

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....11th June 2009

1. Title of Item/Report

Capacity to Deliver School Improvement / Academy Co-sponsorship

2. Record of the Decision

Cabinet was advised that since 2002, careful re-structuring and re-focusing of the Advisory Team had seen a reduction in staffing from 14 general school advisers to 7 highly skilled ex-headteachers, all of whom were Ofsted and SIP accredited. This change in focus and expertise had been matched by significant year on year improvement across phase, with Stockton moving from below average performance to a position where the Council recorded its best ever performance across all key stages and being now at least in line with, but in most cases above, national averages. The Council was also short-listed as a beacon authority for school improvement, and score consistently well in APA and CPA. Performance in Primary had been better than Secondary overall, although at both phases there was considerable variations between the most and least successful schools. The school improvement team intervene, challenge and support in inverse proportion to success, and allocate large periods of time to support individual schools. 8 primary schools were designated as 'hard to shift', and therefore need more radical solutions to achieve the step change in improvement that was required. A significant majority of Stockton's primary schools overall were designated good or outstanding by Ofsted, reflecting the effectiveness of the teams' intervention and support over time.

7 secondary schools were currently in receipt of additional support from the advisory team. This includes two schools with unsatisfactory Ofsted designations, a special school currently without a headteacher and 3 national challenge schools. One of the schools was in special measures with an Interim Executive Board (IEB) application in place, the other was going through closure and re-organisation as part of BSF. This had put significant additional strain on an already small team. In addition, the service was working with external specialists to provide an intensive 18 month intervention programme to bring Thornaby Community School out of special measures and prepare its transition into an Academy. This input had been funded from existing budget and efficiencies across the School Effectiveness group of services. The advisory team will monitor

and evaluate the work on an ongoing basis.

As part of its model for Academy development the Council proposed to act as co-sponsor to both academies. This added a new workstream and responsibility to the other areas of Academy development. The delivery of the buildings was to be done by a dedicated project manager from within the BSF team, funded by top slicing the capital allocation for the Academies. In addition the local authority would have a quality assurance role in relation to the development of the academies within the Council's BSF vision, which would be the responsibility of the Head of Service. Co-sponsorship was another workstream entirely, and would be focused on the actual development and set up of the school itself, from vision and ethos to curriculum design, policy development, staffing and everything else to do with establishing a school from scratch. Added to this will be the statutory consultation, political and local consultation, TUPE transfer, communications and on-going dialogue with government agencies and partners to ensure the smooth transition from maintained schools to Academies.

The additional work represented by the need to put significant time into Thornaby Community School (to deliver the co-sponsorship role of the LA in the Academies, to oversee the smooth transition from three schools to two Academies and the closure of Billingham Campus and enlargement of Northfield) cannot be delivered from within the existing team, nor could the range of work be covered by a single dedicated post. The work would most effectively be distributed across the existing school improvement team, however this team was already over stretched.

Cabinet approval was therefore sought for the appointment 1.5 additional general advisers and some additional clerical time to create capacity and backfill to enable the additional workload to be managed across the team. The age profile of the team was such that in two years' time retirements were expected to enable some posts to be deleted from the structure again, as the peak of the work currently being experienced diminished. Therefore, an additional £100K one off sum was required in each of the financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11 to provide capacity to address the new workstreams. Should the managed surplus not be available at this time, it would be necessary to seek approval for this amount from the Council budget in 2010/2011.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Cabinet note the allocation of an additional £100,000 from CESC managed surplus to be made to the School Effectiveness/Advisory Service budget for 2009/10, and 2010/11.

2. Additional capacity be recruited to the Advisory Team to address the new workstreams.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The additional work represented by the need to put significant time into TCS, to deliver the co-sponsorship role of the LA in the Academies, and to oversee the smooth transition from three schools to two academies, the closure of Billingham Campus and the enlargement of Northfield cannot be delivered from within the existing school improvement team. Additional capacity and backfill to enable the additional workload to be managed across the team was needed to cover this two year "bulge".

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

By Midnight, Friday, 19th June 2009

Proper Officer  
16 June 2009