

**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
09 JUNE 2010**

**SUBJECT: PROTOCOLS FOR ASPECTS OF LINKS BETWEEN ELECTED
MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask Children and Young People's Services Committee to confirm and note the protocols outlined for links between Elected Members and Officers.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section D(1) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to exercising the functions of the Council as Education Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Committee confirms and notes the contents of this report.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Educational Services introduced from 08 February 2008 a pre-Committee briefing for Members. Since then these have been held on the Friday morning before Committee. These briefings were in response to a desire to provide enhanced information for Elected Members and allow more detailed discussion of reports on our schools and pre-school centres following Inspection activity. Although attendance by Elected Members has been variable their feedback on the opportunity for discussion has been positive. In addition, the meetings have allowed an opportunity for quality dialogue and the sharing of information in confidence.
- 3.2 At Committee on 28 January 2009 (para 11 of the minute refers) Members raised concerns over the length and format of reports on schools by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education. They asked that additional information be made available, particularly from the Record of Inspection Findings (RIF), a technical report for the Headteacher and Director of Educational Services following an Inspection. At a meeting involving the Chair of Children and Young People's Services Committee, the education spokesperson for SNP and the Group Leader for Labour, the Director of Educational Services and the Head of Educational Development Services, it was agreed that the detailed contents of the RIF would not be of particular value to Elected Members but should inform the feedback on schools at the pre-Committee briefings. This would particularly apply in the case of any school where an evaluation by HMIE was less than satisfactory ie weak or unsatisfactory.
- 3.3 The protocols outlined in 3.1 and 3.2 are essentially reactive in that they deal with up-dating and supporting dialogue with members following Inspections.

Following a request at committee from a member for more timely input to allow members to be more proactive in their support of schools and a subsequent meeting involving a representative from all political groups, it has been agreed to introduce meetings involving Ward Members and Quality Improvement Officers (QIOs). An initial mechanism for these meetings has been put in place which will be monitored on an on-going basis and amendments made if necessary.

- 3.3.1 Although initially the meetings may be seen as briefings by QIOs, this may only be the starting point as it is anticipated they could end up as more of a dialogue, with Elected Members being able to pass on the general community perception of schools. This would be a perfectly reasonable and mature way of working. The aim is to ensure Elected Members are aware of the general trends, performance and any major issues facing their schools.
- 3.3.2 A key feature of the 'briefings' or 'dialogue' will be that of trust. The information being given will be provided in confidence and will require to be treated as such. In addition, the meetings with QIOs would in no way replace Members' normal channels of raising concerns through the Director of Educational Services.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan

This report relates to Key Priority 10 (Efficiencies – Delivering and developing governance, performance management and accountability to the local community.) in the Single Outcome Agreement. It links to Action Area 2 (Self-Evaluation) in the Service Improvement Plan of Educational Services.

(b) Policy & Legal

N/A

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing & Property)

None

(d) Consultations

Senior Officers in Educational Services have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 That the Committee confirms and notes the contents of this report.

Author of Report: George Sinclair, Head of Educational Development Services
Background Papers:
Ref: DMD/JR/Reports/Children and Young People's Services
Committee/9 June 2010/Protocols for Aspects of Links
between Elected Members and Officers