

Subject:	Terms of Reference for Cross Party School Organisation Working Group	
Date of Meeting:	14 October 2013	
Report of:	Executive Director of Children's Services	
Contact Officer:	Michael Nix (Head of	
	Name: Education Planning & Contracts)	Tel: 29-0732
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Ward(s) affected:	All	

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request the Committee to agree that the status of the Cross Party Schools Capital Working Group should be strengthened, as a Group commissioned by the Committee to consider issues of school organisation and places planning and to advise the Committee accordingly.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee approve the Terms of Reference set out at Appendix 1 for the Cross Party School Organisation Working Group

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Cross Party Schools Capital Working Group has been in place for some time as a mechanism for considering issues relating to school organisation and places planning. It is a joint Members and officers working group. However, its meeting schedule has not been regular, and there has been no formal record kept of its meetings and action points. This lack of formal working arrangements has sometimes weakened its effectiveness.
- 3.2 Like many other local authorities in England, the City Council is faced with significant challenges in fulfilling its duty to secure sufficient school places as numbers continue to rise in the primary sector. Although it has been possible to provide over the last five years 465 new places per year group in the city's primary schools, there continues to be pressure on school places in some parts of the city. These increased numbers will soon appear in the secondary sector.
- 3.3 These changes present corporate challenges for the Council which require a concerted response, involving a range of disciplines across the Council. Without a thriving schools sector, many other Council priorities will be more difficult to achieve.

3.4 In view of the significance of these issues, it is proposed that the Committee should formally commission the Working Group, to be renamed the Cross Party School Organisation Working Group, to consider all aspects of school organisation and places planning and to advise the Committee accordingly. The Working Group will be chaired by the Executive Director of Children's Services or the Assistant Director (Education and Inclusion) and will consist of the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Children and Young People Committee, the lead spokespersons for Children's Services of the other two groups plus one other representative of each of the other groups. The proposed purposes of the Working Group are:

- To keep under review pupil number projections for Brighton & Hove
- To consider actions required to ensure that the Council fulfils its duty to secure sufficient school places for children and young people and advise the Children and Young People Committee (CYPC) accordingly
- To advise the CYPC and the Council regarding the schools capital programme
- To comment on an annual five year School Organisation Plan for endorsement by the CYPC and approval by full Council

3.5 The existing Working Group met on 24 September 2013 and considered draft Terms of Reference for the proposed new Group. The Terms of Reference paper at Appendix 1 includes the comments agreed by the Working Group, and the Committee is invited to approve it.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 The Working Group could continue as it has done, without this level of formal underpinning. The significance of the places planning challenges justifies the proposed strengthening of the Working Group's remit and formalisation of its ways of working.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

5.1 Amongst other factors, the need for this Working Group has been informed by concerns expressed in partnership meetings, in correspondence and in the media by head teachers, governors and local people. The proposal has been discussed with and is supported by the existing Working Group.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The challenges for school places planning merit the establishment of a more formal mechanism for keeping these issues under review and advising the Committee. The proposed Cross Party School Organisation Working Group will meet this purpose.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The Cross Party Working Group will have no direct budget to use, however the outcomes of the working group will determine the plans for the Schools Capital programme. Any revenue implications of the additional places provided will be funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

Finance Officer Consulted:

Andy Moore

Date: 24/09/13

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 The proposed working group will assist the Council in ensuring that it fulfils its statutory duty under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to secure that there are sufficient primary and secondary school places across the City.

Lawyer Consulted:

Serena Kynaston

Date: 25/9/13

Equalities Implications:

- 7.2 N/A

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.3 N/A

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.4 N/A

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Terms of Reference for Cross Party School Organisation Working Group.

