

## **Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission**

**Date: 20 September 2017**

Wards: All

**Subject: Proposal for a scrutiny task group review of the recruitment and retention of teachers in Merton**

Lead officer: Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services

Lead member: Councillor Peter Southgate, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Commission

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### **Recommendations:**

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission agree to set up a task group to review the recruitment and retention of teachers in Merton;
2. That the Commission discuss and approve the terms of reference and scope of the task group, set out in paragraph 2.7-2.11 below;
3. That the Commission appoint members to the task group.

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## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. To present the draft terms of reference and scope of the recruitment and retention task group to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for approval.

## **2 DETAILS**

### **Background**

- 2.1. This issue was initially drawn to the attention of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel by the headteacher of The Priory School. The headteacher highlighted the difficulties that schools in Merton were experiencing with the recruitment and retention of teachers in particular but also other members of staff. She said that although there was evidence that this was not unique to Merton, there were measures that could be taken at a local level that would alleviate the situation.
- 2.2. In discussion with the Panel, it was stated that national difficulties around teacher recruitment are primarily linked to lack of affordable housing and that local offers such as parking and continuous personal development could have a positive impact.
- 2.3. The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel, mindful that this is a cross-cutting issue, particularly in relation to housing supply, referred the matter to the Commission.

## **The national context**

- 2.4. The State of Education Survey Report, 2016, found that 62% of school leaders nationally (76% for secondary schools) reported that recruitment and retention of teaching staff had been a difficult area to manage over the previous 12 months. The Survey found that recruitment and retention of teachers was the second highest concern for the next 12 months, after budget pressures.
- 2.5. The Survey also found that 56% of leaders in London schools stated they were facing a shortage of teachers. Again the percentage was higher for secondary schools.
- 2.6. The House of Commons Education Select Committee published a review report in February 2017 on the recruitment and retention of teachers. The Select Committee considered supply-side factors as well as workload and professional development. They called for evidence based policies to improve supply and retention of high quality teachers and recommended that school leaders carry out exit interviews to better understand staff turnover.

## **Proposals for terms of reference and scope of the task group review**

- 2.7. It is proposed that, in view of the relatively short timescale for this review, the Overview and Scrutiny Commission should establish a task group with very focussed terms of reference:
  - To identify the issues that impact on the recruitment and retention of staff in Merton's schools
  - To consider how Merton Council and its partners can assist schools with the recruitment and retention of high quality staff to the recruitment and retention of staff in Merton's schools
- 2.8. In agreeing to set up this task group, the Commission is asked to note that few of the recommendations arising from the review are likely to be within the power of the Council to implement, given the high level of autonomy in schools and the limited role of the local authority. Recommendations may focus on the role of the local authority in providing support to schools particularly in relation to discussion with partner organisations such as housing providers.
- 2.9. It is anticipated that four meetings would be required:

Meeting 1 (early October)

  - Presentation on national and local context
  - Agree key lines of enquiry
  - Agree approach to consultation with headteachers and teaching unions

Meeting 2 (early November)

  - Feedback from consultation with headteachers and teaching unions
  - Agree witnesses and questions for meeting 3

Meeting 3 (early December)

- Discussion with Future Merton re supply of housing, local housing providers, parking services, CSF (re childcare commissioning) and HR.
- Identification of recommendations for the task group report

Meeting 4 (early January)

- Discussion of draft report with relevant Cabinet Members and Directors

2.10. The task group will report back to the Commission's meeting on 31 January and to Cabinet on 26 March.

2.11. Support would be provided by the Head of Democracy Services.

**3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

3.1. The Overview and Scrutiny Commission can select topics for scrutiny review and for other scrutiny work as it sees fit, taking into account views and suggestions from officers, partner organisations and the public.

**4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

4.1. The proposals have been considered previously by the commission and were subsequently discussed with the Director of Children, Schools and Families.

**5 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1. None for the purposes of this covering report. Any resource implications will need to be taken into account when drawing up & approving specific review recommendations

**6 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1. There are none specific to this report.

**7 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

7.1. There are none specific to this report.

**8 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

8.1. There are none specific to this report.

**9 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1. There are none specific to this report.

**10 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

- None

**11 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1. None

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