment strategies.
- The Executive Summary of Price Waterhouse Coopers Draft Final Report for the DFES on the main factors that determine teachers' and headteachers' workload and the development of a programme of practical action to eliminate excessive workload and to promote the most effective use of resources in schools to raise standards of pupil achievement
- A summary of the proposed actions in Local Priority 7 of the Education Development Plan "to support the LEA's programme of school improvement through establishing a strategy for the recruitment and retention of teachers and headteachers."

Experience Learned from the operation of the Review Panel

9. It is essential to identify the terms of reference and the scope of the review to be conducted at the first meeting.
10. The potential sources of information and the resources required to support the review process should also be identified at the first meeting, although this may not be clear until the review has progressed.
11. It is important to be aware of other work being done on the subject for review. A headteacher/officer reference group had already been formed to address recruitment and retention. This had two consequences for the Panel – in one respect it was a potential source of information and advice to the Review Panel but, conversely, the Panel did not want to duplicate its work.
12. A realistic timescale for conducting the review and drafting conclusions and recommendations needs to be agreed. This is not an easy task because the review can identify unforeseen information or issues that may affect the timescale
13. The informality of Review Panel meetings, the small numbers of people involved and the conduct of meetings in private, is conducive to undertaking consultation; to getting a full and frank exchange of views and to ensuring that all those attending participate actively.

14. The opportunity to focus attention on a single subject area allows a more in depth approach to scrutiny than is possible at a normal Scrutiny Committee meeting.
15. The Review Panel has provided an opportunity for Members to identify what information they need and to draw out that information first hand from direct questioning, rather than by commissioning reports from officers.
16. The review has had to rely a great deal on anecdotal information from consultation. Since the introduction of Local Management of Schools and increased delegation to schools from the LEA, Governing Bodies have been responsible for filling teaching vacancies in their schools. Schools have detailed information about their own recruitment and retention difficulties, but the LEA does not have a central database about the position across the county. The Council should consider whether the Education Department ought to collate and maintain county-wide information on recruitment and retention of teachers. The Recruitment Strategy Manager to be appointed by the Education department could be asked to research the feasibility of compiling and maintaining county-wide information about vacancies, recruitment and retention of teachers.

Officer to Contact

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