

## **Committee:** Overview and Scrutiny Commission

**Date:** 19 September 2018

### **Subject:** Executive response and action plan – scrutiny task group review of the recruitment and retention of teachers in Merton

Lead officers: Hannah Doody, Director of Community and Housing; Rachael Wardell, Director of Children Schools and Families; Caroline Holland, Director for Corporate Services

Lead members: Councillor Martin Whelton, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport; Councillor Mark Allison, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance; Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Cabinet Member for Education

Contact officer: Jane McSherry, Head of Education; Steve Langley, Head of Housing Needs; Kim Brown, Head of HR

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#### **Recommendations:**

- A. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission consider the executive response and action plan setting out how the agreed recommendations of the scrutiny task group review of the recruitment and retention of teachers Services in Merton will be implemented.
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## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to set out the executive response and action plan to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission to demonstrate how the agreed recommendations of the recruitment and retention of teachers scrutiny task group will be implemented, and the associated responsible officers and timescales.
- 1.2. The detail of the response and action plan is set out in Appendix A.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. At their meeting on 25 June 2018 Cabinet noted the report of the scrutiny task group review and agreed that the recommendations of the task group would be responded to through an action plan to be drawn up by officers in consultation with the lead Cabinet Members.
- 2.2. Cabinet welcomed the report and noted that the review had been initiated at the request of teachers in the borough. Cabinet noted that the report contained some bold recommendations and welcomed the acknowledgement within the report that there were many other groups whose work and contribution to the borough was vital who had similar housing needs.
- 2.3. In discussing the report, Cabinet was mindful of the challenges which the Council faced in retention of key workers and the cost of living in the borough. Cabinet emphasised that there were no easy solutions, however with approximately 9000 people on the waiting list for housing, the Council had a duty to address the most acute housing need first and had to take

care not to discriminate against other groups and address a number of needs across the borough.

### **3 EXECUTIVE RESPONSE**

- 3.1. Appendix A to this report sets out the task group's recommendations, the initial response and action planned, together with dates and the responsible officer.

### **4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

None for the purposes of this report.

### **5 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

- 5.1. In carrying out its review, the task group consulted local heateachers and newly qualified teachers as well as speaking to a wide range of council officers.

### **6 TIMETABLE**

- 6.1. The timetable for implementation of the task group's recommendations is set out in Appendix A.

### **7 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. Delivery of these recommendations can either be met within existing budgets or will be the subject of a bid for support through the council's usual financial procedures.

### **8 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. None for the purposes of this report.

### **9 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. None for the purposes of this report.

### **10 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. None for the purposes of this report.

### **11 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

None for the purpose of this report.

### **12 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

Appendix A – executive response and action plan

### **13 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 13.1. None

**Appendix A: Executive response to the recommendations of the scrutiny task group review into the recruitment and retention of teachers in Merton**

Recommendations	Executive response	Timeline	Decision making body and lead officer
<p><b>Recommendation 1.</b> That Cabinet should confirm that it is committed to continuing to celebrate the successes of Merton’s schools in order to attract teachers of the highest quality and to promote local schools as the first preference for parents seeking an excellent education for their children.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>The Council will continue to celebrate exam success and wider schools and pupil outcomes on the Councils website, in the local press and via My Merton magazine.</p> <p>Recruitment has been identified as a key priority within the setup of the School Effectiveness Partnership and some capacity added with the appointment of the Partnership Coordinator. The Merton eteach site is also being refreshed.</p> <p>Feedback from Head teachers is that they value the NQT programme in Merton and this will continue to be promoted.</p> <p>Consideration will also be given to a Merton based recruitment fair to supplement the work already undertaken to promote Merton at University Fairs.</p>	<p>April 2019</p>	<p>Cabinet; Director of Children, School and Families</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 2.</b> That the School Effectiveness Partnership Board should consider a more proactive and personalised approach to match applicants in the Eteach talent pool with specific school vacancies in order to increase its effectiveness.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>The Council has already trialled offering individual interviews for candidates who have signed up to eteach. This has had some positive outcomes and will continue to be offered.</p> <p>HR have indicated that they explore developing a temp to perm policy with agreement from schools.</p>	<p>April 2019</p>	<p>School Effectiveness Partnership Board; Director of Children, School and Families</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3.</b> That, once the government has released details, the School Effectiveness Partnership Board should consider if the teacher apprenticeship scheme could be implemented in Merton.</p>	<p><b>Accepted in principle</b></p> <p>There is a standard for teachers : <a href="https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/teacher/">https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/teacher/</a></p> <p>Applications need to be made through UCAS so this could be considered next year. To be accepted on the programme the applicant needs to have an existing degree or degree level apprenticeship and be employed as a teacher at the start of their apprenticeship. Existing staff can apply if they meet this criteria. There is some funding available through the Department for Education which can be used towards salaries and would need to be applied for by June 2019.</p>	<p>April 2019</p>	<p>School Effectiveness Partnership Board; Director of Children, School and Families</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 4.</b> That the School Effectiveness Partnership Board should promote a wide range of recruitment routes to assist headteachers with advertising vacancies in their schools.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>The School Effectiveness Partnership through the revised recruitment website will clarify and promote the different routes available.</p> <p>A multi channel approach to attract teachers, using various social media channels, attendance at job fairs, links with universities to make contact with final year teaching students is already and will continue to be used.. Continue to raise Merton's profile as a good employer through working with the communications team to put out good news stories about schools in Merton, and updating video profiles on the teaching pages of the website which showcases Merton staff i.e. why they value working in Merton (Head, senior leaders and teacher perspectives).</p> <p>HR does not offer recruitment to schools as part of the current SLA buy back agreement; however this could become part of a future SLA. HR has a track record of working closely with services to attract, recruit and retain staff in competitive and hard to fill roles such as social workers. The re-introduction of golden hellos, retention payments may be considered, but are no longer funded by government,</p>	<p>April 2019</p>	<p>School Effectiveness Partnership Board; Director of Corporate Services</p>



<p><b>Recommendation 7.</b> That Cabinet publicise to school staff and explain how to take up the existing council staff discount on annual memberships at Canons Leisure Centre, Morden Park Pools and Wimbledon Leisure Centre.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>Will ensure there are links to the offers and benefits available so that this is accessible to school staff - on the extranet and eteach. Link offers could be included in adverts and contract offers</p> <p>Include information in the newsletter sent to Headteachers and bursars. Session on bursars and school forum meetings to promote</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	<p>Cabinet; Director of Corporate Services</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 8.</b> That all the benefits that are currently available to teachers and other school staff should be publicised to all school staff and clearly documented on all relevant webpages. This should include the interest free season ticket loan, purchase of a bicycle through the Cycle to Work Scheme (salary sacrifice) and nursery/childcare vouchers.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>Will ensure there are links to the offers and benefits available so that this is accessible to school staff - on the extranet and eteach.Link offers could be included in adverts and contract offers.</p> <p>Include information in the newsletter sent to Headteachers and bursars. Session on bursars and school forum meetings to promote</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	<p>Cabinet; Director of Corporate Services</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 9.</b> That Cabinet should ask the Head of Housing Needs and Strategy to write to local housing associations to ask if they have any “hard to let” properties that could be made available to teachers at an affordable rent (including short term assured tenancies).</p>	<p><b>Rejected</b></p> <p>Whilst Cabinet understand the need of teachers in finding housing, the council also owes a statutory duty to those who are homelessness and they would have to be a priority group in the council’s regular liaison with local housing associations</p>		<p>Cabinet; Director of Communities and Housing</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 10.</b> That Cabinet consider whether the 3-5 year private rental tenancies that will be available through the Local Authority Property Company from 2019/20 could be offered to teachers in the first instance, thus offering teachers an element of financial security.</p>	<p><b>Rejected</b></p> <p>Merantum is an arms-length housing company with its own board of directors. Cabinet would expect it to offer secure tenancies but we cannot single out one particular employment group.</p>		<p>Cabinet; Director of Environment &amp; Regeneration</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 11.</b> That Cabinet should explore the business case for supporting the retention of excellent teachers in the borough by offering a small number of private rented properties through the Local Authority Property Company to such teachers at a reduced rent.</p>	<p><b>Rejected</b></p> <p>There are many equally worthy key workers who face the same challenges and it would be unfair to single out one particularly category of employment and decisions are for the property company to take</p>		<p>Cabinet; Director of Corporate Services</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 12.</b> That Cabinet should ask the Head of Housing Needs and Strategy to approach the Landlords Forum with a “good tenant offer” whereby the council would guarantee a supply of teachers as private tenants for a fixed number of years in return for a reduced rent.</p>	<p><b>Rejected</b></p> <p>The council’s primary duty is to house those most in need which are homelessness and suffering overcrowding</p>		<p>Cabinet; Director of Communities and Housing</p>



<p><b>Recommendation 13.</b> That Cabinet should ask the Head of Housing Needs and Strategy to provide school staff with a list of shared ownership schemes that might be suitable for teachers, whilst not recommending any scheme in particular.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>A list can be circulated of shared-ownership schemes and London Living Rent housing.</p>	TBC	Cabinet; Director of Communities and Housing
<p><b>Recommendation 14.</b> That Cabinet consider setting up a rent deposit scheme that would operate in a similar way to the existing season ticket loan. This would provide teachers with an interest free loan that would be paid back to the council in a set number of instalments.</p>	<p><b>Accepted in principle</b></p> <p>This could be explored, but would have implications where the schools run their own payroll service as we would not be able to deduct direct from salaries and therefore could be part of our overall rent deposit scheme.</p>	TBD	Cabinet; Director of Corporate Services/Director of Community & Housing
<p><b>Recommendation 15.</b> That the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel should receive a briefing on the Mayor of London's London Living Rent initiative in order to identify potential benefits for Merton residents</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>To be included alongside housing reports at the Panel's meeting in March 2019</p>	19 March 2019	Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel; Head of Housing Needs

<p><b>Recommendation 16.</b> That the School Effectiveness Partnership Board should consider how best to build on the effective programme of continuous professional development that is already being delivered. The Board could consider the role of local colleges and universities in further enhancing the options available, including through use of the Apprenticeship Levy.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>The Professional Development programme continues to be developed. It is promoted through our own bespoke website (<a href="http://www.mertoncpd.co.uk/cpd">www.mertoncpd.co.uk/cpd</a>) and through the newly created School Effectiveness Partnership website. This will make it easier to search for courses and will give a direct link to the appropriate booking page.</p> <p>There is a fully developed Leadership ladder in place that promotes all leadership opportunities within the Borough, sub regionally and across London.</p> <p>The Professional Development Steering Group which includes representatives from the Council and the Teaching School Alliance meets regularly to review the Merton offer and to work alongside the School Effectiveness Partnership Board to identify overlap and gaps. Current work continues to develop a more targeted secondary school programme, including a sharing of secondary school/departmental work on A levels. Links with local colleges and universities will continue to be explored.</p> <p>Work on the Apprenticeship levy is led through the council's HR department and they are linking closely with schools to utilise the opportunities available.</p>	<p>April 2019</p>	<p>School Effectiveness Partnership Board; Director of Children Schools and Families</p>