

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting5th March 2009

1. Title of Item/Report

Teachers Joint Consultative Panel

2. Record of the Decision

Members were provided with the Teachers' Joint Consultative Panel's Terms of Reference which stated that 'it is a forum for discussion of issues of mutual interest to elected Members, representatives of teacher organisations and officers of the Council'.

Included in the Terms of Reference was a mechanism for items to be submitted to the Panel for discussion. Unfortunately there had been no items submitted for consideration, for some considerable time, and during that time the Panel had not met. Clearly, given these circumstances, consideration needed to be given to its future operation and possible options in this regard.

The issue was initially discussed at a meeting between school staff representatives and officers from Children, Education and Social Care. Staff representatives indicated that they would support the continuation of the Panel in some form as they felt that its role, as a link between school staff and elected members, to discuss 'issues of mutual interest', was important and would be of great benefit to union representatives and elected members. They felt that it would be particularly beneficial over the coming years, when relevant issues related to the introduction of Building Schools for the Future could be discussed.

In supporting the continuation of the Panel, staff representatives requested that consideration be given to extending its membership and suggested that it be amended to include all school workforce union representatives i.e. to include teaching and school support staff reps.

At a meeting of the Teachers Joint Consultative Panel (TJCP), called to specifically discuss its future operation, Members considered possible ways forward. The Panel was provided with a draft Terms of Reference, which reflected comments made by school workforce representatives. The report also made suggestions relating to the introduction of an annual work programme and an amended agenda

management process.

In addition to the above, Members also considered the possibility of merging the Panel with the Council's Local Joint Consultative Panel (LJCP). The LJCP fulfilled a very similar role to the Teachers Panel, but it considered issues associated with staff from services not directly connected to schools. Staff union representation on the Panel reflected this. It was suggested that there could be benefits to a merger, including the widening of debate on issues, cutting down on duplication and reducing the number of meetings necessary.

The Panel discussed the options presented and, whilst recognising that there were merits in the merger suggestion, felt that the Schools' agenda had been large enough to justify a separate forum. There were concerns that meetings of such a merged Panel could be quite protracted. It was considered that separate meetings were still the most appropriate way to consider relevant issues for both Panels. The Panel did, however, agree that staff representation should include all school workforce staff, not just teaching. It was also agreed that suggestions relating to the formation of an annual work programme and a new agenda management process were positive.

During further consideration of the Panel's Membership it was agreed that the two largest unions, the National Association of School Masters and Women Teachers (NASUWT) and the National Union of Teachers (NUT), should have two representatives each. This would result in 11 staff representatives serving on the Panel.

Recognising that the Panel was for consultative purposes only, Council Members, present at the meeting, indicated that they were happy that Council representation should remain at 7.

Members were provided with a proposed Terms of Reference, which reflected the discussions detailed above. Given the proposed changes, it was explained that it would be necessary for Council to agree that the Teachers Joint Consultative Panel be discontinued and a Schools' Workforce Joint Consultative Panel (including centrally employed Teachers) be established. Minutes of the Panel were forwarded to Full Council for information.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

1. the Teachers' Joint Consultative Panel be discontinued.
2. a Schools' Workforce Joint Consultative Panel (including centrally Employed Teachers) be established and its Terms of Reference as

detailed in Appendix 2 of the report be approved.

3. necessary amendments be made to the Constitution.

4. the operation of the Panel be reviewed in 12 months.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To establish an appropriate forum to facilitate dialogue between elected Members, School Workforce representatives and officers of the Council.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Not applicable

Proper Officer
09 October 2009