

## **Briefing note for Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny review meeting on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2013**

### To consider whether there is sufficient capacity within PCC to provide the necessary support to governing bodies in the city

The governor support team consists of 2 FTE's and is responsible for ensuring that the LA exercises its statutory duties towards governing bodies (please see Annex 1)

Members may wish to consider;

- How are these statutory duties being met?
- How many governors take up the opportunity of free training and how do they use this learning to improve and strengthen governance at their own school?
- Whether there is a connection between low uptake of training and adverse Ofsted inspection judgements?

The team also provides advice and guidance to all governors that currently buy in to the Governor Support Service Level Agreement (SLA). This currently accounts for all maintained schools within the city with the exception of five schools, ALNS, Copnor Junior, Devonshire Infant, Meon Infant and St George's.

The team are responsible for delivering a range of training opportunities for governors including whole governing body training sessions, chairs development and data training as well as external governance reviews.

### To consider recruitment and retention of school governors in the city

Recruitment and retention of governors is a serious issue for many governing bodies across the country as well as within Portsmouth. The issue of recruitment of governors could be significantly reduced if all governing bodies exercised their right to re-constitute under the; School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012, which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012.

Members may wish to consider;

- How many schools have exercised their right to re-constitute?
- How many are considering this at present?
- What benefits would re-constitution bring?
- How would re-constitution impact on the issue of retention?
- What would be the impact on LA appointed governors under the 2012 regulations?
- What are governing bodies doing to actively recruit governors and what do governing bodies perceive to be barriers to recruitment?

To consider the skills of school governors -take up of training by governors, their ability to understand and interpret school data and ability to hold senior leaders to account

The 2012 Constitution Regulations encourages governing bodies to determine what relevant skills they require from governors and how they use this information to actively recruit skilled governors.

Members may wish to consider;

- What are schools doing to determine whether they have the right skills mix on their governing body and how are they using this to ensure succession planning is in place?
- What are governing bodies doing with this information and how are they using it to strengthen governance within their schools?

To consider how effective the existing arrangements are for governing body self-review.

Governance is incorporated in the judgement for Leadership & Management under the current Ofsted Framework for inspecting schools. Any school that is judged by Ofsted to be in the category of, 'requires improvement' are recommended to undertake an external review of governance. It would help to strengthen governance if governing bodies were undertaking their own honest self-review process and using the information to improve their practice.

Members may wish to consider;

- How many schools regularly undertake a self-review of their governance arrangements?
- What do they do with this information?
- How do they share good practice amongst their peers?
- How many schools have been recommended by Ofsted to undertake an external review of governance and how have these improved practice?

To consider how effective clerking of governing bodies currently is and what can be done to strengthen clerking in the city

The Education Select Committee Inquiry into the role of School Governance identified the importance of having an experienced and knowledgeable clerk. The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 state; "*The governing body must appoint a clerk with a view to ensuring their efficient functioning and must have regard to advice from the clerk as to the nature of the governing body's functions*". The emphasis on having regard to the advice of the clerk has raised the profile of clerking and there is an expectation that the clerk will be the expert in respect of law and procedures. The National College for Teaching and Learning (NCTL) has awarded a contract to Southern Educational Leadership Trust (SELT) in partnership with Hampshire Governor Services to develop and

deliver training for clerks which will be available to be delivered locally under licence from the Spring term.

Members may wish to consider;

- How many clerks are accredited?
- How many are going through the clerks accreditation programme?
- How many clerks cover more than one school?
- What the risks are of having fewer clerks?
- What would be the benefits of operating a clerking pool within the city?

To consider good practice from other local authorities

The panel will wish to consider examples of good practice from other LA's across the country. It would be helpful to know;

- What areas of governance members would like to know more about?