

Report to: **Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services**

Date: **21 November 2008**

By: **Chairman of the Tabletop Review**

Title of report: **Tabletop Scrutiny Review of the Recruitment and Retention of Teachers in East Sussex**

Purpose of report: **To present an update on the work by East Sussex County Council and CfBT to support the Recruitment and Retention of Teachers in East Sussex**

RECOMMENDATION – that an update report on the work being carried out on the recruitment and retention of teachers in East Sussex to be presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee in November 2009.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

2. Background Information

2.1 A short review was carried out between October 2007 and March 2008 to assess the recruitment and retention of teachers in East Sussex. Evidence was provided by officers from both the County Council and CfBT (Centre for British Teachers), which currently provides the School Improvement Service for East Sussex County Council.

2.2 The report brought to the Scrutiny Committee in March 2008 recommended that a full scrutiny review was not necessary at that time. However, the report did outline several areas of concern and suggested that these issues be revisited again in the autumn, with a further update report to the Scrutiny Committee in November. (See appendix 1 for more details on the original recommendations)

2.3 A meeting took place with officers from CfBT and the County Council Personnel Services on 3 November and the findings from this discussion are highlighted in section three below.

3. Findings

Current work

3.1 The number of new and trainee teachers that have been recruited within the County for the 2008/09 academic year are:

- 250 newly qualified teachers (NQTs) - 112 in primary and 138 in secondary;
- 26 trainee teachers; and
- 62 teachers have been recruited to the Primary Teacher Pool (from which primary schools recruit);

3.2 Personnel Services have been encouraged by the high calibre of applicants this year and this has enabled them to appoint the best candidates to both the Pool and the trainee teacher programme.

3.3 Several recruitment fairs have been attended by Personnel Services. These have publicised teaching opportunities in East Sussex to university students across the South East ready for the 2009/10 academic year. The recruitment information used by Personnel and the information on the website has also been updated and re-branded to match corporate standards.

3.4 CfBT has focussed its work around the Local Authority 'Leadership Effectiveness and Succession Planning Strategy' (LEADS). This Strategy has established a structure and continuity for promoting leadership, which was not in place in the Local Authority before.

3.5 One of the programmes resulting from the Strategy is the 'stepping up' programme, which has been funded by The National College of School Leadership (NCSL). This five day programme aims to prepare prospective heads for taking on a headteacher appointment, as well as providing guidance on interview techniques and selection panel activities. Twenty prospective heads attended during the 2007/08 academic year and since completing it several deputy heads, who had previously been unsuccessful in gaining a headship, have now done so. Sufficient funding is available for the programme to be run again during this academic year (2008-09) and a further twenty deputy heads are signed up.

Capacity and sustainability of School Recruitment Workforce Team

3.6 Since the initial report Personnel Services has been restructured and the School Recruitment Workforce Team has been incorporated into the main Personnel Services team (although staff with particular expertise around school recruitment still work within this area). This amalgamation of teams has enabled all personnel staff to be trained to carry out a range of different personnel roles. This allows more flexible working across Personnel Services and enables manpower to be directed to particularly areas as and when additional capacity is required. This restructuring has addressed concerns raised in the initial review report relating to the capacity and sustainability of the School Recruitment Workforce Team.

Exit questionnaires

3.7 The initial review raised concerns about the quality of the exit questionnaire used when teachers resign and how the lack of information it provided made it difficult to build up a clear picture as to why teachers were leaving the profession. In September Personnel Services replaced the exit questionnaire with the one used by all other East Sussex County Council staff. This corporate questionnaire provides a greater level of detail on the factors leading to a person resigning and it is hoped that the level of information received from teachers will help assess why they are leaving the profession. As the questionnaire has only been in use for a couple of months it is too early to assess the quality and detail of the information being provided. However, full analysis of the data will be carried out in January 2009.

Teacher vacancies

3.8 Neither CfBT nor Personnel Services believe that recent concerns in the national media about an increase in teacher vacancies are not evident in East Sussex at this time. Both teams recognise that recruitment to maths and science posts is still difficult and an option currently being considered is to train teaching assistants so that they have the skills and abilities to take on more work in the classrooms in these subjects.

4. Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

4.1 The concerns that were identified in the initial scrutiny report are being addressed and action taken by both CfBT and Personnel Services is leading to improvements in these areas. However, headteacher recruitment will remain an issue for the County Council over the next few years and work with schools on leadership development will need to remain a priority. The 'stepping up' programme (paragraph 3.5) is a key part of this and evidence suggests that it is working well. There is uncertainty as to the funding of this programme after the 2008/09 academic year and this needs addressing to ensure that the momentum of this programme is not lost.

4.2 It is recommended that the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee receives an update report on the ongoing work in these areas to the November 2009 meeting.

Councillor Chris Dowling, Chairman of the Tabletop Review

Contact Officer: Gillian Mauger (01273) 481796

Local Members: All

Background document: Scrutiny Review of the Recruitment and Retention of Teachers in East Sussex, March 2008

Recommendations from the initial scrutiny review of the recruitment and retention of teachers in East Sussex completed in March 2008

1	<p>A full scrutiny review of the recruitment and retention of teachers in East Sussex is not carried out at present.</p> <p>Councillor Dowling to revisit and review this matter again in Autumn 2008 and present an update report to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee in November 2008. This review to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess the impact that the work of the Schools Workforce Recruitment Team and CfBT has had on the recruitment and retention of teachers during the 2007/08 academic year; • consider how the expanded remit of the Team and the take up of the PT04 recruitment package purchased by schools has impacted on the work of the Schools Workforce Recruitment Team; and • consider if work to address future vacancies for headteachers will sufficiently meet the expected demand.
2	<p>The Schools Workforce Recruitment Team to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage schools to provide information on a regular basis regarding the number of teacher vacancies that they are actively recruiting to; and • to improve questionnaires sent to teachers leaving the profession to ensure that they are capturing the right information <p>This will enable the Team to maintain a correct picture as to the levels of teacher vacancies across the county and better understand why teachers are leaving the profession so that it can adapt future recruitment and retention support as necessary.</p>