

REPORT TO: BEST VALUE SUB COMMITTEE - 11 SEPTEMBER 2000

REPORT ON: BEST VALUE REVIEW EDUCATION DEPARTMENT STAFFING SERVICES

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT NO: 598-2000

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report is the result of a Best Value Review into the Education Staffing Services provided by the Education Department as part of the Council's Best Value process.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Sub Committee:

- i. agrees the outcome of the review as contained in this report.
- ii. notes the key areas identified for continuous improvement as:
 - reduce the average time taken to fill vacancies for permanent posts
 - improve upon the rate of supply vacancies filled on the first day required
 - improve upon the quality of supply teachers available to schools
- iii. agrees to the piloting of arrangements to improve availability and quality of supply teachers
- iv. remits the Director of Education to continue development of benchmarking arrangements with other education authorities.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 This Review accounts for 0.2% of the Department's Revenue Budget at a budgeted cost of £171,000 and is 8.5% of the total expenditure reviewed in this department in 1999/2000.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Continuous improvement within the Education Department Staffing Services in the recruitment and selection arrangements for school staff will improve access to the skills, knowledge and information needed to enable everyone to play a full part in society.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Continuous improvement in the Education Department Staffing Services will increase equality of access to educational opportunity for pupils.

6.0 DEFINITION OF SERVICES REVIEWED

- 6.1 The primary function of Education Department Staffing Services is to administer the recruitment of teaching and support staff and to maintain their personnel records throughout their service with the Council. This covers a wide range of issues including arranging for vacant posts to be advertised and filled; issuing letters of appointment; confirming resignations and retirements for a variety of reasons; the deployment and maintenance of a pool of supply staff; computation of salary points; maintaining and updating statistical information; annual deduction of General Teaching Council Registration fees; advice and guidance on matters related to conditions of service such as leave of absence and maternity leave etc. The staffing establishment for the section is 1 Senior Administrative Officer, 2 Administrative Officers, 3 Senior Clerical Officers and 2 Clerical Officers. The section is line managed by the department's Chief Administrative Officer who also has responsibility for General Services to schools.

7.0 JUSTIFICATION FOR REVIEWING THIS SERVICE

- 7.1 It is universally acknowledged that human resources are a Council's strongest asset in striving to deliver an education service of the highest quality. It is, therefore, essential that recruitment and selection processes are regularly reviewed to ensure that a well qualified and effective workforce is maintained.
- 7.2 There has been a significant fall in the number of teachers available for supply work at the same time as an increase in the requirement for temporary appointments of teaching and support staff due to the increasing availability of specific, time limited grant income eg. Excellence Funding.
- 7.3 Recruitment and selection procedures have also been subject to review and significant investment in training since the inception of the City Council.
- 7.4 It is now, therefore, appropriate to review the Education Department Staffing Services to ensure that they are meeting the need to continuously improve the quality and range of services provided to departmental managers, pupils and staff.

8.0 REVIEWING METHODOLOGY

- 8.1 The review team comprised a Review Team Leader Steve Swann, Personnel & Management Services and Lead Officer Sandy Weston, Education Resources Manager, Bruce Johnston, Headteacher, Barnhill Primary School, Alan Wilson, Headteacher, Braeview Academy and Arthur Mitchell, Education Department. The Team also involved a number of other appropriate staff in the process of review and option development; in particular in the areas of

process review and options for addressing the shortage of teacher supply cover.

8.2 The review consulted with a stratified sample of stakeholders to ensure that the parts of the service most relevant to the users of the service were considered in the review.

8.3 The review also included possible benchmarking with other authorities, option appraisal and development of pilot schemes for addressing teacher supply shortages.

9.0 CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

9.1 The main stakeholders of the service are Headteachers, teachers, support staff and Education Services Managers.

9.2 The Review Group established the main Critical Success Factors through consultation with Headteachers, teachers, support staff and Education Services Managers. This process took the form of a questionnaire (Appendix 1) and interviews. The results are detailed in Appendix 2 attached.

9.3 The key critical success factors which were identified in consultation with the stakeholders are detailed below in order of importance:

1. The quality of applicants for permanent posts.
2. Time taken to fill vacancies for permanent posts.
3. The quality of applicants for supply posts.
4. Supply teachers provided on the first day required.
5. The communication of vacancies to all staff.
6. The helpfulness of the staffing section.
7. The accuracy of advice given by staffing section.
8. Cost effectiveness.

10.0 PERFORMANCE REVIEW

10.1 The Review Group established a performance indicator for each of the Key Critical Success Factors. The service was measured against these indicators by use of a questionnaire sent out to a stratified sample of around 350 members of staff. The results are detailed below.

Performance Indicators	Present Performance
1. % Satisfaction with the quality of applicants for permanent posts.	81%
2. Average time taken to fill vacancies for permanent posts (no. of school working days between previous member of staff leaving and replacement starting).	43 days (30% satisfaction)
3. % satisfaction with the quality of applicants for supply posts.	44%

4. % satisfaction with providing supply teachers on first day required.	43%
5. % satisfaction with the communication of vacancies to all staff.	91%
6. % satisfaction with the helpfulness of the staffing section.	91%
7. % satisfaction with the accuracy of advice given by the staffing section on conditions of service.	79%
8. Unit cost of staffing - total cost of staffing service divided by total departmental staffing complement teaching and support staff. Will provide a benchmark for comparison with other authorities as a measure of cost effectiveness.	£53.61

10.2 The following key issues emerged from the consultation exercises:

There is a general dissatisfaction (70%) with the length of time taken to fill vacancies for permanent posts. There is therefore a need to critically review the recruitment and selection process.

The quality and availability of supply teachers is a cause for some concern. Although it is recognised that there is a national shortage of supply teachers there is a need to examine options to improve the position within Dundee City.

While it is pleasing that there is a high level of satisfaction with helpfulness and accuracy of advice given by the Staffing Section there is room for improving communication particularly staff vacancies.

11.0 RESULTS OF COMPARISON

11.1 All other Scottish Education Authorities were provided with detail of our consultation questionnaire, success factors/performance indicators and a recruitment and selection process map with a view to exploring the possibility of conducting performance comparison and process benchmarking. While many authorities expressed an interest in participating at some future date only North Lanarkshire Council and East Lothian were in a position to participate now. Staff from the three authorities are currently working to produce like for like performance comparison data. A number of other Education Authorities have indicated a wish to benchmark with us when they begin their Best Value Review of their staffing services. The object of the benchmarking process is to identify, adopt and develop best practice with the aim of attaining and sustaining measured levels of performance which rank within the top ten compiled for all authorities in Scotland.

11.2 A small working group was formed to consider possibilities for improving the availability of teacher supply. This group reported back with proposals which the review group could consider when approving options for improvement.

12.0 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

12.1 The options available to the Review Group were

- i. no change to existing arrangements;
- ii. outsourcing of the service;
- iii. continue with the present arrangements but take on board improvements which address the areas of concern identified by the stakeholders of the service.

12.2 In light of the need for improvement which emerged from the consultation process option i. was not appropriate.

12.3 In considering option ii. it was recognised that there are a few commercial agencies who are seeking to offer services to Education Authorities in respect of teacher recruitment particularly supply teachers. While some of these agencies have experience delivering services in England and Wales there is no such experience in Scotland where the management of schools is vastly different. This matter has been subject of consideration by the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland and it was the general view that using such agencies would not be appropriate. It was therefore considered that this option should not be explored at the present time.

12.4 Options for improving the quality and availability of teacher supply cover were considered. It is recommended that pilot arrangements be operated during the period August 2000 to February 2001 in a secondary school and a primary school cluster. These arrangements are aimed at building in supply to a school's or group of schools' permanent teacher complement. The pilots can be resourced within existing funding for supply teaching. If the pilots are successful in improving availability and quality of classroom teacher supply cover, a report would be prepared for the Education Committee on the effect of city wide implementation. It is envisaged that these arrangements will reduce the high levels of dissatisfaction expressed in respect of quality of supply cover available and in providing first day cover thereby improving measured performance in these areas. More significantly there will be an improvement in the delivery of teaching and learning to pupils.

12.5 A process review group has been established with the remit of reducing the time taken to fill vacancies for permanent posts while continuing to meet the requirements of the Council's fair selection policy.

13.0 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS

13.1 The following continuous improvement proposals are recommended for inclusion within the Education Department's Development Plan.

Critical Success	Proposal	Success Criteria	Lead Officer	Timescale
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Factor No.				
1/2	Review of Recruitment and Selection Procedures by August 2000	Improved level of satisfaction with time taken to fill permanent posts (by 10% per annum)	Chief Admin. Officer (Staffing)	Annual Survey June 2001
		Reduction in average time taken to fill vacancies for permanent posts. (25% improvement)	Chief Admin. Officer (Staffing)	Process Improvement Group/Annual Survey June 2001
3/4	Piloting of alternative teacher supply arrangements	Improved level of satisfaction with the quality and availability of supply teachers (by 10% per annum)	Education Resources Manager	Annual Survey June 2002
		Ability to meet all supply requests on first day required	Education Resources Manager	Termly Monitoring coming session 2000/2001
All	Establishment of benchmarking of performance with other education authorities	Placement within the top 10 authorities for most indicators of performance	Chief Admin. Officer (Staffing)	Annual Survey June 2002
8	Review of cost of service provision	Maintain cost consistent within levels of inflation increase	Education Resources Manager	Incorporate with Annual Revenue Budget cycle

14.0 CONSULTATION

14.1 This report has been the subject of consultation with the Director of Support Services, the Director of Finance and departmental staff.

15.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

15.1 Best Value Submission to the Secretary of State for Scotland, December 1997. Policy and Resources Committee - 11 December 1997.

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Chief Executive

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Date

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Sept 2000