

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

**Date:** 20 March 2019

### **Subject:** Updated action plan – scrutiny task group review of the recruitment and retention of teachers in Merton

Lead officers: Hannah Doody, Director of Community and Housing; Rachael Wardell, Director of Children Schools and Families; Caroline Holland, Director for Corporate Services

Lead members: Councillor Martin Whelton, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport; Councillor Mark Allison, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance; Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Cabinet Member for Education

Contact officer: Jane McSherry, Head of Education; Steve Langley, Head of Housing Needs; Kim Brown, Head of HR

---

#### **Recommendations:**

- A. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission consider the updated action plan setting out how the agreed recommendations of the scrutiny task group review of the recruitment and retention of teachers in Merton will be implemented.
- 

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

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an updated action plan to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission to demonstrate how the agreed recommendations of the recruitment and retention of teachers scrutiny task group will be implemented, and the associated responsible officers and timescales.
- 1.2. The detail of the response and action plan is set out in Appendix A.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. At their meeting on 25 June 2018 Cabinet noted the report of the scrutiny task group review and agreed that the recommendations of the task group would be responded to through an action plan to be drawn up by officers in consultation with the lead Cabinet Members.
- 2.2. Cabinet welcomed the report and noted that the review had been initiated at the request of teachers in the borough. Cabinet noted that the report contained some bold recommendations and welcomed the acknowledgement within the report that there were many other groups whose work and contribution to the borough was vital who had similar housing needs.
- 2.3. In discussing the report, Cabinet was mindful of the challenges which the Council faced in retention of key workers and the cost of living in the borough. Cabinet emphasised that there were no easy solutions, however with approximately 9000 people on the waiting list for housing, the Council had a duty to address the most acute housing need first and had to take

care not to discriminate against other groups and address a number of needs across the borough.

- 2.4. The Commission received Cabinet's initial response and action plan at its meeting on 19 September 2018. At this meeting the Commission expressed disappointment the initial responses had not taken on board detailed points made by the task group in its report and that responses to some of the recommendations had not addressed the totality of the recommendation.
- 2.5. Members made specific comments on a number of recommendations:
- 2.6. Recommendation 3 - Members noted that the recommendation had been accepted "in principle" only and were hoping for more enthusiasm to be demonstrated in promoting the teacher apprenticeship scheme.
- 2.7. The Director of Children Schools and Families said that the scheme would be promoted as one of a number of routes into teaching, albeit one for which there is a relatively small pool of potential applicants.
- 2.8. Recommendations 9-12- Members expressed disappointment but not surprise that Cabinet had rejected these recommendations and said although they understood Cabinet's reasons for the rejections, housing remained a significant factor in the recruitment and retention of teachers.
- 2.9. The Director of Children Schools and Families responded that, in addition to the points made by the Cabinet Member, the lack of housing stock at the disposal of the council and the decreasing number of teachers to be directly employed by the council (rather than by academies for example) would make such an offer impracticable and very costly.
- 2.10. Subsequently to the Commission's meeting in September, the Commission's Chair, Councillor Peter Southgate, and co-opted member Helen Forbes reviewed the executive response and provided detailed comments on where they would like to see a fuller response.
- 2.11. These comments have been taken into account in the provision of the updated action plan, set out in Appendix A.

### **3 EXECUTIVE RESPONSE**

- 3.1. Appendix A to this report sets out the task group's recommendations, the initial response and action planned, together with dates and the responsible officer.

### **4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

None for the purposes of this report.

### **5 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

- 5.1. In carrying out its review, the task group consulted local heateachers and newly qualified teachers as well as speaking to a wide range of council officers.

### **6 TIMETABLE**

- 6.1. The timetable for implementation of the task group's recommendations is set out in Appendix A.

## **7 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. Delivery of these recommendations can either be met within existing budgets or will be the subject of a bid for support through the council's usual financial procedures.

## **8 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. None for the purposes of this report.

## **9 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. None for the purposes of this report.

## **10 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. None for the purposes of this report.

## **11 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

None for the purpose of this report.

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

Appendix A – executive response and action plan

## **13 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 13.1. None

**Appendix A: Executive response to the recommendations of the scrutiny task group review into the recruitment and retention of teachers in Merton**

Recommendations	Executive response	Timeline	Decision making body and lead officer
<p><b>Recommendation 1.</b> That Cabinet should confirm that it is committed to continuing to celebrate the successes of Merton’s schools in order to attract teachers of the highest quality and to promote local schools as the first preference for parents seeking an excellent education for their children.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>The Council will continue to celebrate exam success and wider schools and pupil outcomes on the Councils website, in the local press and via My Merton magazine.</p> <p>Recruitment has been identified as a key priority within the setup of the School Effectiveness Partnership and some capacity added with the appointment of the Partnership Coordinator in June 2018. Since this appointment The Partnership has renewed its public face with a new name (‘Attain’), a website, and engaged actively in recruitment and retention through activities of The Coordinator. The Merton eteach site has been used with greater effectiveness and has seen a 24% rise in applicants to the NQT Talent Pool when compared to the previous academic year. The Coordinator has attended all major teacher recruitment fairs and actively contacted applicants with a personalised approach, arranging visits to schools when requested.</p> <p>Feedback from Head teachers is that they value the NQT programme in Merton and this will continue to be promoted.</p>	<p>April 2019</p>	<p>Cabinet; Director of Children, School and Families</p>

Commented [JP1]:

	<p>Consideration will also be given to a Merton based recruitment fair to supplement the work already undertaken to promote Merton at University Fairs. The Attain Board will assess the viability of this option by the end of the autumn term of 2019 once evaluations of the previous year's activities have been completed.</p>		
<p><b>Recommendation 2.</b> That the School Effectiveness Partnership Board should consider a more proactive and personalised approach to match applicants in the Eteach talent pool with specific school vacancies in order to increase its effectiveness.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>The Council has already trialled offering individual interviews for candidates who have signed up to eteach and will do so again in March and April 2019. This has had some positive outcomes and will continue to be offered. The interview process allows for a face-to-face meeting with candidates, after which they can be matched with the most suitable school vacancies based on performance in the interview. A personalised approach is being implemented by the School Partnership Coordinator who is liaising with headteachers to invite potential applicants to have school visits, often before vacancies arise.</p> <p>HR have indicated that they explore developing a temp to perm policy with agreement from schools. A draft document has been designed and will have to be discussed with Schools.</p>	<p>April 2019</p>	<p>School Effectiveness Partnership Board; Director of Children, School and Families</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 3.</b> That, once the government has released details, the School Effectiveness Partnership Board should consider if the teacher apprenticeship scheme could be implemented in Merton.</p>	<p><b>Accepted in principle</b></p> <p>There is a standard for teachers :  <a href="https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/teacher/">https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/teacher/</a></p> <p>Applications need to be made through UCAS so this could be considered next year. To be accepted on the programme the applicant needs to have an existing degree or degree level apprenticeship and be employed as a teacher at the start of their apprenticeship. Existing staff can apply if they meet this criteria.</p> <p>The Attain Board are in discussions regarding how the Apprenticeship Levy can be utilised effectively by schools through appointing support staff with a view for them to be enrolled on the Teacher Apprenticeship offered by many training providers. A decision on this project will be made by agreement of The Board by the end of the spring term 2019 in conjunction with colleagues in HR.</p> <p>There is some funding available through the Department for Education which can be used towards salaries and would need to be applied for by June 2019.</p>	<p>April 2019</p>	<p>School Effectiveness Partnership Board;          Director of Children, School and Families</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 4.</b> That the School Effectiveness Partnership Board should promote a wide range of recruitment routes to assist headteachers with advertising vacancies in their schools.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b>  The School Partnership through the new website will clarify and promote the different routes available, including School Direct, PGCE and Apprenticeships.</p> <p>A multi channel approach to attract teachers, using various social media channels, attendance at job fairs, links with universities to make contact with final year teaching students is already and will continue to be used and developed by The Schools Partnership. Schools are notified of all such approaches regularly through the attendance of the Partnership Coordinator at cluster meetings, and by direct contact with headteachers.</p> <p>The viability of a Merton-focussed recruitment fair will be discussed by The Attain Board by the end of the academic year 2018/19.</p> <p>Merton's profile will be raised as a good employer through working with the communications team to put out good news stories about schools in Merton.</p> <p>HR does not offer recruitment to schools as part of the current SLA buy back agreement; however this could become part of a future SLA. HR has a track record of working closely with services to attract, recruit and retain staff in competitive and hard to fill roles such as social workers. Retention award payments will be considered by The Attain Board by the end of the academic year 2018/19, aimed at staff who have worked in The Partnership schools for a set amount of time.</p>	<p>April 2019</p>	<p>School Effectiveness Partnership Board;  Director of Corporate Services</p>
---	--	-------------------	--

<p><b>Recommendation 5.</b> That the provision of a flu vaccine to school staff should be included in a service level agreement so that headteachers can assess the costs and benefits of taking up this service.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>(1) To be included as part of HR SLA to schools. Would work closely with Public Health to ensure maximum take-up.</p> <p>(2) in addition to 1 above negotiate price with high street chemists and staff can access service in their own time adopt the approach used for eye tests and reclaim costs through HR system- This would have to be introduced for 2019.</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	<p>Cabinet; Director of Corporate Services</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6.</b> That Cabinet should encourage school governing bodies to organise activities in their school that would promote the general health and wellbeing of school staff. The council's Public Health team would be able to provide advice to governing bodies if required.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>Public Health to continue to promote the Healthy Schools London (HSL) awards programme for schools to reach their Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. Programme identifies the importance of staff health and well-being and includes the following in its assessment (1) Staff CPD The school identifies staff CPD needs for health and wellbeing and provides appropriate training and development opportunities. (2) Staff health and well-being The school supports staff in maintaining their health and wellbeing and a healthy lifestyle and encourages them to be positive role models. All staff can, confidentially, access advice, support and services (within and beyond school).</p> <p>Public Health to (a) attend Chairs of Governors briefing and headteachers meetings to provide a Public Health update on health of CYP in Merton including how they can support staff health and wellbeing (b) and/or include information in appropriate newsletters/emails to schools.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Annually Date TBC</p>	<p>Cabinet; Director of Children, Schools and Families; Director of Public Health</p>



<p><b>Recommendation 7.</b> That Cabinet publicise to school staff and explain how to take up the existing council staff discount on annual memberships at Canons Leisure Centre, Morden Park Pools and Wimbledon Leisure Centre.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>Will ensure there are links to the offers and benefits available so that this is accessible to school staff - on the extranet and eteach. Link offers could be included in adverts and contract offers.</p> <p>Include information in the newsletter sent to Headteachers and bursars. Session on bursars and school forum meetings to promote these schemes. This will be reinforced by the Attain website (merton-attain.net) and posters will be placed in school staff rooms to promote these benefits by the end of the academic year 2018/19.</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	<p>Cabinet; Director of Corporate Services</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 8.</b> That all the benefits that are currently available to teachers and other school staff should be publicised to all school staff and clearly documented on all relevant webpages. This should include the interest free season ticket loan, purchase of a bicycle through the Cycle to Work Scheme (salary sacrifice) and nursery/childcare vouchers.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>Will ensure there are links to the offers and benefits available so that this is accessible to school staff - on the extranet and eteach. Link offers could be included in adverts and contract offers.</p> <p>Include information in the newsletter sent to Headteachers and bursars. Session on bursars and school forum meetings to promote</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	<p>Cabinet; Director of Corporate Services</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 9.</b> That Cabinet should ask the Head of Housing Needs and Strategy to write to local housing associations to ask if they have any “hard to let” properties that could be made available to teachers at an</p>	<p><b>Rejected</b></p> <p>Whilst Cabinet understand the need of teachers in finding housing, the council also owes a statutory duty to those who are homelessness and they would have to be a priority group in the council’s regular liaison with local</p>		<p>Cabinet; Director of Communities and Housing</p>

affordable rent (including short term assured tenancies).	housing associations		
<b>Recommendation 10.</b> That Cabinet consider whether the 3-5 year private rental tenancies that will be available through the Local Authority Property Company from 2019/20 could be offered to teachers in the first instance, thus offering teachers an element of financial security.	<b>Rejected</b>  Merantum is an arms-length housing company with its own board of directors. Cabinet would expect it to offer secure tenancies but we cannot single out one particular employment group.		Cabinet; Director of Environment & Regeneration
<b>Recommendation 11.</b> That Cabinet should explore the business case for supporting the retention of excellent teachers in the borough by offering a small number of private rented properties through the Local Authority Property Company to such teachers at a reduced rent.	<b>Rejected</b>  There are many equally worthy key workers who face the same challenges and it would be unfair to single out one particularly category of employment and decisions are for the property company to take		Cabinet; Director of Corporate Services
<b>Recommendation 12.</b> That Cabinet should ask the Head of Housing Needs and Strategy to approach the Landlords Forum with a “good tenant offer” whereby the council would guarantee a supply of teachers as private tenants for a fixed number of years in return for a reduced rent.	<b>Rejected</b>  The council’s primary duty is to house those most in need which are homelessness and suffering overcrowding		Cabinet; Director of Communities and Housing

<p><b>Recommendation 13.</b> That Cabinet should ask the Head of Housing Needs and Strategy to provide school staff with a list of shared ownership schemes that might be suitable for teachers, whilst not recommending any scheme in particular.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>A list can be circulated of shared-ownership schemes and London Living Rent housing.</p>	TBC	Cabinet; Director of Communities and Housing
<p><b>Recommendation 14.</b> That Cabinet consider setting up a rent deposit scheme that would operate in a similar way to the existing season ticket loan. This would provide teachers with an interest free loan that would be paid back to the council in a set number of instalments.</p>	<p><b>Accepted in principle</b></p> <p>This could be explored, but would have implications where the schools run their own payroll service as we would not be able to deduct direct from salaries and therefore could be part of our overall rent deposit scheme.</p>	TBD	Cabinet; Director of Corporate Services/Director of Community & Housing
<p><b>Recommendation 15.</b> That the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel should receive a briefing on the Mayor of London's London Living Rent initiative in order to identify potential benefits for Merton residents</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>To be included alongside housing reports at the Panel's meeting in March 2019</p>	19 March 2019	Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel; Head of Housing Needs
<p><b>Recommendation 16.</b> That the School Effectiveness Partnership Board should consider how best to build on the effective programme of continuous professional development that is already being delivered. The Board could</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>The Professional Development programme continues to be developed. It is promoted through our own bespoke website (<a href="http://www.mertoncpd.co.uk/cpd">www.mertoncpd.co.uk/cpd</a>) and through the newly created School Effectiveness Partnership website. This will make it easier to search for courses and will give</p>	April 2019	School Effectiveness Partnership Board; Director of Children Schools

<p>consider the role of local colleges and universities in further enhancing the options available, including through use of the Apprenticeship Levy.</p>	<p>a direct link to the appropriate booking page.</p> <p>There is a fully developed Leadership ladder in place that promotes all leadership opportunities within the Borough, sub regionally and across London and this has been integrated with all other partners through the Attain website, which is promoted online through The Partnership marketing strategy, implemented following the appointment of the Coordinator in summer 2018.</p> <p>The Professional Development Steering Group which includes representatives from the Council and the Teaching School Alliance meets regularly to review the Merton offer and to work alongside the School Effectiveness Partnership Board to identify overlap and gaps. Current work continues to develop a more targeted secondary school programme, including a sharing of secondary school/departmental work on A levels. Links with local colleges and universities will continue to be explored.</p> <p>The Attain Board are in discussions regarding how the Apprenticeship Levy can be utilised effectively by schools through appointing support staff with a view for them to be enrolled on the Teacher Apprenticeship offered by many training providers. A decision on this project will be made by agreement of The Board by the end of the spring term 2019 in conjunction with colleagues in HR.</p>		<p>and Families</p>