

Extracts of Executive Board Minutes relevant to the Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 26 FEBRUARY 2015

131	THE SCHOOL GOVERNANCE (CONSTITUTION) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2012 AS AMENDED IN 2014
-----	---

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, on the revised arrangements for the appointment process for Local Authority governors to school governing bodies.

The Board was advised that new regulations came into force on 1 September 2014, which required all maintained school governing bodies to be reconstituted under the School Governance (Constitution and Federations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations, by 1 September 2015. It was reported that local authority governors, foundation governors and parent governors were only eligible to be appointed if they had the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school. In addition, new procedures for the removal of surplus governors had been introduced.

It was noted that the Government was seeking to strengthen the role of governing bodies in setting the strategic direction for schools and academies and in promoting school improvement. The amended regulations required local authority governors to be nominated by the local authority, but appointed by the governing body. The report set out further details of constitution requirements for all maintained schools. In the case of Academy Trusts, it was noted that although there was no requirement for them to have a local authority governor on the Academy governing body, should they decide to appoint one, then the appointment would be made via the agreed procedure for appointment of local authority governors.

Reason(s) for Decision

The decision was required to ensure that there was a clear and transparent process in place regarding the appointment of local authority governors.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

One option considered and rejected was to remain with the present appointment process, i.e. Local Authority appointments being made by the political Party Groups, with Local Authority governor positions being broadly allocated to a Party on a proportion based on the political make-up of the Council, with the Group whips co-ordinating this process for their party. However, Lord Nash had confirmed this was unacceptable practice and the law now required that all governors were appointed on the basis of the skills they had to contribute to effective governance, and Local Authorities must make every effort to understand the governing body's requirements in order to identify and nominate suitable candidates. Once appointed, Local

Authority governors must govern in the interests of pupils, not to represent or advocate for the political or other interests of the Local Authority.

Implementation Date

The process would commence from the approval of the policy.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the process and supporting documentation set out in the report regarding the nomination of Local Authority governors to Local Authority maintained schools and Academies, against criteria determined by a school's governing body be approved; and
- 2) a Members Panel consisting of the Portfolio holder – Children, Young People & Families, the Leader, and the Strategic Director or his nominee be established to put forward Local Authority nominations for schools to consider. This panel will test that individuals meet the criteria for governors for specific schools and will meet termly, or additionally, as agreed by the Panel.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 26 MARCH 2015

149	SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2016 – KEY DECISION
------------	--

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, on school admission arrangements for the September 2016 intake.

The Board was advised that in January 2015, Halton had published a statutorily required consultation paper on the proposed admission arrangements and co-ordinated admission schemes for the September 2016 intake.

It was noted that there were no changes proposed for the oversubscription criteria for admission to Local Authority maintained community and voluntary controlled primary schools, and no change to the current oversubscription criteria for admission to Local Authority maintained community secondary schools.

Reason(s) For Decision

The decision was statutorily required and any revision to the proposed arrangements may adversely affect school place planning, as detailed in the report.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Other options considered and rejected included the allocation of places through random allocation (lottery), as this method could be seen as arbitrary and random.

Implementation Date

The Policy would apply to the September 2016 academic intake.

RESOLVED: That the

- 1) Schools Admissions Policy, Admission Arrangements and Co-ordinated Schemes for admission to primary and secondary schools for the 2016/17 academic year, attached to the report, be approved;
- 2) the Department for Education School Admissions Code be endorsed, and all Halton Schools, including Academy and Free Schools be required to ensure that their admissions criteria are reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair and comply with all legislation; and
- 3) the Local Authority writes to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator to express concern regarding the admission arrangements currently operated by Wade Deacon High School.

150

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015-16 – KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which provided a summary of the Capital programmes for 2015/16 for the Children and Enterprise Directorate.

The Board was advised that in February 2015, the Department for Education announced the schools capital grant allocations for 2015/16; details of the funding received were set out in the report. A further table set out details of how the School Condition and Capital Expenditure revenue Account funding would be allocated. It was noted that schools were required to make a contribution to the cost of capital repair works, which was estimated to be in the region of £40,000 based on current budget costs for the works. A further £95,000 would be carried forward as a contribution to the capital repairs programme for 2015/16.

The report set out details of the details of the re-build of Halebank Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School. This project had been included in the Department for Education's Priority School Building Programme. The project would commence on site in June 2015, with completion by April 2016. It was noted that an amount of £20,000 would be required to complete the transfer of equipment and furniture to the new building.

In January 2014, Fairfield Junior School was expanded to allow the integration of the Infants School, to form Fairfield Primary School. It was further reported that a number of improvements would be required to address building and organisational issues at the newly combined primary school.

Reason(s) for Decision

To deliver and implement the capital programmes.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Implementation Date

Capital programmes for 2015/16 would be implemented from 1 April 2015.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the capital funding available for 2015/16 be noted;
- 2) the proposals to be funded from School Condition Capital Allocation and Capital Expenditure Revenue Account be approved;
- 3) the proposals for Halebank Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School be approved;
- 4) the proposals for Fairfield Primary School be approved; and
- 5) Council be recommended to approve the Capital Programme for 2015/16.

151

14-19 STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING STATEMENT 2015-16
--

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which sought approval for the 14-19 Strategic Commissioning Statement (the Statement) for 2015/16.

The Board was advised that adoption of the Statement would enable the Borough Council to fulfil its statutory duty to secure sufficient suitable education and training provision to meet the reasonable needs of all young people in the Borough, and enable or assist them to participate in education or training.

It was reported that to support the production of the Statement and to identify key priorities, evidence, data and information was gathered and analysed alongside a review of outcomes of the 2014/15 Statement. The report detailed the three key priority areas for the Borough. It was noted that these priorities and supporting evidence had been individually consulted on with partners in specific task groups, and ratified by the 11-19 Strategic Partnership.

RESOLVED: That the 14-19 Strategic Commissioning Statement 2015/16 be ratified in order to fulfil Halton Borough Council's statutory duty.