

REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 24 MAY 2010

REPORT ON: REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP OF BEST VALUE REVIEW GROUP ON EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 280-2010

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report proposes that the Best Value Review Group on Educational Attainment should be re-established as the Education Review Group, with new terms of reference and a revised membership.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Education Committee is recommended to:

- i. note the content of this report;
- ii. re-establish the Education Review Group under that name;
- iii. approve the group's aims (paragraph 4.3.2 below) and the revised membership (paragraph 4.3.4 below).

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 Background

4.1.1 The Education Committee approved report no. 130-2005, 'Pupil Achievement in Dundee Schools', in February 2005. Among the specific measures approved was one to "establish a Best Value Review Group to identify measures that will significantly improve Education Attainment in Dundee schools".

4.1.2 The general remit of the group was to develop recommendations which had been included in a paper 'Attainment in Dundee Schools 2003-04' appended to report no. 130-2005, taking account of Open Voice consultations with Education Committee members, Head Teachers, parents and pupils; and to report back to the Education Committee.

4.1.3 Specific terms of reference, including group membership, were set out for the Best Value Review Group on Educational Attainment. These are included here as appendix 1.

4.1.4 The original report from the group back to the Education Committee was scheduled for October 2005, but in the event took place in June 2006 (report no. 399-2006). It included a detailed Action Plan comprising 20 individual actions covering a number of themes - *Learning Together In Dundee* (LTiD), links with

Further and Higher Education, budget allocations, benchmarking, parental involvement, curriculum developments, pupil behaviour and the recruitment and retention of staff.

4.1.5 The Best Value Review Group on Educational Attainment continued to meet to monitor progress in meeting the targets of the Action Plan. In November 2007 the group agreed that much of the Action Plan had been overtaken, and that remaining items would be picked up in the Education Department's Service Plan.

4.1.6 The Best Value Review Group on Educational Attainment in its time has considered two other aspects of the Education Department's work:

- In October 2007, the Education Committee considered proposals for the closure of Bellfield Nursery School (report no. 540-2007) and, as a result, agreed, *inter alia*, to "instruct the Best Value Working Group on Attainment to draw up proposals for the future provision of nursery school places across Dundee in order to allow parents to make plans for pre-school education of their children, these proposals to be submitted to the Education Committee as soon as possible after the opening of the PPP Schools."
- One of the key themes and barriers to raising attainment, identified by members of the group in the course of a series of visits to schools, was the incidence of disruptive behaviour. The group's consideration of this issue intensified following the publication of the independent enquiry into Sidlaw View Primary School in 2007 and subsequent report to the Education Committee (report no. 652-2007). That whole matter also threw up the issue of the safety and security of schools.

4.2 **Raising Attainment**

4.2.1 Significant steps have been taken, and continue to be taken, in the drive to raise levels of academic attainment in Dundee schools, and these have been acknowledged by HMIE in their follow up report (March, 2009) on the education functions of Dundee City Council. These include:

- the continuous contribution from the senior management team within the Education Department in terms of leading the debate and making the need to raise attainment an improvement priority;
- the increased emphasis on formative assessment through the implementation of the successful LTiD programme;
- the high level of support and challenge from the Education Managers, Educational Development Service staff and Quality Improvement Officers through the review process (attainment, annual and extended);
- awareness raising at school and individual teacher level through ongoing CPD activities;
- the introduction of robust IT systems to enable staff to assess, record and track performance at school, class and individual level;
- the increased use of statistical analysis at the centre and at school level;
- the development of improved approaches to self-evaluation at school level to enable staff to identify strengths and areas for development;
- the development of professional observation of learning and teaching in every school and the impact of feedback on staff;
- the impact of improved direction within the Offsite Education Service provision leading to a substantial increase in the number of pupils gaining Access 3 qualifications;

- the reduction in exclusion rates at school level with the result that pupils remain in school and access learning; and
- the arrangements to enable schools and subject departments to share good practice.

4.2.2 While no-one would pretend to be wholly satisfied with progress made, to the point of complacency, nevertheless there is no doubt that the strategies have met with some success. Appendix 2 illustrates the level of improvement in all the attainment measures between 2005 and 2009, and the degree to which the gap between Dundee's performance and that of its comparator authorities has closed in that period.

4.3 **Proposals**

4.3.1 It is evident that the issues considered by the Best Value Review Group on Educational Attainment over the years (described in paragraphs 4.1.1 to 4.1.6 above) have been many and varied, and while all arguably impact on attainment and achievement, the group's remit has grown more distant from, and less specific than, the original terms of reference.

4.3.2 Members of the group, at a recent meeting, were invited to consider the appropriateness and relevance of the group's continuing existence. In fact, members were unanimous that the group should continue, citing that it provides an opportunity for members to devote time to the following broad aims:

- commenting on progress in a whole range of areas of the Department's work;
- receiving presentations from officers on educational developments;
- taking part in honest and open discussion on areas of common interest; and
- influencing departmental thinking on educational developments.

4.3.3 It is considered appropriate that all this should have as an overriding objective the pursuance of measures designed to lead to continuing increased levels of attainment in Dundee's schools.

4.3.4 It is worthwhile reviewing the membership of the group. The original group included membership drawn from the Education Department's key partners. Following discussion between the Director of Education and his colleagues in Social Work, Leisure & Communities and Health, there is agreement that their continuing membership of this group is unnecessary, given the intensive degree of joint working over a whole range of areas. Representatives from these agencies could be invited as appropriate to participate in specific discussions (paragraph 4.3.6 below).

4.3.5 It is therefore proposed that:

- the Chief Executive should continue to chair the group;
- elected members should be represented as follows: 3 Administration, and 3 from the opposition parties, viz 1 from the major opposition party, and 1 each from the minor opposition parties;
- there should continue to be representation from each of the three Head Teacher groups, early years, primary and secondary;
- there should be one representative from the teaching trade unions and one from the support staff unions;

- there should be 2 representatives from Parent Councils (1 primary and 1 secondary);
- there should be 2 representatives from the City Wide Pupil Council;
- the religious representatives who are members of the Education Committee should be invited; and
- the Director of Education should continue to be a member, supported as necessary by appropriate officers.

4.3.6 Members of the group should be able to nominate substitutes to cover for member absence. In addition, the group should be able to agree to co-opt members as necessary, and will continue to be grateful for the services of a Committee Clerk.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This report has been screened for any implications in respect of sustainability, strategic environment assessment, anti-poverty, equality impact assessment and risk management. There are no negative issues.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 This report has been subject to consultation with the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and Director of Finance.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

JIM COLLINS
Director of Education

17 May 2010

JC

BEST VALUE REVIEW GROUP ON EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**ORIGINAL TERMS OF REFERENCE PAPER (2005)**

REVIEW TOPIC	Educational Attainment
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Executive

1.	Scope of the Review
	To identify measures that will significantly improve educational attainment in Dundee schools. To fully cost all measures identified and establish whether these measures can be implemented in accordance with the three year revenue budget approved by the Policy and Resources Committee.

2.	Objectives
	To introduce measures into Dundee schools that will be directed towards raising levels of attainment.

3.	Group Membership
	<p>Chair - Chief Executive Members - 3 Administration, 2 SNP, 1 Conservative Director of Education plus nominated member of Education Directorate Director of Social Work nominee Head of Communities nominee Secondary School Head Teacher Primary School Head Teacher Nursery Head Teacher Health representative 2 School Board Representatives (1 secondary, 1 primary) Representative of Teaching Trade Unions (2) Representative of other Trade Unions 3 Religious representatives who are members of the Education Committee</p>

4.	Consultation Process – Who to Consult and How
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers, support workers and parent through their representatives • Other Education Authorities and schools through arranged visits • Meet with Head Teachers to discuss ideas and recommendations arising from the review • Policy and Resources Committee in respect of any proposals requiring an increase in the Education Department's Revenue Budget

5.	Schedule for Completing the Review																
	<table> <tr> <td>Pre planning</td> <td>March 2005</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Milestone Meeting 2 (Planning)</td> <td>April 2005</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Investigation</td> <td>May 2005</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Milestone Meeting (Define Issue)</td> <td>May 2005</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Generate Options/Ideas</td> <td>May-August 2005</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Milestone Meeting (Select Option)</td> <td>September 2005</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Implementation</td> <td>October 2005</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Milestone Meeting (Report)</td> <td>October 2005</td> </tr> </table>	Pre planning	March 2005	Milestone Meeting 2 (Planning)	April 2005	Investigation	May 2005	Milestone Meeting (Define Issue)	May 2005	Generate Options/Ideas	May-August 2005	Milestone Meeting (Select Option)	September 2005	Implementation	October 2005	Milestone Meeting (Report)	October 2005
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	Dundee City		Comparator Gap	
S4	<u>2005</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2009</u>
English & Maths	84%	89%	8%	5%
5+ Level 3	81%	86%	11%	6%
5+ Level 4	63%	69%	14%	8%
5+ Level 5	22%	28%	14%	9%
S5	<u>2005</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2009</u>
1+ Level 6	29%	31%	11%	10%
3+ Level 6	15%	16%	9%	8%
5+ Level 6	6%	7%	5%	4%
S6	<u>2005</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2009</u>
1+ Level 6	34%	38%	10%	6%
3+ Level 6	21%	25%	11%	6%
5+ Level 6	12%	17%	9%	4%