

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 21 MARCH 2006**

#### **RESPONSE TO “PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT – HEAD TEACHER AND DEPUTE HEAD TEACHER APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES: A CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

##### **Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1** To inform the Education Committee of East Ayrshire Council's response to the Scottish Executive's consultation document: "Parental Involvement – Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher Appointment Procedures"

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement Bill), introduced on 29 September 2005, provides the overarching principles on the increased involvement of parents in their children's education. It also outlines the key principles for new appointments procedures and gives Scottish Ministers a discretionary power to impose requirements which any appointments procedures must satisfy.
- 2.2** The Scottish Executive issued a separate consultation paper in November 2005 entitled "Parental Involvement – Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher Appointment Procedures". This explains why Ministers consider that improving the involvement of parents in the appointment of Head Teachers and Depute Head Teachers is so important. It also explains why the Scottish Executive believes that changes are necessary and outlines the extended key stages for parental involvement in the appointments process.
- 2.3** The consultation paper contained a series of questions, related to the key issues contained in the legislation. The key issues involve parental involvement in the advertising strategy, job specification, letting and interviewing for Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher appointments.

#### **3. RESPONSE FROM EAST AYRSHIRE**

- 3.1** In order to assist in the response to the consultation paper, a parents' consultation evening took place in Council Headquarters, London Road on Thursday 2 February, 2006. This session informed parents of the proposed changes to the current procedures, and provided the opportunity for parents to respond to the consultation questions.

**3.2** The Authority response is attached as Appendix 1. East Ayrshire continues to fully support the engagement of parents within the appointment processes for Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher appointments.

**3.3** A working party has been established to review the overall Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher appointments procedures within East Ayrshire, in light of the recommendations from The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement Bill). The group is chaired by the CPD Coordinator and they will report their recommendations to the Head of Service: Schools Support, by the end of June 2006. These revised procedures will be the subject of consultation with teacher unions.

#### **4 COMMUNITY PLAN/LEGAL/POLICY/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None

#### **5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1 The Education Committee is recommended to:

- (i) Approve the Authority response to the consultation and;
- (ii) Otherwise note the contents of this report

John Mulgrew  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

February 2006

#### **List of Background Papers**

1. Progress Report on Parental Involvement Bill – Education Committee 31 January 2006
2. Parental Involvement – Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher Appointment Procedures: A Consultation Document, November 2005

Members wishing further information should contact John McCarney, Head of Service: Schools Support (01563 576126) or Gillian Hamilton, CPD Co-ordinator (01563 555650)

**Implementation Officer: John McCarney, Head of Service: Schools Support**

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HEAD TEACHER APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES: A CONSULTATION  
DOCUMENT**

This response has been prepared following an authority led Parent Consultation evening, which took place on Thursday 2 February, 2006. It incorporates the views of those parents attending the meeting.

**Q1. Do you agree that the Parent Council should be consulted about the job specifications for the post of Head Teachers or Depute Head Teachers, and the strategy for advertising the vacancy?**

The job specification and person specification should be based on the Standard for Headship and, as such, should require minimum input from Parent Councils. Parents did not wish to be involved in the 'nuts and bolts' of such a process. However, we feel that it would be good practice to consult parents in the final stages of development of the job specification, in order to ensure that account is taken of local needs.

The Authority, staff and parents recognise the importance of advertising widely for Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher posts and parents would welcome the opportunity to be consulted on the advertising strategy for each post. Again, this would ensure that local needs were addressed.

**Q2. Do you agree that regulations should entitle the Parent Council to be involved in any sift process?**

In East Ayrshire Council, parents are currently involved in the leeting process for Head Teacher appointments, but not for Depute Head Teachers. This involvement of parents is an example of good practice and is not common practice across all education authorities. The Authority and parents are satisfied with the current system in East Ayrshire and feel that they would wish continued involvement in the Head Teacher appointment process. There is a reasonable case to extend this involvement to the Depute Head Teacher appointment process and some parents have expressed such views. The Authority will review this aspect as part of the overall review of the Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher appointments procedures which is currently underway.

In order to ensure consistency and fairness, it is important to ensure that all those who are involved in the leeting process receive appropriate training.

**Q3. Do you agree that parental representation on the appointments panel should be obligatory?**

Yes, parental representation on appointments panels should be obligatory and their views should be given equal status. Currently, within East Ayrshire, Head Teacher appointment panels have three authority representatives and three parent representatives. Parents in East Ayrshire wish this to continue.

Depute Head Teacher appointment panels currently have three authority representatives and two parent representatives. Some parents felt that the status quo should be maintained, others felt that representation should be brought in line with HT appointments – three authority representatives and three parent representatives. The Authority will consider these views as part of the overall review of the Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher appointments procedures which is currently underway.

As stated above, it is important to ensure that all those who are involved in this stage of the process receive appropriate training.

**Q4. Do you agree that parental representation from school mergers or cluster arrangements should be drawn from a combined parent forum?**

Yes. However, it is important that there is flexibility for local needs, in order to best reflect local circumstances.

**Q5. Do you agree that where a school does not have a Parent Council that representation should be drawn from the wider parent forum?**

Yes. It is important that parents are represented in the process. In such circumstances, this representation would require to be drawn from a wider parent forum. This may require to be supported by the Local Authority rather than leaving this to individual school level.

**Q6. We would welcome your views on the establishment of local authority panels to help develop parents' expertise in appointments and strengthen the process.**

The parents in the group had mixed views in this area. Local networking is a strength in East Ayrshire, with School Boards often assisting each other on an informal basis. Some parents felt that this existing set up was satisfactory, and felt that there was no need to develop this further. Others felt that this would be a positive development. If such a panel was established, their role would be to offer advice. It was felt that a member of such a panel should not sit on an appointments panel.

The Authority would support appropriate training and development to develop parents' expertise in the appointments process. The possible establishment of such a panel will be considered as part of the overall review of the Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher appointments procedures which is currently underway.