



## **General Purposes Committee**

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>General Purposes Committee</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>27 February 2013</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>For General Release</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Co-opted Members on the Children and Community Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	<b>There are no financial implications</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Head of Legal and Democratic Services</b>

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The constitution of the Children and Community Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee currently provides for two Parent Governor representatives with voting rights. At the moment the Parent Governors are elected from the Parent Governors drawn from the secondary and primary schools of maintained schools in Westminster. Previously, there was a requirement that one should represent primary school Governors and one secondary school Governors. However, due to the limited pool of WCC maintained secondary schools only primary school Governors have been appointed recently.
- 1.2 In view of the desire to maintain links to academies and free schools it is proposed to expand the qualification for election to Parent Governors of Academies and Free Schools as well as those maintained schools in Westminster.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Council be recommended to approve the following change, shown in bold, to the constitution of the Children and Community Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee and that the Council's Scheme of Co-opted Members which is limited to the Co-opted Members on the Children and Community Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee be amended accordingly.

Nine members of the Council (7 Majority Party members and 2 Minority Party members, but shall not include a member of the Cabinet. 4 co-opted Members with voting rights i.e. one co-opted representative each from the Church of England and Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Boards and two Parent Governor Representatives elected from Parent Governors of **Academies, Free Schools** and Maintained schools in Westminster. 2 co-opted Members without voting rights, i.e. 2 Headteachers of Westminster maintained schools, **Academies or Free Schools**.

NB: The voting rights of the co-opted only extend to matters relating to Education.

- 2.2 That the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to amend the Constitution as necessary.

### **3. Background Information**

- 3.1 New legislation will be shortly introduced allowing Local Authorities to have co-opted members on their P&S Committees from Academies and Free Schools as well as Maintained schools in their area. At present, until the legislation is finalised, it is at the Local Authorities discretion whether they wish to allow co-opted members from Academies and Free Schools to sit on the committee.
- 3.2 As the Parent Governor elections are now due for co-opted members, it has become necessary to consider whether the Council would like (at this time) to include Parent Governors from Academies and Free Schools in the Parent Governor elections to be nominated to sit on the Children and Community Services P&S Committee.
- 3.3 The benefit of allowing Parent Governors from Academies and Free Schools are that virtually all secondary schools in Westminster are now Academies and therefore if Parent Governors were excluded from being nominated it is likely that there will be no parent representative from the secondary schools in Westminster. This would be a loss as the P&S Committee greatly values the contribution of the Parent Governors on the wide ranging topics it covers. The potential involvement of Academy/Free School Governors will also assist with maintaining the Council's links with these which is encouraged by the Government.
- 3.4 It is anticipated that by opening up the Parent Governor Election to Westminster's Academies and Free Schools that there will be nominations from both the primary phrase and secondary phrase and therefore the candidate with the most votes from the primary phrase and the candidate with the most votes from the secondary phrase will be voted onto the P&S Committee. Only in the rare event where there is no nominations from one phrase will two parent governor from the same phrase be allowed to be voted onto the P&S Committee.

As with the current Parent Governors it is proposed that they retain voting rights even if elected from Academies or Free Schools.

- 3.5 Two Head teachers from Westminster schools can also be co-opted onto the P&S Committee to give their views. The decision on which Head teachers will be co-opted is decided amongst the Head teachers themselves and one primary and one secondary Head sits on the P&S Committee. As with school governors previously the Head teachers have had to be Heads of Maintained schools but with the number of Academies in Westminster it is recommended that the change be made to allow Head teachers to be nominated from Academies, Free Schools and Maintained Schools in Westminster. The Headteacher appointments are made via the Headteacher network.

#### **4. Legal Implications**

- 4.1 Ministers have agreed to legislate to include Parent Governors of Academies and Free Schools in these arrangements and a suitable legislative opportunity is being sought to make the changes. Until then, local authorities are reminded that they can co-opt Parent Governors of Academies and Free Schools to such committees at their discretion. The co-optees would not have voting rights unless the local authority grants then such rights according to the provisions of Schedule 1A of the Local Government Act 2000. The Government also intend to extend such arrangements to local authorities that have reverted to a traditional committee structure under the Localism Act. In addition, Members and officers at the recent P&S Committees have indicated the need to “stay in touch” with the Academies.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. The costs of expanding the elections are minor and can be contained within existing resources.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Mick Steward: 7641 3134;  
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#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS - None**